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Brookings Cafeteria Podcast:
Islamism after the Arab Spring

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DEWS: Welcome to the Brookings Cafeteria, a podcast about ideas and the experts who have them. I'm Fred Dews. My guest today is Shadi Hamid, senior fellow in our Center for Middle East Policy and Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World. Last summer I spoke with him about his most recent book, *Islamic Exceptionalism: How the Struggle Over Islam is Reshaping the World*. The book has recently been shortlisted for the Lionel Gelber Prize for the best nonfiction book in foreign policy.

In today's episode, I'm speaking with Shadi about a new paper he coauthored titled “Islamism after the Arab Spring: Between the Islamic State and the nation-state.” Stay tuned in this episode for an explanation of why immigrants create jobs and economic growth. And then, what Brookings experts are saying in week three of President Trump's first 100 days. Shadi, welcome back to the Brookings Cafeteria.

HAMID: Hi Fred, thanks for having me.

DEWS: So we're going to talk about your paper. There's a lot of words in the title that I think ask for some definition, so let's start there. First, remind our listeners what is or what was the Arab Spring?

HAMID: Well, you know, it's funny you ask that because it's very blurry to me now. I mean, so much has happened since the Arab Spring started and it's gone in such a negative direction that it's hard to sort of recall the sense of optimism a lot of us had. But you know, the uprising started in early 2011 in Tunisia, then Egypt, then spreading throughout the region, including in places like Syria and Libya. But very quickly the Arab Spring turned into something less optimistic and became consumed by a violent conflict, especially in places like Syria and Libya that had civil war. So I think part of what we're trying to do in this paper is to sort of take stock six years later, really, I mean, and try to

understand how Islamist movements have evolved in light of all the developments that have happened. And quite a lot has happened as we'll talk about, so yeah.

DEWS: All right, so another definitional term. What is Islamism or Islamist movements?

HAMID: So we define Islamists as those who believe Islam or Islamic law should play a central role in politics. So for them, that is the defining part of their identity. You could be someone who believes in Islamic law, but you think economic issues are more important so you might join a leftist party and – because economic issues are what's driving you. I think what's distinctive about Islamist parties is that's right there, front and center. It's central to how they see themselves and it's also worth noting, because sometimes I get pushback on this, that most Islamists call themselves Islamists in Arabic. So it's not as if a bunch of Western analysts came in and said hey we're going to call you something that you don't like.

DEWS: So, also the title includes the phrase “between the Islamic State and the nation state.” So why use the word between these two seeming extremes?

HAMID: So, you know, I think one real challenge in the post-Arab Spring era is this question of how Islamists relate to their own states. And it's not just Islamists even. It's really anyone, whether you’re Islamist, leftist, secularist, liberal. What's really at stake now are fundamental questions over the meaning of the nation-state. What does it mean to be an Egyptian, a Tunisian, or a Turk? And the most basic aspects of identity haven't been resolved. So Islam’s relationship to the state, that's a question that a lot of people disagree on profoundly. So I think that for Islamists – and in this paper we focus primarily on what we call mainstream Islamists.

These are Islamist groups that participate within existing state structures. They're for the most part gradualist, they're not particularly revolutionary, although some of them have become more revolutionary in light of recent events. But traditionally they're much more kind of playing the long game, steady as she goes, accepting the confines of the state, participating in the parliamentary process, accepting some degree of political pluralism. And most of these groups are part of the Muslim Brotherhood school of thought. So they're either Brotherhood affiliates, or they're inspired by the Brotherhood model, if you will.

So I think that one challenge for these kinds of groups is that they have come to terms with the nation state, to some extent – for the most part because they're practical, because there's no other option. And I think it's hard for them, and really for any of us who work on these issues, to see beyond the nation state because that's all we know. I mean, unless you're, unless you're like 90 years old and grew up in Turkey or you know certain parts of the Ottoman Empire – you'd have to actually be like more like 95 or a 100 – I mean, the only thing you've known are, you know, some kind of nation state because we saw the abolition of the last caliphate, the Ottoman Caliphate, happened in 1924. But at the same time, there's a kind of discomfort with the limitations of the nation-state, because there is this broad perception that these borders are either artificial or arbitrary.

