Why were They Not Radicalised? Forces of Radicalisation Amongst the Young Egyptian Brothers in the Aftermath of 2013 Coup.

Abstract:

While many young members of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood movement chose political disengagement, others resorted to violence. Drawing upon field work materials in the form of in-depth life story interviews with 48 members in 2016-2017, this paper investigates the forces of radicalization amongst the young members of the movement in post 2013 military coup. In contrast with the positive correlation between repression and radicalization, the paper argues that the pathway of radicalism remained unfavourable for the majority of file and rank members. In turn, it provides a complex relational framework that combines the effect of state's repression, organisational schism and transformative personal experiences in shaping the positionalities of participants.

Introduction

Why some members of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement (MB) chose violence whilst others not? The dramatic ouster of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (MB) movement and the unprecedented security crackdown following the 2013 military coup posed an identity crisis with regard to the movement's long history of nonviolent activism. Failing in being revolutionary enough to protect the newly born democratic experience in 2012, the movement spared between preserving its organizational coherence and nonviolent nature, whilst meeting the demands of some members calling for more assertive and violent actions against the state. This internal division signalled the incipit of the movement's fourth ordeal and second organization schisms over the plausibility of the violent pathway of activism[1].

Whilst many young members of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood movement chose political disengagement due to state's political repression in post 2013 military coup[2], others resorted to violence as a pathway of activism. Drawing upon field work materials in the form of in-depth life story interviews with 48 former and affiliated members conducted between 2016-2017, this paper investigates the forces of radicalization amongst the young Muslim Brotherhood members and argues that despite of the state's severe repression in the aftermath of 2013 military coup, the pathway of radicalism remained a marginalised and unfavourable one for the majority of file and rank members.

The paper adopts Della Porta's a broad definition of radicalisation as a "movement from non-violent to increasingly violent repertories of action that develop through a complex set of interactions unfolding over time"[3]. The definition presents radicalisation as unfolding dynamic phenomenon that is shaped over time due to complex factors. Accordingly, the paper provides a complex relational framework that combines the effect of state's repression, organisational schism over the violent strategy and transformative personal experiences in shaping the positionalities of the youth towards the strategy of violence. It aims to generate original empirical research on the MB at an exceptional moment of state repression, bringing new insights to the movement's internal dynamics and the lived experiences of its members in a context where published documentation on the radicalization of the movement including primary and secondary resources is scarce.

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1 Zollner, Barbra. The Muslim Brotherhood: Hasan al-Hudaybi and ideology, (Routledge Studies in Political Islam, 2009).

2 Al-Anani, Khalil. Rethinking the Repression-Dissent Nexus: Assessing Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood's Response to Repression Since the Coup of 2013, *Democratization*, 26, no.8, (2019): 1329-1341. Ardovini, Lucia. Stagnation Vs Adaptation: Tracking the Muslim Brotherhood's Trajectories after the 2013 *coup*, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, (2020). doi: 10.1080/13530194.2020.1778443. Menshawy, Mustafa. The Ideology Factor and Individual Disengagements from the Muslim Brotherhood.Religions12, no (198), (2021): https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12030198.

3 Porta. D. Donatella. Radicalization: A Relational Perspective. Annual Review of Political Science. 21 (1), 2018: 462.

Despite continuous scholarly efforts to address the role of emotions, ideology and personal experiences in the study of social movements since 1990s, the main body of literature remained biased towards structured grievances as motivations for actions[4]. Addressing this gap, the paper draws upon a multilevel approach, combining participants' experiences, emotions and interpretations for political structures of mobilisation and protest strategies, to analyse young Brothers' positionalities towards political violence. In addition to this gap, most recent detailed attempts addressing the radicalisation of the MB remained either descriptive or limited in scope and analysis. For instance, Al Anani's discussion for the nexus between violence and radicalization attributed violence to emotional changes in the aftermath of the Rab'aa massacre overlooking the role of other factors including the nature of the repressive agent and MB impaired post-Coup strategies[5]. Dismissing theoretical discussions on the radicalization of social movement, Biagini and Adrovini's (2022) analysis for the role that violence plays for the movement's future associate violence to primarily police sexual assault against the movement's female members[6]. Despite the fact that, both scholars aim to address circumstances that contributed to violence, their analysis is similarly limited in addressing forces of radicalisation and demobilization alike. Therefore, without prioritising either emotional/ideological factors or exogenous contingencies created by state's repression; the paper portrays the complexity of factors shaping the radical pathway of activism. By narrating participants' experiences, the paper navigates both the process of emotional appraisal and rational calculations that shape the radical pathway of activism.

The following sections shall delineate the paper's multilevel developed theoretical framework in relation to the literature of Social Movement Theory (SMT), and method of data collection. Then, the paper will frame forces that shaped youth positions at three levels of analysis drawing upon participants' narratives.

Theoretical Framework
The radicalization of social groups has been addressed separately by studies of Terrorism, and SMT, however, the latter remained strikingly biased towards moderate groups. Stephen Beach's work (1977) on the Irish People's Democracy[7] is one of the earliest attempts made to explore processes of radicalization. While other studies on violent groups have exclusively focused on the meso level, addressing the role of recruitment and socialisation processes via

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[4] Jasper, James. and Volpi, Frederic. Introduction Rethinking Mobilization After the Arab Spring. In: Jasper, James. and Volpi, Frederic. (eds.). in *Microfoundations of the Arab Uprisings.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018),12–40. Pearlman, Wendy. Contingency and Agency in a Turning Point Event March 18, in Daraa Syria (2018). in Jasper, J. and Volpi, F. (eds.). *Microfoundations of the Arab Uprisings*. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018),111–133. Gunning, Jeroen and Baron, Ilan. *Why Occupy a Square? People, Protests and Movements in the Egyptian Revolution*. (New York NY: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[5] Al Anani, Khalil, Rethinking the Repression-Dissent Nexus: Assessing Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood's Response to Repression Since the Coup of 2013, *Democratisation* 29 (8), 2019: 1329-41.

[6] Biagini, Erika and Adrovini, Lucia. "Struggle Is Our Way: Assessing the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's Relationship with Violence Post 2013. *Religion* 13 (174), 2022, 22-22.

[7] Beach, Stephen. Social Movement Radicalization: The Case of the People's Democracy in Northern Ireland. *The Sociological Quarterly*. 18, no. 3, (1977): 305–318.

family ties and peer-group connections[8], Beach studied the interactions between the meso and macro levels. Beach's work thus made way for other recent studies such as the work of Horgan (2008)[9] and Bjorgo's (2005)[10] on the personal motivation of members in violent groups.

