Islam, Democracy and Islamism after the Counterrevolution in Egypt

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The overthrow of the Muslim Brotherhood’s presidency in Egypt by an unprecedented partnership between the army and Tamarod (“rebellion” in Arabic), a grassroots opposition movement, followed by the brutal repression of the Brotherhood, has left observers dazed and puzzled. The speed and savageness with which democracy, and perhaps even the hope for democracy, has been smashed in Egypt was unexpected and harrowing to watch. This episode may cast a long shadow on how Egyptian and regional polities negotiate with endemic authoritarianism. It will also have a profound impact on how political Islam, especially in the Arab world, evolves. Some commentators are forecasting the end of political Islam; others have limited their obituaries to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Some opinion that perhaps the Muslim world is not ready for democracy; others claim the contention that Islam and democracy are not compatible has been vindicated. This essay will focus on the subject of what political philosophers and theorists call Islamic democracy. The election of the Muslim Brotherhood was not only a pathway to democracy and away from decades of authoritarianism; it was also seen as a vehicle to demonstrate the compatibility of Islam and democracy. The examples of Malaysia and Turkey had already made the case that, indeed, Muslims were compatible with democratic norms. The case of Egypt, however, was more compelling: political Islam was in the driver’s seat and was going to design a polity and write a constitution. In Tunisia, the political parameters were similar, but Al-Nahda did not enjoy the same degree of electoral success that the Muslim Brotherhood had garnered, thus placing Egypt in a position to settle, once and for all, the question of the compatibility of Islam and democracy.

After the overthrow of President Mohamed Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood and its Islamist allies donned the mantle of “champions of democracy and consti-

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tutional legitimacy." They compared their tenure at the helm with American democracy and argued that President Morsi had democratic legitimacy and hence could not be removed from power but had to be allowed to complete his term. Anything else they deemed undemocratic. They ignored the mass protests on June 30 and characterized the overthrow as a military coup against democracy. Yes, elements of the old regime and the military did take advantage of a political opportunity, but the opportunity came their way only because the failure of governance under Muslim Brotherhood was seen as so severe that millions came out and demanded its overthrow.6

The insistent claim to legitimacy by the Muslim Brotherhood supporters raises two significant procedural issues. One concerns the linking of government legitimacy exclusively to elections; the other concerns the reasonable expectations from system continuity. Supporters of Morsi insist that because he was elected for a four-year term he must, under any and all circumstances, be allowed to complete it. The signature campaign and the mass protests against him, while indicative of his governance failures, are not enough to justify aborting his term. Supporters of Morsi do not pay much attention to the electoral math. Morsi won the final round of elections by a narrow 3.4 percent margin — 51.7 percent to 48.3 percent — when the atmosphere of revolutionary euphoria was at its peak against a candidate, Ahmed Shafiq, who was seen as a representative of the old regime.7 Those figures should have given pause to everyone; nearly half of Egypt was still in favor of the old guard. When the excitement of revolution abated, even a slight (1.75 percent) shift away from Morsi would have given the supporters of the old regime a majority. None of this mattered to the Muslim Brothers except the fact that they had won the election. For them, ironically, electoral legitimacy has become sacred and inviolable under any circumstances.8

Perhaps their claims would be valid in an established and stable constitutional democracy, but the regime in Egypt had many problems. There was no parliament in place that might have provided checks and balances to a presidency gone awry. In an established system, a president despised by so many could test his legitimacy through an impeachment procedure or vote of confidence. In the absence of a parliament, there was no constitutional counterbalance to the executive. A new constitution was indeed ratified. The passage of the constitution should have warranted new parliamentary and presidential elections; otherwise, for three years, Egypt would have a president whose authority did not stem from the current constitution. Additionally, many protesters against the Morsi regime were not confident that the ousted president would hold elections when the time came.9 They figured that there was no point in waiting for three more years, if there was no guarantee that there would be an election after that interval. Morsi, in their view, had already demonstrated the instinct of a dictator when, in November 2012, he passed a decree that placed him above judicial review — a decree that was rescinded only after mass demonstrations and the deaths of hundreds of protesters.10 Many critics also pointed to a lack of credibility on the part of the Muslim Brothers, who had first promised not to contest the presidential elections and then had reneged on it.11 They said they were not ready to trust any promises made by Morsi. Anti-Morsi protests had,
according to them, become the only check against presidential power.