So the question then is, is there something in between this very state-centric approach? And what I mean by that is – state-centric in the sense of these overbearing bloated states that want to dominate every aspect of life, and they obviously tend to be

quite repressive in the Arab world. So that is the experience that most Arabs have had with their own nation states over the past few decades.

And then there is this idea, on the other hand, of some kind of transnational Ummah or Muslim community that many Muslims grew up with as a kind of theoretical prospect. They hear about the glories of the past caliphates and how – you know, and I think we talked about some of this in our previous podcast, how even I, as someone who grew up in the American Muslim community – you grew up with these stories of how we in quotation marks “used to be the greatest civilization the world had ever seen.” Scientific and technological advancement, translation, philosophy, you name it. So if people are growing up with these ideas of past grandeur – that has a kind of appeal.

And I think people who advocate for a caliphate, for erasing borders, whether they are pan-Arab nationalists or Islamists or those on the far extreme right like ISIS, they're kind of tapping into this sense that there should be a kind of broader, supranational structure that brings Muslims together and sort of, in a sense, transcends these boundaries. So I think that, you know, you have this kind of identity crisis with many Muslims in the Middle East where they're sort of stuck somewhere in between. And there's no really good option because we've seen how disastrous the ISIS version of the caliphate can be but we've also seen the failure of the modern nation state in the Arab world.

DEWS: So talk about Egypt, then. You spent a lot of time in the paper on Egypt and its history. Over the past few years we've seen the transition of regimes from Hosni Mubarak, and then Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood, and now we have Sisi,

who's another general. Can you talk about how Egypt kind of exemplifies what you're talking about here?

HAMID: Yes, so when we talk about this sort of shattered dreams, if you will, or the false promise of the Arab Spring, I think Egypt is very central because there was actually a democratic transition. Yes, it was very flawed. It was very problematic. It was very polarizing. But at least there was a sense of possibility. And of course, Egypt is the most populous country in the Arab world, so there was a sense that if Egypt could make progress and at least not be a total disaster, that could serve as an inspiration for other countries.

And so I do think a lot was riding on the Egyptian case. But what we saw is that you did have a series of democratic elections where the main Islamist party there, the Muslim Brotherhood, either did very well or won outright in parliamentary elections, in referenda, in the presidential election. So here we have the first democratically elected president in Egyptian history, Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood. And he was only in power for about a year, and then there was a military coup against his government in July 2013, and then a month later we saw what Human Rights Watch calls the worst mass killing in modern Egyptian history where about a thousand Muslim Brotherhood supporters were killed in broad daylight in the matter of just a day.

So that to me was such a crucial moment because once you have a coup like that and once you have a massacre like, that it's very difficult to recover. So in a sense the coup and the massacre, I think they sort of represent the end point of the Arab Spring if we want to sort of definitively mark it. And I think that after the massacre Egyptian Islamists but also Islamists across the region were trying to make sense of

what the coup means because the whole premise of mainstream Islamism was that change was possible by working within the system and not calling for outright revolution. So here you have Islamists participating in elections and working within state structures, but then they're faced with a military coup and a campaign of eradication afterwards. So that forces, I think, you know, a significant number of Islamists, particularly younger Islamists to ask some very difficult questions. Is change really possible through the democratic process? Will Arab regimes ever let Islamist govern for any significant period of time?

Then there are kind of almost broader theological questions which I find fascinating, which may be a little bit beyond the scope of this, but you know, for example, I remember conversations I have had with the Brotherhood activists in exile. How do we make sense of a massacre like this? We thought that we were doing the right thing but then we're killed in such a manner, and it gets to this question of theodicy, of why God permits evil in this world. So is God trying to send a message to these Islamists, that perhaps they weren't following the right path, that perhaps they had been too ambitious in their quest for power? Should they have taken a much more different approach where they didn't contest the presidency? Then the question is, how do you sort of make sense of that after the fact, and what are the lessons that you learn?

DEWS: What about over in Tunisia where the Arab Spring began? What's been happening in that country and what does that tell you?

