



An Ideological Comparison Of Two Islamic Organizations In Egypt: The Muslim Brotherhood And Islamic Group¹

Mısır'da İki İslami Organizasyonun İdeolojik Bir Karşılaştırması: Müslüman Kardeşler Ve Cemaat-İ İslami

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ABSTRACT

Although the Muslim Brotherhood (al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn) and Islamic Group (Gama'a al-Islamiyya) have same origin, Egyptian, they radically differ in terms of ideologies and strategies they espoused. In spite of the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood exhibited, except Sayyid Qutb, mostly moderate ideas; the Islamic Group, after emerging in the mid-1970s as an offshoot of the Brotherhood, basically chose a radical and revolutionary vision until 1990s. Ideological convergence basically stemmed from their salafiyya root. Both viewed westerners and westernized elites in Egypt as corrupted and rejected the idea of secularism. Their prescription to these problems was also same; to return to real and genuine roots of Islam; namely Quran and Sunna. Nevertheless, divergence stemmed particularly from their ideologies which were principal determiner for distinct strategies. It should be mentioned that the Islamic Group maintained radical stance firmly until the declaration of New Initiative in 1997. Since then, the Islamic Group transformed into a moderate and reconcilable movement and came closer to the ideology of Brotherhood. In this research, ideologies of two organizations were set forth by close examination of historical backgrounds and basic writings of the ideologues, then, in the light of findings, their approaches towards some basic concepts like democracy, Islamic state, women rights, secularism, relationship with the state and conception of jihad were compared. Results clearly showed that, the Brotherhood's ideology prescribed "gradual" strategy whereas ideology of the Islamic Group necessitates a "radical" revolutionary one until 1997. Since then, it may also be argued that the Islamic Group melted into the Brotherhood given its moderate stance and inactive position in 2000s.

Key Words: moderate, salafiyya, westernized elites, secularism, Quran and Sunna

ÖZET

Müslüman Kardeşler (al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn) ve Cemaat-i İslami (Gama'a al-Islamiyya) örgütleri Mısır kökenli olmalarına rağmen, ideolojileri ve buna uygun olarak benimsedikleri stratejileri bakımından oldukça derin farklılıklara sahiptirler. Müslüman Kardeşler, Seyyid Kutub hariç tutulmak kaydıyla, çoğunlukla ılımlı görüşler sergilerken, Cemaat-i İslami, 1970'lerde Müslüman Kardeşler'in bir kanadı olarak ortaya çıkmasından sonra 1990'lara kadar esas olarak radikal ve devrimci bir yolu seçmiştir. Her iki örgütün ideolojik bakımdan benzerliği, ortak selefî kökenlere sahip olmalarından kaynaklanmaktadır. Her ikisi de batılıları ve Mısır'daki batılılaşmış seçkinleri bozulmuş olarak görür ve sekülerizmi reddeder. Bu problemlere çözümleri de neredeyse aynıdır; İslam'ın esas ve gerçek kaynakları olan Kur'an ve sünnete dönmek. İkisi arasındaki esas fark ise farklı stratejilere yol açan esas belirleyici faktör olan ideolojilerinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu noktada Cemaat-i İslami'nin radikal duruşunu 1997 yılındaki Yeni İnisiyatif ilanına kadar kararlı bir şekilde sürdürdüğü belirtilmelidir. Bu tarihten sonra örgüt, Müslüman Kardeşler gibi ılımlı ve uzlaşılabilir bir harekete dönüşmüştür. Bu çalışmada iki örgütün ideolojileri tarihsel gelişmelerinin yakından incelenmesi ve ana ideologlarının çalışmaları incelenerek belirlenmiş, elde edilen bulgular ışığında demokrasi, İslami Devlet, kadın hakları, sekülerizm, devletle ilişkiler ve cihat gibi kavramlarla ilgili yaklaşımları karşılaştırmalı olarak ortaya konulmuştur. Araştırma sonuçları açıkça göstermiştir ki; Müslüman Kardeşler ideolojisi "kademeli" stratejiyi salık verirken, Cemaat-i İslami ideolojisi 1997 yılına kadar "radikal" bir stratejiyi getirmektedir. Bu tarihten itibaren 2000'lerdeki ılımlı ve aktif olmayan durumu göz önüne alındığında, Cemaat-i İslami örgütünün Müslüman Kardeşler içinde eridiği söylenebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: ılımlı, selefî, batılılaşmış seçkinler, sekülerizm, Kur'an ve Sünnet