For decades, ideologues of political Islam like Sayyid Qutb and many rank-and-file speakers and writers have constructed a vision of an Islamic state by demonizing secular democratic governance as “Godless” and immoral. Democracy, they argued, legitimized the whims and fancies of the masses, especially those morally capricious preferences emanating from the promiscuous culture of the modern West. They are vehemently opposed to many of the human rights that are necessary to any democratic infrastructure: women’s equality, especially in matters of marriage, divorce, work and travel; freedom of religion allowing one to leave Islam; equality of all under the law for Muslims and non-Muslims; and the supremacy of the will of people in making laws. The constitutional caveats that Islamists insist on — that Islam is the source of all laws and that laws shall not violate the shariah — are designed to preempt many of these human-rights principles.

Maulana Maududi of Pakistan, who articulated the concept of theo-democracy, and Rachid Ghannouchi of Tunisia, who advocates pragmatism as a political virtue and accepts power sharing with non-Islamists, have provided some nuance to the Islamist discourse on democracy. These subtle ideas made democratic governance more acceptable to Islamists, but they did not transform their strongly held belief that the Islamic shariah was superior to any form of man-made law and must be implemented, with or without the consent of the people. The only progress shown was that, rather than imposing shariah on people without their consent, as they did in Pakistan with the help of President Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, Islamists were now happy to enforce their understanding of shariah with the help of an electoral majority.

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Islamists also hold that the sovereignty of the people as exercised in any democracy was unacceptable in Islam, which is based on the exclusive sovereignty of God. Man-made laws would allow women to rule, gay couples to get married and minorities to have the same rights and duties as Muslims, none of which was consistent with the Islamist notions of the shariah. Unlike Islamic modernists such as Fazlur Rahman and Tariq Ramadan, Islamists have not fully understood that the shariah is socially and historically constructed. They act as if its rulings are all divinely articulated, uncontested, fully accepted, agreed upon and remorselessly clear. Muslims who disagree are often demonized and blackballed.

Nevertheless, in spite of their fear of and reservations about secular and liberal democracy, Islamists have more or less embraced democracy as a means to acquiring and transferring power. For over half a century now, Islamists in most authoritarian Muslim countries, where they were
As a result of the popular uprising called the Arab Spring, the Islamists found an opportunity to gain power in Tunisia and Egypt. This upheaval was neither initiated by the Islamists, nor were they the dominant force behind it. They were, however, its principle beneficiaries. The Arab Spring was not a demand for Islamist rule or an Islamic state. It was a demand for dignity and an exasperated rejection of the terrible economic conditions in these societies. The Islamists entered the political process by embracing democratic procedures, especially elections, and succeeded because they were more organized than any other group in Egypt, while the newly formed non-Islamist political parties were disorganized and divided.

Once Islamists won the elections in Egypt and it was time to write the constitution, the discomfort with democratic values of universal equality and progressive laws based on evolving norms of human rights and dignity resurfaced. The Egyptian constitution, passed by the Islamists, fudged on the equality of all citizens by privileging one religion, Islam, over others (Articles 1 and 2), and subverting the equal status of women and minorities. Even the status of democratic legislation was undercut by making Al-Azhar University the arbiter of the Islamic laws that inform the normative framework of the constitution (Articles 4 and 219). Thus, the legislature was not fully empowered to write laws; an unelected academic institution could overturn them. The constitution did state that there would be no discrimination based on gender or religion, but Article 2 in the constitution, declaring Islam the primary source of law, opened the door for discrimination against religious minorities and women, especially if law making was in the hands of groups that did not subscribe systematically oppressed, have advocated for democratization. The growing international legitimacy of democracy as a desired form of government was difficult for the Islamists to resist, particularly since their critics accused them of aspiring to theocratic fascism. Additionally, they realized that, over time, their political activism had made them popular among the masses, who were alienated by the corruption of secular elites and had become more religious. Thus, Islamists found that acceptance of democracy in principle provided international legitimacy and also made strategic sense as their popularity increased. This was borne out in Egypt as Islamists won every election they contested.