HAMID: So Tunisia is pretty much the lone bright spot in the Arab world. It's fascinating for so many different reasons. But what we see here is Islamists, and the main Islamist party here is Ennahda, and Ennahda sees what happens in Egypt and

they learn they learn lessons from it. They were already, even before the Egyptian coup, very accommodationist and trying to make difficult compromises with secularists and liberals and adopting a much more inclusive approach to governance, and they were briefly in government in 2012 to 2013 before voluntarily stepping down in the face of protests. So they were already generally in this accommodationist direction, they see the Egyptian coup happen, and that really for them highlights the lesson that you don't want to push too hard too quickly, you don't want to anger liberals and secularists too much. And they were afraid that a kind of Tunisia-style coup could happen in their own country.

So that made them much more willing to make compromises which you wouldn't normally expect a democratically-elected party to make. So they didn't have to step down from power but they did voluntarily, and they took part in the national dialogue process that essentially, they would argue at least, it essentially saved Tunisia's democratic transition. And there was a moment in 2013, and I had spent some time in Tunisia in 2013, where it felt like the Tunisian transition was very much at risk. So when we look back, it wasn't inevitable that Tunisia was going to be a success story. It was very close to the brink. So I think that the Ennahda party deserves some credit for sort of taking this more magnanimous approach and making these big concessions to the opposition.

But it raises this question, I think, of, you know – for them it angered some in their more conservative base that they were making all of these compromises, that in 2014 they joined a government that was led by the main secular party, Nidaa Tounes, and they accepted a lone cabinet post even though they had won about 33 percent in

the parliamentary election. So some of their own members were asking themselves, hey we didn't win the elections but we still did pretty good, but we joined a coalition government where we just got this pittance of a cabinet post. And I think there is this kind of push and pull of should Ennahda assert its Islamic identity more, should it be more revolutionary, should it be more aggressive, or should it continue to have this very accommodationist, and mild, friendly approach where it essentially gives up some of its objectives in order to avoid confrontation?

DEWS: You just mentioned a secular party in Tunisia. I think one thing that's possibly very surprising – and maybe surprising to listeners, but it's surprising, I think, to observers who don't have anywhere near the amount of experience you have in this – is that the Arab world is full of secular parties and Islamist parties. There are people like, you know, Hosni Mubarak or General Sisi who are Muslims but they're not Islamists. How do you kind of talk about that phenomenon in the Arab world? I mean it's is sort of like anywhere else, there's secular parties, there's less secular parties.

HAMID: Yeah. So there's generally a whole spectrum. I think, though, when we talk about Hosni Mubarak or General Sisi, I think a lot of times we call them secularist but I usually like to use quotation marks because General Sisi is a very devout man, and that's actually one reason that the Muslim Brotherhood actually liked him early on and they actually thought that Sisi was on their side almost until the very last moment, until the coup happened, because he would pray with them. They saw him as someone who was amenable to their religious vision, and Sisi has actually up until this very day been quite open about his desire for Islam to play an important role in politics. He just

disagrees with the Brotherhood on what that role should be. So he's not quite a secularist. He's just very anti-Islamist.

What's interesting about Tunisia is that you have real secularists, in the sense that, those who are more in tune with the French model of secularism or laïcité, which is much more about separating religion from politics in a more sort of stark fashion. And you see some of the French influence there. But anyway, I think more broadly we can talk about secularists who are more hard line in Tunisia, Islamists, those in between, and of course there are those on the far right who are, let's say, further to the right of the Muslim Brotherhood and we would call those ultraconservative Salafis, for example. So there's a pretty diverse spectrum, not just between Islamists and secularists, but even within the Islamist scene itself.

DEWS: You write in the paper about a generational divide, an older generation of activists versus a younger one. What is this and how does it play out?

HAMID: So, you know, it's interesting how I think a lot of us in the West, we tend to fetishize youth. We love this idea – and, you know, you might remember this from the start of the Arab Spring – and we saw all these young people in squares throughout the Arab world, and a lot of them spoke passable English, and they were on Twitter and Facebook, and some of them were liberal and they seemed open-minded and all that. And I think we fell in love with this idea that you had young people who were pretty much just like us and wanted the same things, which I think was a problematic way of looking at the Arab Spring – that we were almost in a sense projecting our own hopes onto a very different region with its own cultural and religious context.