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1. INTRODUCTION:

Even though the Muslim Brotherhood (al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun) and Islamic Group (Gama'a al-Islamiyya) may be seen as similar organizations at the first sight, they particularly differ in terms of their strategies prescribed by ideologies. So, different ideologies bring totally divergent strategies for reaching ultimate goals. At that point, one may find some convergence on their conception of Islamic social order and Islamic state in order to get rid of corrupted and sinful way of life for Egyptians. Moreover, both of them harshly criticize western way of life and westernized elites in the country; reject all dimensions of secularism and espoused salafiyya thought which entail completely to return to original roots of Islam; namely Quran and Sunna. On the other hand, the Muslim Brotherhood (thereafter the Brotherhood), except Sayyid Qutb, reflects mostly moderate ideology, therefore follows a gradual strategy for creating an Islamic state. That is to say, ideology of the Brotherhood necessitates moderation. Contrarily, the Islamic Group engaged much more radical ideology, so, much more radical and even revolutionary strategy for the purpose of constructing an Islamic state as an ultimate goal. Stemmed from deep ideological divergence; discourse, methods, strategies and conception of Islamic state indeed differs radically.

Actually, the Brotherhood may be taken as the most influential and core Islamic organization, and even as "father" of almost all Islamic movements all around the Muslim world, including the Islamic Group. The Brotherhood produced, interestingly, both radical and moderate organizations while it keeps persistently moderate line. Then, it is almost impossible to grasp any Islamic movements without understanding the ideology of Brotherhood clearly. One can find, for example, the traces of Brotherhood even in the most notorious radical organization's roots in the early 2000s world, al Qaeda. In the same vein, the Brotherhood has many offshoots and close wings among Muslim countries. Its influential power and fame came from its ideological coherence with zeitgeist which provided for the organization keeping up with modern era's necessities like democratic principles, human rights, accountability and so on. Additionally, its durable organizational structure and pragmatic discourse provided not only survival in difficult times and provided to reemerge the Brotherhood on and on until today. Particularly, its gradual strategy and rejection of violence vis-a-vis existing political system in Egypt, namely its patience, constituted the Brotherhood's the most powerful aspect. As to the Islamic Group, although it emerged as an offshoot of the Brotherhood in 1970s, espoused radical and revolutionary line particularly until late 1990s. The basic reason for separation was the idea that Brotherhood collaborating with the Egyptian existing regime. Regarding its ideology and history, there are indeed very limited resources because of the Group's secret organizational structure and underground activities. Basic ideological approach was overthrowing the existing regime by any means necessary including assassinations, terrorist actions or revolution. The year 1997 was a real turning point for the Islamic Group from that time on they rejected violence and espoused very similar strategy that of the Brotherhood's.

This research aims to find out basic ideological convergence and divergence between the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Group by conducting a deep comparative analysis. Ideological canons of the two organizations will provide to be understood their espousal of different strategies which will provide returning to genuine roots of Islam for them. To this end; first and foremost historical background of the both organizations will be scrutinized in line with basic ideologues' works like Hassan al-Banna's "Between Yesterday and Today" and Muhammad Abd al-Faraj's "the Neglected Duty in order to explore basic canons of ideologies. In the light of these detected tenets which will clarify different strategies espoused, a comparative analysis will be conducted. Finally, contemporary conditions and ideological approaches of two Egyptian Islamic organizations will be set forth in the light of knowledge gathered from the research.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