Notably, as far as the interactions between the meso, macro, and micro levels is considered, Della Porta's work (2012) is the most comprehensive study. In her work, Porta delineated three distinct yet connected pathways of radicalization. The first path studies the ideological, and the cognitive dimensions of extremism. The instrumental path introduces itself as the second path is based on tactical calculations for the effectiveness of the violent strategy. The solidarity path which is third focusses on the emergence of a politicised identity with the goals of armed groups. Together, all three pathways present themselves as a product of the intertwined relationship between forces at a micro (personal motivations), meso (recruitment, groups-intra dynamics and competition), and macro level (repression)[11].

McCauley and Moskalenko (2009) further aligns with Porta's comprehensive analysis. They were able to delineate different variables to understand personal and group motivations behind violence by drawing on the sociopsychological approach. It was found that personal motivations can be understood through the emergence of a group identification with the sufferings of the victims. In Porta's terminology, this reflected the solidarity path, which is in line with the need for revenge, or personal connections with armed groups (recruitment ties). Group feelings of isolation and external threat, competition with other groups, competition with the state; and competition between branches of the group is associated with the Political Opportunity Structure and group dynamics[12].

I developed a map of the major factors that shaped radical trends among MB youth. My work drew heavily from the comprehensive analysis of Porta, McCauley and Moskalenko, alongside fieldwork-generated data. The extensive map I created includes instrumental motivations to counter state repression, personal motivations that emerged in transformative settings – mainly exile or prison – and the 'moral shock' created as an effect of the Raba`a massacre as a transformative event and an indication of the Political Opportunity Structures induced by state's brutality. Though, it must be highlighted that the field work notes reflect the fact that there have been various crucial factors that influenced the participants' stance towards the violent pathway of activism. These factors resonate with contradicting scholarly evidences

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[8]Wiktorowicz, Quintan. A Genealogy of Radical Islam, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 28. no (2): (2004), 75-97, doi: 10.1080/10576100590905057.

[9] Horgan, John. From Profiles to Pathways and Roots to Routes: Perspectives from Psychology on Radicalization into Terrorism. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 618 (2008): 80-94.

[10] Bjorgo, Tore. *Root Causes of Terrorism: Myths, Reality and Ways Forward*. (New York: Routledge, 2005).

[11]Bosi Lorenzo, Dontella della, Porta D., *Journal*, 362.

[12]Clark McCauley & Sophia Moskalenko (2008) Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Toward Terrorism, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 20:3, 415-433.

on the nexus between repression, protest, and violence[13]. In light of the vastness of the topic, I shall focus solely on the scholarly contributions vis-a-vis the role of the timing and nature of repression, cover-up tactics used by the state in post-massacres era, and the identity of the repressive agents.

Hafez's (2003) comprehensive study, dealing with the radicalization of Islamic groups, concludes that a groups' ability to mobilise for support and resources is affected by the timing and target of repression. Hafez also argued that the capacity of mobilization is likely to be increased under reactive repression as opposed to under the use of pre-emptive measures[14]. Compared to discriminate and selective repression, it was found that diffusive and indiscriminate repression better facilitates the recruitment and the mobilization of supporters who would tolerate violence against the state.

Several recent studies, apart from the ones mentioned thus far, on repression and mobilisation have found that repression represents a transformative event, which is necessary to create a backlash protest cycle. In essence, the argument follows the thought that transformative repressive events, such as massacres or unprecedented levels of repression, generate emotional and moral shocks, which produce political solidarity, wherein a certain group identifies with the victims of violence[15]. Nevertheless, new cycles of protest or radicalization of action are not necessarily produced as a cause of intense repressive events. The empirical work of Ronald Francisco on 31 massacres (2004)[16], as well as Martin Brian's study (2009) on the genocide in Rwanda[17], reflects that due to the state legal and media coverage as well as the devaluing of the target of repression, massacres and severe repression may instead act as a deterrent for protest. In the event of planned massacres, the leaders are usually arrested or killed, which ultimately affects their ability to arrange and hold protests. In cases where the leaders of massacres survive, in order to lower the risk of actions, such as strikes or demonstrations during funerals, they may resort to adaptive protest tactics. Though much ink has been spilled on the topic of the effect of repression on radicalization, the identity of the repressive agent yet remains to be discovered fully.

Jennifer Earl, in her work, analysed the state repressions from a POS perspective. She considered the role of the identity of the repressive agents, may it be the police, military units, or private groups, in the way that they facilitate or restrict a protest without drawing a

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[13]Osa, Maryjane. and Corduneanu-Huci, Crsitina. Running uphill: Political Opportunity in Non-democracies. *New Frontiers in Comparative Sociology*. 2 (4), (2003): 275–312.

[14] Hafez, M. *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World*. (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), 70-73.

[15] Van Stekelenburg, J. & Klandermans, B. The social psychology of protest. *Current Sociology*. 61 (5–6), (2013):891.

[16] Francisco, Ronald. After the Massacre: Mobilization in the Wake of Harsh Repression. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*. 9 (2), (2004): 107–126.

[17] Martin, Biggs. Managing Outrage Over Genocide: Case Study Rwanda. *Global Change, Peace & Security*. 21 (3), 2009. pp. 275–29

connection of the same to the process of radicalization[18]. The participants' appraisal for the effectiveness of the pathway of radicalization has been heavily influenced by the military backup for the massacre of Rab'aa in the Egyptian context, which has been used as a present factor.

Drawing upon these dense theoretical debates, which focus on the paradoxical relationship between radicalization and repression, this study adds a layer to this discussion by challenging the positive correlation between repression and violence, which points to a more complex and relational approach rooted in individuals' experiences and organizational dynamics. This study goes a step beyond by highlighting that, against popular thought, the severity of repression is not the determinate, it is; however, the target, and the identity of the repressive agent, which play a rather pivotal role in the individual cognitive and emotional appraisal processes of radicalization.

Method of Data Collection

This study is established on thick field work materials in the form of 48 in-depth life story interviews with 48 research participants between the age of 19-40 in Istanbul and Egypt in the period between October 2016- April 2017. Selection for participants considered the witness of specific transformative experiences including exile in Sudan and Turkey, in addition to torture and prison experience. Drawing upon the constructionist approach[19], the analysis of generated data considered three crucial issues: 1) temporality in a reference to the role that time plays in the process of emotional appraisal towards the strategy of violence, 2) Sociality addressing social conditions of participants and how would that shape their stance towards participation in violet groups or supporting them, and 3) Setting which refers to the different exile experiences between Istanbul and Khartoum.[20]

Rather than resorting to the term 'Jihad' as an Islamic metaphor during interviews, the study addressed practical cases and narrowed its focus to violence activities targeting the Egyptian state between 2014-2016. The study also differentiates between spontaneous and sporadic violent reactions that take place during protest activities and sophisticated organised violent activities. The former is treated as self-defence mechanisms, which would naturally occur during any direct confrontation with the police, regardless of the ideological or political affiliations of the protesters.