So when we look at groups like the Muslim Brotherhood there is a sort of generational tension, and young Brotherhood members are more, let's say, revolutionary in some ways. They want to confront the state more aggressively. Some of them are more open to what is sometimes referred to as quote unquote “defensive violence,” the idea that some Brotherhood members have adopted against the Sisi regime. This idea that, whether it's things like Molotov cocktails, burning police cars, attacking security personnel, economic sabotage, you see more of an openness to this kind of low-level anarchic violence.

And that's also, I think, what we have to remember about youth – not just in the Arab world but anywhere – is that they are more open to things like revolutionary violence, and then we've seen that throughout history when it comes to anarchists or Communists or Marxists or whatever. But it's interesting that some of these more quote unquote “revolutionary youth” within the Muslim Brotherhood are also more progressive on issues like women's rights on issues, like cooperating with leftists and secularists. So it's a little bit more complicated.

So in some ways, obviously, from an American security perspective, anyone who is supporting “defensive violence” in a place like Egypt, we're going to be uncomfortable with that because that's a security concern for an ally like Egypt. But at the same time, some of these younger Brotherhood members are more open to a kind of liberal sensibility. They're not liberals, of course, but at least they're more willing to listen to alternative opinions when it comes to things like women's empowerment or working closely with leftists and things like that.

The other thing I would say too is that – moving beyond the Brotherhood – is that, you know, in a sense, ISIS is a kind of youth movement. So if we really want to, you know, look at it from a more pessimistic perspective. And again, it gets to this idea that those who are more open to revolution – and ISIS of course is not just a savage, brutal terrorist organization, it's also a revolutionary organization in the sense that it doesn't accept existing states, it doesn't want to just attack states, it wants to replace them entirely with a kind of Islamic revolutionary system of their own making, right – so that's why it's young people, generally, when we're looking at foreign fighters who have come from Europe or from Tunisia – Tunisia has the highest per capita contribution of foreign fighters to ISIS – these are usually young people. So in that sense, it's a much more complex picture when we're trying to understand the role of youth.

The last thing I'll say, and we mentioned this briefly in the paper, is that it's not just because they're young. Part of what's going on here with the Muslim Brotherhood youth and why they are more revolutionary is because their formative political experience was the Arab revolution of 2011, where if you look at the older guard, people who are in their 70s or 80s, their formative political moments were in the 1950s and 60s when they were facing considerable repression under the Nasser regime. So if you're facing a lot of repression your primary concern is how to survive. It's about self-preservation at any cost.

But if you're a young person and you never lived under that totalizing repression, and what you kind of draw inspiration from is those early optimistic moments of the Arab Spring when people believed in this word “revolution,” then you're obviously going to have a different way of looking at politics. So what it comes down to is that people are

shaped by their own particular set of experiences, and that's why we can look at different generations those who came of age in the 50s and 60s, those who came of age in the 70s 80s and 90s, and those who came of age in the 2000s and during the Arab Spring.

[MUSIC]

DEWS: Let's pause now to hear from Danny Bahar, a fellow in Global Economy and Development, about his research on how immigrants create jobs and growth.

[MUSIC]

BAHAR: While, immigrants represent about 15% of the overall United States workforce, they account for around a quarter of entrepreneurs and a quarter of inventors in the U.S. Moreover, over a third of new firms have at least one immigrant entrepreneur in its initial leadership team. In the midst of very controversial plans for immigration reforms announced by the White House, I come to tell you about the positive impact of migration, based on a research project I've recently completed with my co-author Hillel Rapoport from Paris School of Economics.

For years, the economic literature has focused on very tangible and short-term consequences for migration, for instance, the effect of immigration on the wages of other workers, or the role of the money sent back by migrants to their families back home, known as remittances, in fostering development and economic growth. In most cases, the important positive long-term effects of migrations are not always brought into the policy debate.

