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The American University in Cairo

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

RE-THINKING INITIATIVE OF THE EGYPTIAN JAMAʿA ISLAMIYYA IN 1997

A Thesis Submitted to

Arab and Islamic Civilizations Department

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of Masters of Arts

by

Maissa Hussein Niaz

(Under the supervision of Dr.Mohammad Serag, Thesis Advisor)

January / 2016

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I dedicate this study to:

My beloved Family:

Mum, Dad,

Hussein,

Mariam, Medhat,

Abdullah, Abdurrahman,

Fatema, Mouri,

Omar and Neus

I do appreciate the input of each and every one of you.

No word would reward

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ABSTRACT

The rising worldwide danger of Islamist militancy arouses the need to search for solutions for the containment of this danger at a highest priority. This thesis examines the case of the successful violence-ending experience of the Egyptian Jamaʿa Islamiyya (EJI), being a model for conflict resolution with the political regime and an example of the possible de-radicalization of one of the most militant Islamist groups in the modern history of Egypt. The study focuses on the Renouncing - Violence Initiative that was issued by EJI in 1997 and the subsequent issuing of a “Correction of Conceptions Series” that aimed to refute all previously held violence doctrines by the EJI, and those currently held by other militant Islamist groups. In order to do so, the study will attempt to analyze the factors that led to the transformation of that group to the moderate and even reformist path. The backgrounds on the emergence and behavioral evolution of the EJI will be reviewed, in addition to the violence legitimizing doctrines followed by the analysis of the new de-legitimizing violence literature. The thesis concludes that the occurrence of such de-radicalizing incident opens the prospects for other initiatives to occur, given that required conditions and appropriate frameworks are provided.

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“The best of our years was that blessed year during which the Initiative came into being. Only then, joy entered homes and hearts that have long been hit by pains and sadness”.

EJI historical leaders, “Nahr al-Dhikrayāt”.

Introduction

The “Re-thinking Initiative” (*al-Murajaʿāt al-Fikriyya*) that took place in 1997 between the Egyptian regime and the most militant Islamist group in the modern history of Egypt - known as “**al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya**” (EJI) - is a remarkable case of ideological and behavioral transformation from violence to moderation. This initiative ended more than twenty five years of a deadly confrontation with the Egyptian regime, during which the EJI brutally took away the life of President Sadat, head of the Egyptian state in 1981, and the lives of hundreds of local civilians, tourists, police officers, state officials, Christians and intellectuals. In 1997, the leaders and ideologues of the EJI, from their jails, to the surprise of all observers, declared an initiative known as “**Renouncing - Violence Initiative”** in which they abandoned all acts of violence and bloodshed. The Initiative came as a culmination to a long process of negotiations and dialogue – from inside prisons - with the regime’s security authorities. Since then, the Jamaʿa ideologues embarked on issuing a series of books clarifying and refuting the misconceptions as perceived by themselves, and by other Islamist militant movements, setting an ideological framework as a reference for the non- violence path. The Initiative was followed by the release of thousands of EJI prisoners successively and most importantly, the integration of its members into social, intellectual and political life. This study will examine the unique- so far- and prominent case of the Re-thinking Initiative of the EJI as a model for successful ideological and behavioral transformation, analyzing the context within which this Initiative emerged.

The transformation process of the EJI, from a formerly militant group to a moderate one, was also seen as a political success for the Egyptian ruling regime then.

Needless to say, the violence of Islamist militant groups has become one of the most critical challenges facing the regimes that have to deal with the containment of this deadly threat. In doing so, the regimes adopt the internationally acknowledged techniques for the disengagement of terrorist groups and campaigns. Among these techniques are either a security repressive approach (*defeat by repression*), and/or a political reconciliatory approach (*the transition to a legitimate political process*). While the security repressive approach has proven to be necessary, it has also proven to be insufficient. In this context, the political reconciliatory containment approach based on ideological dialogue - among several other procedures - gains importance, side by side with the security solution. The Initiative stands as an outstanding example of ending an extended, mutually exhausting, and deadly struggle between a political regime and an Islamist militant group in modern history.

The aim of this study is to analyze the Re-thinking Initiative that was issued by the EJI in 1997. Through the study, a number of queries will be attempted to be answered; how the Initiative took place and why it did succeed in ending an ongoing deadly struggle. The study will try to pursue the lines of thought and action of the EJI, which started as a non-violent group in the Egyptian universities during the seventies, then changed to a strongly violent path, then retreated again to its peaceful coexistence path. In that regard, the factors that contributed to the process of transformation will be verified comparing the significance of the ideological shift to that of the security forces' dual repression/containment approach. The study will also try to address the subjective and objective factors that had contributed to the success of the Initiative, and whether the subsequent rejection of some operatives of the EJI to the Initiative represented a

failure, or a resurrection for the same circumstances that had previously ignited their violence. The relationship between religion and the classes that adhere to it according to the religious sociology approach will be explored, focusing on the EJI, and whether this relationship can be attributed to the deprivation theory or to the theory that holds religion as a form of protest. The study will briefly cover the ability of other militant groups to issue similar initiatives and examine the extent to which the Initiative can be relied on for predicting the behavior of political Islamist movements. Finally, the prospects of success for the continued presence of the EJI in the *da'wa*, social and political arenas will be addressed. The study also aims at following up the continuing credibility of the reconciliatory impact of the Initiative after a time-span of around two decades since it first emerged.

This research is divided into three chapters. Chapter one examines the emergence and the behavioral evolution of the EJI, showing that it had passed through two phases. The first was the peaceful phase of religious preaching and pursuing social roles only, followed by the second phase, witnessing the dramatic shift to the violence course after less than seven years of the first phase, taking into consideration the historical context within which the EJI emerged and how this had a direct impact on this shift. Chapter two will start with the legacy of violence literature which might have had an impact on the ideological conception of violence in the EJI, then will proceed to explain, in detail, the violence - legitimizing (killing in the name of Allah) doctrines of the EJI, and in the end of chapter two, some concepts that explain the motives of violence and its applications in the case of the EJI will be briefly examined.

The core of the study will be presented in chapter three which aims at analyzing the Re-thinking Initiative. The Initiative has three main components: the emergence, the causal factors that may have contributed to the occurrence of the Initiative, and finally the ideological transformation doctrines (*muraja'āt*). The causal factors are either internal pertaining to the EJI itself, or external pertaining to the domestic political environment within which the Initiative emerged. Among the internal factors under discussion are the organizational nature of the EJI and the effect of imprisonment, while the external factors include the security approach varying from repressive to reconciliative measures (carrot and stick), the political agenda of the ruling regime, and the role of civic actors. The analysis of the new de-legitimizing violence *muraja'āt* doctrines known as "Correction of Conceptions Series" (S*ilsilat Taṣḥiḥ al Mafāhīm*) - the ideological component of the Initiative- will be presented in this chapter.

The conclusion will sum up the results that have been reached throughout the study. Within this context, the extent to which this unique Initiative can be considered a form of post- conflict settlements within which transitional justice mechanisms can be applied will be discussed. Among the presented results will be addressing the future of the Initiative in relation to the extent to which other militant Islamist movements can follow the EJI de-radicalization model, in addition to the continued presence of the EJI in the contemporary daʿwa, social and political arenas. Risk -assessment of the probable foreseen difficulties that may jeopardize the Initiative are also referred to. It is hoped that this might give some guidance when studying the likelihood of the emergence of similar reconciliatory initiatives settling the disputes between regimes and other Islamist movements.

Literature Review

The phenomenon of Islamist militancy has produced a wealth of literature ranging from documenting, to analyzing and examining the future prospects of the phenomenon. However this literature is focused more on the phenomenon of "violence" rather than the "renunciation of violence", the category to which the Re-thinking Initiative belongs. Four relevant books and two articles will be mentioned in this literature review. Three books and one article are in Arabic, and one book and one article in English. Among the Arabic sources two are documentary, the third is as an evaluation of the Initiative on the occasion of the passing of ten years since its emergence in a conference held in al-Ahram Center of Political and Strategic Studies ACPSS, while the fourth is on the mechanisms of reconciliation providing a practical program for the activation of the de-radicalization process.

It stands to reason that the series of books of the Re-thinking Initiative known as the "*al-Murajaʿāt al-Fikriyya*" (ideological re-assessments) are a very important reference for any researcher on this field. The first collection was issued under the title of "*Silsilat Taṣḥiḥ al Mafāhīm*", the subsequent books that were printed later came under separate titles.

1- Arabic Sources:

a. Books: three main books are examined:
    1. Salwa al-ʿAwwa, *al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya al-Musallaḥa fi Misr: 1997-2004*, (Cairo: al-Shorouk International Bookshop, 2006).

The book is concerned with the analysis of the religious speech of the EJI which adopted armed violence as a means to political change considering it part of the mandatory duty of *jihad* in Islam. The book comes in four chapters; the first is the "Introduction" covering the scope of research which is the EJI, demarcating it from other similar contemporary groups as al-Jihad Group. Chapter two is about "Methodology and Resources" showing that the study is not concerned with the ideological analysis of the EJI doctrines except in the context of analyzing its operations from a historical perspective (as it is presented to the Birmingham University, Department of Historical Studies). The third chapter is "The History" covering the emergence of the EJI along with other similar groups reaching the date of President's Sadat assassination, till the issuing of the Re-thinking Initiative. The fourth chapter "A Second Reading to the History of the Islamic Groups" shows the points of view of some leading and influential figures in the EJI as extracted from the personal interviews held with these figures. The study concludes that most of the violent attacks committed by the EJI during the eighties and the nineties were not really for the *jihad* cause for establishing an Islamic State, but rather a struggle with a political rival, the victory over which seemed to be an end in itself in the minds of the EJI members and leaders. On the other hand, the clarification is made that the incongruence of these acts with the Islamic *Shari'a*, is more of condemnation to the persons- not the religious texts- who were not adequately qualified to interpret those texts.

The effort exerted in this work is remarkable and outstanding considering also that it was a leading research in this area of study at that time. However, some gaps need to be addressed. The first is the time gap considering that the study was

accomplished in the year 2006, a date which was very recent to the occurrence of the Initiative (1997-2002). This might have given the writer a better opportunity for documentation but not for thorough analysis of the initiative over a long period of time, especially that significant events took place later in the Egyptian scenery. The time lapse of around two decades, given the domestic, regional, and international changes that took place within this period would give better judgment concerning the credibility of the Initiative.

Another gap is the questioned objectivity of the writer, although in very limited parts, but existent throughout the book. The choice of the Qur'anic verses with which the book starts (al-Haj: 38-41) which are known as verses legitimizing "fighting- in-defense" in a study concerned with the illegitimate resort to combat by a militant Islamist group brings the issue of objectivity to question. In addition, the terminology used describing violent life - taking attacks by the EJI on innocent civilians including Muslims and non-Muslims as "armed struggle" (*al-kifāḥ al-Mussallaḥ*), a term used in Arabic terminology to connote dignified legitimate struggle, raises further questions. Finally, the study is as an excellent legal documentary work to the EJI Initiative, however, it lacks the ideological documentation to the violent vs. non- violent ideologies of the EJI, which is attempted to be covered by this study.

2- ʿAbdel-Latif al-Manāwi, *Shahed ʿala Waqf al-ʿUnf: Taḥawwulāt al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya fi Misr*, (Cairo: Dar Atlas, 2005).

Al-Manāwi believes that dialogue in every possible way, rather than extinction, is a main tool for the rehabilitation and reintegration of the members of the EJI. The author

based his study on collecting all data required through conducting interviews with core members of the EJI. The first chapter: “Years of Anger” focuses on the ideological formation of the EJI members followed by “Little Wisdom, Plenty of Violence” describing the behavioral path of the EJI witnessing the inclination to violence, followed by the final escalation during the Mubarak era, a phase characterized by violence and counter violence, “*al-ʿunf wa al-ʿunf al-muḍad*”. The book proceeds to present a short account of other militant groups emerging at that time. In the second part of the book the author describes the “Years of Transformation” witnessing the emergence of the Initiative. The third part presents the interviews held by the author with core members of the EJI, a biography for each one of them, and reading in the future of the Initiative. The book comes as a detailed documentation of the version of the story as narrated by the EJI members. It is hoped that the interviews held in this study will present a continuation to the interviews carried by al-Manāwi, serving as an evaluation to the reconciliatory impact of the initiative.

3- Diyaʾ Rashwān, ed., *“al-Murajaʿāt: min al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya ila al-Jihad”*, (Cairo: al-Ahram: Center for Political and Strategic Studies ACPSS, 2008).

The book comes in seven chapters; the authors can be classified into three researchers in al-Ahram ACPSS and four eye witnesses. The first is by Diyaʾ Rashwān, ed., presenting a theoretical framework for the concepts of *murajaʿāt (*ideological reassessment), the meaning, the context, and the implications. The second is presented by Najeḥ Ibrahim, EJI main ideologue and one of the historical leaders, analyzing the strategic importance of the *murajaʿāt*, and its consequences on the domestic and international levels. The Third section is by Dr. Kamal Ḥabib, a former member of al-

Jihad Group, and specialist in the field of political science and the first ideologue of *murajaʿāt* in the militant Islamist movements. He presents a comprehensive vision of the *murajaʿāt* through a comparison with the initiative presented by al-Jihad Group ten years later. The fourth chapter is by the Islamist Lawyer Montasser al-Zayyat, adding an additional perspective by stating that the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) *murajaʿāt* cannot be neglected in this context and giving a detailed account to those *murajaʿāt*. The fifth chapter is by Nabīl ʿAbdel- Fattaḥ, discussing the difficulties facing the re-thinking ideologies. The sixth chapter is presented by Dr. Amr al-Shoubaki around the legal *fiqhī* problems and the projection on reality. The seventh and last chapter is presented by Dr. Wahīd ʿAbdel- Majīd, in which he analyzes the future of the Initiative .This study, will examine the validity of the opinions presented in this book providing further analysis considering the occurring events and the time interval that had passed since its publication.

b. Articles: One article is examined:

    1. Mamdouḥ al-Sheikh, al Jamaʿāt al Islamiyya fi Misr: Murajaʿāt al-Fikr wa al-Asālīb wa al-Mawāqif, www.murajaʿāt.com/tarajuʿat_akra_php.

The author is a specialist in Islamist movements; the first part of the article presents a summary of the history of the EJI till the date of issuing of the Initiative. The second part presents an analysis to the four main Re-thinking books known as "*Silsilat Taṣḥiḥ al-Mafāhīm*" focusing on the ideological characteristics of the Re-Thinking doctrines and describing the ideological transition in these doctrines. The author sums up his article by listing the main problematic ideological concepts affecting the emergence of any future similar initiatives.

2- English Sources

a. Articles: One article is examined:

ʿOmar Ashour, Lions Tamed? " An Inquiry into the Causes of De-radicalization of Armed Islamist Movements: The Case of the Egyptian Islamic Group", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 61, No. 4 (Autumn, 2007), pp. 596-625.

The article falls in 30 pages, focusing on the process of de-radicalization of the EJI in the context of examining the factors that may lead radical and militant Islamist movements to de-radicalize. The main research question is "*can militant, Islamist radicals turn into relatively peaceful groups that accept the "other", and if so, under what conditions*". The writer begins with defining key terms and concepts and providing a typology of Islamist movements. In the second section, some of the literature on the causes of radicalization and moderation of Islamists is briefly synthesized underlining what the writer perceives as gaps in previous literature. In the third section, the theoretical framework is presented, and in the fourth, the EJI is taken as a focus of the attempted case study. Finally, the writer provides tentative conclusion as well as policy recommendations.

Two areas were not attempted to be covered by the article, as stated by Ashour; comparing the variables that led to the Initiative with potential others, and investigating other variables including the international factor. However, the two other areas that were not attempted by the article but will be briefly covered by this study are the detailed analysis of the relationship between the EJI and the Egyptian regime, in addition to the effect of the causal variables of the Initiative on other similar militant groups.

Finally, some comments have to be brought up. Again, as in Salwa al-'Awwa's book, the publication date (2007) falls short in re-reading the Initiative, taking into consideration the impact of the recent events taking place on the domestic level in particular and on the regional and global levels in general, a task that will be attempted by this study as well. In addition, Ashour mentioned some information that was considered by specialists in the EJI, and some of the interviewed ideologues as fallacies and misconceptions. First of which, is his consideration of the Re-thinking doctrines as an extension of the MB "moderate" curricula. Secondly, is his mistaken classification for the EJI as a former ally of the-Qaʿida and as a formerly *Salafi-Jihadi* movement although it started as a *daʿwa* group, i.e. a *Salafi-ʿilmi* moderate one.

Books: One book is examined:

1. Lasse Linekilde and Georges Fahmi, ed., *Building De-radicalization Coalitions* (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, ACPSS, 2011).

The book comes in ten chapters written by ten prominent contributors in the field of Islamist movements worldwide. The book is concerned with presenting a practical program for the activation of the de-radicalization process. This is suggested to be accomplished by forming "De-radicalization Coalitions" for the integration of the efforts of all concerned institutions as bureaucrats, security agencies, religious authorities, civic organizations, academics and media representatives aiming at the formulation of policies intending to prevent radicalization, and of policies designed to de-radicalize, disengage and re-integrate members of radical groups into society. The book highlights the fact that although experiences with radical Islamism and political violence have been very different in terms of scope and intensity in Europe and the Middle East, some of

the driving forces of radicalization, as well as the relational dynamics between members of de-radicalization coalitions seem to be similar.

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

As far as the methodology is concerned, the study will incorporate three approaches. The first is the case-study approach over a limited time frame, which aims at understanding the emergence, and the behavioral and ideological evolution of the EJI from the seventies to the present, the factors that led to issuing the Re-thinking Initiative by the late nineties, and finally the extended impact of this Initiative after the passing of almost twenty years since its occurrence in 1997. The second approach is the historical approach, taking into consideration that the militancy of the EJI constituted an ongoing process which has taken different forms throughout modern history, and stemming from the earlier legacy of extremism prevailing in the Egyptian society at that time. The final approach is the content analysis approach of the ideological doctrines of the EJI before and after the Re-thinking Initiative under study as written by its ideologues.

As the study attempts to explain the factors that had led to the behavioral and ideological transformation of the EJI, the argument is based on the analysis of the four main factors that led to this transformation. In doing so, interviews with key figures relevant to the study are held. The interviews include: two historical leaders who issued the Initiative; two former State Security Department senior police officers; a former member of al-Jihad Group who issued several books promoting non-violence ideology; a member of the “Mediation Committee” involved in the Initiative; the Head of English department of al-Azhar University; also responsible for al-Azhar English section website

for refuting *fatāwa al-takfīr (al-Marṣad);* and finally an ex- core Muslim Brotherhood member. Other interviews will be collected from archives and published material. This will help with updating the available documentary data on the Initiative, and more importantly, *to hear their stories in their own words*. Within this context, studies undertaken elsewhere on doctrines relevant to this study will be analyzed, making related inferences which are hoped to contribute to this study.

The theoretical framework within which the causes of violence can be referred to is either the structural psychological approach, or the political process approach. The argument presented by Moḥammad Ḥafez on these two approaches in "Why Muslims Rebel"[1] will be taken as a theoretical framework for the interpretation of the phenomenon of violence. The first approach argues that several types of socio-structural strains as socioeconomic, cultural, and political strains are introduced as violence motivators. However, the application of this approach to militant Islamist movements has not proven to be always right. Several empirical studies, especially in the case of the EJI, indicate that the structural strains led to the de-radicalization of the movement (as manifested by the Re-thinking Initiative), while the radicalization process did not come as an outcome of any direct strains. The alternative approach is the political process approach which begins with the premise that: "*it is neither necessary for Islamists to be contended to be moderate nor sufficient for Islamists to be deprived to become rebellious"*. [2] It argues that the resource mobilization, whether material, organizational, institutional, or ideational within a specific political environment can act as motives for militancy. It examines the context within which the Islamists operate including the

[1] Moḥammad Ḥafez, *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World* (London: Lynne Reinner Publishers, 2003)
[2] Ibid., p. 19.

political environment, the ideological frames upon which they legitimize their actions, and the mobilization structure through which the resources are gathered. This approach is believed to be useful in studying a single case which is most appropriate to this research.

There were some limitations related to data collection relevant to this study. One limitation was the subjective nature of the data collected by means of personal interviews. Another limitation was the difficulty of meeting any of those who retreated from the Initiative, or did not approve of it from the very beginning. Those are either secretly hiding their militant ideology, or if declared, they have either fled out of the country (as ʻAṣem Abdel- Majid and Tarek al-Zumur: members of the EJI) or are still imprisoned. Another difficulty was talking to the main State-Security Department Official (Ahmad Ra'fat known as Haj Mostafa Rifʿat), who was the key figure responsible for the Initiative as he passed away in 2010. However, this limitation will be minimized by interviewing other former State - Security Department officials in the same field, and by referring to the interviewed EJI leaders' reflections on their relation with him. In general, all limitations were attempted to be compensated by referring to the wealth of available documentary material on the Initiative.

However, it is worth mentioning that although the research topic may have some sociological, psychological, and political implications, these perspectives are only covered in relation to the ideological transformation that had taken place by the EJI and not as a specialized paper on these themes.

HYPOTHESES

The study poses the following hypotheses:

There is a positive relationship between resorting to underground activities- under any justification- by the militant Islamist groups and losing the trust of the ruling regime and the security forces. These clandestine activities provoke the state's violent repressive reactions, whether legal or illegal. Likewise, the illegal security measures and absence of proper procedure of law are in direct proportionality to the ignition of more violence on the side of the militant groups, or pushing other non-violent ones to the violence, thus keeping the fire of militancy burning long. The need for the intertwining of both legal repressive policies and the ideological dialogue approach is a prerequisite for the transition of militant Islamist groups to a legitimate political path. The violent behavioral deviation of the Islamist militant groups is inversely proportional to adequate understanding, and profound knowledge of "*Shari'a* Objectives" (*Maqaṣid al-Shariʿa*) on behalf of these groups. This ideological deviation heightens the violent projection on unacceptable social, religious and political realities.

“Conflict…is a theme that has occupied the thinking of man more than any other, save only God and love”

Anatol Rapport, “Fights, Games and Debates”.

Chapter One

I. Emergence and Behavioral Evolution of the Egyptian Jamaʿa Islamiyya (EJI)

The emergence and behavioral evolution of the EJI in the early seventies passed through two main phases. The first phase lasted for around nine years (1970-1979) during which the Jamaʿa emerged, while the second phase lasted for around 18 years (1979- 1997) witnessing the EJI's transformation to the violent path until issuing the Renouncing - Violence Initiative in 1997. The EJI and the Islamist movement in Egypt in general, were affected by the political and historical context within which these movements were acting. The behavioral transformation of the EJI changed from the peaceful means of addressing the religious and spiritual well-being of the individuals, to the coercive interference for the correction of the perceived "un-Islamic misbehavior" on university campuses. Holding it as a religious duty, they took the authority of imposing their version of Islam on the society to its culmination, ending by targeting the misbehavior of the whole political regime and all its institutions in every possible violent way. Distinguished by its highly organizational structure, the EJI managed, even while its main leaders were inside the jails, to execute almost all of its violent attacks.

A. Early Sadat Presidency Period 1970-1979: Permitted Presence

Three main features characterized the first phase of the emergence and behavioral evolution of the EJI. The first was the freedom of action granted exceptionally to the broad spectrum of Islamist movements under Sadat's permissive policies,[3] the second was the relative inter-fusion of these amorphous and un-

[3] Salwa al-ʿAwwa, *al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya al-Musallaḥa fi Misr: 1997-2004* (Cairo: Al-Shorouk International Bookshop, 2006), p. 60.

crystallized movements, along with substantial differences among them, and finally the gradual transition of the EJI towards violence by the end of this phase.[4] The historical contexts, within which the EJI emerged and evolved, include some domestic, regional and international events. Among the major events taking place in the first phase was the 1973 victory, and towards the end of the nineties, some serious events took place, including Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in November 1977 and the beginning of the Peace Treaty negotiations. In addition, there was the legacy of the clash of the Nasserite regime with the Islamists represented by the MB, and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Islamist political movement began in Egypt in the early part of the twentieth century by the foundation of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) group during the British occupation in 1928. Until the 1967 defeat, the MB was virtually the only significant Islamic political organization in Egypt; however the MB was banned and suppressed by Nasser's regime since 1954.[5]The rise of the subsequent religious movements dates back to the aftermath of the Arab defeat of 1967. The Islamist movement in general made a comeback during the early seventies within the context of a tactical alliance with the Sadat regime,[6] known in political analysis as: "creating balanced conflicts".[7] Upon the advice of some of his counselors,[8] Sadat released the MB from prison and permitted them to be active on university campuses to counterbalance what the regime perceived as a Nasserite-leftist opposition (the enemy of my enemy approach) and to enhance Sadat's popular base.[9] It is noteworthy that the State Security Department was not

[4] Kamal Ḥabib, *al-Ḥaraka al-Islamiyya min al-Muwajaha ila al-Murajaʿa*, (Cairo: Madbouli, 2001), p. 30.
[5] MB was also banned during the monarchy in 1948, and then re-emerged from 1952 till the end of 1954.
[6] A similar alliance was held between the MB and the monarchy to counteract the Wafd political party in 1946.
[7] Tawfik Ḥassanein, *Ẓahirat al-ʿUnf al-Siasi fi al Nuẓum al-ʿArabiyya*, (Beirut: Markaz Dirasāt al-Weḥda al-ʿArabiyya, 1992), p. 57.
[8] These were ʿOthman Aḥmad ʿOthman and Moḥammad ʿOthman Ismail (Asyuṭ Governor).
[9] Denis Sullivan, Kimberly J., *Global Security Watch Egypt*, (London: Praeger Security International, 2008), p.61.

informed of this decision which they considered as a wrong strategic tactic.[10] The decision coincided with a growing interest in religion and in religious oriented activism among students at Egyptian universities. The 1973 victory added to the religious enthusiasm, as it was associated with faith and resurgence to religion as expressed by al-Zayyat: "*we perceived that the reason behind the victory was the shift towards religion".*[11]

The second feature of this phase was the absence of a clear demarcation or well defined organizational structure within the movement. A wide spectrum of Islamists started to move under variations of the title[12]al-Jamaʿa al-Dīniyya (the Religious Group),[13]or al-Jamʿiyya al-Dīniyya (Religious Society). For this reason, reference to the word jama'āt in general, rather than the EJI, will be more common in the study during this phase of emergence. By the end of 1973 it was decided to take the title of al-Jamaʿa al- Islamiyya for the emerging Islamist movement after that of Abu al-Aʿla al-Mawdudi in Pakistan. However, in spite of this amorphous nature, they were rapidly and widely spreading. In general, these Islamist groups represented the small hard core of a broad, but amorphous, mass of religiosity in the society as a whole.[14]

Thus, al-jamaʿāt Islamiyya were established as an inter-university club aiming to promote religious and social activities.[15] Most of the jamaʿāt's activities took place in Cairo, Alexandria, and Asyuṭ universities. Starting 1973, big summer camps were allowed by the official authorities to be organized by the jamaʿāt where no less than 500

[10] Interview with Fouʾad ʿAllam, Cairo, December 6th, 2014.
[11] Montasser al-Zayyat, *al-Jamaʿāt al-Islamiyya, Roʾya min al-Dakhil* (Cairo: Dar Misr al- Maḥrousa, 2005), p. 33.
[12] For more details on the titles of the Islamist groups refer to al-ʿAwwa, *al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya*, p. 83.
[13] Kamal Ḥabib, *al-Ḥaraka al-Islamiyya,* op. cit., p.31.
[14] Saʿd Eddin Ibrahim, "Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.12, No.4 (Dec. 1980), p. 425.
[15] ʿOmar Ashour, "Lions Tamed? An Inquiry into the Causes of De-Radicalization of Armed Islamist Movements: The Case of the Egyptian Islamic Group", *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 61, No. 4 (2007), p. 603.

students would spend two weeks contemplating religious sciences, training in various group sports, and listening to preachers.[16] Towards mid-1970s, the jamaʿāt had managed to gain the majority of student union seats in Egyptian universities.[17] This was due to the services they rendered to the student bodies. The jama'āt offered cheap photocopies of manuals, minibuses for the female students, low-cost Islamic dresses, cut-rate pilgrimage, and so on.[18]It was claimed that they had contacts with some government officials and received government funds in various forms.[19]

By the mid-1970s, the jamaʿāt, previously known as the "Religious Group", had transformed into a nation-wide organization with a well-defined structure. The organizational structure of the jamaʿāt consisted of a *Majlis al-Shura* (consultative council), an ʾ*amir* (leader) in each university, and a national ʾ*amir al umarā*" (leader of all the leaders).[20]Despite having such a structure, the jamaʿāt were a multi-ideological, de-centralized organization. As for the membership, few obstacles were placed and few demands were made on its members.[21] They did not have to break ties with other groups, adopt clandestine names, or pay dues. Membership recruitment came from among students or recent university graduates, and with many young people increasingly observing religion and attending mosques for prayers, recruits were easily found among worshippers. [22]

[16] Gilles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt* (London: Al Saqi Books, 1993), p. 139.
[17] Walid ʿAbdelnasser, *The Islamic Movement in Egypt: Perceptions of International Relations 1967-81* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1994), pp. 59-61.
[18] Kepel, *Muslim Extremism*, op. cit., p. 150.
[19] Al-Zayyat, *al-Jamaʿāt al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., p. 65.
[20] Ashour, Lions Tamed, op. cit., p. 600.
[21] Interview with Najeḥ Ibrahim, Cairo, December 5, 2015.
[22] Moḥammad Ḥafez, *Why Muslims Rebel,* op. cit., p.192.

In 1977, the MB was able to recruit the '*amirs* of Cairo, Alexandria and Minya universities: 'Abdul Munʿim Abul-Futuḥ, ʿEṣam al-ʿEryan, and Abul 'ila Maḍi respectively. The MB was not able to recruit the *'amirs* of the Group in Asyuṭ University, Najeḥ Ibrahim and Karam Zuhdi. Both figures emerged later as co-founders of the EJI, Zuhdi headed the *Majlis al-Shura* of the EJI and Ibrahim was the principal ideologue.[23] The interference of the MB in universities and the reaction to such interference in Asyuṭ were among the factors that ignited the idea of the establishment of a new Islamist movement, less compromising and more conservative than the relatively "pragmatic" MB, as conceived by these newly emerging groups. Najeḥ Ibrahim – appreciated for his good manners[24] - was elected the ʾ*amir* of all Upper Egypt, marking the beginning of a new phase in which the EJI emerged as an independent Islamist movement with a distinct leadership as well as a base in Upper Egypt.[25]

Broadly speaking, up to 1977, no obstacles were put to the freedom of expression as expressed by one of the main leaders of the EJI: "*the era of Sadat was one of the most prosperous eras for the Islamic movement in Egypt*".[26] In return, the latter refrained from attacking the regime openly. Until then, the jamaʿāt were quite aware of the limits they should not exceed, but the infrastructure they were establishing and the training of their affiliates in the summer camps seem to have qualified them for a task other than countering the communist opposition for the benefit of Sadat ruling regime. It was not clear whether this was "*a gentleman agreement or a fool's game".*[27]

[23] Interview with Najeḥ Ibrahim.
[24] Al-Zayyat, *al-Jamaʿāt al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., p. 50.
[25] Ashour, Lions Tamed, op. cit., p. 603-605.
[26] Interview with Najeḥ Ibrahim.
[27] Kepel, *Muslim Extremism*, op. cit., p.146.