2.1. Muslim Brotherhood:

The Muslim Brotherhood may be defined briefly with al-Banna's words as "a Salafi mission, a Sunni methodology, a Sufi reality, a political committee, an athletic association, an academic and cultural association, an economic corporation, and a social concept"². On the bases of these ideas; the Muslim Brotherhood, the most influential Islamic organization, was established by Hassan al-Banna in 1928. In his young days, his ideas shaped by his pious father, Sheikh Ahmad Abd al-Rahman whose ideas had close affinity to that of Muhammad Abdu and Gamal al-Din al-Afghani.³ But, al Banna more impressed by Rashid Rida's writings and ideas while he was attending Dar al-Ulum College in Cairo. Rida's emphasis on the "self sufficiency of Islam" and "dangers of westernization", and his writings on political and social aspects of Islamic reform, the need for Islamic state, and the introduction of Islamic law would be the most influential impact in al Banna's psyche.⁴ The revolt against British administration in Egypt in 1919 and joining Hasafiye Sufi Order also played important role in composing his thought. More interestingly, al-Banna was only thirteen year old young man when he participated in nationalist demonstrations against British decision of creating a protectorate in Egypt.⁵ So, nationalist conscious took roots in his ideology. From Hasafiye Sufi Order, he internalized very importance of relationship between leader and followers and concept of obedience for survival to succeed of any organization.⁶

Moreover, al-Banna himself observed that through western cultural domination, particularly among westernized elites, adopting western way of life and neglecting fundamentals of Islam were taking roots in Muslim society in Egypt day by day. Political and intellectual elites were espousing secular modernist ideology and secular Egyptian identity, therefore; they were reducing the role of Islam in the public sphere.⁷ Missionary presence of westerners also played vital role in developing Banna's thought. Thus, his ideology became clearer and constructed upon the idea that returning to real roots of Islam. By this way, Muslims would get rid of those corruptions and have an independent Islamic unity. As of 1932, the Muslim Brotherhood became a nation-wide movement, established its own press and journals in line with cultural programs⁸. All things considered, Banna's ideas mostly based on two concern; western presence in the country and Egyptian people's increasing corruption at the hands of British colonialists. These factors may be taken as stimulating powers for his political activism which would make him the most prominent and constant portrait for Islamic movements all over the Muslim world. In 1948, a Muslim Brother assassinated the prime minister, so, the Brotherhood was banned and many of key leaders were imprisoned.⁹ Even though Banna rejected this indictment he was killed by the secret police in 1949.¹⁰ Whether the Brotherhood assassinated or not couldn't be clarified so far. As a result Brotherhood went into underground until martial law ended up in 1952.¹¹ Since then, they supported Gamal Abd al-Nasser in the first phase of military revolution by the time having understood that Nasser wouldn't establish an Islamic state.¹² In 1954, they had to face their one of the most difficult years, Brotherhood blamed for an attempt to assassinate Nasser, and consequently thousands of members arrested and a number of its leaders executed.¹³

² Rashwan, Diaa. "Political Islamist Movements: The Case of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt", 2009, p. 13

³ Commins, David. "Hasan al-Banna" in Ali Rahnama, "Pioneers of Islamic Revival". 2008, p. 129

⁴ Esposito, John L. "Islam and Politics", 1998, p.136

⁵ Commins, David. "Hasan al-Banna" in Ali Rahnama, "Pioneers of Islamic Revival". 2008, pp. 126-129

⁶ Ibid., p. 129

⁷ Ibid., p. 128

⁸ Ibid., p. 132

⁹ Esposito, John L. "Islam and Politics", 1998, p. 139

¹⁰ Commins, David. "Hasan al-Banna" in Ali Rahnama, "Pioneers of Islamic Revival". 2008, pp. 132-133