In fact, today I'm here to tell you one way in which migrants can be an asset in today's globalized world. The one particular aspect I will tell you about is how migrants

can shape the composition of the export basket of bother their countries of destination and their countries of origin. Many economists have documented how migrants play an important role as vehicles of information between their sending and receiving countries.

By helping to establish networks, migrants can reduce costs associated to bilateral trade and investment. For example, a Mexican migrant working for a firm in the United States is more likely to succeed in establishing a business relationship with suppliers in Mexico. This migrant can communicate with her counterparts in the same language, Spanish in this case, and typically has plenty of knowledge about the country – much more than someone who never lived or visited there would ever have. This knowledge that migrants have and carry with them from country to country can significantly ease the process of establishing business networks between countries. This exemplifies how migrants are par excellence carriers of information across borders.

Yet, our research finds that this knowledge carried by migrants actually goes beyond establishing networks. They can induce changes in productivity in both their sending and receiving countries. Productivity is, after all, one of the most important determinants of economic growth. Actually, about 60% of cross-country income difference can be explained by productivity differences. Productivity growth, in the long run, is what matters the most for economic growth, for more and better jobs, and for our overall well-being.

I would like emphasize that there is overwhelming evidence on the positive role of migration in the economy beyond the research I just told you about. Knowing this is very important, especially nowadays when the new administration considers making important migration reforms. These reforms could cut back on the inflow of migrants,

both skilled and unskilled, to the United States. It is crucial to remain conscious of both the pros and cons of migration in this growing policy debate. I strongly believe cutting on migration is also cutting on more and better jobs for Americans. It is precisely migration that is one of the key elements of a country's success. Cutting back on it could be highly detrimental to the United States.

If you want to discuss and learn more about this, feel free to take a closer look at my work and get in touch with me through the Brookings website. I'd love to hear what you think.

DEWS: You can listen to more from Dany on our Soundcloud channel, and also find his research on our website, where he tells the story of how a Vietnamese immigrant founded a popular Sriracha sauce company. I want to go back to ISIS in a minute, but before that, you mentioned women's rights, women's empowerment. What role do women play in Islamism?

HAMID: So if we're talking about Brotherhood-inspired groups, almost by definition Islamists are not going to be like liberals are on women's rights, otherwise they wouldn't be Islamists, right? So Islamists are Islamists for a reason. They are socially conservative. They do have a more patriarchal way of looking at the world; that should go without saying. At the same time, that doesn't mean that these groups are against women's participation in political life.

So for example, the Brotherhood in Egypt or Ennahda in Tunisia have female members of parliament. They do have female members, female leaders in their organizations. They don't usually tend to play the dominating role but they still do play significant roles in these organizations. There's also, I think, an important difference

between believing in gender equality and believing in women's empowerment. You can believe in the latter without believing in the former. And to some extent you could probably say the same about, you know, certain far-right Christian evangelicals in the U.S., so it's not just necessarily something about Islamically-inspired groups in the Middle East.

But what was interesting I think in the case of, let's say, Tunisia – and this paper is based on a series of meetings and discussions that we had in Doha in 2015 and in Istanbul in 2016, and we made an effort to include female members of Islamist movements in these discussions – and what you do see is, especially in a more promising case like Tunisia, is a new generation of young Islamist women who have taken on more active roles. Some of them are very outspoken in their own organizations in Tunisia, and some of them are also the youngest members of parliament. So we had one participant who was one of the youngest female members of parliament in Tunisia. So I think that's encouraging to see. But they do still face an uphill battle in gaining the respect of their peers sometimes. And that's going to continue, I think.

DEWS: In one of those meetings, you heard from a Muslim Brotherhood activist who shared with you the thought that, and I'll quote, “ISIS is a natural response to repression,” unquote. What did he mean by that?

HAMID: So it's actually a very interesting quote, and maybe I'll just read the whole thing. It was a Chatham House Rule discussion, so people were encouraged to speak as frankly as they possibly could, but I was surprised that he was willing to share this in a room that included Western analysts like myself. And he really opened up on this, so this is the full quote. “ISIS is spreading because they represent a model of

power. At the Rabaa massacre when we see people are being killed by airplanes or tanks, or we see officers shooting people, at that moment if I had a weapon I would have done like ISIS even though I am peaceful and not violent in general. It is a natural response. ISIS is a natural response to repression."