The process of scrutinising the sampling criteria was followed by semi structured interviews categorised under specific themes including informants' background, level of

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[18]Earl, Jennifer. Political Repression: Iron Fists, Velvet Gloves and Diffuse Control. Annual Review of Sociology. 37 (1), 2011: 261–284. Earl, Jennifer. Tanks, Tear Gas and Taxes: Toward a Theory of Movement Repression. Sociological Theory. 21 (1), 2011:44–68.

[19] Holestin. J. & Miller. G. (eds.) *Reconsidering Social Constructionism: Debates in Social Problems Theory*. (New York NY: Routledge, 2017). Lock. Andy and Strong. Tom. *Social Constructionism: Sources and Stirrings in Theory and Practice*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Charmaz, Kathy. Constructionism and the Grounded Theory. In J. A. Holstein & J. F. Gubrium (eds*.) Handbook of Constructionist Research*. (New York NY: The Guilford Press, 2008).

[20] Clandinin, D. Jean and Huber, J. Narrative Inquiry. In B. McGaw, E. Baker & P. P. Peterson (eds.) *International Encyclopaedia of Education*. 3rd ed. (New York NY: Elsevier, 2010), 2-8.

current and previous affiliation to the movement, transformative life experiences and events with priority given to the experience of exile, prison, and specific political roles played within the organization whether in Egypt or in exile.

For previous political experiences/ roles within the movement, three participants were active members of two leftist groups and parties. Seven participants were key active figures in the MB youth section between the late 1990s and 2011. Four were founders of the 'Egyptian Main Trend Party' and active members of Abou El Fotouh's presidential campaign; two are currently running the 'Strong Egypt Party'. Two participants ran the presidential campaign of Muhammed Morsi and had close ties with high-ranking members. Three informants represented the MB in two different syndicates. Two interviews were conducted with bloggers who had been influential since 2005. A meeting was held with one of the co-founders of the 'Rassd' network, a major media forum used by the MB. Another interview was conducted with a female member who was promoted to a high level within the FJP party and three interviews were conducted with young members under the age of 25, who ran MB student anti-coup activities in Cairo, El Mansoura, and El Monfia governorate.

For age diversification, 32 participants were 20–29 years old and 15 were 30–40 years old. Also, to investigate prison experience two interviews were conducted with former affiliated members who spent more than six months in jail. In addition, to two interviews with former affiliated members who spent over than a year living in Sudan. Given the sensitively of the topic, the presentation of the data assured ethical considerations associated with the anonymity of research participants' identities through the use of pseudonym.

Forces of Change

Severity of State's Repression

The brutal crackdown of Raba'a, and El Nahda Square resulted in the killings and the arrest of an expansive number of the movement's sympathisers and file and rank members. In less than six hours over than 1000 people have been killed while dozens got arrested.[21] The severity of state's repression had turned the massacre into a symbol as the 'Karbala' moment in the Islamic history. The killings, arrest and torture of protesters continued, with a second major crackdown at the 'El Fath' protest in Ramsis Square, one week after the Raba'a massacre. The combination of physical and anti MB media campaigns dehumanising and denying their suffering created a setting where soaring feelings of outrage were directed not only against the state but also towards lay Egyptian masses who tolerated the massacre. 'O People, who cheered for the massacre, you shall never escape the tribulation' a say for the Saudi Sheikh Slaman El Auda was virally shared on Facebook by the group's members.

State's contentious repression for all protest activities since the massacre resulted in what is called 'deterrence' committees. Basically, they were small groups of physically fit young male members delegated to physical scuffles on the frontlines during protests[22].

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[21] Human Rights Watch. All According to Plan; The Rab'a Massacre and Mass Killings of Protesters in Egypt. 2014. Retrieved from: https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/08/12/all-according-plan/raba-massacre- and -mass-killings-protesters-egypt [Accessed 5 March 2018].

[22] Awad, Mokhtar. *A Challenging State Emerging Armed Groups in Egypt. Security Assessment in North Africa*. New York NY: SANA Project Briefing Papers. 2017. Retrieved from: http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/T-Briefing-Papers/SAS-SANA-BP-Egypt-armed-groups.pdf [Accessed 1 November 2019].

Threatening messages, attacking police vehicles, using Molotov cocktails during protests and surrounding police stations were all perceived as self-defence mechanisms and examples of the creative non-violence tactic "Elsalmiya el Mobd'aa".

The Egyptian *El Sherouk newspaper* (2014) published a report tracing the shift in MB discourse from the Supreme Guide Muhammed Bad'iea's statement 'Our pacifism is stronger than bullets' to a celebration burning police vehicles on MB online outlets and Facebook pages. According to the report, Facebook page of the FJP party published the numbers of police boxes, prisoner-transport vehicles and armoured vehicles burned in order to praise protestors' struggle against security forces in January 2014[23]. For example, the student anti-coup group[24] at El Azhar University sent a published threats against daughters of the university deputy to stop police attacks on female university protesters. These actions were transformative, in contrast to the movement's traditional passive discourse against state violence. Together, they marked the first phase of emerging radicalization trends within the movement, which were characteristically spontaneous, sporadic, and decentralised.

The first movements that put the notion of creative violence into action were 'Set Fire' (Wal'aa) and the Moltovo Movement. They appeared in tandem with a rise in the amount of online content on how to use and build Molotov cocktails[25]. One female research participant stated that her brother and cousin manufactured Molotov utilising some Internet websites.[26]Other violent groups such as the 'Martyr Brigades', the 'Execution' and the 'Unknown' (Maghoolon) group emerged in 2014 primarily with the target of attacking police officers and thugs involved in torture and sexual-assault crimes against Islamists. They carried out attacks against the state infrastructure, including attacking electricity and petrol stations and cutting off roads.

With the formation of two more organised groups the second phase began. The Popular Resistance Movement (PRM), also known as the Allied Popular Resistance Movement (APRM) was founded on the anniversary of the Raba'a massacre in August 2014. The group claimed no ties with the Jihadist groups – Wilayet Sinai and Al Qaeda – operating in Sinai and the Jihadist group in Cairo, Ajnad Misr. On a group Facebook page, the group announced its plan of targeting security forces. It also published details about a number of operations as setting fire to police cars and planting bombs near police stations. In addition, on 21 April 2015, the group planed the assassination of a police Colonel in collaboration with the Execution

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[23] El Hadry, Hadeer. [Natural Evolution of the MB Slogan "What is less than the Bullets is Peaceful"] التطور الطبيعي لشعار الإخوان "ما دون الرصاص سلمية". [*ElSherouk Newspaper*] جريدة الشروق. January 6. (2014), Retrieved from: https://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=06012014&id=b11cef51-5ae5-44ed-b973-53b519dcb199 [Accessed 19 February 2019].