Two serious significant attacks by militant Islamists took place in 1974 and1997 respectively with which the universities jamaʿāt Islamiyya publicly dissociated themselves. While the regime was priding itself on being based on faith and science (*Dawlat al-'ilm wa al–'Imān*), two dissonant, but alarming attacks took place by two clandestine Islamist movements which considered the regime an infidel one that had to be toppled. The first was the attempted coup d'état in 1974 by a militant Islamist group led by Saleḥ Siriyya,[28] of a Palestinian origin, known as "*al-Fanniyya al-'Askariyya* group". This attempt was spectacular in volume, planning and timing as it took place following the 1973 victorious war, which strongly enhanced the state's legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of the public, and more importantly, introducing - for the first time - the concept of Islamist militancy revolting against the regime. Three years later, in 1977, another stunning and unprecedented attack in the Egyptian political life took place; the hostage taking and assassination of the former minister of Awqāf (Religious Endowments) Sheikh al-Dhahabi by a group known as "*Jamaʿat al-Takfīr wa al-Hijra"*, led by Shoukri Mostafa, who was jailed during the Nasserite period and upheld violent ideologies from within the prison.[29]

A third major event which took place was the massive food riots in January 1977. These riots were followed by a multitude of repressive measures against all kinds of political opposition, martial law was declared, and the army was called in to enforce curfew, all demonstrations and strikes were banned by an order issued by the Egyptian cabinet, and although not related to Islamist militancy, it definitely added to the prevailing tension.

[28] Saleḥ Siriyya had his own violence doctrine known as "*Risalat al-Imān*", which acted as a source of inspiration to Islamist militancy and which was based basically on Sayyed Qutb's ideology.
[29] 465 of its members were to stand to trial before military courts.

Gradually, signs of transformation towards violence on the university and social level started to show. The freedom of action that was widely granted to the jamaʿāt opened the way for the radicalization. As stated by one of the prominent members of the jamaʿāt: "*We did not miss the chance in the context of the general freedom called to by President Sadat, we took advantage of this".*[30] According to one of the leaders, the beginning of violence started in the universities with clashes with the communist "atheist" students who were acting, in a way, in opposition to sound Islamic norms.[31] In the universities, especially in Upper Egypt, the couples were physically attacked for violations of upright Islamic morals, and artistic and cinematic exhibitions were considered provocations against the jamaʿāt and as such were considered forbidden. In the 1970s and early 1980s, those jama'āt criticized MB for confining its role to advise rulers of Muslim countries instead of capturing power itself. Moreover, they blamed the older generation of the MB for growing tired and for adopting compromising stances towards the governments of Muslim countries.[32]

The real battle between the Islamist students and the state started after Sadat's trip to Jerusalem in November 1977, and the subsequent Egyptian –Israeli peace talks in 1978.[33] Al-jamaʿāt expressed their opposition in different forms including seminars, publications, cassette tapes, demonstrations and public meetings to denounce this "*munkar*" (absolute evil). Concurrently, the asylum offered to the ex-Shah of Iran by Sadat in Egypt, gave rise to further opposition.[34] Tension started to increase and in the summer, the Islamist camps were suddenly shut down. Only the Minya camp was held,

[30] Al-Zayyat, *al-Jamaʿāt al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., p.72.
[31] Osama Ḥafez in: Salwa al-ʿAwwa, op. cit., p. 78-79.
[32] ʿAbdelnasser*, the Islamic Movement*, op. cit., p. 61.
[33] Kepel, *Muslim Extremism*, op. cit., p. 148.
[34] Ibid, p.159.

but the authorities refused to pay its expenses. The regime was still far from halting the jamaʿāt, however this was a sign of change toward harassment. The Camp David accords were signed in March 1979,[35] and afterwards, Sadat mounted his restrictions against the Islamists until, in June 1979, the decree 265/1979 banned the General Union of Egyptian Students and froze its assets, but the jamaʿāt had already built solid infrastructures of their own.

Whether Sadat's banning policies were enough to control these movements or not is not the real issue; anyway the direct outcome was the radicalization of these movements, and the decline of moderate figures in favor of more militant elements. The calls to moderation were ignored and the atmosphere on the campuses was extremely tense. The shift from peaceful means of *daʿwa* to a "vice squad" targeting violently all forms of un-Islamic norms of conduct was the entry point to a more serious and tragic shift to violence against the regime including all representative entities and symbols.

B. Late Sadat Presidency Period, Mubarak Era –the Initiative: 1979- 1997:

The second phase lasted around 18 years from 1979 till issuing the Renouncing Violence Initiative in 1997. This phase was characterized by the escalated violence of militant groups including the EJI, the restricted freedoms, and total clash with the regime, which resorted on its part to suppressive policies in retaliation. In addition, this phase witnessed the clear demarcation and crystallization of each group from the other, the consolidation of the EJI as a distinct movement, and the clear radicalization of the EJI escalating their operations to include assassinations, sectarian clashes, mass murders and bombings. Moreover, the field of action was enlarged to encompass Cairo

[35] In 1965 al-Azhar issued a fatwa forbidding peace with Israel.

city, the capital, where violent attacks would have a wider destructive and exhausting impact on the "corrupt" regime.[36]

Similar to the first phase, the changes in the behavioral path of the EJI were affected by the ongoing prevailing domestic, regional and international events. Among the most significant events were the Iranian revolution, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Peace Treaty held with Israel, the assassination of President Sadat, and the collapse and disintegration of the former Soviet Union.

The religious enthusiasm which was inspired in the first phase (1970-1979) by relating the 1973 victory to the return to Islam was further inspired by the success of the Iranian Islamic revolution to seize power in 1979. According to al-Zayyat, describing the impact of the Iranian Islamist Revolution on the young youth: "*We adopted the Islamic evolutionary ideas and the revolution was inflaming our feelings".*[37]The differences between the *Shi'a* and the *Sunna* were willingly dismissed,[38] and it was hoped that the Egyptian people, following the Iranians, would rise to install, a second Islamic republic.[39]

Concurrently with the Iranian Islamic revolution in 1979, Sadat held negotiations to conclude a peace accord with Israel. This was conceived by the whole Islamist movement, in addition to many opposition components, as a betrayal to the anti-Zionist / pro-Palestinian cause (and it is argued to have been the direct reason for the assassination of Sadat) and more importantly, betrayal to the unannounced alliance between the Islamist movement and the "Pious President", who has now become infidel

[36] Al-Zayyat, *al-Jamaʿāt al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., p. 25.
[37] Al-Zayyat, *al-Jamaʿāt al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., p.77-78.
[38] Saʿd Eddin Ibrahim, Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups, op. cit., p. 443.
[39] Kepel, *Muslim Extremism*, op. cit., 149.

in the eyes of the potential violent Islamists who considered that "*when Sadat found that he had achieved his goals, he started to change to a new phase, in which he embraced the views of the USA and hosted the thrown Shah of Iran, then was his great disaster by visiting Jerusalem and holding the Camp David Agreement*".[40]

Towards the end of the late seventies, the EJI had recruited thousands of members in a well-knit organizational structure with internal list of regulations, steered in by a central leadership, intermediary leaders and bases spreading all over Egyptian governorates.[41] The members were doctrinally educated with a view to launching an armed confrontation with all their enemies,[42] including Copts, statesmen, secularists, security agencies and ordinary citizens. The followers were young men who were religiously and dogmatically raised in conformity with a literature of deviant exegetic commentaries and books.[43] The members were divided into groups of seven persons and only one of them was entitled to communicate with the leadership. Military training was carried by carrying the trainees in closed Jeep vans to isolated places in the mountains of Upper Egypt. Abbud al-Zumur[44] was responsible for this military training.

Moreover, the Soviet invasion to Afghanistan by the end of 1979 raised the call to support the fellow Muslims there giving another offshoot to the militant Islamist movement. Almost all Islamist movements of Egypt were contributing to the Afghani resistance troops (*mujahidīn*) and during the early 1980s, the EJI was believed to have contributed with about 300 combat troops training and fighting in Afghanistan among the

[40] Al-Zayyat, *al-Jamaʿāt al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., p. 68.
[41] Abdel-Latif al-Manāwi, *Shahed ʿala Waqf al-ʿUnf* (Cairo: Atlas, 2005), pp. 77-78.
[42] Al-Zayyat, *al-Jamaʿāt al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., p. 129.
[43] Amr Al-Shoubaki, "The Future of Revisions", in Diyaʾ Rashwān, ed., *Building De-radicalization Coalitions*, p. 100.
[44] Al-Zumur was a major in the Military Agency. Later on, he held leading positions in al-Jihad Group and was a member of the *Majlis al-Shura* of the EJI.

5,000 to 10,000 highly motivated Muslim youth, from the Middle East and other parts of the world, who went to Peshawar, the headquarters of the Afghan *mujahidīn*, financed and armed principally by Saudi Arabia and the USA. Now, the concept of *jihad* was becoming fully elaborated and practiced, and the EJI was dragged to the violence path thus losing an important opportunity to emerge as a socio-political force.[45]

In 1979, al-jamaʿāt al Islamiyya were officially banned and this was followed by Sadat's wide "September Detention Decisions" in 1981 according to which 1536 figures from different opposition backgrounds were imprisoned. The jamaʿāt godfather, Moḥammad ʿOthman Isamʿil, who previously advised Sadat of freeing the Islamist out of prisons to counteract the leftists, was removed from his post as governor of Asyuṭ.[46]It is worth mentioning that Sadat encouraged the Islamic movement until he realized his mistake in the late 1970s. The official public speech started to call members of these groups as deviants, abnormal, heretics and *Khawarij*, and although the Nasser era was a period of infidelity for the Islamists*,* the Sadat era did not turn to be any better.[47]

Time was ripe to plan for killing the "pharaoh" who ruled in contradiction to the injunctions of Islam.[48] The EJI had numerous contacts with other like-minded, small Salafi-Jihadi factions in Cairo and the Delta region. In 1979, an ominous coalition between the EJI and the more militant Jihad Group took place.[49] Al-Jihad, headed by Moḥammad ʿAbdel-Salam Faraj, the principal ideologue of the group, brought in Sheikh ʿOmar ʿAbdel-Raḥman, a graduate of al-Azhar, Cairo's leading Islamic university, to bless al-Jihad's military operations and provide religious credentials to the group. Faraj

[45] Ḥabib, *al-Ḥaraka al-Islamiyya* , op. cit., p. 20.
[46] Kepel, *Muslim Extremism*, op. cit., p. 170.
[47] Saʿd Eddin Ibrahim, Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups, op. cit., p. 426.
[48] Kepel, *Muslim Extremism*, op. cit., p.14.
[49] Ḥabib, *al-Ḥaraka al- Islamiyya*, op. cit., p. 18.

had written a tract which called for the execution of Sadat, "*the apostate of Islam nourished at the tables of Zionism and imperialism*",[50] especially, after his slogan "*la siyasa fi al-din wa la din fi al-siyasa*" (politics should be separated from religion, and religion should be separated from politics).

On September 28, 1981, Faraj, Ibrahim, Zuhdi, 'Abbud al-Zumur and Khalid al-Islambulli [51]held a meeting to plan for the assassination of Sadat and a subsequent nation-wide coup d'état.[52] The assassination took place on the 6th of October 1981, and two days later, 35 members of the EJI attacked Asyuṭ security Department, killing more than 100 security men. After the shocking impact of the big number of killed security men, ʿOmar ʿAbdel-Raḥman issued a *fatwa* by their spiritual leader, obligating fasting sixty days on all those involved, in expiation of the committed nefarious sin.[53]

After the imprisonment of hundreds of Islamists following the assassination of Sadat, the EJI started a quick process of complete and clear consolidation and demarcation. In 1982-83 in the Tura prison complex, a split between the EJI and al-Jihad Group took place. The split ended in the consolidation of the EJI as a separate group headed spiritually by the blind preacher ʿOmar ʿAbdel-Raḥman and the Jihad Group which was headed by the group's imprisoned military planner, Abbud al-Zumur and Ayman al-Ẓawahri. The split was mainly due to disagreements on three issues: leadership, ideology, and tactics.

[50] Al-Zayyat, *al-Jamaʿāt al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., p. 69.
[51]Moḥammad Shawki al-Islambulli, the brother of Khalid al- Islambulli, was among the detainees of September Decisions.
[52] Al-Zayyat, *al-Jamaʿāt al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., p. 41.
[53] Interview with Najeh Ibrahim.

Regarding leadership, there was a consensus among the leading EJI figures, which were exclusively from Upper Egypt, that ʿOmar ʿAbdel-Raḥman, being a *ʿalim* (scholar of Islamic jurisprudence) must lead the EJI. The leading figures in the Jihad movement authored a 64-page document in which al-Ẓawahri argued that the leadership of a blind man "*wilayat al-ḍarīr*" in military or paramilitary matters is Islamically unacceptable. The EJI answered back by discrediting the leadership of the imprisoned Abbud al-Zumur considering "*wilayat al-asīr*" as unacceptable.

The second difference that was centered on an ideological concept*: "al-ʿUdhr bi al-Jahl"* (excuse due to ignorance) will be separately explained in the second chapter on the Ideology of violence. The disagreement regarding this concept was particularly raised questioning the legitimacy of killing the soldiers in the Asyuṭ Security Department attack. The third main disagreement between the EJI and the Jihad was regarding tactics. The EJI leaders preferred to be publicly active in mosques, universities, and on the streets. In their "Charter of Islamic Action",[54] two of their means for changing the society emphasized publicity: "*al-daʿwa"* (proselytizing) and "*al-'amr bi al-maʿruf wa al-nahi ʿan al-munkar"* (ordering good and forbidding evil). By contrast, al-Jihad Group, by its very nature was a secret society that emphasized covert action and the tactic that they strongly advocated for bringing about change by al-Jihad leaders at that time was an Islamist- led military coup.

The consolidation phase was further enhanced by the production of literature that highlighted the EJI's violence ideology. This literature has provided Islamic-based ideological legitimacy for the militarization process. Outside-the-prison, a rebuilding

[54] The main violence doctrine of the EJI.

process was conducted in parallel by the second-in-line commanders after the devastating strikes conducted by the Egyptian security forces in the after math of Sadat assassination. In the 1980s they recruited heavily among the unemployed young graduates of the new rural universities and newly urbanized ones with the main center in Asyuṭ, “kingdom of the jamaʿāt Islamiyya”.[55]After the assassination of Sadat, Mubarak released subsequently the arrested detainees of Sadat’s September Decisions and allowed some freedom to counteract the anger that was provoked by these decisions. The EJI core members, who were responsible for rebuilding the group and recruiting new affiliates, made use again from this relative atmosphere of freedom. They deliberately changed the focus of their recruitment speech-to have more appeal to the addressed Islamists - from the deviation of the Sadat’s regime from Islam, to the necessity of the solidarity and support with the arrested “brothers” who were considered heroes[56] who sacrificed their freedom and lives for the cause of Islam. They would even take pride in the number of years they spent in prisons. [57]

The Jamaʿa was now organized in cells, making it very hard to monitor and suppress having a separate military and *da'wa*, or "call," wings. The military wing seems to have been strengthened by the return of Egyptian volunteers from the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan. The Soviet giant collapsed and disintegrated adding to the false feeling of pride by those *mujahidīn.* After Moscow had withdrawn its forces from Afghanistan, the surviving Muslim fighters, battle-hardened and more militant than ever, began to look for some other areas, like Egypt, where they could fight for the "cause of

[55] Most notable of these were Ṣafwat 'Abdal-Ghani, leader of the daʿwa wing, Mamdouḥ Yusuf, former leader of the military wing, and Mostafa Ḥamza, the former leader of Majlis al-Shura abroad, in: ʿOmar Ashour, pp. 609-610.
[56] The researcher met a young man in a bookshop, who pointed to a book with the researcher that has the photo of Khalid al-Islambulli on its cover page and was keen to comment that Khalid was a hero.
[57] Interview with Kamal Boraiqaʿ, Cairo, December 29th, 2015.

Islam."[58] Known as "the Afghanis," these militants were said to be the EJI toughest and most effective fighters. The Afghani *jihad* militarized the Islamist behavior, a process that lacked any moral or legal regulations.[59]

The successful expansion of the EJI in Cairo's poor suburbs and universities, its radical rhetoric, and its attempt to change traditional practices that were deemed" un-Islamic" through violent means in the period between 1987 and 1989 alarmed the regime. The EJI was responsible for 90% of the distributed leaflets opposing the regime then. As a result, the security forces started a crackdown on EJI activists. By early 1989, the EJI attempted to stop the crackdown by issuing the so-called" six demands" appeal.[60]The security forces ignored the demands and continued the crackdown. In reaction, the military wing of the EJI, led by Mamduḥ ʿAli Yusuf at that time, decided to assassinate General Zaki Badr, the minister of Interior Affairs. The attempt did not succeed, but it did initiate a cycle of assassinations. By August, 1990, the speaker of the EJI, Dr. 'Ala' Muḥyi al-Din, was found shot dead near his apartment in Giza. The EJI accused the State Security Department. Members of the supposedly peaceful *daʿwa* wing were now participating in violent activities, including the assassination of Dr. Rifʿat al- Maḥjūb, Head of the People's Assembly in1990. In October 1994, 83-year-old Najīb Maḥfouz, Nobel Laureate in Literature, who was critical of Muslim extremists, was seriously wounded in a stabbing attack by Islamists at his Cairo residence. On the same year, the EJI assassinated General Ra'ouf Khairat, head of Combating Radicalism Section in the State Security Department by bombing his car.

[58] P.B. Sinha, "Threat of Islamic Terrorism in Egypt", *Strategic Analysis* (July 2008), p.,1998.
[59] Kamal Habib, *al-Ḥaraka al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., p. 33.
[60] Al-ʿAwwa, *al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., p 122.

Terrorist attacks on pro-Western citizens by militants and retaliatory mass executions by the government made the situation increasingly violent and frightening. Moreover, the group believed in the position of tributary or *dhimmi* for Christians in Egypt and opposed any signs of Coptic "arrogance" (*istikbār*), such as Christian cultural identity and opposition to an Islamic state. The group distributed a leaflet accusing Egypt's one Christian provincial governor (appointed by the government) of providing automatic weapons to Christians to attack Muslims, and the Sadat administration of following orders given by the United States.[61]

Internationally, the radical behavior was reflected in seeking alliances with other extremist groups, as well as the internationalization of the EJI's violent operations, most notably the attempt on President Mubarak's life in Addis Ababa in 1995, although the EJI attacks between 1981-1997 focused solely on the Egyptian regime, and refrained from attacking targets outside Egypt. The EJI's literature never indicated it had any regional, let alone international aspirations.[62] Anyway, confrontation with the regime and related institutions escalated till issuing the Initiative in 1997.

Over the period of extended Islamist militancy, regional and international external support was suspected. Among the list of accusations came Sudan[63]which was considered then the biggest foreign patron of terrorist activities in Egypt,[64]Iraq was accused of providing weapons and financial support and Iran[65] which supported ʿOmar ʿAbdel-Raḥman,[66] and provided the alternative accommodation and travel

[61] Kepel, *Muslim Extremism*, op. cit., p. 156-160.
[62] Idem .
[63] Stanley Reed, "The Battle for Egypt", *Foreign Affairs* (Sep.-Oct 1993).
[64] Sinha, Threat of Islamic Terrorism, op. cit., p.1198. USA added Sudan to its list of terrorism-sponsoring countries.
[65] Saʿd Eddin Ibrahim, Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamist Groups, op. cit., p.428 "Sadat never hid his disapproval of Khomeini and his unequivocal support for his friend the Shah.
[66] Iran's support for Islamists came in retaliation to the Egyptian efforts to defeat the Iranian revolution and hosting the ex-Shah. It is well known that a main street in Iran carries the name of Khalid al-Islambulli, one of the assassins of

arrangements for the Islamist militants. According to Egyptian security officials, Osama bin Laden was the major financier of a camp in Afghanistan where recruits from Egypt's al-Jihad and EJI were trained. Moreover, the USA and Saudi Arabia, in addition to the Egyptian regime itself, supported - in every possible way - the "*mujahidīn"* to counteract the Soviet occupation, an action which backfired in the three countries.

According to official records, the death toll resulting from the confrontation period between 1992 and 1996 reached almost 1200 deaths including 47I EJI members, 401 from the security forces, 306 Egyptian civilians, and 97 tourists. The number of detainees during the mid-1990s reached a maximum of 30,000 people.[67] This period also featured a rise in the use of terror tactics, many assassinations/ assassination-attempts, bombings, and mass-murders. In retaliation, severe security measures were being taken including systematic torture in prisons, 98 military show-trials, regular curfews in many Upper Egyptian towns and villages, and the destruction of hundreds of acres of arable land.[68]It was more of a low-grade civil war with the EJI.[69]

Among those who fell victim to EJI violence were police personnel, military-men and government officials, who were regarded as pillars of the Hosni Mubarak Administration. The tourism industry was another target of the Islamists' anger. Many Christian Copts, school teachers, journalists and other professionals, and innocent civilians fell prey to terrorist violence. According to one of the leaders, *"the biggest loss in the assassination of Sadat was the success of the attempt, that success deceptively gave the*

Sadat.

[67] Denis Sullivan and Kimberly Jones, Global Security, op. cit., p.63.

[68] Kepel, *Muslim Extremism*, op. cit., p. 150.

[69] Ewan Stein, "What does the Gamaʿa Islamiyya Want Now?", *Middle East Report*, No. 254 (Spring 2010), pp. 40-44.

impression that it was a right step". [70] The plan aiming at changing the ideological and political structure of Egypt within three years, according to the vision of Abbud al-Zumur, simply ended only as an assassination of a president.[71]

In conclusion, the EJI which emerged as a peaceful *daʿwa* group, transformed gradually to the most militant group in Egypt. All the EJI and militant Islamists atrocities were committed within the context of ideological justifications, and slogans naming their violence as "heroic acts" launched for the sake of gaining God's pleasure: "*ghaḍba lillah" (ghaḍba li Allah)*.The ideology to which the EJI justified their violence will be examined in the following chapter.

[70] Ibid, p. 79.
[71] Al-Zayyat, *al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., p. 173.

“Aggression breeds aggression. One comes to expect aggression to be a way of solving all problems…Thus aggression is pretty much of a habit; the more you express it the more you have of it”.

Gardon Allport, “The Role of Expectancy” .

Chapter Two

II. Ideological Evolution: Legitimization of Violence

A. Legacy of Violence

The mindset and the behavior of most of the Islamist youth generation of the 1970s was affected by both the remnants of the Nasser-MB clash, and those ideologies reacting to the post Arab nationalism era, which was conceived as an era of western imperialism and the dominance of socialist and secular ideologies.[72]Moreover, this was taking place in the intellectual and religious vacuum of an effective presence of the moderate Azhar '*ulama*[73] and the infiltration of the Salafi Wahhabi ideology after the oil boom.[74]

The clash between the Nasserite regime and the MB provoked the religious anger sentiments. It was widely publicized within the Islamists circles as a clash with Islam rather than a mere political conflict.[75]Most of the Islamists went as far as interpreting this clash in terms of hostility of a communist regime with religion altogether.[76] The defeat of that anti-religion regime in 1967, in addition to the previous loss of Palestine in 1948 by all Arab regimes, and the collapse of all nationalism dreams,[77] was perceived as a clear indication of the failure of secular and semi-secular

[72] ʿAbdelnasser, *The Islamic Movement*, op. cit., p.18.
[73] All interviewed former militant groups' leaders expressed that they did not take al-Azhar as a frame of reference into consideration.
[74] Ḥabib, *al- Ḥaraka al-Islamiyya,* op. cit., p. 28.
[75] For a detailed counter-argument on the positive relationship between Nasser and Islam refer to :Sabri, M. Khalil, Abdel Nasser wa al-Tajruba al-Naseriyya:Taqyeem Islami Mawduʿi http://arab-uity.net/forums/archive/index.php/t-17633.html.
[76] "Communism was believed to be the polar opposite of Islamic faith and ideology" in ʿAbdelnasser, the Islamic Movement, op. cit., p.181.
[77] The breakup of the unity with Syria in 1961 for example was a blow to nationalism.

ideologies[78] and a clear sign of deserved divine wrath, an element which substantiated the attack by the Islamist movement against Arab nationalism. [79]

This religious interpretation of the ongoing events came as an intellectual descent of the ideology of the most important contemporary Islamist ideologues then: Abu al-ʾAʿla al-Mawdudi (1903–1979), and Sayyed Qutb[80] (1906-1966). Al-Mawdudi and Qutb were both opposed to colonialism, imperialist controls and irreligious leaders.[81] The militant Islamists ideology was also believed to draw on the classic interpretation of Ibn-Kathīr (1300-1373) on the Qur'anic verses on *ḥakimiyya* (confining authority of governorship to God only) (Surat al-Ma'ida, verses 45-47), and Ibn-Taimiya's (1263–1328) books: *al-Imān, al-Ṣarem al-Maslul,* and especially on his *fatawa* pertaining to Mongols and his famous fatwa in volume 28 of his Great Fatawa about "*al-tattarruss*", (the permissibility of killing Muslims if the enemy is taking them as shields).[82]

Qutb and al-Mawdudi were considered "*the intellectual godfathers of jihadi groups across the Muslim world*"[83] including even al-Qaʿida. Qutb's name appears repeatedly in the leaflets produced by the Egyptian *jamaʿāt's* rank and file.[84] Montasser al-Zayyat, who was in charge of the recruitment and ideological training of the new affiliates in the early eighties explained how the intellectual training was based on reading "*Maʿalim fi al-Ṭarīq*" (The Milestones) of Qutb, and the interpretation of some Qur'anic chapters

[78] Interview with Kamal Ḥabib, Cairo, December 8, 2015.
[79] Ḥabib, *al-Ḥaraka al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., p. 16.
[80] Fouʾad ʿAllam, argues that Sayyed Qutb was not the real father of terrorism in the region, but rather it was the establishment of the MB in the 1920s as proved by the wave of assassinations that took place then.(Interview, Cairo, December 6, 2015).
[81] Stephen Vertigans, *Militant Islam*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 162.
[82] Ronald Nettler "IbnTaimiyah, Taqī al-DīnAḥmad." http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com.library.aucegypt.edu:2048/article/opr/t236/e1167?_hi=0&_pos=2
[83] Rifʿat S. Ahmad, *Qur'an wa Sayf: min Malaffāt al-Islam al- Siyasi*, (Cairo: Madbouli Bookshop, 2002), pp. 70-71.
[84] Kepel, *Muslim Extremism*, op. cit., p. 155.

from *Qutb's "Dhilal al-Qur'an"*. In this way the conceptual mindset of the new member was formed to be fully convinced with the idea of revolting against the ruler".[85]

On their part, Al-Mawdudi and Qutb developed their ideology interpreting the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate in the terms of a colonial and Zionist conspiracy,[86] which led to the division of the *umma* into mini-states where secularism prevailed, *shari'a* lost its dominant role in Muslim societies, and the infidels imposed their laws. The main theologian for the "Islamic state" - al-Mawdudi - established the original "al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya in Pakistan, from which the EJI drew their name, thirteen years after the foundation of the MB in Egypt. After the death of the MB founder Ḥassan al-Banna in 1949, Qutb was influenced by al-Mawdudi's ideology, especially on *ḥakimiyya,* which became a primary theme for both scholars, a theme which entails the rejection of human governorship whenever it was present in any form whether secularism, nationalism or democracy.[87] The disobedience to these disciplines is a Godly order, if the ruler does not draw his power form God, and the law he administers is not God's law, then he is a usurper and the duty of obedience is replaced by a duty of disobedience.[88] Both al-Mawdudi and Qutb,[89]argued that both ethnicity and nationalism were opposed to Islam and criticized those forms of nationalism because they presented themselves as substitutes to Islam.[90] Taken to its logical conclusion, this hostile vision of the world leads to an overthrow of power, but it was not until the mid-

[85] Al-Zayyat, *al-Jama'āt al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., p. 129.
[86] Scholars such as Muḥammad 'Abdu and al-Afghani, began by preaching against the impact that the Western technologies and cultural influences would have on the state of Islam.
[87] Ḥassan Hanafi, "Athar Sayyid Qutb 'ala al-Harakat al-islamiyya al-Mo'aṣira" in Soheir Lotfi, ed., *al-Mutashaddidūn al- Muhdathūn* (Cairo: The National Center for Criminological and Social Studies, 1992), pp. 383-384.
[88] Kepel, *Muslim Extremism*, op. cit., p. 11-12.
[89] ʿAbdelnasser, *The Islamic Movement*, op. cit., p. 98.
[90] Ibid., op. cit., p. 97.

1970s for it to spread widely among the first universities generations coming out of the demographic explosion and the literate rural exodus.[91]

Al-Mawdudi and Qutb, also taught that the prevailing ruling governments are "*jahili"* (a Qur'anic term that describes the society of ignorance and barbarism that prevailed before Prophet Moḥammad), and which symbolized the antithesis of Islam. For their more extreme followers, war was not only permitted, but also mandated, to restore the Muslim world to righteousness. Qutb constructed, from behind the bars, the theory of the Islamic rupture with the established order. In his texts, Qutb explains that the societies of the so-called Muslim world are not at all Islamic, but are in reality the equivalents of the *Jahiliyya;* Nasser's regime was seen as the illustration of this par excellence. Qutb defined the *jahili society*: "*but what then is the jahili society? If we need an objective definition, it would be every society that does not worship Allah sincerely …according to that definition, all existing societies on earth now are jahili societies".* Qutb proceeds to list all socialist, atheist, Jewish and Christian societies and he further adds to the list of *jahili* societies "*all those societies which claim to be Muslim, not because they worship other than Allah, but because they grant one of the Godly attributes (ḥakimiyya) to entities other than Allah….so in the first place they are* "*wahimūn*" (*delusional) and secondly they are "kafirūn"(infidels)".*[92]

In addition, Qutb exemplified Ibn-Taimiya's sharp[93] distinction between Islam and non-Islam. In his view, leaders of modern nation-states are analogous to the Mongols. Based on Ibn-Taimiya's assertion, the Muslim identity of these modern rulers must be

[91] Kepel, *Muslim Extremism*, op. cit., p.13.
[92] Sayyed Qutb, *Maʿalim fi al-Ṭarīq* (Cairo: Dar Al-Shorouk, 1980), p. 98-107.
[93] Nettler, "Ibn-Taimiya, op. cit.

questioned. The principle of *takfīr* was widely seen in the newly emerging and widely disseminated book *al-Fariḍa al-Ghāʿiba* (The Hidden Imperative), by Moḥammad ʿAbdel-Salām Faraj, the ideologue of the group that engineered Sadat's assassination. Faraj cites Ibn-Taimiya's fatwa on the Mongols as a legal precedent in his *takfīr* of contemporary rulers and religious authorities. Ibn-Taymiya took his position with regard to the contemporary situation of the Tartars who were, in his view, *kāfirūn,* because they applied a non-Islamic system of law: the "yasa". The phenomenon of declaring Muslims disbelievers and its consequent results goes back in history to the early emergence of al-Khawarij during their clash with the fourth Caliph ʿAli ibn Abī-Talib (656-660). The common ideological denominator that united all militant groups by the end of the 1970s, through which they legitimized their violence was labeling the rulers as *kāfirs* holding it as lawful to spill their blood. [94]

Radical Islamist movements argued that nation states alienated Muslims from *Dar-al-Islam* (The abode of Islam) and thus they called for bypassing nationalism in order to emulate the model of the *"umma"* which existed in early Islamic history. They accused all nationalist movements and intellectuals in the Muslim world of being agents of the crusading West.[95]The doctrinal influence of Egyptian Islamist authors (as well as of the Pakistani al-Mawdudi) which predominated in the Sunni world, remained the prime sources for all who seek to overthrow the impious society (*jahiliyya*) and build the

[94] Ahmad al-Tayyeb, *Danger of Takfir* (2015, June 1). Retrieved November 19, 2015, from Al-Azhar Marṣad Web site: http://www.azhar. eg/en/details/danger-of-takfir.
[95] ʿAbdelnasser, *The Islamic Movement*, op. cit., p.99.