DEWS: And the Rabaa massacre was the 2013 massacre in Egypt?

HAMID: Yeah, exactly.

DEWS: OK.

HAMID: So we sort of pushed him to elaborate on this, and we had a, you know, a very interesting ensuing discussion. But I think it gets at something, that the instinct of violence is something that can happen to people in spite of themselves. So he didn't want to feel this. And that's what he was communicating to us, that there was a moment of weakness where he felt tempted by violence. Of course, in this particular case he didn't succumb to that temptation, but some have.

And this is where extreme levels of repression can push people to radicalize, when they give up hope in the Democratic process, when they see that there is no way to gain power through elections and they look at ISIS's model – and when he says something like ISIS represents a model of power, what does that mean, and a number of other people in our discussion sort of conveyed this to us – is that even if they ideologically oppose ISIS or hate ISIS even, there's something that to them is appealing about ISIS's success.

So the fact that ISIS has been able to capture large swaths of territory in Syria and Iraq, that is something that most mainstream Islamist groups have never been able to do for the last 80 years. So here are these mainstream Islamists are playing the long

game. They're having this very slow, gradual, plodding approach to politics but they're not able to get anywhere. And they're facing things like coups, they're being marginalized, so on and so forth. But then they see this extreme, savage, violent group that is instrumentalizing violence and being effective in the instrumentalization of violence in the sense that they have been able to capture territory.

I think some people see that and it presents an ideological challenge to everything they hold dear. Everything they've been taught, they've been taught that gradualism is the way to go. But then they see the exact opposite of the gradualist organization, in this case ISIS. And that's part of what we tried to capture, that even for people who oppose ISIS, we still have to respect what ISIS represents, what it means, and the kind of resonance that it provides to even people who oppose it. And I think that's a difficult thing sometimes for some of us to get our heads around. But it's still I think an important thing to take away from the ISIS experience, because even if ISIS is defeated tomorrow morning –and already ISIS has lost, you know, significant parts of its territory in both Syria and especially Iraq – that doesn't mean that what ISIS represents will disappear, because what ISIS represents in this sense – the idea that you don't just blow things up, you actually have an interest in governance; you don't want to just capture territory but you want to govern territory – that's going to be the gold standard for extremist movements for a long time to come, this idea that you can go beyond just terrorism and you can capture and hold territory.

So I think that that's what's kind of scary about the ISIS model, is that it shows that violence can be effective. But there's also the kind of mirror image of that when we see Arab autocratic regimes resurgent in the post-Arab Spring era, what message are

they sending? They're also sending a message that violence and repression are effective, whether it's the Sisi regime in Egypt or a number of other regimes. The lesson that they've learned from the Arab Spring is you don't let people protest, you don't let them stay in the squares too long. You try to nip it at the bud to prevent these things from developing. So unfortunately that's the opposite of what we hoped the Arab Spring would be, that unfortunately violence sometimes works. And I think that's why we have to think about this broader ideological challenge that ISIS represents.

DEWS: So this next question is kind of getting outside the scope of this paper, but I think it would be of interest to listeners to hear your thoughts on this. We're talking about the Arab Spring, most of what we've been talking about is Islamism in the Arab world. But what about Islam and Islamism outside the Arab world – Turkey or in sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia?

HAMID: So this is one of the last sections we have in the paper, where we try to explore this. Is there a kind of third way between the Islamic State, ISIS, and the nation state? So if there is a growing realization that these two approaches to statehood, if you will, have failed or brought misery or whatever it happens to be, then is there a kind of another way of looking at the state – if you will, a way of seeing beyond this state? So we kind of talk about, in these meetings we had a number of the younger Islamists activists expressed a kind of libertarian sentiment, this idea that they had lost faith in the state and they wanted to have more local autonomy. They wanted this state to leave them alone. They didn't want these powerful domineering nation-states to control religious discourse. They wanted to leave that to local communities to express their religious preferences in their own way. So these ideas aren't very well-developed

because they're only thinking about these things really over the past few years, and many of these guys and girls are quite young and they're still trying to think through how they view politics in this kind of deeper philosophical sense. But I think it's an interesting kind of debate, and I think one aspect of this has to do with federalism. It has to do with decentralization.