[24] The post 2013 era witnessed the establishment of small, de centralized anti coup groups including Women, Students and Youth Against the Coup, which became by time semi-independent, working without MB guidance. Ketchely, Neil. *Egypt in a Time of Revolution Contentious Politics and the Arab Spring*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017),137,142.

[25] Awad and Hashem, *Report*, 2017.

[26] Interview with Fatima an affiliated female member who split the movement in 2011 and joined back after the Coup, 24 December 2016, Cairo.

Movement. It also planted an explosive bomb at a police checkpoint in El Qalubiya resulting in the injury of seven security personnel on 28 January 2015[27]. In early 2015, this group changed its focus towards international economic targets, such as telecommunication companies and fast-food restaurants, including KFC[28]. The group also carried out a number of explosions in Giza, with the aim of sabotaging the state's preparations for an international economic conference in March 2015.

Formed in January 2015, the Revolutionary Punishment (RP) was the second group to join the club. The group has been part of the broader network of the Allied Popular Resistance Movement that included The Popular Resistance Movement, the Determination Movement, the Revolutionary Punishment Movement, the Movement for Revolution in Beni Soueif and the Execution Movement. The RP claimed credit for at least 157 attacks in 18 governorates, of 50% of the incidents were bombs and 45% armed attacks on police officers in remote areas[29].

The establishment of Hassm (decisiveness) and Liwaa El-Thawra (The Revolution's Brigade) marked the beginning of the third phase. On 16 July 2016, Hassm executed its first operation by assassinating the local chief of investigations in Fayyoum. It was claimed by some experts that Hassm was a spinoff from RP, because of shared tactics and techniques and their failed attempt to attack Ali Gom'aa[30], who was previously targeted by RP in 2015. Two low-ranking police officers were assinated by the group in the Giza and Behira governorates between September and October 2016. The group also carried out operations against police checkpoints that ended by the killing of four policemen and was in charge of the assassination of the Senior State Security Officer of El Qalyubiyya governorate in 2017.

With the publicity of a number of videos filming attacks on police checkpoints in El Monfia governorate Liwa El Thawra announced its formation on 21 August 2016. Several footages depicting police officers clearance of Raba'a Square were filmed by the group under the title of 'The Revenge of the Freemen'. The group's logo showed a fighter holding a green flag, with the words 'Allahu Akbar' (God is the Greatest). Its videos also begain with the Quranic recitation: 'Permission has been given to those who are being fought, because they were wronged. and indeed, Allah is competent to give them victory' (Quran 22:39) which underscored group's Islamic orientations. In October 2016, the group carried out its main operation against the Brigadier General Adel Raga'i in front of his home[31].

Despite of their Islamic orientation, the statements and videos produced by all of these

[27] Emerging groups threaten Egypt's security, Security Risk Management. February 27, 2015. Retrieved From: http://msrisk.com/tag/revolutionary-punishment/ [Accessed 19 February 2019].

[28] (Allied) Popular Resistance Movement. The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy. 4 September. Retrieved from: https://timep.org/esw/non-state-actors/aprm/ [Accessed 19 February 2019].

[29] Revolutionary Punishment. The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy'. (2017). 29 March. Available from: https://timep.org/esw/non-state-actors/revolutionary-punishment/ [Accessed February 19 2019]

[30] Ali Gom'aa was the Egyptian Mufti from 2003–2013, and he legitimised the killing of Brethren, describing them as Khawarij who are destabilising the state security.
[31] Awad, Report, 5–10.

groups since 2015 indicated a nationalist secular rhetoric rather than the Salafist Jihadist metaphors of fighting infidels and restoring God's sovereignty [32].

Organizational Disputes over Violence

The state controlled media continued to emphasise the link between the MB and violent operations; they published confessions of jailed members, albeit the reliability of these confessions is questioned considering they were mostly obtained through torture. However, other evidences on the other hand verified ties between the movement and these groups. After the arrest of some of Hassm members, the MB's leadership declared that some of the arrested members were from its ranks[33]. In addition, PRM initial statement was published on MB media's outlets [34]. In May 2015, Muhammed Ghozlan – a Senior member of the Guidance Bureau –stated on the Egypt's Window (Nafezat Misr) website that some MB members strayed from path of nonviolence and were involved in unlawful armed operations. In a quick response to Ghozlan's article, other rank and file members published critiques for the leadership's post coup strategies on the same website focusing on the inability of the nonviolent strategy to put pressures on El-Sisi regime. They wondered if the current Guidance Bureau had any alternatives to offer[35].

Responses to Ghozlan's defence of nonviolence pointed out the MB's drift over violence. By early 2015, the MB had divided into two main wings: 1) Muhammed Kamal, a less publicly known senior Guidance Bureau member who had been selected to run the MB's temporary executive committee, known as the High Administrative Committee (HAC); and 2) Muhammed Ezzat, the first Deputy of the Supreme Guide, London-based Deputy Supreme Guide Ibrahim Munir and the Secretary General Mahmoud Hussein in Turkey.

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[32] Salman. Lotfi. [MB Youth Organize Popular Resistance Against the Police and the Military شباب الإخوان يأسسون المقاومة الشعبية ضد الجيش والشرطة. [El Watannews]. جريدة الوطن. August 14, 2014. Retrieved from: https://www.elwatannews.com/news/details/538918 [Accessed 19 February 2019].

[33] Awad, *Report*, 10–11.

[34] مقال غزلان يثير جدال بين شباب [Ghozlan's Article invoked Controversy Among the Youth الجزيرة مباشر [Al Jazeera Mubasher]. الإخوان. May 25, 2015. Retrieved from: https://mubasher.aljazeera.net/news/miscellaneous/2015/5/25/-مقال-غزلان-يفجر-الجدل-بين-شباب-الإخوان [Accessed 5 July 2021].

35 El Sharkawy, Ahmed, Magdy.Muhammed, and El Shoura, Hossam. [Investigations for MB killing of the officer Weal Tahoun Refer to contradicting Confessions within the Guidance Bureau Office]/ الارشاد مكتب قلب من متضاربة أقوال .. طاحون وائل العقيد باغتيال الإخوان اتهام تحقيقات . [El Sherouknews] جريدة الشروق. June 8, 2016 Reterived from: http://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=08062016&id=7e8e6035-0d20-497a-b70d-a42bd535ab07 [Accessed 19 February 2019].