Islamic state on its ruins. In the 1970s, Arab nationalism became increasingly identified with Nasser, the arch-enemy of the MB[96].

The radical Islamist movements extended their definition of "liberation" so that the term would not be confined to the liberation of Muslim territories from a foreign presence "*al-ʿaduww al-baʿīd*" (far enemy) but would include as well, the liberation of Muslim peoples from oppressive rulers and governments "*al-ʿaduww al-qarib"* (near enemy), who were now representatives of the classic *external far enemies*; Israel, the colonialist Christian West and the Communist Soviet Union. Now the *internal near enemy* was everywhere; the EJI and other militant movements did not distinguish between the Egyptian regime and its" infidel" US and Israeli allies, or between armed police and tourists.[97]

All components of the Islamist movement during the 1970s, even the moderate ones, agreed on the goal of Islamic unity, however, they differed on the means to achieve this unity. While radical elements adopted *jihad* to achieve that end, considering *jihad* as an end per se,[98] moderate forces were peacefully propagating the objectives of Islamic unity among Muslims and rulers. The MB, whose ranks had included Qutb, was considered by militant Islamists to have betrayed their past in the interest of accommodation with the regime.[99]

With the polarization of modern Islamist political thought on these issues in the latter half of the twentieth century, the radical Islamist movements, including the EJI, has become dominant on one side of the political debate with their own ideology

[96] Kepel, *Muslim Extremism*, op. cit., p. 105.
[97] Ibid, pp. 184-185.
[98] ʿAbdelnasser, *The Islamic Movement*, op. cit., p. 116.
[99] Ewan Stein, What does the Gama's Islamiyya Want, op. cit., p. 42.

defining their view of the world. These groups did not merely seek self-empowerment but aggressively sought to disempower, dominate or destroy others.[100]

B. EJI Violence Doctrines[101]

The worldview of the EJI was relatively simple: The Islamic caliphate had been replaced by small states ruled by secular-minded "infidels" in league with Crusaders and Jews. These infidels would never re-establish the caliphate, essential to the revival of Islam; and must therefore be toppled through *jihad*. At the same time, Muslim societies have to be purified from deviant practices via "*al-'amr bil maʿrouf w al-nahiʿan al-munkar"*, or *ḥisba,* in addition to never-ending proselytizing (da'wa). It is noteworthy that the EJI did not go so far, as did al-Takfīr wa al-Hijra and al-Jihad Group, to declare almost all of society to be infidel. This direct action on behalf of religion would bring society back to the true religion of God.[102]

Prior to writing their doctrines in 1984, the EJI drew on its own contemporary violence "godfather", the fellow Jihad Group's primary doctrine of Faraj "*al-Fariḍa al-Ghaʾiba*" which was the reference book inspiring all *jihadi* movements then. Faraj's book[103] was heavily indebted to Qutb's writings and provided the worldview and ideology of Islamic *jihad* considering *jihad* as an obligation on par with the other five pillars of Islam. Faraj's doctrine was written in 1979–1980, but it was first published, in the Egyptian newspaper *al-Aḥrar*, on December 14, 1981, more than two months after

[100] Khalid Abul-Faḍl, *The Place of Tolerance In Islam*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), p.5.
[101] Appendix B provides a detailed account of the EJI violence doctrines.
[102] Ewan Stein, What does the Gamaʿa Islamiyya Want, op. cit., p. 41.
[103] This book (al-Fariḍa al-Ghaʾiba) has been considered by al-Azhar to be offensive, doctrinally wrong, and dangerous. Even years after Sadat's death.
[103] *Majallat al-Azhar* (Journal of al-Azhar) published a special booklet in July 1993, criticizing Faraj's doctrine point by point.

the assassination of Egyptian Sadat. The MB's corrective book "*Duʿah la Quḍah*" *(*Preachers not Judges), which was a trial to correct Qutb's deviation from the MB mainstream, went without recognition for the emerging radical militants. Qutb's terminology and their interpretation as "*al-mufaṣala*" (separation) or "ʿ*uzla*" (withdrawal) and "*istiḍʿāf*" (weakness) denoted the position that necessitated the spiritual detachment from the contemporary Egyptian *jahili* society which had to be excommunicated. This was the basis for al-Takfīr wa al-Hijra group whose leader – Shoukri Mostafa - was a disciple of Qutb in jail and heavily drew on the latter's ideas.

Second in the line after Faraj came Sayyed Imam al-Sherif[104] of the Jihad Group, who preached for the use of violence in the 1970s in his famous tract "*al-ʿOmda fi Eʿdād al-ʿOdda*", who claimed in his conclusion that *"rights can only be attained by force"*,[105] and that today's rulers are more infidel than the Mongols. In addition, Sheikh ʿOmar 'Abdel-Raḥman, who had been charged with complicity in the assassination of Sadat, but was acquitted and later fled to the United States,[106] had the highest spiritual impact.

CHARTER OF ISLAMIC ACTION

The conceptual violence framework of the EJI, which transcended the nation state, was reflected in the titles of their violence doctrines.[107] Titles, such as "*Mithāq al-ʿAmal al-Islami*" (the Charter of Islamic Action) (1984), and "*Ḥatmiyyat al-Muwajaha*" (The Inevitability of Confrontation) (1987) were the first to appear.[108] The EJI and al-

[104] Known also as ʿAbdel Qadir bin Abdel ʿAziz and after issuing his Re-thinking doctrine "*Wathiqat Tarshīd al ʿAmal al-Jiahadi*", he came to be known as Dr. Faḍl.
[105] Abdel- Qadir bin Abdel- Aziz*, al-ʿOmda fi Eʿdād al-ʿOdda,* Dar al Risala, Cairo,(no publication date), p. 579.
[106] Kepel, *Muslim Extremism*, op. cit., p.
[107] Rifʿat S. Ahmad, *al-Nabiyy al-Musallaḥ: al-Rafidūn (*London: Riad El-Rayess Books Ltd, 1991), pp. 156-176.
[108] Both terms echoed the common Nasserite vocabulary including "*Mithāq al-ʿAmal al-Waṭani and Ḥatmiyyat al-Ḥall al-Ishtiraki*".

Jihad Group relied on the oral circulation of their ideology before the written documentation of the ideologies. Although the Charter, EJI main violence doctrine, was issued in 1984, yet it belongs ideologically to the seventies era since the EJI's leaders who composed it belonged to the 1970s generation.[109]Unlike the widely known pattern, the EJI produced its violence literature after it had already got fully involved in radicalization following Sadat's assassination. They thought of documenting their ideology after being imprisoned for the sake of preserving this action- motivating ideology fearing that it would be lost in case they were sentenced to death. Prior to that, no specific document portrayed their ideology except the general Salafi legacy of Ibn-Taimiya and Faraj's doctrine.

The violence literature of the EJI totals to about 10 main books and papers,[110] representing the so called EJI's "*Fiqh al-'Unf*" (Jurisprudence of Violence) issued from within the jails through a period of six years starting 1984. Those books, including the most famous "*Mithāq al ʿAmal al-Islami,* explained the main objectives of the EJI and its applied strategy. "*Kitab Aṣnaf al-Ḥukkām wa Aḥkāmihim*" (kinds of Rulers and their Rulings) stipulated the obligation of revolting against the ruler who alters divine rulings. The book specifically ascertains the infidelity of Sadat. In *"al-Ṭa'ifa al-Mumtaniʿa ʿan Shariʿa min Shara'iʿ al Islam"* (The Desisting Party from a Law of Islamic Laws), and also in *"Ḥatmiyyat al-Muwajaha*" (the Inevitability of Confrontation), the obligation of *jihad* and of fighting anyone or group refraining or hindering the application of any Islamic injunction is legitimized. The book comes in complete compliance to Ibn-Taimiya's *fatawa* and was intended to emphasize precisely the legitimacy of calling for

[109] Rifʿat S. Aḥmad, *al-Nabiyy al-Musallaḥ*, op. cit., p. 165.
[110] Refer to appendix B, p. 113.

jihad against Sadat. Another book is "*Kalimat Ḥaq*" (A Righteous Word) wich constituted the pleading that was presented by ʿOmar ʿAbdel-Raḥman to the courts in defense of the accused EJI members then.[111]"*ʾAʾillahun maʿa Allah? Iʿlan al-Ḥarb ʿala Majlis al-Shaʿab*" (Another God with Allah? Declaration of War on the People's Assembly), discussed the prohibition of political parties and any kind of political participation in the parliamentary and political secular life. "*Baḥth al-ʻudhr bi al-jahl wa al-Muwallah*" (Excuse due to Ignorance of the Sin) is a paper which warns against labeling those "ignorant of the sin" as unbelievers, and draws sharp lines between those who should / should not be rendered as infidels. The second part of that paper discusses holding alliances with the infidels and divides this into internal alliance (which is prohibited), and external alliances,(which is still prohibited but does not render the person an infidel). "*Jawaz taghyīr al-Munkar li ʻAḥād al-Raʿiyya*" (the permissibility of changing the evils by the individuals) explains how individuals are granted the right to interfere in correcting the evils and sins. "*Wujūb al-ʻAmal al-Jamaʿi*" (the Obligation of Collective Action) stipulates the necessity of collective action as a prerequisite for establishing a caliphate according to the fiqhī rule "whatever is a pre-requisite for an obligation is in itself an obligation", hence it is obligatory and to be enrolled in a *jamaʿa* in which the total obedience to the leader is a must.[112]

In summary, the broad violence theoretical framework was: the infidelity of the ruler who alters the rule of God, in addition to all subsidiary institutions and individuals like the security agencies among others, the obligation of fighting any refraining group or individual from applying a certain religious rule, the permissiveness of individuals to

[111] According to Najeḥ Ibrahim the pleading was written by two of the EJI historical members.
[112] Al-Manāwi, *Shahed ʿala Waqf al-ʿUnf*, op. cit., pp. 74-76.

assume the right of changing the evils and misconducts, the prohibition of parliamentary and political life participation, the obligation of joining a *jamaʿa*, the hostility of secularism to the doctrine of Islam, the infidelity of man-made laws, and the societal obligation of *jihad*. In addition to echoing some of al-Jihad's Group concept of the priority of fighting the "near enemy" (as represented by the infidel regimes) to fighting the "far enemy" (Israel and the West including USA), the infidelity of all non-Muslims, and the permissiveness of killing Muslims if they stand as shields or cannot be separated from the desired attacked targets.[113]The tradition of tolerating an unjust ruler for the sake of preserving the unity of the '*umma* is completely rejected believing that it is the duty of every true Muslim to remove injustice "*ẓulm"* and misguidance "*ḍalala"*, including that committed by a ruler.[114]They restricted the concept of *jihad* to combat, restricted combat to killing, and confined *jihad* to *jihad* of demand (*jihad al-ṭalab*) disregarding the other kind of *jihad* in defense "*Jihad al-dafʾ"*. According to the *Mithāq*, *jihad* is one way to achieve sociopolitical change. The other two means being *da'wa* (preaching or proselytizing) and *al-ʻamr bi al-maʿrouf wa al-nahi ʿan al-munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil). The latter method could be violent or non-violent.[115]

That literature employed the general religious terms, used by most of the Islamist literature, with sacred or historical connotations in the collective memory of Muslims, such as '*umma, jihad, dar-al-ḥarb, dhimmis* and *jahiliya.* Those terms which were reinterpreted, to fit contemporary political actors into classical stereotypes, were also radicalized and taken to their extremes, and were universalized to cover the globe by al-Mawdudi, Qutb and by the new ideologues. That terminology was even utilized by what

[113] Ibid, p. 77-79.
[114] Mithāq al ʿAmal al Islami in :Rifʾat Sayyed A., *al-Nabiyy al-Musallaḥ: al-Rafiḍūn*, Cairo, pp.165-176
[115] Idem.

was considered then as the most moderate component of the Islamist movement, namely the MB. Another One linguistic feature characterizing the EJI violence literature was the repetition of the terminologies of monotheism, worshipping, submission and governance. It reflects that they remained captive to dogmatic and juristic concepts which made them incapable of seeing the contemporary surrounding political environment or international relations, considering that their dogmatic aspects are the ones which exclusively, or fundamentally, determine their political options.[116]This comes in compliance with all firmly held systems of belief, especially those founded on religious conviction, which are in some way supremacist.[117]

One of the distinguishing - less radical - ideological concepts for the EJI was the concept of *al-ʿUdhr bi al-Jahl* (excuse due to ignorance). The concept is well established in Sunni theology, and argues that if a person has violated Islamic laws due to "ignorance" and/or a misunderstanding he should not be punished. On the other side, leaders of al-Jihad Group argued that even that person should be punished. The practical implication of the argument has to do with fighting Muslim soldiers protecting "secular" regimes. Whereas the EJI gave those Muslim soldiers an "excuse" due to their "ignorance" and therefore argued for narrowing the selection of its targets, al-Jihad leaders argued that both soldiers and leaders of secular regimes are "apostates" and, therefore, legitimate targets.[118] In general, the EJI was more cautious than al-Jihad in accusing others of kufr and they excluded "*'ahl-al- Qibla*" (Muslims), *kufr al-muʿayyan*" (a specific person or entity). In this point the EJI adopts the creed of the majority of

[116] ʿAmr al-Shoubaki, *Building De-radicalization*, op. cit., p. 98.
[117] Khalid Abul-Faḍl, *the Place of Tolerance*, op. cit., p. 5.
[118] This was after the EJI had assassinated more than 80 police officers and soldiers in Asyuṭ on the 8th of October 1981.

Sunni scholars which was believed to be one of the ideological factors which opened the road for its de-radicalization.[119]

After the EJI had emerged in in a full-fledged shape, it developed its doctrinal and political schemes based on juristic foundations and special religious exegetic explanations whereby they judged the ruling regime as infidel and called for fighting it. The EJI adopted this orientation in a more mass-oriented way than the "elitist", more dogmatic and uncompromising fashion pursued by the Jihad Group.[120]The EJI, like other militant Islamists, have deployed several ideological frames to justify and motivate collective violence. Violent militants usually justify carrying out inhumane conduct by deactivating self-inhibitory norms against violent behavior. They do this through several mechanisms that can be explained upon examining the phenomenon of violence in general.[121]

C. The Phenomenon of Violence

The phenomenon of religious-based violence cannot be explained by one simple direct answer, rather a set of factors are always presented as a possible explanation. Moreover, in the case of the EJI, the well-established answers do not seem to give a logical explanation for their radicalization; to the contrary, more questions are even raised. It seems that the EJI was unique both in radicalization, as much as it was unique in de-radicalization. The factors leading to the violence of the EJI in particular and militant Islamists in general, will be portrayed in an attempt to examine the extent to which the EJI's violence conforms with the explanations given to the general question

[119] Kamal Ḥabib, *al-Ḥaraka al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., p. 90-92.
[120] Al-Shoubaki, *Building De-radicalization*, op. cit., p.100.
[121] Ḥafez, *Why Muslims Rebel*, op. cit., p,191.

of: “Why Men Rebel”,[122] then, the more specific question of: “Why Muslims Rebel”,[123] in an effort to reach a final possible explanation to the most relevant question of this study: Why did the EJI rebel?

The answer to this question demands discussions of the factors that set the context for revolt, considering not only forms of state, economic policies, external control, and class structure, but should add two more important elements, namely; ideological formation and mobilization capacity, to name but some.[124]The fact of the matter, however, is that radical Islam had been in the making for well over half a century in the Middle East, particularly in Egypt, the region's center of gravity. Several factors are suggested as explanations for the emergence of religious violence in general during the seventies in Egypt. These explanations include political vacuum, the failure of any alternative opposition – other than Islamic - in gaining popular support, the failure of secular ideologies in compromising between the Islamic values and the modernity process, the westernization of the political leadership, the loss of role models, the 1967 defeat , the Arab- Israeli conflict, the Western prejudices towards Israel in addition to political suppression of the Muslim youth after 1965, the year of the second clash of Nasser with the MB and the impact of the economic policies of Sadat leading to the alienation of the youth.[125].

In the case of the EJI, some of the common violence interpreting factors are not in full conformity with the classical violence motivating explanations, while others seem to be, to a large extent, in compliance to these explanations. Among the controversial

[122] Drawing on the title of Ted Gurr’s book: “*Why Men Rebel*?”, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974)
[123] Drawing on the title of Moḥammad Ḥafez’ book : “*Why Muslims Rebel*?”
[124] Ḥafez, *Why Muslims Rebel*, op. cit., p.192.
[125] Rifʿat S. Ahmad, *Qur’an wa Sayf*, op., cit., pp. 72-77.

examined factors in the case of the EJI are the **political oppression**, **economic deprivation** and **discontent with the regimes' secular tendencies**. Among those in conformity with violence explanations are **text misinterpretation** (legacy of extremism), the set of **distinguishing characteristics of the EJI** (the demographic nature of the Upper Egyptian component of the EJI members, the youth factor, absence of an independent scheme of action and loyalty to the group), the **influence of the MB religious rhetoric**, and finally **resource mobilization**.

As for political suppression and exclusion, the common assumption is that definitely, the most fundamental human response to the use of force is counterforce.[126]During the Nasserite period suppressive security approach was applied with opposition altogether. Qutb, who was tortured in prison, argued that the Egyptian military and its brutal persecution of Islamic activists proved that it was non-Islamic, or pagan. The *Takfīr and Hijra* group's leader, Shoukri Mostafa said "*it is impossible that they torture us and still be considered Muslims*".[127]Faraj - al-Jihad Group's ideologue - went one step further, saying that the state's determination to crush Islamic activism made all courses of action futile with the exception of violent attempts to overthrow the ruler.[128]

During Sadat's presidency, however, the only recorded state-violence incident was the September Detention Decisions in 1981, which included all opposition actors, yet only the Islamists answered back by assassinating Sadat. As expressed by one of them: "*Khalid (al- Islambulli) had the idea of assassinating Sadat, he was definitely affected by the imprisonment of his brother Moḥammad (in the September detentions), and a group of religious scholars to which he was attached, he considered the arrests, as a war on*

[126] Ted Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, op. cit., p. 232.
[127] Al-Zayyat*, al-Jamaʿāt al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., p. 38.
[128] Idem.

Islam".[129]However, during Mubarak's presidency, the state violence went to its extreme level and was described to be the worst ever among the three regimes.[130] Mubarak criticized the initial trials of dialogue with the Islamists calling it "*ḥuwar al-ṭurshan*" (the dialogue of the deaf) and one of his ministers of Interior Affairs, Genral Zaki Badr (1986-1990), announced the policy of "*al-ḍarb fi suwaidā' al qalb*"[131] indicating the intention to give the Islamists a deadly blow in retaliation for their violence. The EJI answered back by attempting Badr's life, and according to Ali al-Sherif, one of the EJI historical leaders: "*when the minister of interiors said that the new policy is stabbing the Islamists in the heart, we thought of defending ourselves otherwise we would be extirpated*".[132]

Such empirical data would seem to emphasize the assumption of the causal relationship between state repression and the violence of militant groups, in other words, "*a vicious circle of repressive autocrats breeding violent theocrats*".[133]However, in the case of EJI, whereas repression contributed to the radicalization of the EJI starting the early 1980s culminating in the assassination of Sadat, and the production of *fiqh al-ʿunf* literature during the prison period in Mubarak era, it has also contributed to the revision of both the behavior and ideology of the EJI, as admitted by the EJI leadership.[134] Moreover, the Interviewed historical leaders and some writings by core members emphasized the degree of unlimited freedom granted to them by Sadat. Najeḥ Ibrahim and karam Zuhdi described how they took advantage of the continued forbearance and indulgence of Sadat "*the more he became forbearing, the more aggressive the preachers*

[129] Ibid, p. 173.
[130] As described by Najeḥ Ibrahim, Kamal Ḥabib and Kamal al-Helbawi. The latter went as far as describing Nasserite security approach as "ethical" if compared to that of Mubarak.
[131] Al-Zayyat, *al-Jamaʿāt al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., p. 251.
[132] Interview with Najeḥ Ibrahim.
[133] ʿOmar Ashour, Lions Tamed, op. cit., 623.
[134] Idem.

became in attacking him".[135] In the end, he was assassinated by them, and according to one of the observers: *"The freedom that was granted to these groups (to the youths of 1970s) was intoxicating, for these young activists, filled with a false sense of their own power, thought that anything was possible*".[136]Moreover, one of the interviewed ex-core members of the more radical Jihad Group stated that 1970s generation did not suffer from any political repression or cruel imprisonment conditions and torture, to the contrary, all the circumstances were set to produce a psychologically and ideologically sound and balanced generation, but the Islamists lost all the offered opportunities,[137]and as put by the EJI leaders: "*If I could turn time back, we wouldn't have killed Sadat, we would have appreciated his value*".[138]

Consequently, the factor of political and security repression does not seem to provide a convincing explanation for the violence of the EJI. Other factors as economic deprivation and discontent with the secular regime tendency will be examined in an effort to either consider or eliminate them as possible causes of the EJI violence.

As for **economic deprivation**, Ted Gurr, in his seminal work "Why Men Rebel"[139] put forward the theory of relative deprivation, which linked rebellious activity to feelings of economic deprivation.[140]Nationalistic governments have further suppressed socio-economic growth in a majority of the Muslim countries. From this poverty and social instability, a desire to revolutionize the political structure has arisen. This accounts for the majority of desirable recruits being of the male middle-to-lower-class demographic.

[135] Interview with Karam Zuhdi, Cairo, January 4, 2016.
[136] Stein, What does the Gamaʿa Islamiyya Want, op. cit., p. 42
[137] Ḥabib, *al-Ḥaraka al-Islamiyya* , op. cit., p. 30.
[138] Interview with Najeḥ Ibrahim.
[139] Ted Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, op. cit., p.60.
[140] Relative deprivation is defined in psychosocial terms as a perceived discrepancy between men's value expectations and their value capabilities.

However, contrary to popular belief, a large share of the leaders of the EJI and dominant Islamist movements' members and participants were rather highly educated and came mostly from Engineering and Medicine faculties. The interviewed leaders of the EJI and of al-Jihad Group totally negated this assumption confirming that even if it holds for the grassroots, the decision makers were not mobilized by this factor[141](Tarek and Abbud al-Zumur, Ayman al-Ẓawahry, and Osama bin Laden, to name but some, came from highly prestigious economic and social backgrounds). Another empirical data on the regional level was the Islamic Iranian revolution which was carried out by the elite intelligentsia and no participation was recorded by the economically marginalized. In short, these participants are far from the "Third World, uneducated" perception that exists in many Western minds.[142]

The third factor is the **discontent with the political regimes' secular tendencies**, in other words: the "separation of the *Sultan* and Qur'an".[143] Many writings have related the accumulated anger of militant Islamists to the failure of secular ideologies in compromising between the Islamic values and the modernity process, in addition to the westernization of the political leadership. However, it was previously mentioned that the *Faniyyaʿ Askariyya* coup d'état in 1974 took place when the state was priding itself of being the "State of Science and Faith", Sadat was being called the "Faithful President" after his tactical alliance with the Islamists, and was also keen to be seen performing the ritual prayers. Religion, then, was just used to cover political objectives while winning the masses of people.[144]Moreover, a counter argument with

[141] Refer to all interviewed members and leaders of Islamist groups.
[142] Guidere Mathieu, *Historical Dictionary of Islamic Fundamentalism* (Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2012), p.3.
[143] Interview with Kamal Ḥabib.
[144] Fouʾad ʿAllam, "The Experience of the Egyptian Security Services in countering Terrorism", in Diyaʾ Rashwān, ed., *Building De-radicalization Coalitions,* pp. 119-126.

sound proofs defends Nasser's stand from Islam in refutation for the claimed accusation of being anti-Islam or anti-religion, affirming that the clash with the MB was mainly a political clash rather than a religious one. Even the EJI clash with the regime was described by Salwa al ʿAwwa and Najeḥ Ibrahim as a mere political one. Moreover, on the regional level, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is witnessing religious violence although it is applying the *Shariʿa* rules (Islamic Jurisprudence).[145] In addition, later empirical data reveal that even the "assembly of the *Sultan* and Qur'an" resulted in unprecedented violence, as in the case of Daʿish, to the extent that militant Islamists are described as being more of "death cults".[146] Historically, even the highest religious authority of the third and fourth Caliphs - ʿOthman and ʿAli - was accused of being deviant from religion worth to be killed for infidelity.

Thus, the discontent with political repression, economic deprivation and deviance from religion still fall short of providing a reasonable causal relationship of the EJI violence. Four main factors will be further examined to provide an explanation of the EJI violence phenomenon namely: text misinterpretation, EJI special characteristics, the influence of the MB religious rhetoric, and most importantly resource mobilization.

Text misinterpretation is one of the examined factors for religious-based violence.[147] Islamists' violence was and is still committed with cries of *tahlil* [148] and *takbir*[149] and under ideological justification of being a "*ghaḍba lillah".*[150] Militant Islamists go as far as considering it "legitimate violence". The inadequate religious knowledge of

[145] Interview with Fouʾad ʿAllam.
[146] http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/sep/22/isis-hamas-haiti-and-the-catholic-church-on-the-use-of-death-cults.
[147] All interviewees agreed upon this factor as being one of the main causes of the EJI violence.
[148] Saying "la ilah illa Allah" or there is no God but Allah.
[149] Saying "Allah Akbar" or Allah is the Greatest.
[150] Indicating "anger (wrath) for the cause of Allah".

the militants whose only tools were just enthusiasm and sharp reactions to reality was a direct path to radicalization.[151]The misinterpretation is conceived as more of "A Crisis in Thought", and not an original approach adopted by the Islamist movement.[152]The legacy of extremism added to this crisis of thought. The Grand Imam of al-Azhar claims the responsibility of the Azhar institution for "*the heritage of extremism and fanaticism in the Islamic thought*" considering that the faulty reliance on the misinterpreted *fatawa* of Ibn-Taimiya further derived them to embrace harsh or violent interpretations[153].

The deviance from the moderate religious speech was further accentuated by the dissociation of the Islamist groups in this era from the Azhar mainstream of thought. None of the radical group's members was an Azhar affiliate, except for ʿOmar ʿAbdel-Raḥman who was considered an exceptional deviance from al-Azhar mainstream.[154]Attitudes towards al-Azhar ʿ*Ulamā*ʾ among most militant groups ranged from indifference to hostility, viewing those ʿ*Ulamā*ʾ as a group of state employees – bureaucrats and describing them as *babbaghaw'āt al-manāber* (pulpit parrots). Sheikh al-Baqouri (1907- 1985) was called *al-Munafiquri* (indicating his condemned affiliation with the regime) and Sheikh Gad al Ḥaq (1917-1996) was called Ḥad al-Ḥaq[155] (indicating the deviance from the right path). They invariably described those ʿ*Ulama* as people who would reverse religious edicts "*yuḥallilūn al-ḥaram, wa yuḥarrimūn al-ḥalal"* and were strongly advised not to pray behind them in mosques where official ʿ*Ulama* presided. The kidnapping and subsequent assassination of Sadat's former Minister of Awqāf Sheikh al-Dhahabi culminated the groups' hostility toward Egypt's religious

[151]Interview with Kamal Boraiqaʿ.
[152] Muʿtazz al-Khatib, , *Sayyed Qutb wa al-Takfir: Azmat Fikr 'am Mushkelat Qira'a* (Cairo: Madbouli, 2009), p.44
[153] Ahmad al-Tayyeb, Danger of Takfir, op. cit.
[154] Interview with Kamal Boraiqaʿ.
[155] Interview with Najeh Ibrahim.

establishment. [156] The only accepted external influence was that of the Wahhabi *Salafi* oriented trend, which builds heavily on Ibn-Taimiya.[157] The text misinterpretation, so far, seems to introduce the first acceptable explanation for the EJI religious-based violence. The next examined factor is the set of the EJI's distinguishing features of.

The distinguishing characteristics of the EJI seem relevant in the context of the process of the EJI radicalization. The first feature among those characteristics was the demographic human component considering the high percentage of both the EJI's rank and file and its leadership who came from such Upper Egyptian cities as Asyuṭ, Sohag and Beni Swaif. The people in these regions tend to be more alienated from Cairo from those in the north, they are also more prone to blood feuds and other violence, and due to their firm psychological nature they tend to enforce their ideas aggressively. Moreover, the large number of Christians in these regions exacerbated Muslim extremists' sentiments.[158]

A second feature was the relative immaturity of the EJI members considering their young age group, and as put by Najeḥ Ibrahim "*the ere of Sadat was the most prosperous for the daʿwa in Egypt, but we were not satisfied by this, the youth always wishes for more"*.[159]It can be easily said that while the official regimes were unable to absorb the youth and find outlet for their energy and enthusiasm, the Islamist movements were able to provide this alternative.[160]Moreover, sometimes violence came in the context of search for identity, leadership and political ambitions: "*they created an imaginary state that*

[156] Saʿd Eddin Ibrahim, Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups, op. cit., p. 434.
[157] Interview with Kamal Ḥabib.
[158] Reed, the Battle for Egypt, op. cit., p. 4.
[159] Ibrahim, al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya Bain al-Mubadara wa al-Muraja'a in Diyaʾ Rashwān, ed., al-Murajaʿāt min al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya ila al-Jihad (Cairo: al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2008), p. 29.
[160] Interview with Najeḥ Ibrahim.

did not exist in reality".[161]This Ideological immaturity was a characteristic of all Islamist groups acting at that time.