¹¹ Esposito, John L. "Islam and Politics", 1998, p. 139

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

Sayyid Qutb was the secondary important ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood after Hassan al-Banna.¹⁴ His ideas mostly reflected more radical, more violent, and more challenging which would cause establishment of many radical Islamic groups or organizations not only in Egypt but also all over the Muslim world. Qutb was strongly affected by Hassan al-Banna and Abu'l-A'la Mawdudi's writings.¹⁵ He ushered these ideas to a more militant and revolutionary edge. He was also arrested in 1954 and released in 1964, and a few months later once again imprisoned and executed.¹⁶ Fortunately, Hassan al-Hudaybi, the successor of al-Banna, rejected Qutb's radical ideas like takfir (the act of declaring another Muslim an apostate) and separated him from the movement. Hence, thanks to Hudaybi's tolerant view the ideology of Brotherhood was rechanneled into old moderate line ultimately.¹⁷ Hudaybi strived for returning to religious status, changed many of administrative members and dissolved the military wing of the Brotherhood, "special apparatus".¹⁸ From that time on, the Brotherhood would follow moderate line and eventually embrace democratic values by espousing the notion of slow Islamization"¹⁹.

Particularly suppression of the Brotherhood by Nasser in 1965 had constituted a perception that the movement had been destroyed totally, and nobody could predict that it would influence not only Egyptian Islamic movements but also throughout the Muslim world in a near future.²⁰ But, the Six-Day War debacle vis-à-vis Israel brought an unpredictable opportunity to the Muslim Brotherhood for revival. Particularly during Anwar al-Sadat's presidency, the Muslim Brotherhood experienced an ebullient revival. Actually, Sadat's main purpose was to construct a bulwark against the Nasserites and communists in the country by using religiosity as an instrument in order to reinforce political power.²¹ Thus, the Brotherhood acted not only as a social movement but also as an influential political identity. In due of time Hosni Mubarak, they entered into legal political life by joining existing political parties like New Wafd Party in 1984 or Liberal and Labor Parties 1987.²²

Particularly in the early 1990s, a struggle emerged between two groups, "old guards" and the "second or middle generation". First group, the old guards, was consisting of the members who faced Gamal Abd al-Nasser's very rigid repression including imprisonment, torture, and executions.²³ They are mostly conservative, and their approach reflected missionary style long term struggle rather than political ones in compliance with al-Banna's founding vision. The second group or middle generation was comprised of the student leaders of 1970s who were more attuned to change and political participation focusing on Egypt rather than the Muslim world unlike the first group.²⁴ This younger generation was more socialized by means of some student associations and was more prone to find new political participation channels for the Muslim Brotherhood.²⁵ This new generation formulated new interpretations of Islam and supported the modern ideas like pluralism, representation, and human rights which were defined by many scholars as "liberal or modern Islam" or the new "Islamic centrism" (Wasatiyyah).²⁶ The core values of this new thinking were holism, inclusivity, and dialogue.²⁷ In 1996, the new way of thinking prompted to establishing a new Islamist party in Egypt by the new generation of Muslim Brotherhood, the "Wasat Party" (Center party).²⁸ Indeed, the largest group of its founding members was Muslim Brothers (62 out of

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 140

¹⁶ Commins, David. "Hasan al-Banna" in Ali Rahnama, "Pioneers of Islamic Revival". 2008, p. 128

¹⁷ Leiken, S. Robert and Steven Brooke. "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood", 2007, pp. 109-110

¹⁸ Mandaville, Peter. "Global Political Islam", 2010, pp. 74-75

¹⁹ Leiken, S. Robert and Steven Brooke. "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood", 2007, pp. 109-110

²⁰ Esposito, John L. "Islam and Politics", 1998, p. 148

²¹ Ayubi, Nazih. "Political Islam: Religion and Islam in the Arab World", 2006, p. 73

²² El-Ghobashy, Mona. "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers", 2005, pp. 380-381

²³ Elad-Altman, Israel. "Democracy, Elections and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood", 2006, p. 26

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Mandaville, Peter. "Global Political Islam", 2010, p. 117