In September 2015, Ghozlan along with three other senior three Guidance Bureau members were arrested by the police; Ghozlan confessed that Muhammed Kamal was in charge of establishing a militia, without the permission of the Guidance Bureau[36]. Ghozlan's confessions revealed how deep is this organisational drift and verified the existence of a tendency towards violence within the movement[37]. In fact, this organisational rift disrupted a preceding organizational agreement over funding a low level of violent operations against the state in early 2014. Two research participants narrated that their names were accidently added to an email thread among members of the Shura Council that endorsed the strategy of violence against the state and religiously justified it. They felt it was likely that the RP group and its allied network had been formed later with conditional support from the MB leadership at that early stage.[38]

Another formerly affiliated member stated that armed special committees were formed under the supervision of Kamal, who had a reformative plan, pointed out to realised three objectives: 1) Reviewing the MB vision and philosophy; 2) Setting new regulations (Layha); and 3) Calling for new elections. Kamal's comprehensive plan was perceived as a revolutionary action that ostensibly challenged the authority of the old guard.[39]

Based on an in-depth interviews, with two key young cadres in Istanbul[40], and two other media sources[41], Muhammed Kamal was assigned after the Raba'a massacre to administer the movement's activities in Egypt through the High Administrative Committee (HAC) due to his seniority and low profile. Kamal started implementing his reformative plan by endorsing revolutionary tactics. The Shura Council accepted Kamal's strategy but its acceptance was conditional on the avoidance of killing – instead attacking buildings, infrastructure and police vehicles. Kamal was in charge of establishing what has been known as the Qualitative Action Committee (QAC) (lajnat al-'aamal al-naw'aiya) dedicated for forming a military wing for the movement (Willi, 2022, 327-329).

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36 Saber, M. [Ghozlan Confesses in Wael Tahoun Case that Muhammed Kamal was the one who Suggested the Idea of Special Committees] محمود غزلان يعترف في تحقيقات قضية مقتل العقيد وائل طاحون: محمد كمال صاحب فكرة تأسيس اللجان النوعية. بوابة فيتو [Vetogate]. September 12, 2015. Retrieved from: https://www.vetogate.com/1808659 [Accessed 19 February 2019].

37 Willi, Victor J. The Fourth Ordal: A History of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, 1968-2018.Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021.

38 Interview with two formerly affiliated working male members who were key cadres in the student section in Cairo and founders of Strong Egypt Party, 8-10 November 2016, Cairo.

39 Interview with Khalid formerly affiliated male member from El Monfia Governorate who was active student cadre till 2012, 9 January 2017, Cairo.

40 Hossam is one of the participants was a working member in Nasr City Cairo, and his affiliation to the MB continued till 2016 when the reform call of Kamal was dismissed by Hussain wing. Abdullah, the second participant is close to Hussain's circle and still a middle rank member in Istanbul branch.

41 [MB Crisis: Muhammed Kamal Publishes Documents that Accuse Mahmoud Hussain of Fraud] أزمة الإخوان محمد كمال يرد على محمود حسين بوثائق نتهمه. نون بوست [Noonpos]. February 24, 2017. Available from: https://www.noonpost.com/-أزمة-الإخوان/أزمة-الإخوان-محمد-كمال-يرد-على محمود-حسين-بوثائق-نتهمه-بالتزوير [Accessed 20 February 2019].

To ease old guard's control over the movement and pursue a revolutionary path, in May 2015 Kamal decided to dismiss Mahmoud Hussain over a conflict regarding conducting geographical sectors and Shura Council elections . To proof good intensions, Muhammed Kamal resigned from all of his positions and called for new elections for the Guidance Bureau and Shura Council in a voice message published in the soundcloud appp., sparking a legitimacy crisis and threating old/conservative guard's control. In coordination with Hussain, Mahmoud Ezzat called for a Shura Council session that dismissed Kamal from his positions. The Council demanded the establishment of an investigation committee to check whether Kamal was in a violation for the MB regulations. After four months of investigation, the Committee condemned Kamal for working at the back of the Guidance Bureau and adopting a damageable strategy. The committee also dismissed Muhammed Montaser, the spokesman for Kamal's wing and instead appointed Tal'aat Fahmy[42]. As a result, tensions between both wings trickled down to all membership levels and divided the movement geographically (Willi, 330-335).

Tracing the origins of the schism , the pivotal moment emerged when the QAC lost control over young affiliated members who joined other armed groups. Apparently, the old guard felt its inability to control the consequences of this strategy that would result in internationally isolating the movement. [43]By the time, the Ezzat wing reclaimed organisational power by controlling the movement's international financing which had a significant impact on the sustainability and finance of most violent activities. The Ezzat wing also launched a defamation campaign against Kamal portraying him as power seeker. By Kamal's assassination in October 2016 by the police, the old guard was in a full control and most violent activities were fading by 2017, not only due to the lack of financial resources but the state's pre-emptive measures against key cadres involved.

Transformative Personal Experiences

Despite of these challenges, some young Islamists saw violence as a mode of resistance. The following section addresses three personal transformative experiences, introduced by research participants, as drivers of/forces for radicalization. The impact of these experiences differed among participants delivering distinctive outcomes depending on the person's personal motivations, age and ideological background. Fieldwork materials have uncovered that age cohort is critical in examining processes of radicalization among MB youth. Members aged 15–20 are prone to radicalism, compared with those who are 20–30 or older. The disparity reflects the ways in which their political consciousness has been shaped. Young members were intensely active in protest activities, street activism; they used fireworks and Molotov cocktails against the police rather being politically cultivated in the MB family meetings and nonviolent activities. Members between 20–30, by contrast, are less supportive of radical strategies; their support is conditional and tactical, as their positions reflected long-term political learning processes and intellectual exposure.

Prison and Torture

According to human rights reports and published confessions, prisoners were kept without legal oversight for months and were routinely shocked, beaten and hanged bare by

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[42] Interview with Hossam a formerly affiliated working male member who continued to be active in Istanbul branch till 2016, 3 February 2017, Istanbul.
[43] Interview, Ibid, 3 February, 2017.

their tied wrists for hours to force fake confessions[44] The torment moreover included assembly-line beatings, electric stuns, stretch positions and assault[45] Sentiments of vindicate, shock, and disgrace caused by torment and particularly by sexual attack, conditioned the discernments of young members against security bodies. As those feelings sored, young members went through a new experience of political learning through their daily interactions with ISIS members in prison rooms.

Ga'afar El Za'afrany, the son of the senior cadre and a political activist who is still in jail, published an article entitled, 'In Our Prison…There are ISIS Members' (Fe Sagnana…Da'esh) on Al Jazeera blogs in September 2016 to raise awareness of MB-ISIS prison interactions. El Za'afrany described that ISIS members targeted and recruit young Islamic prisoners, who have been physically tortured by the police. They deliberately addressed young members under the age of 25, who lacked ideological preparations for deconstructing the Jihadist discourse[46]. The same story was told amid interviews with three other participants, who experienced jail during distinctive periods of time between 2014 to 2016. The recruitment process was elaborated by another research interviewee, who got arrested between 20 September 2014 and 16 March 2015 and from 22 February to 12 October 2016. In his words:

> I recognised that the recruitment process for the MB members in ISIS was intensified during my second prison stay. Senior cadres were able to maintain control over young members until early 2015. There has been only a minority who joined radical groups, including El Nosra, Ahrar El Sham, the Free Army of Syria and other newly emerging violent groups in Egypt. During my second prison period, there was a high tendency towards violence among young Islamists in general. Some prisoners have already been involved in violent operations in Egypt… I witnessed the tensions between MB senior cadres and ISIS-affiliated members over the recruitment of MB youth. But I would say there has been a sort of an agreement between most prisoners on the right of self-defence to counter the state's oppression.[47]

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[44] Kingsley, Patrick. 'Egypt's Secret Prison: 'Disappeared' Face Torture in Azouli Military Jail'. *The Guardian*. 22 June, 2014. Retrieved from: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/22/disappeared-egyptians-torture-secret-military-prison [Accessed 20 February 2019].