A third feature of the EJI was the absence of a defined independent scheme of thought and action during the formation and radicalization phase. This subjected them to become absorbed into the defined scheme of the more radical Jihad Group.[162]The Jihad's ideological doctrine; *al-Fariḍa al-Ghāʿiba,* considered *jihad* as an equivalent to armed combat, and considered it as an end per se. According to Ḥabib,[163] the merge with the Jihad Group was the reason for the tragic transformation towards radicalization. This explains why after being imprisoned, the EJI sought to dissociate itself from the Jihad Group by developing its own Charter of Islamic action.

A fourth and final important feature of the set of characteristics of the EJI, as defined by one of the historical leaders,[164] was the exaggerated sense of and loyalty and alignment to the group. This factor is a characteristic of the Islamist movement in general. Over appreciation for the group, intermarriages, and excessive sense of devotion that subconsciously transcended even the loyalty to the creed of Islam characterized the zealous members to the extent that members would "*tolerate insults to Islam and would not tolerate insulting the Jamaʿa*".[165]

After examining the two factors of text misinterpretation and the characteristics of the EJI as more possible motives for radicalization, a third possible factor will be examined. All the interviewed members of both the EJI leaders and al-Jihad, in addition to several studies, emphasized **the influence of the religious rhetoric of the MB**

[161] Interview with Dr. Kamal Boraiqaʿ.
[162] Interview with Kamal Ḥabib.
[163] Najeḥ Ibrahim mentioned the same reason.
[164] Interview with Najeḥ Ibrahim.
[165] Ibid.

members. MB members, who could not depart from sharing the same Qutb's "psychology of the prisoner"[166]were regularly invited as prominent spokesmen to the university lectures held by the jamaʿāt. The emphasis on the atrocities committed towards the MB by the Nasserite era ignited unjustified anger of the Islamists towards the tolerant Sadat regime. This inability of the MB's members to let go the residuals of the painful memories,[167] was of no good except in fueling the unjustified discontent with the official authority in the subconscious of the Islamist youngsters as described by Najeḥ Ibrahim: "*we would talk about torture when there was no torture at all*".[168] Later on, the EJI leaders avoided this rhetoric after their release from the prisons in an effort to evade creating a similar cycle of inherited violence. Nowhere in their new ideology comes any mentioning of the details of their sufferings from any unlawful security measures torture: *"we were deeply deluded by the exaggerations that we heard about the clash of the Nasserite regime with the Islamists as if it was an intended plan".*[169]

The final critical factor to explain the religious-based violence of the EJ and the militant Islamists in Egypt is **resource mobilization**. Belief in both the utility and desirability of violence (through ideological justification) can motivate men to organize and participate in political violence especially if they are in some degree discontent.[170] Recruitment was made easy in the context of the success of Islamic fundamentalists to channel public discontent with the economic and political conditions into support for an Islamic regime, especially in the context of the wide freedom granted to them during Sadat's presidency period. In general, discontent allows men to believe violence against

[166] Ḥassan Ḥanafi, *al-Mutashaddidūn al-Muḥdathūn*, op. cit., p. 325
[167] As described by Ibrahim, Zuhdi and Ḥabib .
[168] Interview with Najeḥ Ibrahim.
[169] Interview with Kamal Ḥabib.
[170]Ted Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, op. cit., p.319.

political actors is both justified and potentially useful in enhancing or defending their value positions. The failures of increasingly discredited secular forms of nationalism strengthened new voices who appealed to an Islamic alternative.[171]

On the other hand, the1970s Egyptian Islamists' time spent in academia has helped them to understand how social rebellion can change the course of a civilization, and their knowledge of the Islam of the past, which is seen as "a true Islamic society". Moreover, the socio-economic charitable role of these religious groups competed for the loyalty of their citizens and the legitimacy of their own political power.[172] As for financial support, it was not an easy task; but was made possible by several financing channels. Sadat's regime publicly supported the university activities of the Islamist groups. Later on, stealing Christian-owned gold shops was legitimized as a source of financing their violent attacks, in addition to the suspected external role of Sudan and Iran and the announced logistic and financial support of Saudi Arabia and USA and even the Egyptian regime (Afghani mujahidīn).

To sum it up, the militant Islamists were radicalized through a multilayered set of factors.[173] Misinterpretation and false apprehensions have steered the course of the general opinion of the Islamic fundamentalist movement. [174]In addition, the EJI was able to radicalize its affiliates considering its special characteristics and ability of resources mobilization. Religion was a vehicle to mobilize deprivation and discontent and *takfīr* was the ideal and fastest means to express the bitter reality.[175] Militant Islamists have

[171] John Esposito, *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism or Reform?* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1997), p.3.
[172] James Wellman & Clark Lombardi, *Religion and Human Security: A Global Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), P. 21.
[173] Muḥammad Ḥafez, *Why Muslims Rebel*, op. cit., p. 173.
[174] Guidere Mathieu , *Historical Dictionary of Islamic Fundamentalism*, op. cit., p. 1.
[175] This relates to the assumption presented in Aqua Viva, *ʿilm al-'Ijtimaʿ al-Dini :al Ishkālāt wa al-Siāqāt* (Abu

relied on several ideological frames to justify and motivate collective violence. Violent militants carried out inhumane conduct by deactivating self-inhibitory norms against violent behavior. They did this through ethical justification of violence and displacement of responsibility for violence by shifting it onto its victim's.[176] The threat posed by "oppressors" was heightened and the struggle was portrayed as a total war against corrupt and irredeemable enemies, thus facilitating moral disengagement. Religion was misused to serve their anarchistic tendencies. They thought they were in a war where anything was allowed.[177]

In conclusion, while Islamist movements are not alone in perpetrating violence as militant Christians, Jews, Buddhists, and Sikhs have also been inspired by their religious beliefs to engage in violence. With regard to Islamic fundamentalism, those who desire this return to the "fundamentals" do so because they feel that today's changing modern world is blemishing the "sanctity" or "purity" of Islam and therefore that a return to the religion's basics will preserve the faith and provide for a morally just life for its believers.

Dhabi: Hay'at Abu Dhabi li al-Thaqafa wa al-Turath, 2011).

[176] Ibid, p.191.

[177] Stephen Vertigans, *Militant Islam* (USA: Routledge, 2009), p.21.

“If we eschew violence, it is not because of any moral imperative, but it is because violence cannot change human beings”.

Jayaprakash Narrayan,

“The Nature of the Revolutionary Situation Around the world”.

Chapter Three

III. The Re-thinking Initiative: De-legitimization of Violence

A. Emergence of the Initiative

After the EJI had entered into a violent confrontation with the regime and failed, it was only natural that they revise the "ideology of failure"; in order to establish an "ideology of success".[178] On the 5th of July 1997, during one of the military tribunals of the EJI members, Moḥammad al-Amin ʻAbdel- ʻAlīm, asked the generals presiding over the tribunal for a word. To the surprise of everyone, including security officials, and even other EJI members, he announced a statement[179]on behalf of the historical leaders renouncing -violence and calling EJI affiliates to renounce all military operations at home and abroad.[180]After much bloodshed, the Jamaʿa, that long glorified violence, made a complete shift in the violent ideological and behavioral stance held by the group since the late 1970s.

Not only did the EJI dismantle its armed wings as a proof to its credibility, but it also published a series of well-argued renouncing violence doctrines (*Murajaʿāt*) authored by members of the consultative council (*Majlis al-Shura*) of the group. The initiative, which was called in the media the "Initiative for Renouncing Violence", succeeded in freeing around 15,000 to 20,000 of the group, hence driving them away, at that time, from the path of militancy.[181]

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[178] Amr al-Shoubaki, *Building De-radicalization*, op. cit., p 107.
[179] Appendix A gives a full account of the statement.
[180] Najeḥ Ibrahim, et al., *Nahr al-Dhikrayāt,* (Cairo: Maktabat al- ʿUbaikan, 2005), p. 7.
[181] Amr al-Shoubaki, *Building De-radicalization*, op. cit., p. 93.

The declaration of the Initiative passed through four phases over a period of about five consecutive years.[182]The first phase was the announcement of the intent to shift to the non-violent path which necessitated the internal consensus of the leadership. The second was the Ideological contextualization of the new ideology through issuing the series known as "*Silsilat Taṣḥiḥ al-Mafāhīm*" authored and revised by eight members of the *Majlis al-Shura*. The third was convincing the affiliates and the grassroots with the new ideology, taking into consideration that the Initiative was taken by the imprisoned historical leadership, without approval from the leaders outside prison and abroad. The last phase was appealing to the Egyptian people and to the whole Muslim community. In addition, before the 1997 initiative, at least 14 attempts were made, the most notable of which was the one made by al-Azhar scholars starting 1988, and the one made by the so-called "*Lagnat al-Wusaṭā'*" (Mediation Committee) in 1993.

The Initiative came as a surprise to many parties including the EJI members themselves. The security forces reacted cautiously and even suspiciously in the beginning.[183]Internally, the Initiative came as a blow to the leaders in exile to the extent that Ayman al-Ẓawahri, leading the opposition from outside, considered the Initiative as a "surrender", and enlisted two main figures among the EJI to sabotage the Initiative by carrying out a massive attack on November 17th 1997 in Luxor leaving 71 death casualties, 58 of which were tourists. Rifaʿi Ṭaha, who headed *Majlis al-Shura* abroad, took responsibility for the massacre which was the last violent act by the EJI. This almost came as a death blow to the ilitiative causing it to halt for the successive three

[182] Ashour, lions tamed, op. cit., p. 612.
[183] Mamdouḥ al-Sheikh, al jama'āt al Islamiyya fi Misr: Murajaʿāt al-Fikr wa al-Asālīb wa al-Mawaqif, www.muraja'āt.com/taraju'at_akra_data/4.DOC,

coming years. However, the Initiative managed to came into action again by the year 2001. Another death blow, which raised the suspicions of the spectators and the security authorities, came in 1998 with the declaration of Rifāʿi Ṭaha of joining "*al-Jabha al-Islamiyya al-ʿAlamiyya li Muḥarabat al Yahūd wa al-Ṣalibiyyīn"* (World Islamic Front for Fighting the Jews and the Crusaders) of al-Qaida. However, the historical leaders from within the jails declared their objection, and Rifāʿi Ṭaha was removed from the *Majlis al-Shura* and was forced to draw from the Front, not long after signing it. The leadership consensus about the unilateral ceasefire was reached only on March 28, 1999, when the leaders in Egypt and abroad declared their unconditional support for the Initiative. ʿOmar Abel-Raḥman, the spiritual leader in exile initially supported it.[184]

Externally, the reactions to the Initiative were divided into three opinions: the first categorized it as a deal with the government in exchange for mutual benefits for both parties, the second considered it as submission and surrender due to strong security pressures, and the third considered it as a real ideological reassessment and behavioral transformation. The suspicions included those regarding the Initiative as a kind of dissimulation "*taqiyyah*" that the EJI resorted to as a result of failure, believing that if there was a chance for them to go back to violence, they would.[185]

B. Transformation Factors

The factors that led to the Initiative can be divided into internal and external factors. The internal factors include the organizational nature of the EJI, especially its

[184] Idem.
[185] Amr al-Shoubaki, *Building De-radicalization*, op. cit., p.93.

leadership, and the effect of imprisonment. The external factors include the security approach, the political regime agenda, and civic actors.

1. Internal Factors

a. Organizational Nature of the EJI

It could be said that organizationally wise, the Initiative passed peacefully without any disintegration from within the group, nor any bloodshed. According to Najeḥ Ibrahim, this was a great success because when a similar initiative took place in other groups it was faced with great opposition as the case in the Jihad Group causing deep internal conflicts.

It is crucial in the analysis of any movement's behavioral evolution to differentiate between the reasons that led to the emergence of these movements and the reasons that led to resorting to violence, as violence may by accidental to its nature, which is the case of the EJI.[186]As mentioned earlier, the EJI emerged from a much broader peaceful student movement. Unlike the Jihad Group which emerged as a dissident from the militant Faniyya ʿAskariyya Group, the roots of the EJI go back to the "Religious Committee" that was formed in the universities during the early seventies for daʿwa purposes.[187]Moreover, the main reason for the split with al-Jihad Group was the divergent organizational orientations of the two tendencies in the1980s. While the EJI's tendency aimed to build a mass movement through public preaching and direct action, al-Jihad wanted to form a disciplined clandestine organization capable of launching a

[186] ʿAbdel-Aẓim Ramḍan, al-Ḥarakat al-Diniyya fi Misr wa al-ʿUnf, in Soheir Lotfi, ed., *al-Mutashaddidūn al Muhdathūn*, p. 412.
[187] Ashour, Lions Tamed, op. cit., p. 606.

decisive strike against the state. The EJI's "vice squad",[188] that was established to combat immoral behavior in public places was only a temporary, but a tempting shift in the original structure of the group. And although" v*iolence is a temptation, it leaves you in the predicament of how to get out of it"*[189] yet, the EJI was able to get out. In addition, it was targeting the "near enemy", so when it came in good terms with this "near enemy" - the regime - violence lost its momentum. When violence reaches a "saturation point", it starts to decline. The EJI realized that it had reached this point of saturation. On the ideological level, the EJI initially belonged to the groups which perceived the violent combat as a means to an end unlike other groups as al-Jihad which perceived it as a "sacred" end per se.[190]

The local Upper Egyptian rural nature of the human component of the EJI which once facilitated violence also facilitated the acceptance of renouncing violence. Following the "paternal" leaders was a deep rooted habit that facilitated compliance with their respected decisions.[191]Many writings interpret the compliance of the EJI grassroots to the state of "high respect" to the members of the *Majlis al-Shura*, which is a repeatedly mentioned theme in many writings[192]considering the tribal-like habits of following the chief of the tribe or the senior person in the extended family. Social bonds, intermarriages and similarities contributed to the domino effect of spreading the acceptance of the Initiative. Moreover, unlike the Jihad, the EJI was a local Egyptian movement which worked on mass scale in poor villages and city slums. The local nature

[188] Max Guirguis, "Islamic Resurgence and its Consequences in the Egyptian Experience", *Mediterranean Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 2, (2012), p. 206.
[189] Interview with Kamal Ḥabib.
[190] Ashour, Lions Tamed, op. cit., p. 599.
[191] Interview with Kamal Ḥabib.
[192] ʿAbdel-Monʿem Mounib, *Murajaʿat al-Jihadiyīn* (Cairo: Madbouli Bookshop, 2010), p. 35.

of the EJI protected it from influential external impact and support (though hindered the Initiative for a while after its declaration) which also served to prevent the globalization of its terror as happened in al-Jihad Group case. In Addition, the decision making process was fairly democratic as exemplified by the *Majlis al-Shura* and practiced on a mass approval basis. This process was noticeably reflected in the prolonged dialogue between the leaders and their grassroots during their tours in the prisons for explaining the Initiative. All points of view were expressed and discussed, and consensus was always sought by the leaders.

Among the factors that had also contributed to the de-radicalization process was the special nature of the leadership of the EJI. It is known that change in general, and change towards de-radicalization in particular, is often surrounded with accusations of "betraying the struggle"[193] in the view of many militant Islamist movements. Thus only through a charismatic leadership that is perceived by the majority of followers "*credible, pious, Islamically knowledgeable, and with a history of struggle*",[194] could such a process by accepted. The imprisoned "historical leadership" had presented the spiritual leadership replacing that of ʿOmar ʿAbdel-Raḥman (since the latter's imprisonment in the USA following 9/11) around which the members rallied around in times of crises for psychological and spiritual comfort. The second generation of leaders outside the prisons, which executed decisions and administered the group's affairs on a daily basis, derived their legitimacy from the former.[195]According to one of the second line leaders, Mamdouḥ Youssef,: "*we accepted the Initiative because we trusted that it originated sincerely*

[193] Ashour, Lions Tamed, op. cit., p. 618.
[194] Idem.
[195] Ashour, Lions Tamed, op. cit., p. 614.

from our leaders, whom we know would never be weakened under any kind of pressures".[196] More importantly, they were able to break the taboo set by the militant jihadi trend which condemned any cooperation with the political regime as "*al-ḥiwār maʿa al tawāghīt, maqbrat al daʿwa wa al-duʿāh"* as stated in the Jihad's famous decree".[197] And although most of the arguments in the literature were not new, the ***message bearers*** made a difference. The appeal to the masses was made easier because it was their leaders who called them to the Initiative, and as put by one of the former commanders of the EJI's armed wing: "*hearing the arguments directly from the sheikhs (EJI leaders) was different, we heard these arguments before from the Salafis and from al-Azhar, but we did not accept them. We only accepted them from the sheikhs because we knew their history*."[198]The leaders cared for their members and when the prison administration decided to put detainees from different ideological backgrounds in the same cell, the leaders rejected these mixed prison cells as they were worried that the more radical *takfīr* ideology would appeal to its members or that they would be affected by the raised criticism to the Initiative.[199]

Another important factor was the perseverance of the leaders who had the idea of the Initiative in mind and kept pursuing it. They were able to gain the trust of both the regime and the EJI members twenty years later. The historical leaders toured all known political detention centers and prisons, from Damanhūr in the north to al-Wadī al-Jadīd and Asyuṭ in the south, for a period of 10 months in 2002. These tours aimed to illustrate the new ideological perspectives, and then to address the questions,

[196] Salwa al-ʿAwwa, *al Jamaʿa Islamiyya*, op. cit., p. 202.
[197] Mounib, Muraja'āt, op. cit., p. 38.
[198] Ashour, "Islamist De-radicalization and Ending Jihadism". In Lasse Lindekilde, & Georges Fahmi, ed., *Building De- radicalization Coalitions* (Cairo: al-Ahram Center For Political and Strategic Studies ACPSS, 2011), p. 55-56.
[199] Interview with Najeḥ Ibrahim.

comments, and critiques of the members.[200] The leaders would discuss the four new books, followed by an extended period of questions and answers. The leaders would also meet the members in their cells to discuss the new ideology in small groups. The leaders considered these meetings as being one of the main reasons for the relative success of the Initiative.[201]

The leaders were also able to read the history of similar contemporary Islamist experiences, avoiding mistakes and benefiting from successful ones**.** In their conferences, and interviews, they mentioned that their fear of an Algerian- like scenario was among the motives behind the Initiative,[202] by which they meant fear of the loss of control over their followers and the fragmentation of the EJI during the confrontation period. This logic is still present in the leader's mindset as they constantly blame fellow-Islamists for choosing the unsuccessful path of clash with the regime instead of exerting equal efforts in reconciliation.

The virtue of self-criticism and introspection were amongst the leaders' distinguishing characteristics[203]as it takes a special psychological nature that allows people to reconsider their actions.[204] Moreover, they never blamed the regime for their militancy, nor did they resort to the usual conspiracy theory for justification of their violence. They claimed full responsibility for misleading their followers by propagating all violence mis-conceptions causing a large scale of damage to the society and the state. Karam Zuhdi announced his readiness to tolerate any resulting consequences or

[200] Ashour, Lions Tamed, op. cit., p.619.
[201] Najeḥ Ibrahim, *Nahr al-Dhikrayāt*, op. cit., p. 22.
[202] Makram, M. Ahmad, *Ḥuwar maʿa Qadat al-Taṭarruf,* (Cairo: Dar Al Shorouk, 2003), p. 193, Ibrahim, *Nahr al- Dhikrayā*t, op. cit., p. 123.
[203] Interview with Kamal Boraiqaʿ.
[204] Ḥabib, *al-Ḥaraka al Islamiyya*, op. cit., p.68.

costs.[205] *"Not only should we possess the braveness to refrain from any harmful action, but we should also be brave enough to declare this action as erroneous and to regress from it"*.[206]

b. Effect of Imprisonment

Imprisonment is definitely a painful and disturbing experience. However, in spite of the well-known negative impacts of the imprisonment, it had three positive effects that had contributed to de-radicalization process of the EJI. Firstly, the sufferings and miseries resulting from the long and cruel prison conditions derived them to reconsider the utility of their actions compared to the costs. Some former detainees recalled being held in solitary cells in the Scorpion prison for years to the extent that when they were released 1997, the last news they had heard about the world was in 1993.[207] Not only did the arrested individuals suffer, but also their families, especially during the Mubarak era, which was described as the worst. It all shows in the opening dedication in one of his books: *"To my dear mother, who wandered all of the prisons of Egypt following me, my father and my brothers. She was not familiar with that because the only place she used to know was the small Dayrouṭ village. She left it just because of us. My deepest regards and respect to you".* [208]

Prisons severely affected hygiene and health conditions, and in some cases resulted in deaths. Outside prisons, the families of those detainees were suffering from economic deprivation, social alienation, and systematic discrimination by the state. Yusuf argued, "*If God was on their side, these things would not have happened to the EJI*

[205] Interview with Najeḥ Ibrahim.
[206] Osama Ḥafez, ʿAṣem ʿAbdel-Majid, *Mubadarat Waqf al-ʿUnf* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Turath al-Islami, 2002), pp. 7-8
[207] Ashour, interview with a former detainee, October 2002, p. 621.
[208] Najeḥ Ibrahim, *Khareṭat Ṭariq li al- Ḥaraka al-Islamiyya al-Moʿaṣira* (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Publication, Translation and Distribution, 2012) .

members and their families". He concluded that there has to be something "theologically wrong", with the decision to confront the regime".[209]The second positive effect of imprisonment was on the intellectual level. The imprisonment allowed a chance for deep contemplation and reassessment due to the state of isolation over the long years of detention away from the details of everyday struggle with the regime outside the jails. All interviewees of the EJI and al-Jihad Group agreed that the imprisonment gave them the chance to mature thinking and reconsidering their stances. The third remarkably positive effect of imprisonment is that it sets people free from communal pressure. [210] Paradoxically, the threat of prison provides protection from life endangering threats. It is speculated that had these leaders announced the renouncing violence from outside the jails, they might have been subjected to material and intellectual harassment by militant jihadi groups as happened elsewhere.[211]

To sum up, the internal factors of the organizational structure, leadership and imprisonment enabled the EJI historical leaders to mobilize human and intellectual resources towards the process of de-radicalization. Still to be considered, the external factors that contributed to that process.

2. External Factors

Among the examined external factors for having an impact on the emergence of the Initiative are: the security approach, the political regime agenda and the element of the civic actors. As mentioned earlier, the radical groups' disintegration occur either due

[209] Al-ʿAwwa, *al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya*, interview with Mamdouḥ Yusuf.
[210] Interview with Kamal Boraiqaʿ.
[211] In Algeria, in 1995, Sheikh Mohammad al- Saʿīd (leader of Gaz'ara group) and 500 of his affiliates were killed by their fellow members for announcing a similar initiative renouncing violence .

to *defeat by repression* or due to the *change to the legitimate political path.*[212] Initiatives can come from "above" through state officials or security agencies proposing policies and setting out guidelines for action as primarily happened in Egypt. Also, initiatives can be formulated and implemented from "below" by civic actors such as NGOs, religious authorities, and ex-activists from radical groups. in Egypt, the focus was not so much on prevention of radicalization as it was on ideological revisions and re-integration of the tens of thousands of members.[213]

a. Security Approach

It is well-known that authoritative coercion in the service of the state is a crucial concept in political theory; some have identified the distinctive characteristic of the state as its "monopoly of physical coercion".[214]The EJI and other militant Islamists were faced with such coercive measures taken to their highest level in response to their militancy. The security crackdown on Islamists started right after Sadat's assassination. All possible confrontational activities, were applied by the security forces ranging from campaigns of mass arrests, chasing Islamists out of the city mosques, military trials, executions and alleged widespread police torture. Towards the end of the 1980s and the early 1990s, the EJI's violence (in addition to other jihadi groups) had exhausted the Egyptian security forces to the extent that the security became occupied mainly with combating religious violence rather than criminal violence.[215]The established applied policy was "*al-ʿunf wa al-ʻunf al-muḍad*" (deterring the militants' violence with counter security violence), and "*al-ḍarb fi suwaidāʾ al qalb*" (stabbing through the heart).

[212] Lindekilde & Georges Fahmi, ed., *Building De-radicalization*, op. cit., p. 9.
[213] Ibid, p. 9-10.
[214] Ted Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, op. cit., p.7
[215] Sinha, Threat of Islamic Terrorism, op. cit., p.1205.

In the meantime, the gradual and slow reconciliation efforts were taking place inside the prisons on the side of the EJI on one hand, and the State Security Department senior officers on the other hand. Both parties were aspiring to find an alternative path to end this crisis. The security officials involved in such efforts were doing so on personal basis and carried the burden of trusting the repenting Islamists and convincing higher authorities in the Security Department and the political regime of the utility of such efforts.[216]The importance of ideological dialogue at this stage shows in the story told by one of the core members describing how the dialogue with the security officer pecked him as he was stunned by the officer's logic arguing how the EJI members justified their attacks as being in retaliation to the security's attacks telling him "*if we (security officers) committed actions that are deviant from correct religious rules, what about you? Don't you represent religion? How can you commit such deviant attacks just because you are retaliating and countering our (security officers) attacks?*" Mamdouḥ proceeds to describe how he kept pondering on this conversation in his prison for days and how this resulted in further introspection. [217]

By early 1989, the EJI presented the so-called "six demands" appeal,[218] the demands included releasing all detainees who were not charged, ceasing torture, Improving the prison conditions, releasing female hostages who were taken to force male relatives to surrender to police forces, re-opening the EJI mosques that were shut down, and ceasing the policy of renewing detention indefinitely.[219]Although the

[216] Interview with Fouʾad ʿAllam.
[217] Al-ʿAwwa, *al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., interview with Mamdouḥ Youssef, p. 204.
[218] Ibid, p. 122.
[219] A policy introduced by the late 1980s by Zaki Badr, the emergency law allowed the police forces to detain suspects for two months without being brought to court and formally charged. The state security would issue a report every two months saying that the detainee was released but he resumed his "illegal activities" and therefore must be re-detained. some detainees stayed in prison based on this procedure for more than ten years.

demands were rejected due to security doubts,[220]however this indicated that a process of negotiations was taking place. It was only when the EJI leadership ceded all of these demands that a turning point happened allowing the security forces to start considering the Initiative seriously.[221]

Gradually, the Initiative was in the making due to the sincere efforts of the State Security Officer: General Ahmad Ra'fat (Haj Mostafa Rifʿat) [222] head of Combating-Fanaticism Section in the State Security Department who succeeded the previously assassinated General Khairat. According to several testimonies and writings on the subject, Raʾfat exerted great effort,[223] not only that he believed in the Initiative, but that he held the responsibility of embarking on such a risky mission in spite of the doubts of the ruling regime and the risks of being attacked by the opposing members outside jail for being suspected of forcing the EJI leaders to accept the Initiative. He was able to convince the senior officers to give the EJI the benefit of the doubt, he toured the jails with the leaders and he even supplied them with whatever religious books they requested to read during their search for the correct ideological interpretations.[224]

After the intervention of Ra'fat, the security approach entered a new phase of positive interaction with the Initiative. The first level was improving the prison conditions in addition to a number of inducements including ceasing systematic torture in prisons, gradual release of the imprisoned members and leaders, the payment of social pensions to their families, the allowance of conjugal visits for the first time in Egypt

[220] The suspicions seemed to be justified as the EJI attempted the life of General Badr in December 1989 in return.
[221] Al-ʿAwwa, *al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., p. 123.
[222] The Writer had the chance to attend his funeral in 2010 during which the presence of police officers along with a huge number of Islamists at the same place was an amazing scene to any observer. The strong presence of Islamists from all backgrounds reflected the real appreciation on their part to the reconciliatory role that had been played by that State-Security official.
[223] All relevant interviewed figures agreed on this point, in addition to General Fouʾad ʿAllam.
[224] Interview with Karam Zuhdi.

where members were allowed to get married and some had children while in prison, the improvement of prison meals, prison visits were allowed again since it was banned in 1992, and the conditions of visits gradually improved as described by one of the former detainees that they were allowed to sit with their families with no fences in between.[225] The second level took place by December 2001,[226] the leaders were allowed to tour the prisons, and in 2002 the gradual release of the leaders and members, first in groups of hundreds and then in thousands started to take place.[227]From this step onwards, the political regime had a say with what was going on with the Initiative.

b. Political Regime Agenda

When the historical leaders declared the Initiative in 1997, there was no apparent coordination with the state, [228]and the regime stepped cautiously towards responding to the Initiative. After the news about the early secret negotiations of the security department with the EJI militants reached Mubarak, he was angered and the resignation of ʿAbdel Ḥalīm Moussa, the minister of Interior Affairs then followed the news leak. The government did not respond to the prior calls by the jailed leaders in July 1996 (an earlier initiative by Khalid Ibrahim 'amir of Aswan during a tribunal). By that time, the only approach adopted by the regime was to decapitate the Islamists. The government ignored the imprisoned leaders' calls motivated by what was believed to be successful anti-terrorist measures that had pushed violence out of the country.[229]

[225] ʿOmar Ashour, Lions Tamed, op. cit., p. 623.
[226] Ewan Stein, What Does the Gamaʿa Islamiyya Want, op. cit., p.42.
[227] According to former State Security Department Deputy Chief Fouʾad ʿAllam, those who were in opposition to the Initiative and reconciliation with the regime, were later released by Morsi in 2012.
[228] Interview with Najeh Ibrahim.
[229] Sinha, Threat of Islamic Terrorism, op. cit., p.1205.