So whenever, I think, as Americans, when we think about problems in the Middle East we think about weak states and how to strengthen them. But I think sometimes we have to look at it in precisely the opposite way, that sometimes we have the problem of very strong states in the sense that they're very repressive and dominating. And we have to think about not how to strengthen them further but how to weaken their domination, how to weaken their centralized hold on power.

And I think that these more localized approaches to government are worth really thinking about. I think part of that, too, includes things like power sharing, and it's easier to talk about power sharing on the local level – and here I mean power sharing between people who hate each other, right, between Islamists and secularists, they hate each other fine. How can they find a way to work together on the local level? And I think it's easier to do it at the local level because you're not dealing with the big national questions of the role of Islam or Islamic law in the Constitution. You're thinking about kind of bread-and-butter issues of how you actually get things done in kind of municipal governance and how to provide basic services to constituents.

So I think those are a couple of the ideas we heard some people expressing, or at least being open to. And I think that that holds some degree of promise. If we're looking at how Islamists are rethinking their own assumptions, that is one thing I think

we have to pay close attention to, is are there these other approaches when it comes to power-sharing that could be more promising when it comes to this very, again, this fundamental question of how do you get people who don't like each other to agree to not like each other through a peaceful democratic process? Because I think, as we've talked about before, I have a dark view of human nature so I don't believe that people are going to resolve their foundational divides. What I do believe people can do though is find ways to address and manage and mitigate their foundational divides through power-sharing arrangements, through local government, through cross-ideological cooperation.

DEWS: Well, Shadi, let's wrap up this conversation by looking at the Trump administration, brand new administration here in Washington. What policy lessons would you hope that the foreign policy team of the Trump administration derives from your research here?

HAMID: Yeah, we pretty much wrote this well before Trump won. So, you know, it's interesting to think about how my answer to this question would have been different had there been a different result in the elections. And I think that Trump's victory, you know, raises a lot of interesting questions for those of us in the policy community, those of us in think tanks, and, you know, how can a paper like this be useful to the Trump administration?

And I think in some ways we have to get back to basics. So there aren't necessarily clear bullet points of policy recommendations for the Trump administration with a paper like this, because a Trump administration, as it's already expressed in a number of different ways, through a number of different members of the transition team

or surrogates, they're very much anti-Islamist. And it's fine for them to be anti-Islamist, but they go one or two steps further and they see all Islamists in the same basket. So they have trouble – or they don't do it at all – they don't necessarily make distinctions between different Islamist groups. So ISIS, Hamas, Muslim Brotherhood, Ennahda, PJD in Morocco, which are all Islamists even though they're very different from each other, they all end up being put under this same broad category. And that to me is a big problem because Islamists play an important role in a number of strategically vital countries. And if you're not able to make distinctions between the Muslim Brotherhood and ISIS, and to understand what Muslim Brotherhood members themselves are debating within their own organizations or associations, then you're really going to be at a fundamental disadvantage in policymaking I think.

So I think one thing we hope that this paper can really get across to members of the Trump team is to kind of offer this deeper sense of nuance and to really get inside the minds of Islamists, if you will: what are they thinking, what are they debating, what kinds of assumptions are they rethinking, what are the divides that you're seeing within these movements.

For example, you know, we talk in the paper about an unprecedented split within the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. That's important to know. It hasn't gotten a lot of attention in the media, not a lot of people are paying close attention to that particular issue, but I think that's an important thing to know. The question is what are the implications for us, but the starting point is to be aware of what's actually happening on the ground. So, you know, we hope that we can inject some of that nuance into the debate over Islamism and not all Islamists are bad and evil – some certainly are but

some, like again we've talked about, Ennahda in Tunisia. Ennahda is part of a coalition government in Tunisia so if you're trying to criminalize them or pretend that they're similar to ISIS, then how are you going to engage with a Tunisian government that Ennahda itself is a part of, or the fact Ennahda today represents the largest bloc in the Tunisian parliament? Presumably we as Americans have to engage with the Tunisian parliament.