[45] Human Rights Watch. Egypt: Torture Epidemic May Be Crime Against Humanity. 2017. Retrieved from: https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/09/06/egypt-torture-epidemic-may-be-crime-against-humanity [Accessed 7 March 2018]. McVeigh, Karen. Egypt's Security forces are Enforcing 'Torture Assembly Line'. *The Guardian*. 6 September, 2017. Retrieved from: https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/sep/06/egypt-security-forces-enforcing-torture-assembly-human-rights-watch-al-sisi [Accessed 7 March 2018].

[46] Al Zaafrany, Gaafar. [In our Prison…There are ISIS Members] في سجننا دواعش. [*Al Jazeera Blogs*] مدونات الجزيرة . September 4, 2017. Retrieved from: https://blogs.aljazeera.net/blogs/2016/9/4/%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B3%D8%AC%D9%86%D9%86%D8%A7-%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%B4 [Accessed 20 February 2019]. Note that the blog has been deleted from Al Jazeera website.

[47] Interview with a 40-year-old eyewitness who is a freelancer researcher in Islamic studies, 19 December 2016, Cairo.

According to this narrative, the decision to join ISIS was not the only choice for MB members who perceived violence as a prudent strategy, since ISIS ideology remained contested to some young members, other violent groups were a resort for either psychological or national causes.

Living in Exile

Dreading getting arrested and tortured, expansive number of young and senior members were forced to flee the country Most of deprived young members, or those who had problems in renewing or issuing their travelling documents, travelled to Sudan where they were exposed to ISIS ideology and got recruited in other violent groups in Syria, Iraq and Libya. To explore exile conditions particularly in Sudan, I relied on the narratives of three young formerly affiliated members, who spent a period of more than six months there.

Ziad who travelled to Sudan in fear of being arrested and subjected to a military trial, explained how dangerous were these road trips as they were a target for boarders police. Zaid's life story and experience of living in Sudan shows how harsh exile conditions and direct interactions between MB senior leaders and young members have shaped some young members' perception of violence. In his words:

I was arrested by the military after Raba'a, I was only 16-year-old, but this did not preclude them from torturing me. The officer beat me up in my back where I was injured. After my release, I had to flee the country under the fear of being arrested again with other MB members. I illegally travelled to Sudan where I settled in a place rented by the MB to shelter young members. Upon our arrival, the movement's mentor took our passports. The movement wanted us to be under its control and to restrict our freedom of movement. Our house mentor told us that you are here for shelter and food and do not ask for more… An MB senior mentor in Sudan walked away from defending some young members who were arrested by the Sudanese authorities, despite his long strong relation with Sudanese security bodies. Those members were in charge of sending money to some families in Egypt, whose members were supporting the Kamal wing in the movement. The movement gave its back to young members. We felt so humiliated; while they treated us like children, ISIS was recruiting many young Brethren. They were giving them the leadership and responsibility over certain operations. Young members felt empowered, compared with their status within MB and how they were treated in Sudan. Ten of my friends travelled to Syria with ISIS and others joined the El Nosra front lines. Six died there, however, I agree with what they did and I wish I had been with them.[48]

Zaid's story conveys how the patriarchal nature of the MB leadership broadened the gap between the motivations of the youth and the leadership's strategies leading to the radicalisation of some young members. During the interview, Zaid concluded that the slogan 'our peacefulness is stronger than bullets' was useless, therefore he supported violent operations against state security forces despite his resent to ISIS ideology. Zaid's perception of the use of violence conveyed a secular national agenda perceiving violence as a political tactic rather than a religious ideology.

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[48] Interview with Ziad a 19 years old formerly affiliated male member, 5 February 2017, Istanbul.

The patriarchal nature of the MB leadership and its mistreatment of young members forced to flee to Sudan was emphasised by another male member who lived there for six months before his move to Istanbul. He stated that:

> Some of the young members who were already involved in violent operations travelled to Sudan under the fear of arrest. They expected to be treated like heroes since they sacrificed their lives for the movement, but they were humiliated.[49] Those members who were already supporting the violent strategy, joined ISIS. As ISIS members were offering them houses, money and activities to be in charge of. The group also had a well-designed ideological indoctrination process for newcomers, whist the MB mentors lacked the required knowledge to answer young Brethren's questions about Jihad and violent resistance.[50]

Both participants asserted that living conditions in Sudan, in comparison to other places of exile, such as Istanbul emptied the lives of young members empty and MB mentors ignored their social and intellectual needs. The lack of entertainment and the sake for excitement made young Brethren an easy target for ISIS recruiters.

Drawing upon the foregoing narratives, the differences in adopted stances towards the violent strategy show how the same force – as in the case of exile –produce distinctive outcomes, depending on other intervening variables, such as the age cohort, living conditions in exile, personal motivations and the nature of ideological indoctrination.

Why Weren't They Radicalised?

Despite evidences that some young MB members opt for violence, the radical pathway of activism was not a well-trodden path for the majority of file and rank members. The fieldwork materials convey the insignificance relevance of the radical trend, compared with rising tendencies towards political disengagement and apathy. The support for violence has been conditional, temporal and instrumentally justified. This finding aligns with Hafez and Wicktorowic's study on Islamists' violence in Egypt. For them, violent contention, even for Jihadist groups in 1990s, was an outcome of tactical considerations informed by repressive context's dynamics rather than religious/ ideological imperatives[51]. Accordingly, the violent strategy emerges as one of the tactical choices for organizational survival and self protection.

In analysis for youth positionalities towards violence, field work shows three major groups: The first group includes those who totally support establishing violent groups or pockets related to the movement. The second group includes those who support violence based on certain conditions. The third group rejects the idea of violence, for both practical and moral reasons.

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[49] The marginalisation and mistreatment for the Young MB members especially those who have been active cadres in the student and youth anti-coup movement has been also mentioned by one of the participants in the report of from Rab'aa to Syria: Why MB youth go to Jihad (2016).

[50] Interview with a formerly affiliated male member from El Monfia Governorate, 28 January 2017, Istanbul.