It is worth mentioning that this was not the regime's political approach during Mubarak's early presidency. EJI members charged in the assassination of more than 68 members of the police forces at Asyuṭ Security Department on 8 October 1981 were rather leniently sentenced on 30 September 1984, only 58 received sentences of prison under high security or hard labor out of 299 defendants requested for death by the General Prosecutor. Moreover, as early as mid-1980s the regime's tried to isolate the extremists by launching a campaign of repentance, widely broadcasted over Egyptian television,[230] and re-transcribed in the newspapers. Professors from al-Azhar, and other Muslim intellectuals also participated in the campaign.[231]

However, as the violence of the EJI and other militant Islamists escalated by the early 1990s, Mubarak ended his policy of the initial distinction between the "good" and "bad" Muslims,[232] which he adopted upon his early presidency period. Now all Islamists were considered "bad", including the MB. Harsh security measures replaced the tolerant ones.[233] The clash with the Islamists then reached its peak, especially after the assassination attempt of Mubarak in Addis Ababa in 1995.[234]The shift of Mubarak regime toward accepting the Initiative was therefore very significant. It is claimed that after 9/11the regime shifted towards the re-containment of the escalated Islamists' threat. [235]The Egyptian component of the 9/11 attack put some blame on the Egyptian regime. Form this point, the Egyptian regime tried to prove that it is in control,

[230] Known as *Nadwa li al- Raʾy.*
[231] Kepel, *Muslim Extremism* op. cit., p.245.
[232] Sullivan, Kimberly, *Global Security Watch*, op. cit., p. 53.
[233] Ashour, Lions Tamed, op. cit., p.611.
[234] Al-ʿAwwa, *al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., p. 143.
[235] Ashour argues that the message that the regime wanted to send to the USA and the West was that it was successful in "taming the lions", co-opting a former ally of al-Qaʿida, and therefore it should get credited for that despite its repressive policies, op. cit., p.623

henceforth, the Initiative gained momentum from 2001 onwards.[236]Mubarak's response shifted from "all stick, no carrot" to a more reconciliatory one[237]and the approach of dialogue was given green light, and the media gave extensive coverage of the transformations, and the regime went as far as disseminating the EJI Re-thinking books. And according to Najeḥ Ibrahim: "*And this wise policy was fruitful in consolidating the Initiative"* to the extent that some of the members voluntarily turned themselves in to security forces. [238]

c. Civic Actors

It is well-known that for a major change to happen, a catalyst is needed to mediate between conflicting parties.[239] Civic actors including ex-activists and religious authorities are usually a part in the making of de-radicalization and disengagement policies.[240] Civic actors represent competent and credential figures, being non-governmental actors which might be an important factor in its own.[241] Furthermore, their deep ideological knowledge of firsthand knowledge of being an ex-activist has proven important for establishing the respect, trust, and legitimacy needed to build successful interaction with radicalized youngsters. [242]

In the case of the EJI, the new catalyst was the "Committee of Mediators". It first started in 1987 with the voluntary intervention of Sheikh al-Shaʿarawi, but was

[236] Ashour, Lions Tamed, op. cit., p. 615, Mamdouḥ al-Sheikh, op. cit.,
[237] Reed, the Battle for Egypt, op. cit., p. 7.-
[238] Ibrahim," al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya Bain al-Mubadara w al-Muraja'a", in Diyaʿ Rashwan, *al-Murajaʿāt* a*l-Murajaʿāt min al- Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya ila al-Jihad,* (Cairo: ACPSS, 2008), p. 35.
[239] Interview with Ahmad K. Abul-Majd, Cairo, December 10, 2015.
[240] Lasse Lindkelde; Georges Fahmi, ed., *Building De-radicalization,* op. cit., p. 10.
[241] Abul ʿila Maḍi, "The Role of the Civil Society in Reintegrating the Islamic Extremists" in Lasse Lindekilde, & Georges Fahmi, *Building De-radicalization Coalitions* (Cairo: al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies ACPSS, 2011), p. 127-136.
[242] Ibid, p. 11.

immediately aborted when an imprisoned group of al-Jihad made an escape trial.[243] The second committee was formed in 1993 by the famous lawyer and Islamic Scholar Dr. Moḥammad Salim Al-'Awwa including Sheikh Al-Sha'rawi, Sheikh Al-Ghazāli, Fahmi Huwaydi and Dr. Ahmad Kamal Abul-Majd, all of whom were known to be prominent Islamic figures.[244]

However, the Initiative received another blow but this time from leaking the news to the media, raising suspicions and opposition for holding any kind of reconciliation with the "terrorists" and considering this as a mere maneuver. These suspicions were confirmed when it was followed by an attempt to assassinate the minister of mass-media Ṣafwat al-Sherif by the military wing of the EJI in 1994 outside the prison led by the second generation who wanted to send the imprisoned leaders a message of consolidation. They interpreted the reconciliation efforts as pressures being exerted on the imprisoned leaders. However, the gap widened and more effort had to be put from the EJI leaders inside prisons to prove their intentions. In any case, while it appeared that the committee of mediators did not reach a direct and successful conflict resolution in the real sense of the word, it was definitely a step forward in the process of reconciliation.

The media was a second crucial civic actor as it played a central role in giving the Initiative entry points to the Egyptian masses. Montasser al- Zayyat played a key role in this respect by publishing a seasonal periodical under the name of "*Murajaʿāt*" in which this phenomenon was put under study.[245] In addition, some journalists played an

[243] Known then as the "*al-Hurub al-Kabir".*
[244] Ibrahim, *al- Muraja'āt min al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya ila al-Jihad*, op. cit., pp. 29-31.
[245] Mamdouḥ al-Sheikh, op. cit.

important role in advocating the attempts of ideological de-radicalization in prisons including Diyaʾ Rashwān (a researcher in the ACPSS then) and then the “al-Shark al-Awsat al-Dawliyya” newspaper under the responsibility of ‘Abdel-Latif Al-Manāwi, (the head of Cairo branch then) which published a survey and summary to all the Re-thinking Doctrines that were published after the first four ones. In addition, “al-Ḥayyah” newspaper published all the EJI’s announcements. However, the real introduction to the Egyptian people came from the journalist Makram Moḥammad Aḥmad (editor-in-chief of Dar al-Hilal and al-Musawwar magazine) who was allowed to hold interviews with the EJI leaders, attend the tours to the prisons (al-ʿAqrab and Wadi al-Naṭrun) and to publish the details of these meetings allowing a large sect of Egyptians to be introduced to the Initiative.

To sum up, the occurrence of the Initiative came as an outcome of the interaction between the internal and external factors. Now the EJI was moving from the state of *defeat by repression*, to the state of the *transformation to legitimate political path*. Moreover, another shift will be examined in relation to the wealth of the de-legitimizing violence literature produced.

C. Re-thinking Doctrines

The analysis of the Re-thinking doctrines in this study will focus on analyzing the new ideology from four main aspects: **the general features**, the **ideological shift**, the **impact on the behavioral transformation**, and the **indications of the new Re-thinking Doctrines**. Furthermore, the elements of the success of the Initiative considering its impact will be examined in the end.

The historical leaders embarked, while still behind bars, on presenting a new vision that surpasses the duality of faith and infidelity, and the duality of violent confrontation with the ruler or passive acceptance. **The general features** of the new doctrines can be comprehended by the comparison with similar efforts in the field. Considering that ideological reassessments are either; constructive / preemptive or remedial / corrective, [246] the EJI's Initiative falls under the latter type of remedial / corrective initiatives, characterized by the ideological and theological reassessment of radicalism through dialogue and proof. Similar precedents in the Islamic history include that of ʿAli ibn Abī-Talib and ʿOmar ʿAbdel-ʿAziz with the *Khawarij*.[247]Moreover, the re-thinking revisions usually come in two levels, as in the case of the EJI: the first level depends on revising the ideas which employ violence to impose certain ideas on society and/or change the status quo, the second level is changing the view about the society itself, recognizing the state's democracy, citizenship, acknowledging rights for all citizens, the status of women, and other ideological, social, and political issues.[248]

The Islamist movements in general elaborated four kinds of ideological re-thinking initiatives. The first is of theological and conceptual nature as "*Duʿāh la Quḍah"* of MB leader Ḥassan al-Huḍaybi, and *"Ẓahirat al-Ghuluww fi al-Takīir*" by al-Qaraḍawi. The second is of political nature reconsidering the legitimacy of political participation and other concepts.[249] The third kind is of methodological nature shifting the behavioral course of action from pursuing the establishment of an Islamic state to the

[246] Moḥammad Yateem, "Dor al Murajaʿāt al-Fikriyya li al-Ḥarakāt al-Islamiyya fi Bina' al-Wasatiyya wa al-Ḥad men al-Taṭaruf" in a conference under the title *Dor al Wasatiyya fi Muwājahat al-Irhab wa Taḥqiq al-Istiqrar wa al-Silm al-'Alamiyyayen*, Amman, March 2015.

[248] Maḍi, *Building De-radicalization*, op. cit., p. 127.

[249] For more refer to Ahamd al-Raysouni, N*aẓaryat al-Taqrib wa al-Taghrib*, al-Qaraḍawi in" *Fiqh al-Dawla*", op. cit., Mohammad al-ʿAwwa "al-Siyasa al Shariʿiya" , Rashed al-Ghounoushi "al-Islam wa al-Dawla al-Madaniyya", and Mohammad 'Emara "al-Dawla al-Islamiyya Bayn al -'Almaniyya wa al-Sulṭa al-Diniyya.

establishment of religion. Finally, the fourth kind is of organizational and structural nature where the movement is restructured and military wings are disengaged and underground activities are halted. The EJI Renouncing- Violence Initiative, can be considered to have included and applied the four types altogether.

The methodology and the language of the doctrines give further understanding of the general features of the doctrines. The methodology followed in the doctrines in relation to the sources of reference is the total reliance on authentic legal proofs from al-Qur'an and Sunna in supporting every piece of argument throughout the doctrines, with a stress on mentioning the authenticity of every prophetic tradition referred to.[250]In addition, historical precedents and readings from early scholars as al-Ghazāli, the four main fiqhī scholars, al-Nawawi, ibn 'Abdīn, al-Shahrestani, and ibn Taimiya, were commonly referred to. As for contemporary scholars, al-Qaraḍawi works were used as frames of reference including books like: *al- Ṣaḥwa al-Islamiyya Bayn al-Jumud wa al-Taṭarruf*". Moreover, the linguistic analysis of the new doctrines also reveals that they could be considered ideological texts written in a literary style.[251]The language is eloquent, fluent and expressive to a large extent. The impact of the place and time context within which the doctrines emerged is very strong. The structure of the argument is based on a dialogue that is mostly imaginary. The authors are the group of historical leaders who are now considered the highest legitimate religious authority and their names come collectively on the covers of the early books as writers and editors without an intended specific sequence.

[250] Diyaʾ Rashwān, ed., Al-Murajaʿāt al-Fikriyya li al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya fi Misr: Qiraʾa fi Silsilat Taṣḥiḥ al-Mafāhīm, In: *Dalīl al-Ḥarakāt al-Islamiyya* (Cairo: ACPSS, 2011), p. 275.
[251] Ibid, p. 283.

The **ideological shift** in the new Re-thinking Doctrines is reflected in the title of the first four books which were issued as early as 2002-2004 under the title "S*ilsilat Taṣḥiḥ al-Mafāhīm*"[252](Correction of Conceptions Series). The four books of the Series come in around 600 pages. The doctrines come in two types: The first is the series that refutes the misconceptions as held by the EJI itself, which have now reached nearly twenty five books by the beginning of 2016. The second is the series that was successively issued later on, refuting the misconceptions held by other militant groups as al-Qaʿida (and now refuting Daʾish). These books provided an Islamically-based critique of al-Qaʿida' and like- minded groups' ideologies, strategies, and tactics. Another book criticized the clash of civilizations hypothesis "*Hidayat al- khalāʾiq*" (the Guidance of Mankind). Following this, the EJI was allowed to establish an official website, upon which the new literature was published. Some of the EJI leaders are now being interviewed on state-sponsored Egyptian television as well as satellite networks, and recently, [253] articles authored by some of the historical leaders appear in Egyptian newspapers on weekly basis.

The first book of the "Correction of Conceptions Series" is titled "The Initiative for Ceasing Violence: a Realistic View and a legitimate Perspective". The book generally addresses the practical and the ideological reasons behind the Initiative. The three other books, published concurrently, addressed what went "wrong" during the "*jihad*" (that is, the confrontation with the Egyptian regime), ideological extremism and excommunication of Muslims, and advice to those who participate in the preaching process of ordering the good and forbidding the evil.

[252] Refer to Appendix C for more details on the EJI's Re-thinking books.
[253] Ashour, Lions Tamed, op. cit., pp. 606-612.

Two main aspects of the ideological shift will be discussed: firstly the ideological and practical motives behind issuing the Initiative, and secondly the theoretical framework upon which the new ideology was based.[254]Firstly, the ideological and practical motives behind issuing the Initiative are stated in twelve points in the first book: "*Mubadarat Waqf al-ʿUnf*". The first point emphasized how that the reassessment of ideas has become a mandatory religious duty "*wajib sharʿi*" considering the terrible damages "*mafāsid ʿaẓīma*" that had been inflicted.[255]The subsequent eleven points illuminate how the motives for the Initiative are built on the newly considered Islamic Jurisprudence rule of "*safeguarding the interests and warding off the evils".*[256] Consequently, six interests are to be safeguarded and eight are to be warded off. The six interests to be safeguarded are as follows: resumption of the initial role of *daʿwa* as stated: "*the freedom of da'wa was fully granted to us, but we sought to establish the Islamic State, so we lost both, the da'wa and the State*".[257] Also, setting an example in backing-off from the wrong and deviated path as a religious must and also a moral courage, pursuing the pleasure of Allah even at the expense of the dissatisfaction of others "*Whereas God satisfaction is the ultimate goal in Islam without regard to the wrath of the creature, so delinquency to peace is clearly ordered in our holy book"*.[258] The interests also included safeguarding the lives of the youth, preventing the re-occurrence of similar attacks, and finally relieving the nation- wide strain caused by their violence. Following the six interests to be safeguarded, the eight evils, which acted as push factors from

[254] Rashwān, *al-Muraja'āt min al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya ila al-Jihad, op. cit., p. 275.*
[255] ʿAbdel-Majid, et al., *Mubadarat Waqf al ʿUnf,* op. cit. p. 20.
[256] Ibid, pp. 11-31.
[257] Interview with Najeḥ Ibrahim.
[258] ʿAbdel-Majid, *Mubadarat Waqf al-ʿUnf*, op. cit., p. 96.

radicalization,[259] to be prevented are listed as follows: bloodshed, larger scale of arresting and repression of EJI members,[260] tarnishing the image of Islam as a heavenly religion which consequently increased the grudge and hatred towards Muslims, the drain of the efforts and funds of the government which could have been devoted to a better path, benefitting the external enemy which freely practiced and achieved his strategic goals using Islamists' violent incidents as a pretext for foreign intervention, the further consolidation of misconception in the minds of the youngster, the greater evil of toppling the rulers, and the possible extirpation of the whole Islamist movement in response to its violence : "*all this suffering never rendered Islam stronger or more immune.*"[261]

Secondly is the theoretical framework upon which the ideological shift was based. The EJI now realized that, ideologically, they used false standards of measurement and corrupt analogy. The analysis of the content of the doctrines reveals that the focus on the key concepts, as well as the hierarchy of priorities in the thought and stands of the EJI has largely changed. They also reflect how the EJI realized their miscalculated action against the Egyptian regime,[262] and how the *utility of the action*, rather than the *religious legitimacy* is what really counts. The main religious jurisdiction rule to be prioritized is considering the *Maqāṣid* (*Objectives) of the Shariʿa* (the preservation of Religion, Life, Lineage, Intellect, and Property),[263] and the main problematic issue to be

[259] Push factors where a person/ group leave a violent path due to negative impacts in contrast to pull-factors where a person/ group leave a violent path due to a more rewarding alternative, Dr. Tore Bjorgo, in: *Building De-radicalization*, op. cit., pp. 30-31.
[260] As mentioned in Chapter One, the casualties of the EJI mounted to around 1,200 killed, hundreds injured, and around 20,000-30,000 detainees.
[261] Interview with Najeḥ Ibrahim.
[262] Mamdouḥ al-Sheikh, op. cit.
[263] Al-Shatibī (d. 1388) defined Maqāṣid al-Shariʿa in "al-Muwafaqāt" as the attainment of good, welfare, advantage, benefits and warding off evil, injury and loss of creatures.

resolved is the revolt against the ruler. Some other key fiqhī concepts, that were previously rejected, were now accepted as frames of reference including: fiqh of priorities, considering the importance of time and place, the priority of duties, fiqh of consequences considering the results of the applied rule, fiqh of benefits and the evils taking into consideration that preventing evils precedes gaining benefits, fiqh of text interpretation as discriminating between what is decisive "*qaṭ'ī*" and what is non-decisive "*ẓanī*", what is mandatory and what is optional, what is permanent and what is temporary, what is for legislative purposes and what is not. Also, fiqh of the reality which implies adequate understanding of the incidents upon which the religious rulings will be applied as stated in one of the Re-thinking books: "*it is a clear error to take stances and decide religious rulings away from the accurate consideration of the reality".* In addition, fiqh of the history of previous nations and Islamic States, and fiqh of the contemporary political Islamic history, examining reasons for failure and success in the experience of different political entities, fiqh of "*al-Aḥkām al-Siyadiyya*" (the decisions to be taken only by the rulers and state institutions) considering that "*war declaration and general mobilization are the missions entrusted to rulers at all times and places".*[264]

Considering the above mentioned new theoretical framework and its implications, it can be inferred that now the EJI ideologues had realized that the interest of the society determines the interpretation of the texts, rational calculations and material interests superseded the previously held literal orders "*al-naṣ fawq al-maṣlaḥa*", the adherence to

[264] Ibrahim, *Man Naḥnu wa Madha Nurīd* (unpublished book, 2006)

which serves as an impetus to engage in armed confrontations against much stronger powers.[265]

The third main aspect in the analysis of the new Renouncing- Violence Doctrines is concerned with the **behavioral changes** following the new theoretical framework. Among the behavioral implications of the new ideology is the perception of the wrong practices of *Jihad* and *ḥisba* and the inevitability of confrontation. Continued combat will not yield any benefits except more bloodshed. Most importantly, impediments to jihad "*mawaniʿ* " to the obligation of jihad were prioritized. Consequently, if the dangers inflicted after practicing jihad are ascertained, the religious rule of jihad becomes undesired or even abandoned. Consequently, "*The fairness of the cause does not entail the inevitability of the confrontation*".[266]Also, among the crucial newly adopted behavioral shifts is to tolerate an unjust ruler for the sake of preserving the unity of the umma, which was completely rejected before and which acted previously as a main ideological violence motivator. The Islamist movement erred seriously when it tried to overthrow regimes, which, no matter how decadent, cannot be declared infidel. The consequent harming of civilians, Muslim and non-Muslim, is forbidden in Islam. The focus of confrontation shifted from a clash with the local regime (near enemy) to the regional level of the (far enemy) in the context of the Arab Israeli conflict. Moreover the hostility with the secular movement was seen from a different perspective. Now they both shared the common concern of the burden of protecting the country from external threats.[267]In addition, the acceptance of the concept of citizenship and its implications the religious duty of coexisting with Egyptian Christians was introduced, and foreign

[265] Ashour, *Building De-radicalization*, op. cit., p. 56
[266] Interview with Najeḥ Ibrahim.
[267] Najeh Ibrahim, "*Ḥatmiyyat al-Muwajaha wa Fiqh al-Natāij*" (Cairo: Maktabat al-ʾUbaiakān, 2005), pp. 15-19.

tourists are to be protected not attacked. The focus of action shifted from the struggle to guiding Muslims to the straight path. Fanaticism is the root for all militancy; hence, a golden maxim was extracted: *"Nothing can render you a non-Muslim except nullifying what made you a Muslim".*[268] They now realized that revolting against the ruler was a reason to create hostility to Islam, which is a clear shift from viewing the world by the eyes of a victim of the conspiracy theory to holding the responsibility to the assault on Islam.

To sum up, the new body of literature, mainly deconstructs the eight major arguments of Jihadism: al-Ḥakimiyya (God's exclusive right to legislate), al-Ridda (apostasy, mainly of ruling regimes), al-Jihad/Qitāl (fighting for the Islamic State, Jihad al-dafʿ (defensive jihad), Aḥkām al-Diyār (rules of conduct in the "abode of Islam" and the "abode of Infidelity"), methods for sociopolitical change, the inevitability of confrontation, and the "neo-crusader" arguments.[269]The three elements of the EJI program (*jihad*, *ḥisba* and *da'wa*) remain at the core of the Re-thinking literature, stressing that jihad is a means to an end and the end does not necessarily justify the means, the duty of violent jihad falls into abeyance if the costs outweigh the benefits. The duty of *ḥisba* must be discharged in coordination with the state. Finally, daʿwa is the prime concern and *raison d'etre* of the Islamist movement. No step should be taken that may prejudice the goal of guiding humanity to salvation.[270]

The fourth aspect in the analysis of the new ideology reflects some **indications.** The new Re-thinking Doctrines included two processes, inside them, that went parallel and were overlapping. The first process was deep rooted criticism of past thought and

[268] Najeh Ibrahim, Ali al-Sherif, "*Ḥurmat al- Ghuluww fi al-Din wa Takfīr al-Muslimīn*" (Cairo: Maktabat al-Turath al-Islami, 2002), p. 43.
[269] Ashour, *Building De-radicalization*, op. cit., p.56.
[270] Stein, What Does the Gamaʿa Islamiyya Want, op. cit., p. 45.

practices. The second process included drafting a new thought and ideological layout that is not related to the past, and which became the reviewed group's movement determinant in the present and the future. Among the other main indications also are:

- The announcement of the Renouncing -Violence Initiative preceded issuing the doctrines by around 5 years. This might indicate the EJI's desire to present a strong practical proof of renouncing violence, before issuing the theoretical framework, thus giving more credibility to that ideology that will be issued later.
- The slow issuing of the doctrines for a period of around five years may also be due to the intention to allow for an interval for the social recognition by the Egyptian society after it had been badly injured by the EJI violence, or due to the gradual ideological maturation of the leaders considering that ideological shifts usually an accumulative process.[271]
- The Initiative came free from any mentioning or praise or even condemnation to the second party; the security forces and the ruling regime. Torture and suffering were mentioned only in the context of the negative consequence of their violence not in the context of condemnation of other parties.
- The leaders never mentioned at any point that they had been influenced by secular intellectuals and politicians who supported the Initiative. Despite that, they have expressed their gratitude for those secular intellectuals and politicians. This is a remarkable transformation; secularists in general, usually were the targets of the EJI harsh criticism,[272] and sometimes its bullets.[273]The doctrines do

[271] Rashwān, ed*, Dalīl al-Ḥarakāt al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., p280.
[272] Ashour, Lions Tamed, op. cit., p. 619.
[273] The EJI assassinated Faraj Foda, a leading secular intellect in 1992.

not in any place include any insults, degradation, or dishonoring to any of the opponents.[274]

- The ideas expressed in the new literature, as well as the references cited, reflect a strong presence of modernism, only phrased in an Islamist theoretical framework.[275]
- The idea of the enemy is still obvious, however the internal enemy of the government and its institutions was replaced by the poverty and illiteracy, and the external enemy is Israel and the West including its internal allies and the secularist ideology.[276]
- The rejection of the "conspiracy theory" is considered a stipulation for the renewal of the "religious speech.

To sum up, the new literature features a departure from upholding *fiqh al-'Unf* towards discouraging armed confrontations and political violence on one hand,[277] and towards getting re-integrated in the mainstream of moderate thinking, on the other hand. In this respect, the Re-thinking Initiative can be considered the most important example in the Islamic world which falls within the revisions of the militant Islamist *jihadis.*

A parade of commentary praised the EJI's Initiative's impact on the subsequent recantations seeing these events as signposts along the road to de-radicalization.[278] The EJI leaders pride themselves that the first Islamist movement to admit its mistakes

[274] Rashwān, ed., *Dalīl al-Ḥarakāt al-Islamiyya,* op. cit., p. 286.
[275] Ibid, p. 617.
[276] Ibid, p. 282.
[277] Ashour, *Building De-radicalization*, op. cit., p. 54-55.
[278] Hussam Tammam, the Revisions of Jihadism: Implications on Islamic Violence, In Lasse Lindekilde, & Georges Fahmi, ed., *Building De- radicalization Coalitions* (Cairo: al-Ahram Center ACPSS, 2011), p.84.

was the EJI, [279] knowing that: *"No other political Islamist group in opposition has succeeded in gaining the trust of the regime in the history of Egypt as did the EJI"*.[280] In 1969 the MB initiated the first wave of Islamist ideological de-radicalization by authoring ""*Duʿah la Quḍah"* in an attempt to dismantle the MB's armed wing and de-legitimize "*takfīr*" ideology. The EJI began a second wave in July 1997 which almost had a "domino effect" on other movements in Egypt and in the region including the Algerian AIS (The Islamic Salvation Army), other militias in Algeria, Islamist figures and individual suspects in Saudi Arabia (*al-Munaṣaḥa*), the *Ijtihadi Salafi* trend in Morocco, and the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), which introduced re-thinking doctrines "*Dirasāt Taṣḥiḥiyya fi Mafāhīm al-Jihad wa al-Ḥisba wa al-Ḥukm ʿala- al-Nās".*[281]

Domestically, the Egyptian Jihad Group's ideologue and Osama Bin-Laden's former mentor Sayyed Imam al-Sherif issued "*Wathiqat Tarshīd al-ʿAmal al-Jihadī*" (Doctrine of Rationalizing the Action of Jihad) in 2007, refuting the former Faraj's "*al Fariḍa al-Gha'iba*". 'Abbud al-Zumur published a document titled "*al-Badīl al-Thaleth: bayn al-Istibdād wa al-Istislām*" (the Third Alternative: Between Authoritarianism and Surrender) in 2009, in which he prescribes ways of ending political violence within Arab and Muslim-majority states, and he strongly argues for the necessity of electoral participation as well as for alliance with the "ideological" other.[282]

[279] Najeḥ Ibrahim in an interview in: Ewan Stein, also The leaders of the EJI take pride that the initiative was praised by prominent Islamist figures as Dr. M.al-ʿAwwa in his book "Tajdid al-Fiqh al-Islami".
[280] Al-ʿAwwa, *al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., p. 38.
[281] Tammam, the Revisions of Jihadism, op., cit., p. 84.
[282] Ibid, p.86.

The successful conflict resolution settlement reached by the EJI and the Egyptian regime echoes the internationally applied transitional justice mechanisms. And according to the UN system, transitional justice is the:

"*Full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society's attempt to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation*". [283]

Some of the transitional justice mechanisms,[284] which include trials, truth commissions, reparations, apologies, public memorials, forgiveness, and institutional reforms[285] were applied- though unintentionally and partially - in the reached EJI reconciliation with the Egyptian regime. Mutual forgiveness between the EJI and the regime, the reparations introduced to the EJI members, the trials that the EJI were subjected to, (most of them had finished their sentences period by the time of the Initiative) are examples of these applied mechanisms. Moreover, instead of denying its violent attacks or blaming external conspiracies, the EJI genuinely confessed all their attacks and violence, and held for themselves what could be considered as a truth commission through which they passed to the acceptance of the political regime and the Egyptian society. Significantly, an equally important factor was the emerging mutual sense of guilt between the two clashing parties; the security forces on one hand, and the EJI on the other hand. Both parties had an innate desire to compensate the damage inflicted on the other. This desire acted as a push factor towards seeking a compromise

[283] www.unrol.org/article.aspx?article_id=29.
[284] What is Transitional Justice, The International Center for Transitional justice ICTJ, at: https://www.ictj.org/about/transitional-justice.
[285] Daniel Philpott, "Religion, Reconciliation, and Transitional Justice: The State of the Field", *Social Science Research Council,* Oct. 2007.

within which mutual forgiveness would be exchanged. This can be interpreted in the context of the common phenomenon of sympathy that grows between the oppressor and the oppressed.[286]

While the EJI's radicalization process followed the footsteps at of al-Jihad, its de-radicalization preceded that of jihad by around 10 years. Emerging concurrently with the Jihad in the early seventies, and around half a century after the MB, only the EJI shifted irreversibly - so far - to coexistence with the ruling regimes in no more than two decades since its emergence. It seems that the EJI - which was the most violent group responsible for 95% of violent attacks during the nineties- cleverly, added the accumulative experience[287] of the MB and other Islamists clash with the state to its own history to avoid a similar fate.

In conclusion, although the Initiative can be considered authentic and self-initiated, however, denying the impact of the pressures under which the Initiative was born into would be too idealistic. So, neither excessive idealism nor total reality denial can be taken as an explanation for the motives behind the Initiative.[288]The EJI was able, through successful leadership and ideological reassessment to achieve self-de-radicalization. On the other hand, the Egyptian regime de-radicalized the EJI by an effective dual process of "defeat by repression", and the "transition to a legitimate political process".[289]In the end, both lions were tamed.

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[286] Interview with Hussein Ḥammouda, Cairo, January 5, 2016.
[287] Najeḥ Ibrahim, *Nahr al-Dhikrayāt,* op. cit., p. 43, and Interview with Najeḥ Ibrahim.
[288] Rashwān ed., *Dalīl al-Ḥarakāt al-Islamiyya*, op. cit., p. 281.
[289] A RAND study of 648 terrorist groups during 1968-2006, almost half were defeated by police or military repression (47%), and 43% transformed to a legitimate political process, in: Dr.Tore Bjorgo "*Building De-radicalization Coalitions*", op. cit., pp.30-31.

“It is out of wisdom that right holders keep their rights. It is also wise to attempt to keep their record clear and spotless”.

Najeḥ Ibrahim, “Man Naḥnu wa Madha Nurīd”

Conclusion

The Future Prospects of the EJI Initiative

The ideological contribution and the outstanding reconciliative impact of the EJI Initiative stand as a distinguished precedent to follow in relation to ideological reformation and conflict resolution domain of research. In the end, the Initiative achieved its goal and both lions were tamed; the militant death cult, and the outraged regime. The future of the Initiative will be determined by the extent to which other militant Islamist movements can follow the EJI de-radicalization model, in addition to the continued presence of the EJI in the contemporary daʿwa, social and political arenas.

The extent to which other militant Islamist movements can follow the EJI de-radicalization model depends on their ability and desirability to follow this model. Some opinions are doubtful that the EJI experience can be disseminated and consider the Initiative to be a specialty for the EJI and cannot be generalized to other groups. Other opinions argue that the MB is the most probable to reach a similar reconciliatory agreement with the regime. Opponents to this view attribute this to the lack of the MB's ability of self-criticism, specialized religious scholars among it cadres, their continued alliance with external parties as the USA, and recent violence inclinations which hinders the process of reconciliation, among other reasons. As for al-Jihad Group's Initiative, analysts believe that its failure was due to the fact that it did not strive enough, even minimally to understand the contemporary political reality, or pass independent opinions concerning issues of democracy, human rights, and party politics. Moreover, the Jihad is unfortunate because the ten year delay of their Initiative than the EJI's, witnessed the shift of local terror to the state of globalization. The new era of terrorism - within which

the Jihad's Initiative was announced - witnessed the unlimited scope of terror in an open world where ad-hoc leaderless Islamists (and terrorists in general), come together through the social network rather than classic formal organizations (as the Madrid train attack in March 2004 leaving 191 killed and 2,000 wounded). Within this context, the Jihad Initiative, significant as it has been, seems to have gone in vain. The Initiative received no acceptance on the part of the grassroots and the core members, and it had no effect in halting the violence of like-minded groups as al-Qaʿida and the commonly known as Daʿish. To add to the problem, both the MB and Jihad Group have an element of access to external logistic and financial funding and support which tempts them to hold to their stances and hinders the process of making any concessions and reconciliation on their side. Besides, both groups did not reach the state of defeat as a group, as in the case with the EJI upon the emergence of the Initiative.

Another determinant to the success of the EJI Initiative is the continued presence of the EJI in the contemporary daʿwa, social and political arenas. In spite of the eminent outcome of the Initiative, the future of the EJI is still to be questioned. On one hand, the political agenda of the regime is not putting enough efforts to keep the de-radicalizing impact of the Initiative activated, the Re-thinking books are not republished or circulated, and the repenting leaders and members are under high economic and social strains. On the other hand, the second-line generation of the EJI is acting on a relatively different agenda than that of the historical leaders, leaning towards a newly crashing attitude with the regime. The historical leaders resigned from the membership of the group and are now suggesting that they should embark on a second tour of ideological

dialogue with their grassroots to eliminate the growing signs of radicalization inside the EJI.