The Islamist commitment to the ideal of democracy remained procedural, however, not substantive and normative. Islamists were willing to accept elections and referendums as a way of determining who acquires power and how political disputes may be settled in the public sphere. But they never accepted many of the fundamental principles that constitute the normative package called democracy. The idea that democracy is not the dictatorship of the majority, but a process that seeks to find a middle ground and ultimately aspires for consensus, escaped them. The notion that one of the virtues of contemporary democracy is that it uses constitutional instruments to protect and guarantee minorities equal rights and equal access to governance also escaped them. Democracy gains its legitimacy not just from periodic elections, but also from sustained, systematic, deliberative policy making that consults and includes the views and concerns of everyone in the society. Democracies increasingly celebrate intellectual diversity and religious pluralism, neither of which seems to be important to Islamists.
to the principle of fundamental equality for all people. The loophole could have been explicitly closed, but it was not.\textsuperscript{19} The contrast can be seen starkly when one looks at the constitution written by Islamists in Egypt and the one written by Islamists and others in Tunisia.

**MB AND (MIS)GOVERNANCE**

In the one year during which President Morsi governed, he rushed through a hastily written constitution, tried to assume extra-constitutional powers to preempt the judiciary, and focused more on consolidating his party’s power over government institutions than providing good governance. The constitution passed the constitutional referendum with a significant majority. But critics argue that many of those who voted for it do not fully understand the scope and meaning of all of its articles, since there was no time to fully discuss and debate them in the public sphere.\textsuperscript{20} Additionally, the Constituent Assembly, which wrote the constitution, was not very representative of the society. Many non-Islamists had resigned from the constitution committee; there were very few women (six or seven, depending on when in the process you counted) and members of religious minorities. While it did garner a majority in the referendum, it alienated a significant portion of society, who felt cheated by the text as well as by the process. A constitution is a social contract, and if there is no buy-in by a large segment of the population, it is barely legitimate; 66 percent of the 33 percent that voted was tantamount to an approval by only 22 percent of the population. Constitutions need a higher degree of agreement by a society in order to become its foundational document. Constitutions that are not approved by overwhelming majorities will divide rather than unite a country in pursuit of a common purpose. The Egyptian constitution, whose final draft was written entirely by Islamists and rushed to the ballot box, failed to unite all citizens behind a common purpose or engender a common vision. Quite the contrary.\textsuperscript{21}

As far as governance was concerned, the Muslim Brotherhood failed miserably. The economy declined, the crime rate rose precipitously, social divisions became more pronounced and the quality of life fell significantly. Clearly, there is evidence that the previous regime had worked to subvert the Morsi government, but that should have been evident to those wielding the levers of power. The biggest source of resentment against the Morsi regime was that it failed to include others in the circle of power; it worked actively to marginalize non-Islamists, even those who had supported it, and it was pushing an Islamist agenda that allowed demonization of Christians, Jews, Shias, Sufis and other dissenters. The overall impression they conveyed was that ideological consolidation of power was more important to them than the welfare of the state and society.

**CRITICAL QUESTIONS**

Does the failure of the Muslim Brotherhood to provide good governance in Egypt mean that Islam and democracy are not compatible? Or is it that Egyptians have rejected democracy and prefer military authoritarianism? Does it perhaps mean that the Muslim Brotherhood cannot govern and that this is the end of political Islam?

The failure of the Brotherhood to provide good governance, and its inability to unite Egyptian society in a common purpose, does not imply that Islam and democracy are incompatible. There are many reasons this is the case, the most important
being that the Muslim Brotherhood does not have a monopoly on Islam. Its failure is not the failure of Islamic values.\textsuperscript{22} In Egypt itself, there are other manifestations of Islam — salafi and sufi, for example — both of which have entered the public sphere. The Al-Nour party has a strong salafi orientation, and the leadership of Al-Azhar University has once again begun to revert to its sufi heritage. Both Islamic alternatives to the Brotherhood have in the past two years demonstrated a willingness to work within a democratic context and be less politically rigid than the Brotherhood.