²⁶ Wickham, Carrie Rosefsky. "The Path to Moderation: Strategy and Learning in the Formation of Egypt's Wasat Party", 2004, p. 207

²⁷ Mandaville, Peter. "Global Political Islam", 2010, p. 115

²⁸ Ibid., p. 117

74).²⁹ Although they try to establish a political system based on Islamic law, they emphasized reassessment of the Shari'a and tried to place the principle of popular sovereignty as the basis of legitimate state power, espoused pluralism in all spheres of social and political life, and supported equal rights for all citizens, including "women and non-Muslim minorities".³⁰ According to them, religion is only one part of solution, and needs to be taken together with national interests, economic realities and cultural traditions.³¹ Actually, this point constituted a divergence with the prior slogan of the Brotherhood, "Islam is the solution". It was also an important break to espouse pluralism or multi party system compared with the founders' ideas of the Brotherhood which suggest no-party system instead. Not only old guards but also the Mubarak regime opposed the Wasat Party.³² Most of the Brothers returned to the Muslim Brotherhood when old guards called for and the new party faced some difficulties stemmed from the regime's pressure.³³ In 2000 parliamentary elections, 17 independent Brotherhood candidates were elected, and in 2005, Brotherhood candidates won 88 seats in parliament.³⁴ During this period, the Egyptian government has sometimes tolerated and sometimes suppressed the Muslim Brotherhood.³⁵ Meanwhile, one of the important documents of Brotherhood, "Statement of Democracy", affirmed their commitment to democracy, equal status of Copts as a full citizen, and their belief that there is no contradiction between popular sovereignty and a Shari'a based system in 1995.³⁶ In addition, 2004 "Reform Initiative" has also strengthened this approach.³⁷ Muhammad Mahdi Akef's coming to office triggered a hard debate on forming a political party and caused a hot internal debate. Discussions mainly focused on whether this party would constitute a wing of the Brotherhood or replace it completely. In case it transforms to a political party form, they will have to quit some aspects of the organizations because of some prohibitions stemmed from Egyptian laws. For example, they will have to leave international dimension of the organization, because Egyptian laws prohibits political parties from having foreign branches.³⁸ Meanwhile, the regime intended to outlaw the Brotherhood by 2007 constitutional amendments which constituted a basic watershed between the state and the organization. Consequently, the Brotherhood channeled its strategy into establishing a political party admittedly. As a result, a consensus has been reached over forming a political party as a wing of the Brotherhood.³⁹ Then, in 2010 general guide Muhammad Badi, firmly conservative, came to power and first of all eliminated two of reformist from the Guidance Council and abandoned the idea of establishing a political party.⁴⁰ So, in 2010 elections, since Mubarak's National Democratic Party won almost all seats in the first round because of unfair election conditions, the independent Brotherhood candidates abandoned second round of the elections.⁴¹ Finally and earthshakingly, the Brotherhood supported Freedom and Justice Party won the elections in 2012 and Mohammad Morsi became president of Egypt. This was a real victory for the Muslim Brotherhood. But, Morsi's presidency ended up by a military coup in 2013 which brought imprisonment for him and supporters.

Taking into account above summarized historical background, it may be argued that whenever the Brotherhood gained power and came closer to the government, the state squeezed it, then, once again overlooked to grow it up. As of 2011, the organization was still suffering the problem of generation gap stemmed from co-existence of three generations. The first group, old guards,

²⁹ Stacher, Joshua A. "Post-Islamist Rumblings in Egypt: The Emergence of the Wasat Party", 2002, p. 422

³⁰ Wickham, Carrie Rosefsky. "The Path to Moderation: Strategy and Learning in the Formation of Egypt's Wasat Party", 2004, p. 207

³¹ Mandaville, Peter. "Global Political Islam", 2010, pp. 115-116

³² Takayuki, Yokota. "Democratization and Islamic Politics: A Study on the Wasat Party in Egypt", 2007, p. 160