The future of the Initiative is therefore conditioned with the regimes' long-term policies that would keep the impact of the Initiative in activation and more importantly, with the EJI's ability to re-define itself within the historical changes taking place in Egypt, especially after the 2011 revolution. For almost two decades since the declaration of the Initiative in 1997, the EJI had kept its former moderate non-confronting stand. However, the inclination of a few members to join the opposing "*Taḥaluf Daʿm al-Sharʿia* (Legitimacy Support Alliance), established after 2013, marks an alarming sign of a possible split within the previously consolidated group. Moreover, the moderate EJI website, which was earlier founded by Najeḥ Ibrahim in several languages including Arabic, English and Urdu, was closed. Lately, a new website replaced the previous moderate one, but with a hostile stance to the current ruling regime. The resignation of five of the historical leaders from the group and the opposing inclination of the new website raises fears and suspicions concerning the continuation of the EJI as a model for reconciliation and moderation and indicates that they might be, for the second time since their emergence in the 1970s, wasting the opportunity for appearing as an effective and integrated socio-religious force.

As to prospects of the EJI's political participation and pluralism, there are mixed messages on this subject. The EJI ideologue Najeḥ Ibrahim and Karam Zuhdi, for example, have called on Islamist movements to abandon politics and to focus on missionary activities. Najeḥ Ibrahim believes that *"taking the aggressive opposition stance continuously is the worst thing, then you have to consider your opponent as oppressing you,*

then you resort to underground activities." However, the second-line generation leader Ṣafwat ʿAbdel-Ghani, and core member Tarek al-Zumur are in favor of establishing a political party and actually established "*Hizb al-Bina' wa al- Tanmiya*" (Building and Development Party) in opposition to their historical leaders' will. In general, the first generation is showing stronger commitment to the Initiative while the second generation is showing less devotion to the broad lines that demarcated the Initiative and more inclination towards violent opposition. The EJI's success in keeping the relationship of the mutual acceptance with the regime and the different components with the Egyptian societies is conditioned by the continued ideological and behavioral affirmation, that they no more represent a threat.

The retreat of some members from the mainstream reconciliatory and moderate position of the EJI, as: ʿAṣem ʿAbdel-Majid, and the recently deceased ʿEssam Derbala and others, raise further doubts. Some opinions hold that this is not a sign of failure to the Initiative; rather it is seen as individual incidents of dissent. ʿAbdel-Majid, who strongly joined the violent opposing stand of the MB after 2013 and fled away since then, and ʿ Derbala, who joined the opposing "Legitimacy Support Coalition", were earlier separated from the other six historical leaders inside jails after their initial rejection to some of the Re-thinking ideas.

Moreover, the reconciliatory impact of the Re-thinking Initiative of the EJI is questioned due to the re-emergence of violence motivating factors. Among these factors is the renewed tension between the official authorities and the political Islamist trend in general and the MB in particular after the rise of the latter to power in 2012 and its fall down again in 2013. Also, stronger calls for higher secularization and total

marginalization of Islamists (as a reaction to the relatively negative experience of the rise of Islamists to power following the Egyptian revolution 2011) are likely to heighten the clash with the Islamists. Weak policies of enforcing and supporting the Re-thinking Doctrines on one hand and the reintegration of the formerly-militant affiliates into the society on the other hand, in addition to coercive measures and the absence of struggle - mitigating mechanisms add to the quandary.

It seems that the question of what the future holds for the EJI is still an unanswered question, considering that the Egyptian political life is in a fragile transitional phase that does not allow such questions to be even posed. Not only is the future of the EJI as a group is to be questioned, but in addition, the future prospects for the emergence of similar reconciliatory initiatives. The names of members of the EJI, who once took the lead on the media headlines for their brutal attacks, are now reappearing on almost weekly basis in several newspapers, and T.V. programs calling for the significance of moderation and the priority of conflict resolution and consolidation of the Egyptian society. Taking into consideration the changes occurring in the stands of the second generation, it is still to be foreseen whether EJI news will make a comeback to headlines on violence, or will remain appearing on newspaper articles and T.V. shows calling for moderation, or even will fade away for good?

After critical examination of the results of the research, the study hypotheses are verified and show that the results come in congruence with the posed hypotheses. Resorting to underground activities by the militant Islamist groups and losing the trust of the ruling regimes are positively corelated. These clandestine activities provoke the state's violent repressive reactions, whether legal or illegal. Likewise, the illegal security

measures and absence of proper procedure of law are also in direct proportionality to the ignition of more violence on the side of the militant groups. The prerequisite for the transition of militant Islamist groups to a legitimate political path is the intertwining of both legal security measures and the ideological dialogue approach. On the other hand, the violent behavioral deviation of the Islamist militant groups is inversely proportional to adequate understanding, and profound knowledge of "*Shariʿa* Objectives" which is highlighted by the violent projection on unacceptable social, religious and political realities.

Recommendations

The theme of the study yields recommendations on the political, security and religious levels. In authoritarian systems, de-radicalization processes and programs are a short-to-midterm solution to the problem of Islamists political violence. Indeed, de-radicalization does not mean that the root causes of radicalism were properly addressed and resolved. Now, the EJI has abandoned violence, but political repression, the socioeconomic strains, and exclusionary dogmas can ultimately reproduce similar organizations. Successful democratization and religious reformation can be the two keywords for a long-term, durable solution. Political regimes should consider that in the absence of proper democratization, power vacuums is not necessarily filled by the most qualified or the most popular, but rather by the best organized and sometimes the most aggressive.

Rulers, throughout the history of Egypt since the time of the pharaohs till the present time, have made good use, or manipulation of religion, being an integral part of the Egyptian mindset. In the modern history of the twentieth century, the fixed strategy of the successive regimes before and after the 1952 revolution was to manipulate religion for mobilizing and utilizing the masses to pursue the goals set by their own agendas. Politicians should consider that the Islamist groups fulfill a de-alienating function for its members in ways that are not matched by other rival political movements. Through Islamist groups, youths are offered a meaning, a sense of community and acceptance, in addition to an inflated sense of importance and prestige. The result is that these marginalized and oppressed groups identify with the aggressor

and become as aggressive as what they perceive as a violent society. They imitate their aggressor.

It would be inaccurate to view the Initiative as an outgrowth of security pressures only. It is feared that, the conflicting evidence concerning the effect of state repression on both the radicalization and de-radicalization of the EJI may encourage regimes' repressive tendencies. Regimes facing armed rebellion usually regard compromises as evidence of weakness and devote additional resources to military retaliation. The presumption justifying counterforce is that it deters; the greater a regime's capacity for force and the more severe the sanctions it imposes on dissidents, the less the violence they will do. However, the effect is likely to be an intensification of resistance and dissidents will resort to greater force. Some kinds of force may be necessary, but exclusive reliance on force eventually rises up the forces that destroy it. Force threatens and angers men, especially if they believe it to be illicit or unjust. Threatened, they try to defend themselves; angered, they want to retaliate.

The public order is most effectively maintained when means are provided within it for men to work towards the attainment of their aspirations. Some religious actors apparently cling to harmful practices either because they are ignorant of the effects or because they know no viable alternative. The ability or failure of the state to provide openings to Islamist movements for participation in the political process and the manner in which it represses dissent is an important domain of research.

Considering the security perspective, there should also be a distinction between terrorism and radicalism. While terrorism can only be combated through military

solutions, confronting radicalism is mainly an ideological task. In spite of the importance of the security approach for the preservation of lives and properties, the ideological confrontation remains at the core. Additionally, the absence of concepts of political security, besides to the traditional backgrounds on criminal sciences, in addition to miscalculated – or neglected - consequences of human rights violations and the excessive use of illegitimate power prolong the struggle and even escalate it.

The last fifty years have seen an extraordinary period of religious revival around the world. A great deal of evidence suggests that the power of religion as a motivating force and the power of religious organizations as social actors and soft powers, have grown during this period. Those who seek to promote human security should, therefore, study the impact of religion in the societies in which they are working – to understand better the dynamics of the human security situation in that country and to identify possible enemies and allies in the fight to improve human security. Religions mobilize groups to resist oppression in both peaceful and in violent forms, and in many cases, they directly challenge states and governments that seek to oppress peoples with their power – justly or unjustly.

On the Islamists part, they have to realize that religion's impact on human security is however, multifaceted. Religious actors are among the biggest threats to human security, and they are also among the most important safeguards. The attainment of human aspirations through means that are more effective and less destructive should be sought. Exclusionary slogans as: "Islam Is the Solution" should be replaced with other slogans raising the values of mutual coexistence, dialogue and acceptance. The contemporary Islamic movement in Egypt, which has always acted as

a political force in opposition, should consider alternative non-exclusionary and non-supremacist paths for promoting its ambitions. They have to learn how to act from within the society not to create parallel entities that act on behalf of the society. They also have to learn that theoretically, all acts, or even signs, of violence and underground activites pose a threat to the political system in two senses: they challenge the monopoly of force imputed to the state in political theory; and, in functional terms, they are likely to interfere with and, if severe, destroy normal political processes. This will provoke the political authorities to react in a more repressive manner.

The concepts of transitional justice are the most appropriate for the focus of this study. Transitional justice becomes more effective when supported by reconciliatory religious concepts as "*The language of faith comes through strongly in domains of apologies and forgiveness*", and as John Paul II (1978 – 2005) appended to Pope Paul VI's 1965 maxim "*no peace without justice*" the corollary "*no Justice without forgiveness*". Pre-modern Arab Islam contains rich community rituals of *ṣulḥ* (settlement) and *muṣalaḥa* (reconciliation), similar to Judaism's *yeshiva.* Pardoning is wider than tolerance because it entails forgiveness and letting go of blame. Reconciliation perspectives indicating the restoration of right relationship, overcoming enmity, trust building, and healing are to be considered.

As for religious social actors and soft powers, a higher role of official religious establishments as al-Azhar, Ministry of Endowments, and Dar al-Iftāʾ is to be considered as a highest priority. In doing so, a review of the content of curriculums, qualified preachers, and the replacement of the traditional educational system with another one based on reasoning and plurality of thinking is a pre-requisite for the

effectiveness of the role of these institutions in the reform of religious rhetoric. Those who work to promote human security, will need to develop policies that will diminish the negative effects of religion on human security while preserving its positive impacts.

Paradoxically, political violence is episodic in the history of most organized political communities and chronic in many. No country in the modern world has been free of it for as much as a generation. Conflict resolutions can be reached and peaceful coexistence can replace the struggle, only if history and human experience are of any guidance.

Finally, due to limitations of time and space, some related fields of research were not covered by this study. Further study can be carried out in relevant domains to several relevant concerns. One field would be an in-depth comparative study between the re-assessment ideological and behavioral experiences on the domestic level in Egypt. This comparative study could be carried further to cover similar initiatives on the international level. From a political perspective, the EJI Initiative could be examined within the context of conflict-resolution leading experiences. From a socio-psychological perspective, a more specialized study on the subjective and objective characteristics of the EJI, in addition to all the previous areas would enhance our understanding of the probability of the emergence of similar reconciliative, conflict resolving initiatives, on both the domestic and international level.

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Appendix A

FIRST STATEMENT OF EJI RENOUNCING-VIOLENCE INITIATIVE

"The leadership of EJI calls upon all its members and leaders, inside and outside Egypt, to halt all military operations, and all provoking statements, unilaterally, without any condition, for the sake of Islam and Muslims".

*the announcement above was pronounced orally in the military court room by EJI member Moḥammed Amin ʿAbdel-ʿAlim as dictated to him by EJI leader Karam Zuhdi, on the 5th of July 1997.

Source:

Najeḥ Ibrahim, "al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya bain al-Mubadara wa al-Murajaʿa", in Diyaʾ Rashwān, ed., *al-Murajaʿāt min al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya ila al-Jihad* (Cairo: al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2008), P.31.

Appendix B

EJI VIOLENCE DOCTRINES: LEGITIMIZING VIOLENCE

S.	Name	Author(s)	Publication date	Publisher	Remarks
1	Mithāq al-ʿAmal al-Islami	Najeḥ Ibrahim, ʿAṣem ʿAbdel-Majid, ʿEṣam Derbala	1984	Unofficial publishing and limited distribution.	EJI manifesto and the equivalent to al-Jihad's "al-Fariḍa al-Gha'iba", written behind bars.
2	Qitāl al-Fi'a al-Mumtaniʿa 'an Shariʿa min Shar'āiʿ al-Islam (also known as "Ḥukm al-Ṭā'ifa al-Mumtaniʿa" Research)	Derbala, ʿAbdel-Majid	1984	Unofficial publishing and limited distribution.	For the purpose of being delivered to the court of al-jihad trial, Written behind bars.
3	Ḥatmiyyat al-Muwajaha	ʿEṣam Derbala	1984	Unofficial publishing and limited distribution.	
4	Al- Dhab 'an al- Ṣaḥāba	Ṭalʿat Fouʾad	1984	Unofficial publishing and limited distribution.	This book incorporated moderate ideas though published in the era of violence doctrines. .
5	Aṣnaf al- Ḥukkām wa 'Aḥkāmihim	Derbala Hisham, ʿAbdel-Ẓaher Revised by: ʿOmar ʿAbdel-Raḥman	1984	Unofficial publishing and limited distribution.	
6	Wugūb al-ʿAmal al-Jamāʿi	The eight historical leaders	1984	Unofficial publishing and limited distribution.	
7	Kalemat Ḥaq	ʿOmar ʿAbdel-Raḥman	1987	Dar al-Eʿteṣam	The book was issued for the purpose of being presented

					in the trial, and it does not represent ʿOmar ʿAbdel-Raḥman's ideas.
8	ʾAʾillahun maʿa Allāh	ʿAbdel-Majid	1987	Unofficial publishing and limited distribution.	
9	Al-Rad ʿAn Shubuhāt al-ʾAmr bi al-Maʿoruf wa al-Nahi 'an al-Monkar	Abdel-'Akher Ḥammad	1989	Unofficial publishing and limited distribution.	
10	ʾEmaṭat al-lethām ʿAn Baʿḍ Aḥkām Dhorwat Senām al-Islam	Rifāʿi Taha	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Wrote it individually in disagreement with EJI leaders.

Appendix C

RE-THINKING BOOKS

S.	Book name	Author (s)	Publication date	Publisher	Remarks
Silsilat Taṣḥiḥ al-Mafāhīm					
1	Mubadarat Waqf al-ʿUnf	Osama Ḥafez, ʿAbdel-Majid	2002	Maktabat al-Turath al-Islami	
2	Ḥurmat al-Ghuluww fi al- Din wa Takfīr al-Muslimīn	Ibrahim, Ali al-Sherif	2002	Maktabat al-Turath al-Islami	
3	Tasliṭ al-ʾAḍwāʾ ‘ala ma Waqa‘a fi al- Jihad min Akhtā’	Ḥamdi ʿAbdel-Raḥman , Ibrahim, al-Sherif	2002	Maktabat al-Turath al-Islami	
4	Al-Noṣḥ wa al-Tabiyyīn fi Taṣḥiḥ Mafāhīm al-Moḥtasebīn	al-Sherif, Ḥafez	2002	Maktabat al-Turath al-Islami	
5	Nahr al-Dhikrayāt: al-Murajaʿāt al-Fiqhiyya li al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya	Ibrahim, Ḥafez	2003 2005	Maktabat al-Turath al-Islami Maktabat al-ʿUbaikān	
6	Daʿwa li al-Taṣāloḥ maʿa al-Mujtamaʿ	Ibrahim	2004	Maktabat al-‘Ubaikān	
7	Hidayat al-khalāʾiq bayna al-Ghāyāt wa al-Wasāʾil	Ibrahim	2004	Maktabat al-‘Ubaikān	
8	Fatwa al-Tatār; Dirasa wa Taḥlil	Ibrahim	2004	Maktabat al-‘Ubaikān	
9	Ḥatmiyyat al-Muwājaha wa Fiqh al-Natā’ij	Ibrahim	2005	Maktabat al-‘Ubaikān	Refuting the first “Ḥatmeyat al-Muwajaha”

Others					
10	Al ʿUdhr bi al-Jahl	Derbala	2005	Maktabat al-‘Ubaikān	
11	Man Naḥnu wa Madha Nurīd?	Ibrahim	2006	EJI website before its closure.	EJI new manifesto after the initiative.
12	Al-Ḥakimiyya: Naẓra Sharʿiya wa Roʾya Waqeʿiya	Ibrahim	2005	Maktabat al-‘Ubaikān	
13	Aḥkām al-Diyār	Ibrahim	2006	Maktabat al-‘Ubaikān	
14	‘Eīdāḥ al-Jawāb fi Tasā’olāt ‘Ahl al-Kitāb	ʿAbdel-Majid	2006	Unofficial publishing inside jail during the Initiative’s lectures.	
15	Taṭbiq al-Aḥkām Min Ekhtiṣāṣ al-Ḥukkām	Ibrahim	2004	Unofficial publishing and limited distribution.	
16	Tajdīd al-Khitāb al-Dini; Ahammiyatoho wa Maḍmonoh	Ibrahim	2005	Maktabat al-‘Ubaikān	
17	Naẓarāt fi Ḥaqiqat al-Isteʿlā’ bi al-Imān	Ibrahim	2005	Maktabat al-‘Ubaikān	
18	Al-Islam wa Tahdhīb al-Ḥorūb	Derbala	2005	Maktabat al-‘Ubaikān	

Appendix D

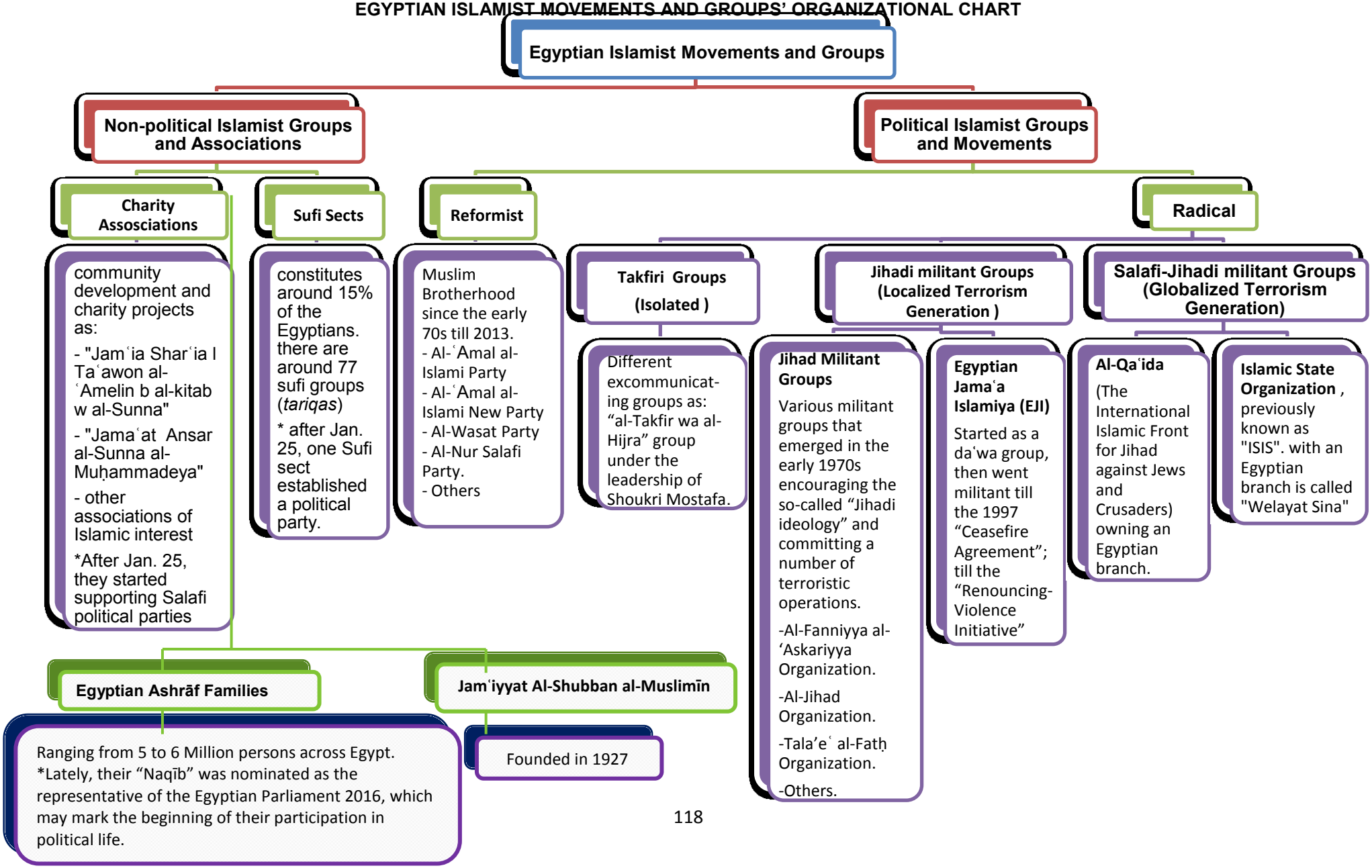
GENERAL BOOKS REFUTING OTHER MILITANT GROUPS' VIOLENCE

S.	Book name	Author (s)	Publication date	Publisher	Remarks
1	Tafjirāt al-Riyāḍ …al-Aḥkām wa al- Athār	Ibrahim	2003	Maktabat al-Turath al-Islami	
2	Esteratijiyyet wa Tafjirāt al-Qaʿida	Derbala	2005	Maktabat al-'Ubaikan	
3	Al-Akhṭā' wa al-Akhṭār	Derbala	2005	Maktabat al-'Ubaikan	
4	Naṣiḥa Wajiba li Qadat al-Qaʿida	ʿAbdel-Majid	2009	Not mentioned	
5	Barqiyāt Mohemma ila Shabāb al-ʾUmmah	Ibrahim	2014	Al-Shorouk International Bookshop	
6	Khareṭat Ṭariq li al-Ḥarakāt al-Islamiyya al-Moʿaṣira	Ibrahim	2012	Al-Ahram Center for publication, translation and distribution	

Source: the researcher's own preparation, revised by Najeḥ Ibrahim.

Appendix E

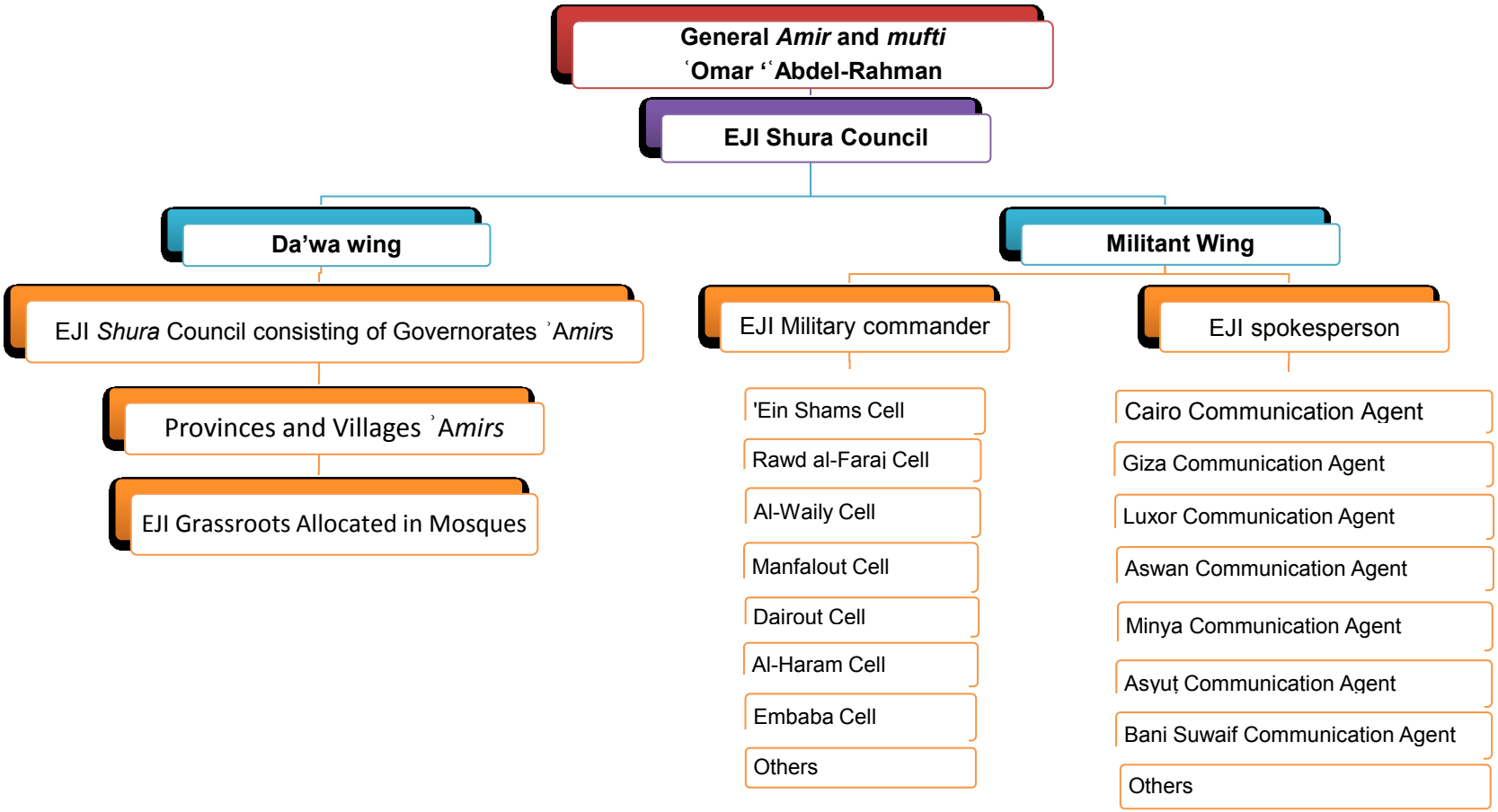
EGYPTIAN ISLAMIST MOVEMENTS AND GROUPS' ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Source: Brigadier Hussein Hammouda, former senior officer in State Security Department and an expert in combating international terrorist groups.

Appendix F

EJI ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AT ITS EMERGENCE



Source: Brigadier Hussein Ḥammouda, former Senior Officer in State Security Department and an Expert in Combating International Terrorist Groups.

Appendix G

GLOSSARY

- **Dar al-Islam/ Abode of Islam:** a peace zone. It is the territory where Islam is enacted, and therefore no warfare can take place within it.
- **Dar-al Kufr, Dar–al- Ḥarb**: the abode of infidels; a war zone. It is designated as the land where Islam does not rule, a territory where, according to Islamic fundamentalists, fighting can occur. According to fundamentalist ideologies, *dar al-ḥarb* is anywhere where S*hariʿa* is not applied regardless of territorial boundaries or demographics.
- **Daʿwa**: propagation of the mission; proselytization.
- **Dhimmiyyūun, Ahl-al-Kitab**: people of the book, a notion that normally applied to Jews and Christians, but also applied in some stages of Muslim history to others (e.g.: Buddhists).
- **Fatwa:** a religious judgment by a certain 'alim based on certain rules of interpretation in the Qur'an and Sunna.
- **Ḥakimiyya:** political sovereignty and rule on earth. The radical fundamentalists use *ḥakimiyya* as a justification for *jihad* against any group or government that does not make *tawḥid* its basis. It reasons that humans follow Allah's pathway and are therefore followers of Allah. However, *ḥakimiyya* is conducted by humans because no person can claim absolute finality of his interpretation.
- **Islamic militancy:** actual violent group behavior committed collectively against the state or other actors in the name of Islam.
- **Jahiliyya**: a *jahili* society is one that does not apply *Shariʿa* (Islamic Law) and that violates the teachings of the Quran and divine governance. To the fundamentalists, moderate and radical alike, the essence of Islam is one that focuses on the destruction of *jahiliyya*. Many radical fundamentalists feel that all contemporary societies are *jahili*.
- **Jihad**: literally struggle, yet generally covers all means of preaching and defending the faith. In the most basic of terms of fundamentalism, *jihad* is simply an armed struggle against any institution or force that opposes or restricts Islam. A moderate view on *jihad* is that it is not a means of aggression and expansion but rather a protection of *Daʿwa*. Radical fundamentalists, however, see *jihad* as not only a defensive action, but also a way to establish Islam in the lands where it does not exist. In other words, *jihad* should not just protect Islam, but it should also destroy *jahili* societies and transform them into Islamic ones.
- **Takfīr**: the condemnation of a society or political regime for unbelief which confers religious legitimacy upon a revolt against it. Also known as, excommunication.

Islamic groups and related concepts:

- **De-radicalization:** a process of relative change within Islamist movements, in which a radical group reverses its ideology and begins to de-legitimize the use of violent methods to achieve political goals

as well as accepting gradual social, political and economic changes within a pluralist context. De-radicalization can occur on the behavioral level as well. On that level, de-radicalization means abandoning the use of violence to achieve political goals without ideological de-legitimization.

- **Historical leaders:** The term “historical leaders” was coined by the Egyptian media and it refers to the EJI leadership of the 1970s. Almost all of the leaders were sentenced in the so-called al-Jihad Trials of 1981 following the assassination of President Sadat. Most of the historical leaders were still serving their sentences or administratively detained by the regime in 1997. The historical leaders currently represent the majority in the EJI *Majlis al-Shura*. The leaders who are still alive in 2016 are Karam Zuhdi, Najeḥ Ibrahim and ʿAṣem ʿAbdel-Majid.
- **Islamist groups**: sociopolitical movements which base and justify their political principles, ideologies, behaviors, and objectives on their understanding of Islam or on their understanding of a certain past interpretation of Islam. Islamist groups can be distinguished along a broad spectrum, from moderate to radical.
- **Khawarij**: a group of early Muslim dissidents who disapproved of the behavior and action of the Fourth Caliph Ali, as well as that of his challenger Mu’awiya. The Khawarij fought both at one time and never consented to the central authority of the Umayyads in Damascus or the Abbasid in Baghdad. One fundamental tenet of Khawarij is insistence on the unity of faith and deeds. Thus a tyrant ruler is not to be obeyed, nor can there be obedience to a sinful command. This goes against the mainstream Sunni doctrine, which would tolerate a tyrant for the sake of preserving the unity of the Umma. The mainstream Sunni establishment considers the Khawarij heretics. The term has now come to be used in describing any group that the established political and religious authority perceives as threatening the “unity” of society by rebelling
- **Moderate Islamist Groups:** an Islamist movement that ideologically accepts, at minimum, political and ideological pluralism, and aims for gradual social, political, and economic changes. Behaviorally, moderate groups accept the principles of working within the established state institutions regardless of their perceived legitimacy, and shun violent methods to achieve their goals. Moderate Islamists can also be called reformists, pluralists, or modernists.
- **Radical Islamist Groups**: those movements that ideologically reject democracy as well as the legitimacy of political and ideological pluralism. They aim for revolutionary, social, political and economic changes refuse to work within the established state institutions, and utilize violent means to achieve their goals. Radical Islamists also can be called revolutionaries, extremists or exclusivists.
- **Radicalization**: a process of relative change in which a group undergoes ideological and/or behavioral transformations that lead to the rejection of democratic principles as well as to the use of violence, or to an increase in the level of violence.
- **Salafi**: those who strictly adhere to the spirit and the letter of the Prophetic traditions and early Islamic practices.