Moreover, the Brotherhood lost much of its support among non-members through its partisanship, not because they were seen as representing Islam. Those who rejected the Brotherhood rejected it \textit{per se}; they did not reject Islam. Two other developments continue to keep optimism about Islam and democracy high. People in the countries that experienced the so-called Arab Spring (Tunisia, Egypt and Libya) had all chosen a democratic alternative as their first choice after their moments of liberation from dictatorships. Countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and Bangladesh, with various degrees of coexistence between resurgent Islamic identity and emerging democratic political structures, assure us that the future of democracy in the Muslim world is bright. The democratic principle has triumphed; its realization in practice, however, remains uncertain.\textsuperscript{23}

The counterrevolution of June 30, 2013, and the enormous support for the military — from ordinary people, the secular and liberal intelligentsia, the media, the economic sector, the police and the army, and members of the Christian community and Muslim denominations not affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood — have prompted many observers to conclude that Egyptians have rejected democracy. I was in Tahrir Square on June 30 and talked to hundreds of protesters. In the days before and after the massive protests, I spoke with many scholars, media personnel, waiters, cab drivers and shopkeepers. People were not tired of democracy, but were disenchanted with a disastrous economy and the failure of the Muslim Brotherhood to focus on governance.

The secular and liberal elite were in an uproar over the Brotherhood’s systematic efforts to consolidate power and exclude even those who had supported them during elections. The counterrevolution was not a rejection of democracy and an endorsement of military rule; it was a resounding rejection of the Muslim Brotherhood — not a rejection of Islam or democracy, just the Brotherhood. The near-complete isolation of the Brotherhood as the army proceeded to crush their counterprotests — egged on by the rest of the country — is testimony to the failed governance of the Brotherhood. Egyptians preferred anything, even a military dictatorship and the loss of their incipient democracy, over the Brotherhood.

Ironically, some supporters and some critics of the Brotherhood are sending the same message in the aftermath of the overthrow of President Morsi. Frustrated supporters are blaming democracy for the actions of the Egyptian military. Many of
them have been shouting slogans such as “No more elections after today.” Are they suggesting that, if the Brotherhood had not adopted democracy, it would still be in power, or are they threatening to abandon democracy if Morsi is not restored as president by international intervention? The message was reinforced by Essam el-Haddad, spokesperson for the Muslim Brotherhood, who told the press, “The message will resonate throughout the Muslim World loud and clear that democracy is not for Muslims.”

Critics of the Brotherhood, like Youssef Rakha, also argue that democracy is perhaps not for Muslims, but from the standpoint that political Islam and democracy are not compatible. In an essay in The New York Times, he provides a laundry list of undemocratic practices and policies of Islamists and Morsi to make his point: while Islamists espouse democracy, they have no intention in upholding its principles. Among his grievances he includes examples of a man killed for walking with his girl friend, Morsi’s concern for terrorists who kidnapped army personnel, sexual harassment of women who did not wear the hijab, initiatives in the Islamist-led Parliament to legalize female genital mutilation, and violence against Shias and Copts. The most worrying thing for advocates of democracy is the disenchantment with democracy itself that is taking root in Egypt. Islamists argue that democracy has failed them; secularists fear democracy because it brings with it an end to their freedoms, via Islamist government. In spite of everything, I am convinced that Egyptians have not given up on democracy. Both Islamists and secularists are now protesting against undemocratic measures by the popular military regime. The spark of democracy is still burning.

Does the return of the military and the political marginalization of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt herald the end of political Islam? Probably not. The various groups that can be included under the broad rubric of political Islam may have suffered a setback in Egypt, but they remain a significant force in Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan, Palestine, Pakistan and Turkey. Indeed the brutal suppression of the Brotherhood in Egypt has helped strengthen the resolve and vindicated the feeling of victimhood among Islamists everywhere. Even in Egypt, Islamists are in disarray and leaderless, but they still have a very dedicated constituency. If they undergo a process of reform and learn from the mistakes they made when in power, it is possible that the Brotherhood will once again become a major force in Egyptian politics and even contribute to the democratization of Egypt and the region.

THE FUTURE

For simplicity, I wish to divide political Islam into two types, one that seeks change through peaceful activism and even electoral politics — such as the Muslim Brotherhood in the Arab world and Jamaat-e-Islami in South Asia — and the other that seeks change through violence, like al-Qaeda and the Taliban. The violent and jihadi movements will continue to operate in weak and partially failed states. They will only disappear when peaceful political Islamic movements are either successful, making jihadis redundant, or comprehensively defeated in the political sphere.