DEWS: Well Shadi, I want to thank you very much for that excellent answer. Thank you for sharing your time today, and as always thank you for sharing your expertise with us.

HAMID: My pleasure. Thanks so much for having me.

DEWS: You can find the paper “Islamism after the Arab Spring: Between the Islamic State and the nation-state” by Shadi Hamid, William McCants, and Rashid Dar on our website, brookings.edu.

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DEWS: As President Donald Trump begins his administration, I'll present on a weekly basis a selection of what Brookings experts are writing and saying about the new administration's early policy choices, personnel decisions, and engagements with domestic and global events. Here's Week 3 of the first 100 days. Links to everything and even more content is available on the Brookings Now blog on our website.
On foreign policy and national security, senior fellow Tamara Coffman Wittes looks at four aspects of new Secretary of State Rex Tillerson’s inaugural speech to State Department employees: his leadership, mission security, the question of dissent, and his focus on efficiency.

Senior fellows Joshua Meltzer and Mireya Solís argue that President Trump's executive order removing the U.S. from the Trans-Pacific Partnership means loss of U.S. economic growth and job creation, undercuts leverage with China, and is quote "a blow to U.S. global leadership in determining the rules for international trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific region." Senior fellows John Allen and Michael O'Hanlon, who co-direct the Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence, write that while President Trump's executive order on immigration and refugees responds to a "legitimate fear," it quote "could do enormous harm to the broader struggle against terrorism—and thus, ultimately, to America's own security even here in the homeland." Nonresident senior fellow Arturo Sarukhan, a former Mexican ambassador to the U.S., says that the U.S.-Mexico relationship has changed profoundly over the past two decades, mostly for the better, but "is now on a knife's edge."

On domestic policy, senior fellow Bill Galston examines the politics of repairing versus repealing Obamacare. "The Republicans have a lot of tough policy issues to address," Galston says. "And as a recent Gallup survey shows, they also have a political problem that will make these challenges even harder." The Hamilton Project at Brookings has a new paper in which the authors note the widespread agreement of the need to address the nation's infrastructure, but that consensus on how to fund and prioritize projects is lacking. The paper explores the pros and cons of public-private partnerships for infrastructure investments. Jon Valant, a fellow in the Brown Center on Education Policy, notes "the Trump administration's support of charters and choice may be distracting from—and contributing to—an emerging political threat to school choice programs, especially charter schools: renewed skepticism from Democrats."

Nonresident senior fellow Blair Levin has a three part series that examines broadband policy in the Trump administration. He writes, “If affordable and abundant broadband is integral to the continued growth of the American economy, then how the market reacts to Trump administration policy will determine whether the country can deliver this necessary infrastructure.” On February 16, the center co-hosts an event to launch the new Brookings Institution Press book *Achieving Regulatory Excellence*, which offers guidance from experts around the world for how regulators in all fields of policy can succeed in today’s demanding environment.

Nonresident senior fellow Bob Pozen looks at what will happen to the Dodd-Frank financial regulations under President Trump’s executive order. And finally, J.B. Vowell, an Army colonel and currently the Army Chief of Staff’s Senior Fellow to the Brookings Institution, examines the confirmation of David Shulkin as the next Secretary of Veterans Affairs. You can find the links to all of this content and more on the Brookings Now blog at brookings.edu/brookingsnow.

And that does it for this edition of the Brookings Cafeteria, brought to you by the Brookings Podcast Network. Follow us on Twitter @policypodcasts. My thanks to audio engineer and producer Gaston Reboredo, with assistance from Mark Hoelscher. Vanessa Sauter is the producer, Bill Finan and does the book interviews, and our intern is Kelly Russo. Design and web support comes from Jessica Pavone, Eric Abalahin, and Rebecca Viser; and thanks to David Nassar and Richard Fawal for their support. You can subscribe to the Brookings Cafeteria on iTunes and listen to it in all the usual places. Visit us online at brookings.edu. Until next time, I'm Fred Dews.

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