Salafi-Jihadi: the Salafi-Jihadi current is a Sunni-based Islamist ideological trend that combines elements from two major Islamist trends: Salafism and Jihadism. Salafist movements are characterized by their adherence to the teachings of the first three Muslim generations as well as their Sunni-based literal/puritanical interpretation of Islamic sources. Salafist movements can be political (*Salafiyya-Jihadiyya)* or apolitical (*Salafiyya-ʿilmiyya* – Scholarly-Salafism). Jihadist movements are characterized by their legitimization and frequent use of violence as a method of social and political change, their rejection of both electoral and liberal democracy, as well as their intolerance of sociopolitical rivals.

- **Wahhabi Movement**: a movement that started in the latter decades of the eighteenth century. Its founder, Muḥammad Ibn Abdel-Wahhab, a puritanical fundamentalist, allied himself politically with the house of Al-Saud of Najd in central Arabia. Together they began to drive to unite Arabia and to institute fundamentalist Islamic institutions. Despite the ups and downs of this alliance, vis-a-vis the outside world, it persisted and finally triumphed politically in the early decades of the twentieth century. Saudi Arabia today is a culmination of this effort.

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Appendix H

CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR VIOLENT ISLAMIST MOVEMENTS

AND MAJOR EXTERNAL INFLUENCES (1928 – 2015)

N.B.: Attacks committed by the EJI are highlighted in Bold.

Year	Events	External influences
1928	• **Mar.:** Foundation of the Society of Muslim Brotherhood by Hassan al-Banna in Ismailiyya.	
1948	• **Dec**.: Dissolution of the MB on charges of "attempts to overthrow the existing regime.	The war in Palestine.
1949	• Assassination of Hassan al-Banna.	
1953	• Dissolution of all political parties except Muslim Brotherhood.	
1954	• **Oct**.: MB accused of attempting to assassinate Nasser in Alexandria.	
1966	• Sayyid Qutb hanged.	
1967	• **Jun**. **1967**: Six-day war that ended by Arab countries' defeat by Israel.	
1968	• **Feb. 1968:** Student demonstrations against those responsible for the defeat.	
1969	• Emergence of Islamic movements in universities.	
1972	• Muslim Brothers set free and started their "*Daʿwa*" activity in university.	
1973	• Birth of the Islamic groups (*Jamaʿāt Islamiyya*). • **Oct.:** 6th of October victory.	
1974	• **Apr.:** Attack at Heliopolis Military Academy by Siriyya group (al-Faniyya al-ʿAskariyya). • First participation for Islamists in student unions.	
1976	• The Islamist movements control the Congress of the Student Union. • Conflict between MB and other Islamist groups in universities regarding the latter's attitude in applying *Ḥisba*.	
1977	• **Jan.:** Riots in Cairo against the rise in price of subsidized products. • **Jul.**: the assassination of Sheikh al- Dhahabi by the Jama'āt *al-Takfīr wa al- Hijra*.	

	• **Nov.**: Sadat's trip to Jerusalem and signing Peace Treaty.	
1978	• Regime bans the Islamists in Student Unions and the later violently criticizes the "Shameful peace with the Jews". • **Sep.:** Signature of the Camp David accords.	
1979	• Formation of al-Jihad organization (Salem Raḥḥal starts recruitment) • Ending Islamist control over student unions.	• **Dec**.: Soviet invasion of Afghanistan • Iranian Islamic revolution
1980	• Sectarian clashes in Asyuṭ. • Meeting between Faraj (Jihad main ideologue) and Zuhdi (leader of EJI). • Choosing ʿOmar ʿAbdel-Raḥman as EJI spiritual leader.	• Afghanistan war (U.S.A supported Islamist mujahidūn)
1981	• **Aug**.: EJI members rob jewelry shops in Nagaʿ Ḥammadi to fund and arm their group**.** • **Sep.**: Islamist movements banned, Islamist press suspended. • **Sep.:** Sadat arrests 1,536 oppositionists, demotes the Coptic Pope and suspends the oppositionist press raising the slogan "*la siyasa fi al-din w la din fi al-siyasa*". • **Oct**. **6th**: Assassination of Sadat. • **Oct. 8th:** Asyuṭ Security Department attacks killing more than 100 police officers. • **Dec**.: Release of MB leaders.	
1982	• **Apr.:** Five death sentences are pronounced and executed in Sadat's assassination trial. Faraj and Khalid al-Islambulli were amongst those five. • Setting free those who took lightened verdicts in al-Jihad case.	**Apr**.: the agreed upon date for Israel's withdrawal from Sinai.
1985	• **May**: The People's Assembly rejects for demanding the application of the Shariʿa. • **Jul.:** All mosques are placed by decree under the control of the Ministry of Awqāf . Arrestment of Sheikh ʿOmar Abdel-Raḥman and his release later then.	
1986	• **Islamist members leave to Afghanistan to join "*al-mujahidīn*" there.** • Burning video shops in Shubra.	
1987	• **May** Assassination attempt of former minister of the interior Ḥassan Abu Basha.	

	• **Jun.**: Five hundred Islamist militants are arrested. • Assassination attempt on journalist Makram Moḥammad Aḥmad. • **Aug.:** Assassination attempt on minister of the interior al-Nabawi Ismail (by al-Jihad).	
1989	• **Dec.: Assassination attempt on Zaki Badr.**	
1990	• **Aug.:** Killing of ʿAlaa Mohi Al-din –speaker of EJI- giving rise to anger of EJI members. • **Oct.: Assassination of Rifʿat al-Maḥjūb –Head of People's Assembly-**	
1991	• **Oct.:** Hostile reactions to the Madrid Middle East Peace Conference in Islamist circles.	**Dec.**: disintegration of the Soviet Union
1992	• **Apr**.: **Assassination of the essayist Faraj Foda by EJI**. • Release of Osama Ḥafez –EJI leader- from prison in an attempt to mitigate EJI violence • **Oct**.: Attacks on tourists leave several dead or wounded. • **Oct.:** Earthquake in Cairo leaves 552 dead and 9,000 injured. Islamists take part in the assistance efforts following the earthquake. • **Dec.:** Military trials for the returnees from Afghanistan and the execution of eight of them.	
1993	• Resigning of minister of interior ʿAbdel- Ḥalīm Mousa after his meeting with al-`ulama` committee to discuss mediation. • Attempting to assassinate –Minister of Interior Affairs- Hassan al-Alfi and Prime Minister Atef Sedki by al-Jihad. • **Assassination attempt of Ṣafwat al-Sherif –Minister of Media-**	
1994	• **Apr.: Assassination of State Security Senior Officer General Raʾouf khairat.** • **Jun.:** Execution of EJI members who were accused of Ṣafwat al-Sherif assassination. • **Oct.: Assassination attempt of Najīb Mahfouz Nobel prize winner.**	
1995	• **Jun.: Assassination attempt of president Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa**	
1996	• Announcing Khalid Ibrahim's initiative –EJI ʾ*amir* in Aswan- but it went without recognition. • **EJI militants opened fire on Greek tourists in front of Europe Hotel in Al-Haram.**	

1997	• **Jul.:** EJI announcing "the Renouncing Violence Initiative". • **Nov.: Luxor massacre causing the death of 58 tourists and 4 Egyptians.**	
1998	• Foundation of the International Islamic Front for Jihad against Jews and Crusaders	
2001 - 2005	• Beginning the leaders' tour on prisons to introduce their cadres to the new ideology. • Issuing the first edition of the "Correcting Conceptions Series". • Setting free Mamdouḥ Yusuf, Karam Zuhdi, Najeḥ Ibrahim, Fou'ad al-Dawalībi and Ṣafwat Abdel-Ghany.	
2006	• Launching EJI website in a step to let EJI resume its da'wa efforts.	
2011	• **Mar.:** Setting free some EJI leaders and other Islamists including 'Aṣem Abdel-Majid, Tarek al-Zumur and 'Abbud al-Zumur by former President Mohammed Morsi	
2013	• 'Aṣem Abdel-Majid, Tarek al-Zumur, and other EJI leaders join "Taḥaluf Daʿm al-Sharʿiyya" and later on, escaped to Turkey and Qatar.	
2014	• Resignation of EJI major leaders Najeḥ Ibrahim and Karam Zuhdi.	

Sources:

Gilles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt* (London: Al Saqi Books, 1993).

Salwa al-ʿAwwa, *al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya al-Musallaḥa fi Misr*, (Cairo: al-Shorouk International Bookshop, 2006).

Appendix I

INTERVIEWS

s.	Interviewee	Title	Date	Remarks
1	Najeḥ Ibrahim	Main ideologue and one of the historical leaders of the EJI.	5th of Dec. 2015	Phone interview Recorded
2	Fouʾad ʿAllam	General, former Deputy Chief of State Security Department during the eighties.	6th of Dec. 2015	In-person interview Recorded
3	Kamal al-Saʿīd Ḥabib	Ph.D. in political science, former core leader in al-Jihad Group and a specialist in Islamist movements.	8th of Dec. 2015	In-person interview Recorded
4	Aḥmad Kamal Abul-Majd	A prominent Islamic scholar and member of the Mediators Committee of the Initiative.	16th of Dec. 2015	In-person interview Recorded
5	Kamal Boraiqaʿ ʿAbdel-Salam	Lecturer in the Faculty of Language and Translation, Al-Azhar University, member of the Interfaith Dialogue and Head of English Department in al-Azhar Observer.	29th of Dec. 2015	In-person interview Recorded
6	Kamal al-Helbawi	Ph.D. in political science, dissident member of the MB, Ex-spokesperson and member of MB *Shura* Council.	1st of Jan. 2016	In-person interview Not Recorded
7	Karam Zuhdi	Ideologue, a historical leader and former EJI General ʾ*amir*.	4th of Jan. 2016	Phone interview Recorded
8	Ḥussein Ḥammouda Mostafa	Brigadier, former Senior Officer in State Security Department and an expert in Combating International Terrorist Groups.	5th of Jan. 2016	In-person interview

N.B.: interviews above are sorted in chronological order.

Interview with Nageḥ Ibrahim on Dec. 5th, 2015

(Main ideologue and one of the historical leaders of the EJI)

What is the principal reason behind the adoption of violence the (EJI)?

The *Jamaʿa* first started with a peaceful call (*daʿwa*) for people; educating them to learn the Quran by heart and to keep the prayers. We've grown stronger and moved from one university to the other, until *we* became predominant on campuses. The bigger the EJI became, the lesser it was prone to control. Moreover, the larger the scope of groupings, the more liable they become to have some members who are rather austere or even violent and the bigger the role they search for themselves and the like. Thus, they don't suffice by call for religion, but rather pursue changing society at large. The group in this manner does not stop at the call for religion (despite the fact that this is the greatest mission of reform).

We didn't have an influential leader with experience to pass on to us. Thus, we relied on ourselves; the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) used to visit, give us lectures, and attend our camps. They haven't informed us about their experience, such as telling us that going underground was to their detriment. They did not warn us against the use of weapons and the troubles this could entail. They didn't impart their own experience. We had thought that the rulers as such were the ones who oppress us and the MB, and that the MB hadn't done anything wrong. The authorities were the ones who tortured and imprisoned the MB, killed Sheikh Ḥassan al-Banna and started a series of executions with no fault on the side of the MB themselves. Strangely, all what we heard about torture, murder, assassinations, and injustices was mainly at the time of Abdel- Nasser and to some degree during the reign of King Farouk. Unconsciously, we have projected such action on Sadat, despite the fact that he had stopped torture and allowed the Islamist groups freedom. To tell you the truth, the state during Sadat's reign didn't do us injustice. The oppression at the time of Nasser was projected on the times of Sadat. The true injustice, torture, and assassination were rather experienced at the time of Mubarak not Sadat.

Thus, subconsciously we took the role of opposition. We are not sure how this was passed to us – in fact this role is a legacy from one generation to another. Islamist groups and movements like to be in opposition and rather shun agreement; they feel ashamed from acquiescing to the state or not being in clash with the state. This is why when were slightly stronger we attacked Sadat fiercely. If someone was arrested we would organize demonstrations for him without knowing the reasons for arrest, and even if this person was not a member of the group to start with. We started acting irrationally: Thus, we took up roles not fit for us. The stronger you become, you become closer to a group seeking domination and renown in this world, which makes the educative element recede.

Change using physical force started. Of course, changing evil with hand is the gateway to violence, and this is one of the key mistakes committed by EJI. Certainly, the university, on the other hand, should have avoided provoking people, and should have limited itself to learning and knowledge. The university is not the place for concerts nor is it a place for inviting singers.

You took over the role of the state?

At the time we did not understand that this is the role of the state. We understood it was permissible to change evil with hand. When we reached a better knowledge of religion, we realized that change with hand is the responsibility of the ruler, while change with the tongue is the responsibility of the scholars, and with the heart that of the laypersons. The problem of the Islamic movement as we have come to realize is that we were undertaking roles not ours, such as the role of the state to change evil and so one. However, the state did not change this evil like the selling of drugs, corruption, bribery and other forms of perversity. Also, secular extremism was prevalent, while the state remained silent. In fact, the state could do injustice, oppress, imprison, and torture while all the hoped for social and political justice were seen missing from the state and on the contrary, good and pious examples were seen in the group the more the individual melts within it. Two factors existed: there were young men driven by text misinterpretation and the heat of youth as well as the surrounding conditions of society and the state, where there was no social or political justice.

You mean that this was a reaction because the state does not take any action?

This is how we saw it. If anyone goes to the police station to file a report, nothing would be done. There was a gang in Asyuṭ who were homosexuals and they were the sons of university professors. We would hold those kids and beat them to stop this behavior. However, this has a more negative impact because you are entrenching the idea of usurping the right of the state to use force. Furthermore, as time passes, bad people would jump in, and overcrowd the good people.

The conclusion I have reached is that when you desire to change using violence, you could have people joining you who were originally thugs or bad people. They want to wash off their sins in Islam. They are therefore efficient and hardhearted; this is why they excel in this approach. This is what happened to us after we have been imprisoned. The educational level of the group declined after having had university graduates as members, most of the membership is from among holders of vocational diplomas and technicians. They used this approach for other issues not simply changing evil but to show off themselves in the name of Islam.

Usually, the Islamist movement after establishment and engaging in the call for religion would take the role of opposition. Thus, the character of the Islamic movement is rather passive: there is a passion for the role of opposition, and this role cannot be abandoned even if it comes to power. The Islamist movement after Morsi's role organized huge demonstrations, even though Islamists are in power and parliament, such as the million-march demonstration for legitimacy. What kind of talk is this? You have the parliament, the power, the legitimacy! Demonstrations and demands are for opposition not for those who are in power.

Islamist groups and movements have had several issues concerning their educational upbringing. First, the individual loves the group and revolves in its orbit. It is the cauldron in which the individual acts and reacts because it is the source of learning the Quran, knowledge, and educational, political, and administrative matters. Usually, such topics are not covered in universities. If the person is employed in a company owned by the MB, the company becomes everything – it has become the alternative, as the state hasn't offered anything, not a job opportunity or anything. Second, the

individual marries from within the group. Members are committed to one another, and they become one and the same thing unconsciously. The individual is more protective of the group than of Islam.

In conclusion, this individual melted within the thought of the group. Nobody had ever taught him the thought of the state, and he had never engaged with the state. The state prosecutes and excludes, making the person detached from the state, which neither provides care nor works with the person, especially when coercion starts. An operation of armed violence is usually followed by torture, beating, humiliation, charges, and random accusations. Thus, the individual is driven deeper into the arms of the group.

You mentioned that you have prevailed in universities at a time when there was no leadership. How was this case?

Indeed, there was no specific leadership, but we used to learn from the MB who attended the camps and tried to control – from afar – the new nascent entity, which revitalized them. Similar to the EJI nowadays, the MB at the time had almost clinically died. After the calamity between 1954 until 1974, they had almost ceased to exist. Thus, when they found this budding entity, which pumped new blood into them, they gave life to this newborn. Both entities gave one another much. Had the MB imparted their full experience, we would have learnt what to avoid and what to do – such as treating the Christians properly. They were afraid though to tell us about their experience. Had they told us their mistakes, we would not have joined them. For instance when I am asked about torture, I do not talk about it as I believe that over-discussion of torture leads to one of two things, first of which is: a wave of pronouncing people infidels, secondly followed by a wave of vengefulness and hatred. This is proven by experience of the MB who wrote books on the torture. One example is saying “I received a thousand lashes when I was taken to prison.” When I have been there, it was only three lashes and beating boards, which makes one faint.

When we started we were obsessed with the thought that this regime is unjust and tyrannical, hates religion, and acts as such out of hatred to religion. This and all what the MB have experienced was a firm belief in our minds. Later on, we understood

that this was a political conflict between the MB and Nasser. Each party believed it was more entitled and fit to rule; and as a result they vied – the strong beats the weak and inflicts all sorts of torture thereon. It is not a conflict over religion. Had the MB let Nasser be, he would not have harmed them. When they opposed him, he penalized them. When we were younger, we used to say that the government hates religion and shuns it. Evidence shows that Sadat let the supporters of religion be. But we were blinded because we were only informed of torture, beating, humiliation, and hatred of religion; and we were only told anecdotes about what they have done to this scholar or the other, as well as all other ambiguous issues.

How did the Re-thinking Initiative come into effect? And what is the relative significance of the ideological shift in comparison to the security approach?

We made mistakes, and the regime also made mistakes. In the Initiative we have corrected our mistakes and the regime did so, and this is why we agreed. Both sides have reviewed their positions autonomously. They did not force us, neither have we done so; but when we changed they did. Therefore, the first step for the groups to resolve their problems is to change themselves, then, the governments would change. If I stop attacking you for a whole year, you would not have any justification to beat me. But, as long as I attack the judges and officers, they would torture and beat without being instructed to do so by the state, and there would be aggravated sentences.

Do you believe that Ahmad Raʾfat encouraged the project or was it the state?

The Initiative was fortunate when the leader of the military wing responded to Sheikh Karam and turned himself in together with others (unconditionally). The state dealt with them intelligently and professionally. There was no treachery, which made the Initiative successful. The role of the state is very important. General Ahmad Raʾfat was responsible for this success as he encouraged the state and the intelligence. At the beginning of the Initiative, he encouraged the project, and he used to say, “If it fails, I will be responsible.” He was courageous and adventurous. Also, Sheikh Karam was the real master of the Initiative. He was the originator of the idea. He put his reputation at stake to make the project a success.

You mentioned that Islamists like to take the side of opposition; do they also like to feel victimized?

Yes, Islamists like to take the side of opposition. After the individual or groups are taken to prison, they like to play the role of killed victim. They forget what they have done. They say, “We have been tortured, they killed our brother.” They tortured and killed and we killed them; they beat us and we beat them; they acted and we did. This was our battle and conflict. The conflict was not about religion, but a conflict over power. We wanted to change the regime and remove it violently. The state cannot accept this. However, the movement only thinks about what the authorities have done to the members instead of thinking about the explosions and the like.

The EJI did not believe in conspiracy theory, if we commit an action we admit it. Even after the revolution, it was claimed that Mubarak interfered to have Sadat killed, I denied this stating that Mubarak is innocent of Sadat’s blood. Those who killed Sadat are well known, and did so out of principle and belief. In their view, Sadat made mistakes. However, there is no justification for murdering a person based on this mistake. We are not guardians of blood or rulers. One other issue where we made a major mistake was the case of Rifʿat al Maḥjūb, and the rumors that he was assassinated by Mubarak. I said this before on TV that those who killed him are well known, not out of love for Mubarak, but rather for the sake of telling the truth, “truth is more worthy to be followed”,

In the Islamist movement, all mistakes are foundational. No individual achieved any gain from the group. There was no material gain, but membership was all losses. Nothing was achieved except humiliation, torture and imprisonment. Most members were conscientious, for instance ʿAṣem Abdel-Majid was distinguished and smart. Sheikh ʿAṣem and Sheikh ʿEssam came from good families and made sacrifices. ʿAṣem wrote most of the books and formulated foundational volumes of the past. He was also the one who drafted one of the statements of the Initiative. They were geniuses. Ayman el-Ẓawahry was a noble, disciplined, and mannered person. His problem was his thought. These people did not make any profits from the EJI. It is naive to say so; for example, somebody such as Osama bin Laden does not need any gain

from this world. Thus, it is a matter of thought – this is why the deficiency is rather intellectual.

There is also a technical point that is lost to all: had such ideals existed in society not in a group, there wouldn't have been a problem. However, as long as they are a group, they would seek change. We try to change, the government confronts them, and therefore they say we need to go underground. This is the beginning of slipping; after resorting to working underground, they complain that the government is attacking and such entity is torturing us, so we need to form a group that responds.

Do you believe that forming groups is a misguided strategy?

In brief, when I reviewed groups since their formation in the forties and up to now and the fruits of their work, I found both the good and the bad. However, the shortcomings overweigh the advantages**.** Forming a group that goes underground, and then forms a special military wing leads to violence. The state arrests everybody and not this group only. The state beats and tortures everybody, which causes injustice to become prevalent, and this leads to pronouncing people infidels wholesale. The rift between us and the state widens and animosity increases. Rulers see no other path but torturing and oppressing such people. This chain reaction grows and leads to breaking any group that is formed and to their ultimate degradation and imprisonment. The more you are hostile towards some rulers, the more unjust and dictatorial they become. Thus, we have mobilized two sides: armed violence on the part of Islamists and dictators.

Armed violence is by no means justified. When you proselytize – your role is to call for religion in the light of four concepts: be callers, not judges "*Duʿāh la Quḍāh*", callers not rulers "*Duʿāh la Wulāh*", callers not cruel "*Duʿāh la Qusāh*", callers not tyrants "*Duʿāh la Bughāh*". On Doomsday, would Allah ask us how many have we pronounced as infidels or immoral? He won't ask us this then. He will ask how many persons have you managed to attract to religion, how many have you made happy, how many have you managed to make merciful? Once you pronounce the ruler infidel, you see the ugly face. The infidel ruler must be rebelled against; but not he alone. He and his ruling institutions must be rebelled against and changed. "Pharaoh and Haman and

(all) their hosts were men of sin", even the Quran was respectful and said men of sin not infidels – unlike ISIS stamping people with this stigma.

There is a difference between a call for Allah and a call for a group or an organization; both are confused. We call any human being to Allah; if they respond, well and good, regardless if s/he joins the group. Why are morals on the decline in Egypt, despite the existence of many proselytizers? Because most of the calls are party oriented, they call for themselves, for their parties, for the ruler, for a sect, for a group – all of which are losers.

To what extent do the concepts of religious sociology apply, regarding the deprivation theory or the theory that holds that religion is a form of protest?

I myself was not deprived of anything – not love not money – and I did not seek any power or property. Ayman al-Ẓawahry was convinced: his father was a surgeon, his grandfather was Sheikh al-Azhar, his sister a professor, his uncle a dermatologist. When food was brought to him, he would not touch it. He was a wealthy person not deprived of anything and high up the social scale. Thus, what moved him was rather the love of Islam. His project was intellectual (misguided), but partially driven by social and political injustices, secular extremism, corruption, and all other motives. The main elements of the EJI were from university; they were fine and naturally cultured people from the faculties of Medicine and Engineering.

Then, it was a form of protest?

The major pitfall of Islamic movements was the stance of opposition. Even if the government is good they have to oppose (Ali was opposed and even declared an infidel). Both Ali and Muʿawiyah were declared infidels and were both targets of assassination. You start with the idea of being in opposition. The worst thing about it is that you start as being illegitimate, then an infidel, then you have to change, and then I cannot change you except by force. (The problem is that you are denying me any means to oppose you).

***But were there people who suffered from deprivation? What about the remaining base of people representing the Islamic movement in the seventies*?**

Most of the people came from university students. When there was restriction on the activities holders of vocational and professional training certificates joined, especially when our work was prohibited in the university. Thus the second phase is of lesser quality compared to the earlier leaders. One of the state security officers told me that the first generation is irreplaceable. The third and fourth generation is really bad; they are rather inclined to violence. They want to be visible.

The critical point in the EJI shift to bearing arms came through Sheikh Karam Zuhdi who was a hasty man and wanted to change everything overnight. He met another hasty man, Moḥammad Abdel-Salam, who was Jihad-oriented and who sought a coup. Thus, he convinced Zuhdi with the idea of the coup and the underground organization after having seen us in the camp, maintaining that since you are a large group, you have a strong base of human resources. There was a huge difference between the EJI and the Jihad Group. The Jihad was constructed of cluster cells working underground without any support from a group of callers. The EJI, however, had well known leaders, who could have been easily arrested. The alliance, nonetheless, continued because Sadat had then issued the decision of seizing people. Fugitives are usually watchful, believing that anyone would arrest and torture him – we were inexperienced.

In September, a decision was issued to arrest everybody until the delivery of Sinai, and then all would be released. We did not see this at the time. We thought he would do the same thing like Abdel Nasser in 1954, so we escaped. Some of us were arrested. Sadat did not stop at that and kept arresting people in groups.

Thus, the critical point in your shift was this alliance between Karam Zuhdi and Moḥammad Abdel Salam?

Indeed, after having been imprisoned we separated, because they were driven with the underground mentality. The mentality of declaring people infidels and the mentality of coups ruled. However, from the start we were call oriented.

This means that the Re-thinking Initiative was but a restoration of your old selves?

Yes**.**

So how did this mentality of coups or armed fight find its way to the EJI?

It found its way via two specific persons: Karam Zuhdi and Moḥammad Abdel-Salam. The worst point in the whole history of EJI was the moment of the alliance between Karam Zuhdi and Moḥammad Abdel-Salam.

With what was the Charter of Islamic Action substituted?

"Man Naḥnu wa Madha Nurīd" (We and What We've Desired) (2004-2006). All mistakes in the Charter were amended. All ideas were corrected without being pointed to. We made substitutions for everything in the new Jamaʿa literature. We did not suffice by discussing our own ideas, but we discussed the ideas of all other groups. We were the first to respond.

Was everybody in agreement with the Initiative?

We pledged that we won't take with us except those who approved of it. There was neither compulsion nor coercions. Only one person disapproved of the Initiative and the peaceful approach (one of his relatives died) and he did not come. No one was forced to attend. However, we had asked to put the EJI members in prison in separate wards to avoid disputes and exchange of abuses. We advised our members not respond to any abuse and we urged them to be patient and tolerant even those whose brothers had died.

Does this mean that you prepared the EJI members psychologically?

The members were convinced with the idea of the Initiative, even those whose brothers died out of torture or at the hands of security, even those who were sentenced to death or life approved.

What did al-Azhar represent to you when you were young students? And what did it mean to you when you adopted violence, and after this period?

We used to like al-Azhar, but there were some who would defame key figures of al-Azhar such as Sayyed Sabiq and al-Baqouri – whom they used to call al-Munafiqury. However, the *EJI* did not fall into this trap of hatred, though we believed that al-Azhar lives in the shadows of the government, and cannot progress because it is tied by the government. Later on, we realized that Islam cannot develop without al-Azhar; the Book and Prophetic traditions cannot be preserved without al-Azhar, because Islamic movements were always subject to disasters and tribulations. Nonetheless, we liked al-Azhar and were opened to it at the time of the Initiative as without it, Islamic jurisprudence scholarship would be lost. But the truth is, al-Azhar had no role to play in this Initiative, not even in the Committee of the Wise Men (Committee of Mediators). In fact, the catalyst of this Committee was Dr. Salim al-ʿAwwa.

Did the state try to open paths of dialogue with Islamic groups after the Sadat accident?

Yes, Ḥassan Abu Basha (former minister of interior affairs) and General Fouʾad ʿAllam tried. However, Abu Basha was transferred and Fouʾad ʿAllam left the State Security Department. Zaki Badr was their successor, and had no knowledge of political security. For him all Islamists were all the same – he didn't differentiate between EJI and the Jihad Group or the MB for that matter. All had to go to prison. His policies hit us in the heart and led the political wing to confrontation with the state once more, which rekindled violence. Badr arrested whoever would just hang the announcement of a lecture.

ʿOmar Abdel-Raḥman made a fatwa of fasting for 60 days after the Asyuṭ events?

He believed that the Asyuṭ event were wrong. In fact, he was an Azharite in thought, and EJI was the one that influenced him not otherwise. He was not the one in control. The EJI assigned him to defend the brothers. This was not his line of thought. This was what was written and exchanged among generations. It was a group of brothers who prepared the book. Everyone accepted the Initiative except Sheikh Rifaʿi

and his rejection ended up with his arrest. Osama Ḥafez and ʿEṣam Derbala later changed their positions.

Have they changed their positions because they were influenced by the Initiative or by the events?

Sheikh Osama Ḥafez has always been peaceful, but with rather strict opinions. He did not partake in violence. He was always opposing governments. Sheikh ʿAṣem, unfortunately, has been among the first to write the statements of the Initiative and one of the early supporters. However, his flaw is that amidst crowds, he would become zealous and tends to play on emotions. Another flaw in Sheikh ʿAṣem is that he needs to have an enemy all the time. If he failed to find one, he would make one.

How did the EJI look administratively?

When the military wing was dissolved the first time, there were no casualties (when al-Huḍaybi in the MB tried to discipline the Secret Section, there were assassinations, but thank goodness, Sheikh Karam Zuhdi managed to end the issue of the military wing calmly and smoothly.

Do you believe that the EJI was democratized internally through Majlis al-Shura?

Since the outset the EJI was driven by consultation. ʿOmar Abdel-Raḥman was in the *Majlis al-Shura* headed by Sheikh Karam. The Jihad Group became a separate group after imprisonment. Sheikh Abbud and Tarek joined the group. The consultative council used to be in control. There was a council in prison and another outside. Thus, consultation was there from the beginning and decisions were taken by majority.

Has the EJI deviated from the Initiative? Do you think the Initiative deviated?

No, it has not deviated. The deviation was external to the key line of the EJI.

But how do you explain the resignation of many of the historical leaders such as yourself, Karam Zuhdi, and Ḥamdi Abdel-Raḥman?

They have resigned primarily because they could see what would happen next. Had you read the resignation letter, you would have found fear of deviation from the path of the Initiative. The future is not promising. Many of the members were arrested. Part of the leaders died. They are prevented from undertaking any activity political or religious. The decision of joining "Supporting Legitimacy Alliance" was wrong. All of this led to resignation. However, I felt that matters were not going in the right direction. I do not think there is a return to violence but rather a return to conflict, i.e. conflict with the state (we are not properly understood).

Does this mean that the EJI is in a juncture? Or is it on the path to moderation, or caught in violence?

The *Jamaʿa* shall not revert to violence but will become weaker, even if some try to leave. The name of the *Jamaʿa* shall remain connected to the Initiative. This Initiative is more logical than conflict, because it created a momentum that cannot be overlooked. Whenever a charter or method is sought, only the Initiative comes to mind.

What is the position of the EJI towards the legitimacy of democracy?