The most intriguing question concerns the future of peaceful political Islam, which saw such an abrupt rise and fall after the Arab Spring, especially in Egypt. The experience of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt has clearly engendered intense
animosity for empowering secular and liberal movements to confront political Islam elsewhere, as in Turkey and Tunisia. But the appetite for Islam in the public sphere has not diminished. A heightened sense of victimhood and the perception that the world is against Islam will strengthen support and desire for political Islamic movements in much of the Muslim world.28

While the situation appears to be desperate for the Brotherhood, this is an excellent opportunity for a generational change in personnel and ideas. After the explosion of the Arab Spring, democracy was the only option people chose in the countries that experienced complete (Egypt, Tunisia, Libya) or partial (Morocco) change. Political legitimacy is now clearly under the exclusive sovereignty of the concept of democracy; the aspirations of political Islamists for an Islamic state or caliphate have no currency whatsoever. The most successful political Islamist today, Prime Minister Recep Erdogan of Turkey, is an ardent advocate of secular democracy, albeit a conservative one.

Therefore, the first major conceptual shift that Islamists must make is recognition of this reality. They are welcome to try to change Muslim public opinion away from democracy, but such activism will only justify and garner more repression against them. Embracing democracy as a necessary inconvenience en route to power will only lead to political disaster, as witnessed in Egypt. They need to rethink the global appeal of democracy and read and listen to the arguments of liberal Islamic thinkers, who have been arguing that democracy is not only compatible with but also necessary to the establishment of healthy Islamic societies. Without embracing democracy in substance, recognizing its normative worth, and integrating their political ambitions with democratic principles that respect the rights and equality of all and cherish inclusiveness and diversity, political Islam may not find its way back to the circles of power.

The second shift that Islamists need to make is from “Islamic identity” to “Islamic values.” For decades, Islam has been used to legitimate certain political and ideological choices. Islamic state, Islamic economy, Islamic identity and Islamic society have become catchwords to advance and promote a modern interpretation of Islam whose central goal is neither spiritual revival nor ethical struggle, but power. As Muslims struggled to cope with the devastating consequences of colonization and European imperialism, political Islam emerged to unite Muslims against both the West and an authoritarian and Westernized ruling elite. One of the consequences of this development has been the reduction of the faith to an identity and an ideology. It is not seen as a set of values that constrain human choices, but as a political ideology that unites a group in pursuit of power.

The power-centered nature of political Islam was unequivocally manifest in
The ease with which the Brotherhood abandoned its long-cherished goal of establishing an Islamic state in exchange for a leading role in a liberal democratic arrangement suggests that the group was more interested in power than principle. The salafis, who for decades opposed the idea of democracy as *kufr* (disbelief), became *kafirs* (disbelievers) overnight (on the basis of their own rhetoric) and plunged with gusto into electoral politics, launching the party Al-Nour. The desire for power was too tempting to be restrained by their long-held notions of Islam and shariah. These hypocritical maneuvers have not escaped any thoughtful observer of Egyptian politics. In order to regain their credibility as moral actors who wish to govern for the sake of justice rather than power, political Islamists need to once again understand that Islam is a faith and a reservoir of values, not an identity ready-made for political mobilization.

The third shift they need to make is in their philosophical approach to the concept of the shariah and how they define an Islamic society. Early Muslim Brotherhood ideologues made the application of shariah a litmus test for the Islamic state. This idea was more or less enshrined with a sectarian perspective in the article that privileged the Sunni concept of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) over all other sources of law in the constitution passed by the Islamists in 2012. It will be both organic and beneficial if Islamists seek to redevelop the corpus of Islamic law from Islamic sources in light of the needs of contemporary society, rather than merely putting in place a centuries-old understanding of Islamic principles. A commitment to modernizing the body of *fiqh* literature that recognizes the importance of *ijtihad* (diligence) and incorporates it in the very structure of the polity will go a long way in convincing Muslims that Islamists are serious about living their faith rather than merely using it as a means to garner and mobilize support.

The fourth shift that Islamists may have to make is towards pragmatism and away from ideological dogmatism. Removal of Mohamed Morsi as president and subsequent events have clearly shown that a wide array of political forces, both domestic and international, are aligned against the Muslim Brotherhood. If playing the victim and spoiler is the only response that the Brotherhood offers to the current situation, the future of both political Islam and democracy in Egypt is bleak. But, rather than just protesting, if the Brotherhood reforms and replaces its leadership (much of which is in prison) with a younger generation more interested in the future than the past, then perhaps there is hope for both political Islam and democracy. There is an enduring demand for Islam to play a role in the public sphere; the only issue that remains is whether it will happen in concert or in conflict with democracy. Authoritarianism has no future. The current military government will have to transition eventually to some form of democracy, probably a hybrid authoritarian-democratic model. The Muslim Brothers can resist or facilitate it; the choice is theirs.