[51] Hafez, M.M., and Wiktorowicz, Q. 2004. "Violence as Contention in the Egyptian Islamic Movement," in Wiktorowicz, Q., ed. Islamic Activism. A Social Movement Theory Approach. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 61-64

Supporting Violence

Thirteen research interviewees expressed their support for violent operations that emerged in Egypt since 2014, and Kamal's wing within the MB. They perceived such a strategy as a way of putting pressures on the regime and countering the Coup. The narratives of these participants can be grouped into two sub-segments:

The first segment feels 'content' as an emotional response to violent actions, but reluctant and unready to get personally involved in such operations. The second segment includes only three of the research participants who were willing to take part in these activities. The interviewees contributed their support to the failure of the non violent strategy in protecting the newly-born democratic experience; their support is based on tactical calculations to deter police officers.[52]

Other participants within the same segment associated the violent strategy to the creation of a new political order where citizens are able to resist state's repression. Hossam, a 38 year-old working affiliated member, added that different segments of society should have the right to protect themselves against state repression. For him, the utilisation of violence or any other sources of power ought to be not restricted to the current battel between the state and Islamists but rather perceived as societal autonomy. In his ideal model, there should be a decentralised model of governance, in which various communities have access to weapons and natural resources to oppose the dictatorship of the ruling elite. A similar narrative was conveyed by Amany; without addressing the issue of autonomy she believes that the change of power relations cannot take place without the use of violence. Amany who was an influential MB blogger said her belief in violent changes was a result of intellectual exposure, though she did not dare to share this belief or call others to join violent groups.[53]

In contrast to using violence to force a new political order, Hussain, explained that his support for violence is conditional, as violence does not constitute a basis for a legitimate governing regime; having a violent group in power means a new repressive system is in the making.[54]

The foregoing narratives depict Della Porat's three paths of radicalisation[55]. The first path is the instrumental one articulated in perceiving violence as a mechanism of deterrence and a negotiation card for political reforms. Here the support of violence is premised on the 'positive radical flank effect' according to which a violent group can enhance the bargaining power of another movement or open a political opportunity for other forces to seize[56]. The second is the solidarity path involving a group identification with the sufferings of Islamists and acknowledging their right to justice. The third path is broader than what has been conveyed

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[52] Interview with Somaia an affiliated female who is currently exiled in Istanbul after facing jail in 2013, 7 March 2017, Istanbul.

[53] Interview with Amany, previous MB female influential blogger, 7 March 2017, Istanbul.

[54] Interview with Hussain, a formerly affiliated male member who became an atheist after the Syrian revolution despite of his family religious conservative background, 22 November 2016, Cairo.

[55] Bosi Lorenzo and Dontella della, Porta D., *Journal*, 362

[56] Ketchely, *Book*, 22.

in Porta's analysis. Accordingly, violence is not related to ideological extremism as suggested by the cognitive path but to in-depth understanding for the mechanisms of power in the model of the nation state. In contrast with associating violence to ideational dimensions presented in sovereign Islamic texts and traditions, a secular critique for the nation state and its power dynamics is justifying this position.

Rejecting Violence

Despite the presence of group identification with the sufferings of the victims of the state's repression, the remaining of research participants justified their denouncement of the violent pathway on moral and practical grounds. Moral considerations were encapsulated in the possibility of killing civilians during violent operations and exposing young members to the risk of arrest and killing in imbalanced fights, while practical ones addressed the scope, agenda and execution of these operations.

Respondents who opposed violent activity cited the lack of balance of power between oppressive state institutions and the scale, resources, and available networks of public support for violent groups. since, those loose paramilitary groups do not represent a serious challenges to state's allies and elite solidarity. In addition, the existence of such groups, while they put little pressure on the state, greatly increased the international and domestic societal exclusion of Islamists. Accordingly, violence is perceived as a tactical choice that is not supported by current political dynamics at the organizational and macro level. Increasing organizational isolation, limited capacity of members recruitment and imbalance of power serve as restrictive factors for supporting the violent strategy. These factors contradict McCauley and Moskalenko's analysis of motivations for violence at the group level[57]. In this regard, the fear of isolation exits as a deterrence factor of extremism rather than a welcoming opportunity; however, the existence of ISIS and channels of recruitment and ideological indoctrination under prison and exile conditions facilitated a shift towards violence among only a small group of members who underwent transformative traumatic experiences.

The role of POS was present in the analysis of other members who rejected violence. This included the solidarity of the governing elite, availability of allies, and nature of repressive agent whether the police or the military. Lina, 28 year old, explained how power relations in Egypt would forestall the support for any radical actions against the state. In her words:

> In a country like Egypt, violence is not a reasonable strategy because there is no specific centre of power. Power is distributed among different elites whose interests are well connected and intertwined…Fighting the security apparatus of the state will not take those fighters anywhere and they would never enjoy the support of other segments who have interest with the governing regime; All what would happen is that the regime would increase its military expenditure at the expense of other deprived segments in the society.[58]

The nature of elite relations in Egypt as well as the rise of the military as a dominant economic and political agent[59] portrayed the fight not only as an imbalanced battle, but too as

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[57] Clark McCauley & Sophia Moskalenko, *Journal,* 418-29.

[58] Interview with Lina a 28-year-old female ex affiliated member who studied in Al Azhar University, 20 March 2017, Cairo.

[59] Joya, Angela. The Military and the State in Egypt: Class Formation in the Post-Arab Uprisings. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 47: 5. 2018. pp.1–21

futureless one unless the regime adopts certain actions that would jeopardise dependency relationships among its located different centres of power.

A 23-year-old member linked her rejection for this strategy to the absence of a vision for governance. She said,

> I cannot support something that has no future. Assuming they toppled the current regime, what will be next? How will they govern and based on what? What is their own perspective for the future of the state and how will they deal with the regime's networks of power and the perception of the public towards Islamists?[60]

The militarisation of the civil sphere and the instrumentalization of the military as a repressive agent in post 2013 were two main underpinning factors for continuously supporting the nonviolent pathway amongst young members. Abdelgawad, 40 year old, explained his rejection for violence as follows: 'What happened in Egypt was a military coup and you cannot fight the state by relying on weapons; it will defeat you. Therefore, there should be a long-term strategy for dismantling the military control over civil life rather than engaging in unorganised violent activities with short term agenda'.[61]

Some participants based their rejection for violence on the fear of the consequences of the violent approach. Abdullah asserted that: 'the violent strategy is a risky one, because it is uncontrolled. You would never know how far this radicalization process will go? A small cell may emerge for revenge and then end into a terrorist group'.[62]

Another participant concluded that opening the way for violent groups will adversely affect law enforcement in Egypt, as people will begin to develop tolerant attitudes towards extra-judicial executions and torture outside the oversight of the judiciary.[63]

In addition to these factors, two research participants explained that the middle-class, professional background of most rank- and -file members of the movement made violence an unappealing strategy for them. They concluded that this sort of background made Brethren more reluctant to support a radical strategy and incapable of being involved in such activities. The MB is not a radical student, leftist, or anarchist movement; it is rather a traditional missionary group with social and economic links to various segments of society[64].