After 25 January, they established a party named *Al-Bināʾ wa al-Tanmiyah*. I believe that that the group has not yet matured democratically.

Do you think that the line of the Initiative is linked to some leaders?

If the upholders of the idea disappear, the idea will die; if the upholders of the opposing idea and become a majority, they will take matters to the direction they like. Leadership definitely has an effect.

Do you see the basic factors of success (of the revisions) available for other groups? Are there factors such as leadership?

Currently, success factors are available. The MB is the only one who has such factors: leadership, thought, and organizational structure.

Interview with Fouʾad ʿAllam on December 6th, 2015

(Former Deputy Chief of State Security Department)

What is the principal reason behind the adoption of violent extremism by the (EJI)?

President Anwar Al-Sadat assigned Moḥammad Othman Ismail, the MB affiliate and the then Asyuṭ governor, the task of establishing Islamist groups in the Egyptian universities to confront leftist groups who were against al-Sadat's policies. Al-Sadat made this move without the prior knowledge of the Egyptian security agencies and even restricted them from taking any procedures against these groups. This policy didn't change until Omar al-Telmisani, the then *Murshid* (leader) of MB and Abd al-Mun'im Abu al-Futuh dared to criticize him in a public meeting.

What are the subjective and objective factors that had contributed to the success of the ending-violence Initiative?

The relationship based on human considerations that developed between General Ahmad Raʾfat, (chief of Counter Fanaticism Section in the in the State Security Department), and the EJI's historical leaders contributed significantly in rendering the Initiative successful. Unfortunately, their books stopped to be printed after his death. The chain was broken by the death of Ahmad Raʾfat, who used to hear from them, and carry their messages to whom it would concern.

Do other militant Islamist groups possess the elements of success of the Re-thinking Initiative as possessed by the EJI?

The circumstances differ for every group. It is for the first time that militant groups like "ISIS" take over large country lands, the first time to have huge funding and the first time to own large amounts of weapons. There should be specialized systems to study how those should be combated. Also, a difference between the current militant groups and EJI is that EJI members studied in the same universities and were later imprisoned together in the same cells, unlike ISIS and al-Qaʿida that are decentralized with a lot of

secret cells and branches worldwide. A global organization has to be formed and should consist of 300 or 400 experts in every relative field to combat terrorism.

So what is the Fiqhi doctrine that they refer to in order to legitimize carrying out massacres?

They are more fanatic than Sayyid Qutb himself. They did not live during his time neither meet him. The ones who did are the old members. The new members' ideology is affected by that of Qutb's who views the world as *jahili*. He contends that in order to save the world from this *jahiliyyah*, Muslims must found the Islamic group that would establish the Islamic state. This idea was great for them and attractive for the lay persons. Also, when you look at Hassan al-Banna's two *rasaʾil* (writings) of political parties and dealings, they both call clearly for *takfīr.* He describes those who believe in political parties as infidel and so are those who participate in political parties because parties lead to the dispersion of Muslims.

To what extent can we depend on the Re-thinking books in understanding the behavior of the Islamist movements?

The Re-thinking Initiative is very important. When we see the examples of Najeḥ Ibrahim or Karam Zuhdi or similar groups, we realize that they did not have inclination to violence at the first place, and that violence was not instilled in their minds. This is obvious because; they studied the experience and found out that result would have been more successful if addressed in a scientific way. The problem is that other violent Islamist groups neither benefited from them, nor from their books. The EJI lost their credibility in the eyes of other militant groups, because they deserted *jihad.*

What are the EJI's current chances of success at the preaching and social levels, and politically through their "Building and Development" party?

There must be political will on the part of the state to be fully convinced that out of 15000, they can benefit from at least one thousand. There should be political will so we can benefit from the behavior and experience of those groups. We should

communicate the message seeking the help media experts, like I did before with “Hilmi Al-Buluk”.

Do you think the mediation committee is a successful idea?

The reconciliation committee including El-Shaʿrawi, al-ʿAwwa and Abul-Majd, was the idea of Abul-Majd. But it came to an end because of a conflict among the political leadership. This was the result of giving the wrong picture to the president.

Do you believe in negotiations?

It’s a very successful experience, although it is limited in the case of MB with whom no negations took place. My mistake was that I focused on re-thinking the ideologies of the *takfīrī* groups, not on that of the MB’s. My fault was that I did not start the negotiations with MB, simultaneously with my negotiations with the *takfiris.* This is because the *takfīrī* thought and organization was the most dangerous during the time. My main concern was to face it first, at this level.

What are the prospects of success for the presence of the EJI on the daʿwa, social and political arenas?

If there were no political will to benefit from them in a scientific way, it will come to an end. Even worse, the members at the grassroots may become more rebellious.

Interview with Kamal Ḥabib on December 8th, 2015

(Former core-leader in al-Jihad Group and a Specialist in Islamist Movements)

What is the principal reason behind the adoption of violent extremism by the EJI?

The EJI started violence in the context of the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice. They came from Upper Egypt, and Upper Egypt has its own customs and traditions: the use of arms, violence, vengeance, and tribalism.

Also, the youth factor, as young people believe that violence is an easy path to change, violence is luring; because it achieves a change on the ground. More importantly, I believe was the following: The EJI did not start with a project or an organization. The members met with the Jihad Group in Lower Egypt (Moḥammad Abdel Salam Faraj) who carried the Jihadist legacy since 1974, Faraj criticized the current groups (the MB and the Tablīgh Group) and indicated that the lacking obligation is that of Jihad. This project gave the EJI a symbolic moral frame for violence.

The main shift in the EJI was meeting the Jihad Group who maintained that the Islamic state could be achieved using armed force. Their start without a project pushed them towards violence. Indeed, this is an old project, since the end of the sixties. These were ideas taken from Sayyid Qutb and Ibn Taimiya. They shifted from the idea of promoting virtue and prohibiting vice, randomly on campus. Their role grew. They took Sheikh ʿOmar Abdel-Raḥman as an Azharite reference, and to be their façade.

There are other factors connected to character and psychological aspects. There is the Afghani factor, which entailed pulling the youth there. Both the Algerian and Afghani factors were key sources of violence by the EJI. Also, the rise of Salafi thought was the result of inundating the country with the thought and *fatwa*s of Ibn Taimiya more than the thought of Qutb. They read the works about the abstaining sect (*at-ta'ifa al mumtaniʿah)*.The influence of Ibn Taimiya was much greater than that of Qutb, all of which are intellectual sources for violence using what we term "interpretation."

The difference between the EJI and Jihad is that EJI sprung from the university, it was semi-public, without a project, promoting virtue and prohibiting vice rather

emotionally, coherent, having tribal affiliations, and very patriarchal. Geographically, the members come from Upper Egypt upholding the customs and traditions of the region. The Jihad, on the other hand, is a rather civilian organization. There were no discrepancies in creed except after imprisonment.

The other groupings were Salafist and did not declare a Muslim to be infidel without having committed an error that deserves such. Hence, the generation of the seventies has a history of wasted opportunities. The MB was exhausted by imprisonment. The new generation was volunteering for revenge from the times of Nasser, which made them talk about torture (*Al Bawwaba al-Sawdaʾ* [The Black Gate], by Ahmad Rai'f, was quite exaggerated; because the youth were angry at the time.

In terms of belief, these were simple people. The simple Salafist idea prevailed. Jihad were more involved in intellectual dialogue; prayer behind the imams, political oppression, and so on, we (al-Jihad Group) were also under the influence of exaggerations

To what extent do the concepts of religious sociology apply, regarding the deprivation theory and the theory that holds that religion is a form of protest?

Most of the members of the Islamist groups were not deprived. They were not poor. It was a crisis of identity, and this is the closest interpretation of the whole thing. Economic interpretations or theories of deprivation are not fit for responding to this issue. This is not a social movement. The interpretation is cultural, value-oriented, identity related. Identity is the key point. After the project of nationalism collapsed, people started to search for a new identity. The old identity was Arab nationalism, which was broken before Israel and could not deliver, neither was secularism capable.

You think that religion is a venue for protest?

Since the Iranian Revolution in 1979 onwards, the perception of religion started to change in the West and the non-Western worlds. As a framework for protest, we applauded the Iranian revolution and considered it a revolution against Israel. It was an example for destroying a secular regime and the US. This was the side we saw of the Iranian Revolution, not that it turned into a sectarian country. We didn't realize that it

was filling the power vacuum at the expense of the Arabs and the Sunna. This is where religion started as a tool for protest; it was the authority for protest. When the Khawarij came, they claimed to protect religion (God). Also, the Umayyads and the history of Arabs and Muslims shows this. The crisis is the connection made between power "*sultan*" and the Quran. The more the state is separated from Shari'ah (Islamic Law), a crisis of identity is created, particularly the state with exaggerated secularism. This was the cause for protest on religious basis.

In Egypt, we are not as secular as Turkey. The Constitution of 1923 stated that Islam is the key source of legislation. However, with the aggravation of crises in the seventies, the rise of the Church, the rise of the Islamists, religion started to be used. The state manipulated religion to exploit social, political, and religious groups, which is very grave. In this case, power is not separate from the Quran, but the Quran is exploited for self-interest. This is a very dangerous issue. The Khawarij said: "the command is for none but Allah". They used this claim to confront Ali ibn Abi Taleb. Thus, they used religion to confront Ali. This is Invalid interpretation.

Al-Jihad groups are anarchist movements against power whatsoever. Islam has a position towards the unjust ruler. The Jihad members believed in theories of defying the ruler. They saw this as part of belief. They don't see this as part of the thought that could change with the change of time and place. This is why all the terminology of the religious discourse should be reviewed.

The EJI had a problem of self-affirmation vis-à-vis the project of Jihad. Therefore, they created the Charter for Islamic Action, which upheld the words of Ibn Taimiya.

Do you believe the Re-thinking Initiative was a successful intellectual shift or the outcome of security treatment?

Violence is not inherent in the methodology of the EJI, unlike the Jihad Group. They had the possibility of becoming open. Violence and counter-violence started in the eighties. The EJI could have been one of the political players. The state requested that there would be a separation between those who work in calling for religion and those who are interested in governance. However, the state realized that they didn't comply and it had to react to the Islamist's violence repressively.

However, the members of the EJI remained restless. When they were imprisoned, they started to reconsider. Even if some people took tortuous paths, those who started with *daʿwa* want to return to it, such as Dr. Najeḥ Ibrahim. Also, The *EJI* is a local organization. The local element was strong, which made revisionism easier. The Jihad is rather global and regional. It is much more difficult.

Has the security given the members the opportunity to enter into revisions and to realize the consequences?

The security treatment, arrests, repeated violence, pressure in prison and open violence were the main features. The EJI started to attack tourists in the early nineties. This topic of attacking tourists is quite sensitive. No one could accept the violence of the group with tourists. The group deviated from a wise project to adopt violence. Violence is seductive. However, it leads the proponents to an impasse – what to do next? Violence for the sake of violence has to come to an end. It is used for political reasons; you tie the noose around your neck. However, violence without controls leads to chaos. The security tried violence and counter-violence from 1990-1997. If one of the sides persists on violence, it's not going to work out.

Gradually, some of the officers put themselves up to the mission. They accepted the task. They accepted to negotiate the thoughts. Also, Karam Zuhdi did so. He had strong convictions. Moreover, he did not uphold the project of violence initially.

Intellectually, have you influenced the revisions?

We reviewed positions and we used to engage in discussions. General Fouʾad ʿAllam believed in dialogue. Dialogue is important. We need intellectual dialogues once again. I exited in 1991 and produced the book *Al-Ḥaraka al-Islamiyya min al-Muwajaha ila al-Murajaʿa* (The Islamic Movement from Confrontation to Revision).

Do you believe that the Re-thinking Initiative was successful?

Yes. The revisions were also quite useful for the EJI in Libya (Moḥammad Ali el-Salabi) and in Saudi Arabia. What the EJI managed to do isn't attainable by al-Azhar or even Dar al-Iftāʾ. Dar al-Iftāʾ is the mouthpiece of politics not religion and this

catastrophic. The same intellectual revisions are not as credible among other groups. We were accused of being weak.

I believe Intellectual revisions were successful for the many reasons the most important of which is the production of Intellectual material responding to questions based on old ideas as: Jihad a means or an end? May promoting virtue and prohibiting vice be conducted by an individual person? Tourism and tourists, Christians and the position towards them, and detaching the factor of violence.

Is the recantation of some members considered to be a failure of the Initiative?

No, it was not. There were individual differences (ʿAṣem, for example has his mindset). This was a very good experience. If it is revived and reintroduced, it could be good. This was a successful and a unique experience. The experience is very important. The Initiative shall remain to be an important topic. The group remained to be coherent. The EJI did not have a project of violence, but a political project.

Do other militant Islamist groups possess the elements of success of the Re-thinking Initiative as possessed by the EJI?

This is a very unique case of the EJI and does not help in projections. By the end of the sixties, the MB wrote a book "*Duʿah la Quḍah*." Had the MB not entered into power, they could have continued on the political path. The MB cannot live separately from the state, but oppose it. The MB is capable sooner or later; Mahmoud Ezzat and Ibrahim Mounir are attacked by some of the younger members. The new youth maintain that they are revolutionary, which is a cover for violence. There is an internal conflict within the MB currently. They will negotiate with the state from inside prisons

As for other groups, there are elements in ISIS who are mainly concerned with writing and researching as well as broadcasting on the internet; and their work is read by the youth. The absence of an intellectual project is what makes ISIS ideas appealing to them.

A very important issue is the redefinition of Islamist groups of themselves with the post 2011 revolution. With the rise of ISIS and other groupings, barriers among groups were blurred.

What are the opportunities for success of the EJI with the state? How could it continue?

Continuity is tied to setting itself free from the control of the “Alliance to Support Legitimacy”, and is linked to moral responsibility. It needs to consider itself as an intellectual group offering Egypt an intellectual project. If the group remains as it is, it shall become even weaker in the future. The second generation is even more violent, especially those who went to Afghanistan. However, it is still capable of taking steps as Al-Wasat Party had done (Abul ʿila Maḍi).

Egypt is a state that needs to reach the right mix. Egypt should respect religion and should not appear to be antagonistic to it. It is very important to put religion in consideration so that the state would look just. At the same time, a new discourse for the Islamists is required, and the state needs to accept them. Regardless Erdogan, the experience of Turkey was very important as a conservative democracy. Confidence should be built.

Interview with Ahmad Kamal Abul-Majd on December 16th, 2015

A prominent Islamic scholar, and member of the

Mediators Committee of the Initiative

What is the principal reason behind the adoption of violent extremism by the EJI?

In some cases, this is due to misinterpreting the text and, in others, to the political repression. The political repression usually leads to violating the limits of all laws and orders. The militant groups, who misinterpret the text, are excused because of their ignorance. The correct Islamic approach leaves us in no need of these approaches. The one who uses violence cannot be excused. Inventing excuses would cause violence to spread. Why should I use two swords in my slogan? The slogan "Islam is the solution" is a reduction of many meanings in few words. But this is dangerous when the one who interpret these words is not qualified.

To what extent do the concepts of religious sociology apply, regarding the deprivation theory or the theory that holds that religion is a form of protest?

It is hard to provide one single answer to this problem that has different forms. Some instances and reactions indicate that those people are deprived. Many of the lower classes are deprived. Some extremist reactions are caused by deprivation. ʿOmar, the second Caliph, said:

"I wonder why the one who does not find sustenance for himself and for his family does not attack people."

In reality, phenomena are hard to explain through one answer because one phenomenon may be an expression for many meanings. For example, in the deprivation theory, the deprived deviates, bears grudges, and protests, but to protest is more courageous. I have rights and the others have rights as well. This sort of protest is required. There are some people who resort to violence and protest while they do not suffer deprivation.

Everyone should recognize the distinction between protest that brings people closer and the one that provokes alienation. Protesting is not healthy when it continues

because it keeps the phenomenon going. If everyone manipulated the law for himself, we would indulge into civil war. I'm wondering how Muslim Brotherhood's situation became that bad.

What did motivate you to become a mediator in the Initiative?

I visited them in prison and found among them individuals of reasonable thinking who gave me some of their writings. I realized that they did not constitute any danger. I never thought that someone like Nageḥ Ibrahim would attack someone with a bomb for example. I found out that there was hope but there was shortcoming at the part of the state and Muslim scholars. Also, the prosecution practiced against some of the group's member is a subject that one cannot be silent on.

In your point of view, did the Initiative succeed?

The revisions by the EJI are exceptional. People look for solutions that both please Allah and remove hardships. In order for the Initiative to be reproduced, there should be a way of communication characterized with tolerance, forgiveness and lenience. But this won't be the case if they used violence. If someone attacked me with a weapon, it is logical that I would respond with a stronger one. The Re-thinking Books that effective, being authored by the individuals who used violence, gives them credibility and effect for them but not us.

The current EJI's website is different from the old one The current one contains pictures of ʿOmar Abdel -Raḥman, words like "the military ruling regime".

This is nonsense. But we still shouldn't fight them. We should give way to peaceful negotiations first.

Is this an indication that the EJI is retracting the Initiative?

The fact is that the second-line leaders are not that serious and moving closer to violence. The suffering that people would experience as a result of that is clear.

This Initiative seems to have transitional justice mechanism?

The Initiative included concessions and reconciliation within a social conflict.

There are opinions that religion has a positive role in the procedures of the transitional justice. Is this due to the religion's principles of toleration and forgiveness?

Religion is an essential component because it addresses an issue and it's opposite.

Do you think al – Azhar has a role?

Al-Azhar does not have influence on extremist groups because they discredit al-Azhar. However, al-Azhar took positive steps in this regard.

Could you give us examples of the steps taken by al-Azhar in this regard?

The most important steps are: revising the content of the curriculum, and preparing a team of successful leaders who travel abroad and can speak more than one language. They are at ages that qualify them to work actively. This work will be fruitful seen.

Interview with Kamal Boraiqaʿ on December 29th, 2015

Lecturer in the Faculty of Language and Translation, Al-Azhar University, member of the Interfaith Dialogue and Head of English Department in Al-Azhar Observer

What is the principal reason behind the adoption of violent extremism by the EJI?

From the very beginning, the EJI emerged as a radical group. They were drawing on the thought of Sayyed Qutb and al-Mawdudi. The writings of Mawdudi and Qutb legitimatize violence against the regime. However, one can discern some factors that led to the emergence and proliferation of this radical group in 1970s in Egypt. Politics was one of these important factors that led to their appearance, as President Anwar al-Sadat encouraged the emergence of this Islamist radical group as a counterweight to the Nasserite –dominated associations and student unions. The Theological factor should be underlined here as this group and others were the victims of Qutb's deviant thought that goes against the interpretation of the well-reputed Muslim scholars who represent the main stream Islam and reflects the true image of Muslim faith. This is besides some social and economic factors that led to the rapid development of this group particularly in Upper Egypt, such as illiteracy, poverty, lack of social services, and the rise in the number of independent mosques that was not dominated by the Ministry of Religious Endowment. The mosques provided a safe environment for recruits and brainwash of new members who joined the group.

To what extent do the concepts of religious sociology apply, regarding the deprivation theory or the theory that holds that religion is a form of protest?

Both theories are applicable. The theory of religion as a form of protest could be applied to the leaders and founders of EJI and the second theory to their followers.

How did the Re-thinking Initiative come into effect? And what is the relative significance of the ideological shift in comparison to the security approach?

The joint efforts of al-Azhar and the government played an important role to render these Initiatives successful. The security approach provided a safe environment to the detained members of the EJI to think their ideologies over. One of the criteria held by

the EJI to promote the ordinary members to an ʾamir is that he should be tried and imprisoned; they used to take pride of the number of years they spent in jail. However, none could think to change his ideology if he were outside the jail, as he will be threatened and will inevitably suffer the tragic end of being killed and assassinated at the hands of the faithful members of the Jamaʿa who will consider killing such disloyal members as an act of obedience that will bring them close to God. The jail was a safe meeting point between the scholars of al-Azhar who were easily able to decontextualize and refute the very basis of the arguments raised by the uneducated and unspecialized leaders of the group. Peer pressure and the fear of being assassinated by other members of the groups make us safely believe that these re-thinking initiatives would be impossible to succeed if it has taken place outside prison.

Has the Re-thinking Initiative achieved an end to EJI violence? And does the subsequent rejection of the Initiative by some operatives of the EJI represent a failure for the Initiative?

The Re-thinking Initiative was completely successful. The subsequent rejection of the Initiative by some operatives of the EJI does not represent a failure in any way as their number were very few in comparison to the number and position held by those who changed their ideology. The circumstances were different, so there is no room to talk about resurrection of the old ones, however there are some other factors such as the manipulation of those members to serve a hidden agenda or/and their political aspirations to be the rulers of Egypt in case of the success of their coup d'état attempts that has nothing to do with theological arguments.

Do other militant Islamist groups possess the elements of success of the Re-thinking Initiative as possessed by the EJI?

We should differentiate between extremism and terrorism. Dialogue is not always the proper method to combat terrorism. However, it is the proper method to combat extremism.

What are the prospects of success for the presence of the EJI on the daʿwa, social and political arenas?

The EJI has already faded in the Egyptian society. It has no real weight in the Egyptian society. The active role of al-Azhar in daʿwa, the renewal of religious discourse, the ease through which the young men obtain information, the increase of religious awareness, the large number of educated people and the containment approach made the proliferation and reemergence of the EJI in the Egyptian society very difficult.

Interview with Kamal al-Helbawi on January 1st, 2016

Ph.D. in political science, dissident member of the MB, Ex-spokesperson and member of MB *Shura* Council

What is the principal reason behind the adoption of violent extremism by the EJI?

The principal reason behind the adoption of violent extremism by the EJI, is the high aspiration to establish an Islamic State even by military struggle since political peaceful means were totally closed due to political repression and absence of democratization process. Of course this move, in general, was due to text misinterpretation both of Quran and Traditions in addition to early Salafi fatwas.

How did the Re-thinking Initiative come into effect? And what is the relative significance of the ideological shift in comparison to the security approach?

The Re-thinking Initiative came into effect due to different reasons and circumstances, among them the popular feeling of insecurity, the solicitors' contacts in the courts with the leaders, the will of the Ministry of Interior to end the struggle, the well trusted ʿUlamāʾ, scholars, in addition to the growing rational concept of some leaders such as Dr. Najeḥ Ibrahim. Yes, both the ideological shift and the security approach, assisted in rendering the Initiative successful. I do believe that the ideological shift and relative proper understanding of Islam had more weight in this regard.

Has the Re-thinking Initiative achieved an end to violence? Does the rejection of the Initiative by some operatives of the EJI represent a failure for the Initiative?

The Re-thinking Initiative achieved some success in relieving violence, but it did not bring an end to it and will never do that. There are members and leaders in the EJI who will never stop this wrong attitude like Eng. ʿAṣem ʿAbdel-Majid for example. I met some of those infected persons in Afghanistan who considered themselves the only Muslims on earth. The Initiative succeeded in this regard. In this area there is only relative success. No absolute achievement and no end for violence until the Day of Judgment. The disease of violence needs continuous treatment on different levels

because; it yields *Takfīr* and *Istiḥlal* and both lead to military struggle and the wrong belief of martyrdom (suicide operation).

What are the subjective and objective factors that had contributed to the success of the ending-violence Initiative?

The subjective and objective factors that contributed to the success of the ending violence Initiative include: the impact of some entrusted personalities like Sheikh al-Shaʿrawi, Sheikh al-Ghazali, Dr. al-ʿAwwa and others. They also include the continuous suppression and chase to the members of the EJI and their families. This is in addition to emergence of other fiqhi valid opinions.

Do other militant Islamist groups possess the elements of success of the Re-thinking Initiative as possessed by the EJI?

No and yes at the same time. I do not think that a group like Daʿish possesses the elements of success as those possessed by the EJI. They believe that they contributed a mile to establish the *Khilafa*. They have gained and controlled materials, equipment, money, world recognition, in addition to areas like Peshawar in Pakistan on the borders of Afghanistan. Some other smaller groups can accept the EJI Initiative of Re-thinking violence if properly approached. The behavior of other Islamist militant movements has similar and different reasons for revolt and carrying guns. We cannot rely totally on the Initiative to comprehend and predict the behavior of all other Islamist militant movements. During the MB parliament, we saw a member raising Azan for prayers during the session. It is so far difficult to have proper dialogue with any of them.

What are the prospects of success for the presence of the EJI on the daʿwa, social and political arenas? In other words, what is the future of the EJI?

Prospects of success for the EJI on the daʿwa, social, and political arenas are meager. It could be only individual. The process may need two or three generations to succeed. Comprehensive strategy is required including educational curriculum and proper implementation of the democratization process.

Interview with Karam Zuhdi on January 4th, 2016

Ideologue, a historical leader and former EJI General *ʾamir*

What is the principal reason behind the adoption of violent extremism by the EJI?

This takes us back to the seventies which was a decade full of *takfīr* and intimidation as a result of the foregoing decade that beheld conflicts with the Islamic current. As soon as President Sadat came to power, there were remainders of the memories of the shed blood, in 1965 that preachers –not only MB - always used to mention causing the mobilization of youth to take revenge and pursue violence. Although Sadat was too patient, showed sympathy to youth and kept announcing that he doesn't want youth to enter jails anymore, however, preachers' speeches continued to grow in provoking violence and calling for *Jihad.*

To what extent do the concepts of religious sociology apply, regarding the deprivation theory or the theory that holds that religion is a form of protest?

Actually, the real influence was religious and intellectual. Youth got influenced just by attending a lecture that called for extremism in religious rulings. If deprivation was or not an influence, it's a yes; it definitely had a side influence, but we can't say it's the driving force. The real driving force was intellectual, and it is also the only path now to influence them to renounce violence. Intellectual confrontation is the key.

So can we say that security oppression caused you to renounce violence?

No. security had no influence on changing our minds. We announced the Initiative and we asked the security for help in providing us with the books we needed and we let go of our conditions that we initially desired from the state.

Did the security forces respond to your demands?

Yes, they did via specific persons as Ahmad Ra'fat. He believed us and that we didn't launch the Initiative to push them to release us from prisons. We were almost done with our penalty period (only one or two years were left on our release by then). We were honest when we announced the Initiative and we were very keen to spread the corrections of our old conceptions inside prison. Dialogue is the key word. From our

experience with the Initiative, we can conclude the following; what drove us to issue doctrines and refute them later is misinterpreting the text.

Has the Re-thinking Initiative undertaken by the EJI achieved an end to violence?

Yes, the Initiative went through many stages. General Ahmad Raʾfat allowed us to tour the prisons and hold lecture and provided buses to take us. Fortunately enough, our lectures were of great influence and I claim that violent ideas were terminated after this tour.

And does the subsequent rejection of the Initiative by some operatives of the EJI as ʿAṣem Abdel-Majid- represent a failure for the Initiative?

There are members who claim they didn't approve the Initiative in the first place although they participated in writing our Correction of Conceptions Books. Any drawback in their stances is intimidated by members of other groups after the 25th of January revolution and only aims at attaining personal gains that have nothing to do with the EJI stance.

Do other militant Islamist groups possess the elements of success of the Re-thinking Initiative as possessed by the EJI?

Yes, definitely. I wish that MB leaders reach an agreement for reconciliation with the Egyptian regime in the first place and the whole international society in general. I consider the acts committed by MB a reason for havoc in all Islamic countries and Muslim youth. We have to revise the old Initiative in a contemporary way starting with members in Upper Egypt and those who show violent inclinations, then spread the idea in the rest of the governorates.

What are the prospects of success for the presence of the EJI on the daʿwa, social and political arenas?

The future of the Initiative is tied to EJI's success to start a constructive dialogue that the state has to support in order for the Initiative to re-succeed. The desire of some EJI current core leaders to seek power and authority is the reason for our resignation now to set an example for all members of the group that one should do good in devotion, sincerity and faith in Allah, regardless of the benefits, positions or rewards.

Interview with Hussein Ḥammouda on January 5th, 2016

Brigadier, former senior officer in State Security Department

What are the subjective and objective factors that had contributed to the success of the ending-violence Initiative?

There should be general and specific factors to render any Initiative successful. As far as the EJI's Initiative is concerned, the main influencing factor is the mutual empathy and sympathy between the two sides: state and the EJI. The former is represented by the State Security Department's officers of the ex-regime, who carried on negotiations on behalf of the political regime (Mubarak's regime), and the latter is represented by the EJI members. The feelings emerging from EJI members towards security officers can be defined as a bit of "Stockholm syndrome", defined as "the psychological phenomenon in which hostages express empathy, sympathy and positive feelings toward their captors, sometimes to the point of defending and identifying with them". The offender (criminal) here is the EJI members who directed their violence towards civilians and policemen. The EJI members later felt they were the ones who pushed the counter attack from the state. They even started justifying the oppression and torture practiced against them since the moment they were arrested till they were judged and even exceeded that period. They contended that torture was forgiven because; it was in return for the violence they started at the first place and that torture was a tool of obtaining information about the group. (I have to mention my disagreement regarding this point because torture cannot be forgiven under any circumstances).

On the other hand, the State Security Department, as well as the Prisons Department officers, felt guilty about the torture crimes they committed for EJI prisoners to extract information. That could be a reason why they accepted the Initiative, once it was offered by the EJI leaders. It is worth mentioning here that 44 officers at that time were accused of practicing torture, but they were finally acquitted.

The above mentioned discussion dealt with the objective reasons that led to the success of the Initiative. Meanwhile, the subjective factor is the existence of charismatic

negotiators, at one side is General Ahmad Raʾfat, who represented the State Security Agency, and on the other side, prominent EJI's leaders: Karam Zuhdi and Najeḥ Ibrahim. Those two sides developed a unique interpersonal relationship that was mostly evident in the scene on General Ahmad Raʾfat's funeral when I met Dr. Najeḥ Ibrahim, , and the latter was praying*:*

"May he –General Ahmad Raʾfat - rest in peace; for relieving the suffering and pain of hundreds of Muslim families who were released from prison because of his mediation" AMEN.

Finally, there are some indicators to the setback of the EJI in case of lack of state support, societal containment, and resurrection of the Initiative by EJI historical leaders. Otherwise, the Initiative is likely to turn on its heels and lay in ashes. However, it will remain - at least theoretically - a leading unprecedented imperial practice in the Islamic world in the previous century, and a reference for all Islamist militant groups who look forward to copying it, only if sincere intentions exist.

Do other militant Islamist groups possess the elements of success of the Re-thinking Initiative as possessed by the EJI?

It is not likely for other similar fanatic groups to hold a similar Initiative; as the current violent groups like "ISIS" feels proud of the victories and they believe that their extremist activities are successful and unprecedented; meaning that they lack the desirability and ability to make compromise with national state governments. Moreover, there is another factor that stands as an obstacle to make us expect success for future Initiatives, which is "Globalized Terrorism Generation" which has connections with USA and other Western forces. What worsens the situation is that their belief in the westernized notion of "Clash of Civilizations"; meaning that those groups believe they represent the sound Islamic civilization "*al-Khilafa al-Rashida*" that carries the role of combating the western infidel allies represented in the current Arabic and Islamic regimes.