The fourth shift they need to make is to move away from sacred symbolism to ordinary outcomes. The Islamists, in general, and the Brotherhood in Egypt, in particular, rely on cultural jingoism and anti-Western sloganeering to gain support. One of the unpleasant outcomes of this identity-based appeal is the necessary demonization of the West, which generates fear and often proscriptive countermeasures. The margin-
alization and even harassment of religious minorities is the other natural outcome of identity-based jingoism. Lip service to shariah in speeches, manifestos and even constitutions is advanced as proof of good governance and success. Failure to rectify the economy or generate jobs is often blamed on a “foreign hand.” Islamist parties must realize that governance is about such mundane issues as jobs, the economy, traffic and the smooth running of educational institutions, not grandiose battles between good and evil. When Islamists start to garner support for providing good governance and not grand slogans, the chasm between the Islamist supporters and the rest will diminish, as it has in Turkey. Everyone acknowledges that the AK Party has done much to make Turkey both prosperous and better governed.

Finally, the Islamists need to work on their credibility. The Muslim Brothers did much in a very short time to squander their credibility in Egypt. Their support remains robust in some quarters, but they are unable to convince many that they are good for the people. Acting as an obstructionist force may only give the military justification to prolong authoritarian rule. From 2011 to 2013, the Brotherhood broke many of its political promises. They said they would not run for the post of president, but then reneged on it. They promised to build an inclusive government, but then proceeded to consolidate power in various public institutions. They promised to respect democratic norms, but Morsi tried to place himself above any checks and balances. This matter was redressed only after mass protests, creating the fear that waiting for the next election to oust him would be dangerous, as he could cancel elections once he had consolidated power. This fear among many Egyptians that democracy was already lost was exploited by the army in early July 2013 to dismantle democracy.

**CONCLUSION**

Military rule in Egypt with its specious efforts at pseudo-democratic contraptions will gain neither international nor domestic legitimacy without the enthusiastic participation of Egyptians from all segments of society. Just as Islamists could not establish a democracy by excluding others, the others cannot do so by excluding Islamists. But as long as the army can provide some stability and protection from Islamists to those who fear that their lifestyles would be threatened by Islamist governance, they will continue to hold power. Of course, all Egyptians will have to pay the price in the form of a worsening economy and quality of life. However, if Islamists were to reform and assure the critics that Islam and democracy are not incompatible and that an Islamic democracy would not become a theocratic tyranny of the majority, perhaps Egypt will be able to move towards a democratic future. Until then, it may remain at best a hybrid: a liberal autocracy, the antithesis of Fareed Zakaria’s *Illiberal Democracy.*

At the time this article went to press, unofficial results of the constitutional referendum in Egypt on January 14, 2013, were being reported in the media. The referendum passed with a very high degree of approval (98 percent to 66 percent) and higher degree of participation (39 percent to 33 percent) than the Islamists constitution of 2013. While the results suggest a victory for the military-backed regime, the low participation suggests that the call for a boycott by the Muslim Brotherhood did have an impact. Perhaps the support of the liberals and ultra-conservatives (Al-Nour party) did not generate as much support as
the sponsors had anticipated. It is clear that Egyptians now desire stability more than democracy and economic progress more than Islamic symbolism. The military-backed regime may keep the Islamists at bay, but it will not be possible to provide a quick turnaround on the economic situation. Stability without economic progress and political freedoms in a highly divided Egypt suggests that Egyptians are in for a long period of political uncertainty. Perhaps if liberals can use the current opportunity to build a political movement that can provide an electoral balance to the Islamists, and Islamists can reform sufficiently to regain credibility and assuage fears about their intentions, there could be hope that a successful transition to an Islamic democracy may yet happen in Egypt.

9 I was present at the protests in and around Tahrir Square on June 30, 2013, and spoke with countless protesters about their fears and hopes for Egypt and their opposition to the Muslim brotherhood government. Some of the observations here are based on these conversations.


I do not have any surveys to back this claim but it is based on conversations with academics, intellectuals and ordinary people in Turkey and Morocco, and engagements with Islamists in the United States, Pakistan, Egypt and India via social media, since the fall of the Morsi regime.