The moderation and radicalization of young people's positions happened over time, as a consequence of specific transformative experiences. Time in this regard had a dual effect, while some were radicalised, others abandoned their radical stances. For example, Kariman, said the 150 days she spent in prison changed her opinion of nonviolent resistance. She realised that people needed weapons and other sources of power to counter state repression. She added that

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[60] Interview with Nada, a formerly affiliated female member who is currently studying in the UK after leaving Cairo under the fear of persecution, 9 March 2017, Istanbul.

[61] Interview with Abdelgawad a key cadre in the MB student section before 2011 and a founder of Strong Egypt Party, 8 November 2016, Cairo.

[62] Interview with Abdullah a key cadre in Istanbul Office, 3 February, Istanbul.

[63] Interview with Ayyash a former affiliated member from El Mansoura, 30 October 2016, Istanbul.

[64] One of those participants- 26 years old- was an active MB blogger till 2011. He split the movement before the revolution due to ideological exposure. The second is a working male affiliated member from Alexandria who split the movement and founded Strong Egypt Party.

the state easily crushed the MB because the movement had not made any preparations to protect itself.[65]

Others have changed their minds for a new interpretation due to the lack of professionalism exhibited by emerging violent groups and the high human costs of joining such groups. In my interview with Sahar, she said,

> After Raba'a, I personally wanted to kill the sniper who shot my friend. I wanted to know his name and kill him, but later, I realised the ineffectiveness and the high human cost of this way of thinking. If we kill only one of them, they arrest and kill tens of us.[66]

Fatima, a 26-year-old member, said:

> I was happy to hear the news of the operation that attacked number of police officers in EL Haram district. But when I lost one of my friends who was my manager, I realised the cost of that. My manager – a smart kind young man – will spend years in jail and he might not be able to see his son again.[67]

The narratives of Fatima and Sahar illuminate how human loss can both quell and motivate violence, which convey contradicting findings with regard to the effect of repression on radicalisation. Noting that, the moderation of feelings happens over time and through personal encounters.

Discussion

The aforementioned findings do not lend themselves to easy generalisations about the effect of repression on actors' choices. The pathway of radicalization among MB youth can be understood in reference to two main dimensions: the first relates to Political Opportunity Structure (POS) in post 2013 era, with a focus on the nature of repression, the identity of the oppressor and solidarity of state allies. The second relates to informants' perception/interpretations of the POS and experiences they underwent.

Following the analyses of Mohammed Hafez (2003), who examined the relationship between the indiscriminate nature of state repression and radicalization, a radical group will not emerge without a facilitating political environment to lead to a backlash of protest and repulsion of public support for radical groups[68]. Within the Egyptian context, the El-Sisi regime has succeeded in shutting potential political opportunities that would encourage such a backlash of protest. The elimination of political opportunities was based on indiscriminate/ diffusive and severe repression combined with the use of the military and the police alike as

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[65] Interview with Kariman, the daughter of a senior MB member who is exiled in Istanbul, 5 March 2017, via Skype.

[66] Interview with Sahar a formerly affiliated female member from El Mansoura, 22 December 2016, Cairo.

[67] Interview with Fatima a formerly affiliated female member from Cairo, 24 December 2016, Cairo.

[68] Hafez, *Book*, 70-73.

repressive agents, and a polarised political context since 2011 Uprising[69]. Under these conditions , dissent and radical actions became a self-destructive act[70].

In relation to the participants' narratives about the efficacy of the violent strategy, the identity of the oppressor, solidarity of state's allies and the lack of any counter-strategy from the MB leadership, conditioned the participants' interpretation of violence as a motivational frame of action. Based on what Martin Brian (2009) has described as 'tactics of controlling moral outrage after massacres', the Egyptian state manipulated the media to cover up the details of the brutal cleansing of Raba'a and El Nahda Squares. This minimised and devalued the number of protesters who were killed and presented state's security crackdown as a fight against terrorists. Official channels were used to legalise the action of clearing the two Squares. The lack of available information about the number of victims and the state's brutality during the evacuation of protesters, alongside the media demonisation of Islamists negatively affected solidarity ties between the MB members and the Egyptian masses, whilst the state's military has evolved as a key economic and political force within the ruling class and a negotiator in international financial interactions[71].

The strategic interpretation of the POS in the aftermath of 2013- with a reflection on the role played by the military as major political and economic agent, and the emotional appraisal of the consequences of violence over time, including the possibility of killing civilians and widening the scope of violence, undermined the popularity of the violent pathway of activism amongst most research participants. Both strategic and emotional calculations made the support of violence only a tactical and temporal choice. In addition, organisational factionalism over the strategy of violence, the difficulty of recruiting qualified members and the absence of ideological framing for violence influenced the sustainability and organisational rigour of emerging violent groups.

Radicalization, accordingly, was not an ideological imperative but a by-product of rational appraisal for macro-circumstances, group dynamics and temporal psychological status of some involved members who underwent the traumatic experiences of exile and prison. It also reflected the nature of available ideological indoctrination that young members were exposed, which was reinforced by the escalating competition between the nonviolent discourse of the MB and other violent groups, such as the Islamic State[72]. The marginalisation of the

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[69]Kraetzschmar, Hendrik and Saleh, Alam. Political Parties and Secular- Islamist Polarization in Post- Mubarak Egypt. In Kraetzschmar, Hendrik and Rivetti, Paola. *Islamists and the politics of the Arab uprisings.* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2018) pp. 89–106.

[70] Brown, J. Nathan, and Dunne, Michele. *Unprecedented Pressures, Uncharted Course for Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood.* Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2015. Retrieved From: https://carnegieendowment.org/2015/07/29/unprecedented-pressures-uncharted-course-for-egypt-s-muslim-brotherhood-pub-60875 [Accessed 7 March 2018]. Ketchley, Neil and Biggs, Michael. What is the Egyptian Anti-coup Movement Protesting for? *Washington Post.* 4 April, 2014. Retrieved from: http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/04/04/what-is-the-egyptian-anti-coup-movement-protesting-for/ [Accessed 1 November 2019].

[71] Joya, Angela. *Journal.* 2, 21.

[72] Fayed, Ammar. *Is the Crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood Pushing the Group toward Violence?.* Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute; Retrieved from:

violent trend among MB members challenges the mechanical correlation between repression and radicalization. Other intervening variables including personal experiences, identity of repressive agent, and the level of political polarisation in repressive phases play more important roles rather than state's severity of repression.

at https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/FINAL-Formatting-Ammar-Fayed-English_v2.pdf [Accessed 7 March 2022].