³³ Stacher, Joshua A. "Post-Islamist Rumblings in Egypt: The Emergence of the Wasat Party", 2002, p. 422

³⁴ Mandaville, Peter. "Global Political Islam", 2010, pp. 118-119

³⁵ Sharp, Jeremy M. "Egypt: Background and U.S. Relations", 2008, p.12

³⁶ El-Ghobashy, Mona. "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers", 2005, pp. 384-385

³⁷ Rashwan, Diaa. "Political Islamist Movements: The Case of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt", 2009, p. 7

³⁸ Ibid., p. 13

³⁹ Ibid., p. 16

⁴⁰ Guitta, Olivier. "Muslim Brotherhood Parties in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region", 2010, p. 8

⁴¹ Radikal, "10 Soruda Müslüman Kardeşler", 06 February 2011

participated in the organization in 1940s and 1950s, the second group joined in the 1970s and 1980s, and the third generation joined in the 1990s.⁴² Differences between first group and others stemmed from the fact that they suffered mostly prison, exile, torture, and even executions as mentioned. These events shaped their ideas and made them more cautious and suspicious to regime, other parties, and other organizations. But, the second and third generations have not confronted with state and other parties, interacted with both Islamist and non-Islamist activists, and more attuned to work together with them. It was these two groups who were actively participating in party politics and providing Morsi's coming to office in 2012. After the Freedom and Justice Party's destruction at the hands of the military regime in 2013, it is too difficult to predict whether this generation gap channeled the Brotherhood into more moderate line or not, and either old guards or new generations will be more effective in the organization's destiny. It seems that old guards' ideology, namely al-Banna's thought, will dominate the discourse of the Brotherhood most probably in the short term.

2.2. The Islamic Group (Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya):

Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, which means "the Islamic Group", Egypt's largest Islamist militant group, like many other Islamist organizations emerged as radical offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood.⁴³ It mainly established as a youth movement among the university students after the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood renounced violence in the 1970s.⁴⁴ Its preliminary name was al-Lacnat al-Diniyya (The Religious Committee)⁴⁵, and the early purpose was to get students' academic rights. These groups, consisted of the students who influenced by the revolutionary writings of Sayyid Qutb and dissatisfied with the mainstream Muslim Brotherhood because of its moderate stance, established the "Upper Egypt Movement" at Asyut University in the early 1970s by Karam Zuhdi who was known for forceful personality and strident radicalism.⁴⁶ Another group created in Cairo neighborhoods as "Minya Group" (Tanzim al-Jihad Organization)⁴⁷ by another devotee of Qutb, Muhammad Abd al-Faraj.⁴⁸ Faraj, one of the first ideologues of the Islamic Group, in his work "the Neglected Duty" defined the Egyptian state as an apostate regime and insisted that it must be overthrown.⁴⁹ In this work, Faraj also accused the Brotherhood of betraying the Qutb's spirit because of neglecting the obligation of jihad against Egyptian regime⁵⁰. To him, jihad was an obligation against not only invaders of Muslim land but also nationalist or secularist Muslim governments by defining them near enemy.⁵¹ In brief, the Islamic Group and its ideology were constructed particularly over Faraj and Zuhdi's thoughts.⁵² According to Tal'at Fuad Qasim, one of the founders of the Islamic Group (thereafter the Group) and founding member of Majlis al-Shura (Governing Council) provides very brief focus on early years of establishment of the Group:

Activities began in the mid-70s with nine people in Minya reading works of Ibn Taymiyya, Abu Ala al-Mawdudi, Sayyid Qutb and others. A group began in Asyut around the same time. The Minya group pressured the school administration to segregate girls and boys, to halt classes at prayer times, and to establish mosques. The activism then spread to surrounding villages. The group worked to change the Munkar (which is forbidden), and after some destruction of property they got a law passed banning alcohol. It was after these activist formed al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, a real organization.⁵³

⁴² Rashwan, Dina. "Political Islamist Movements: The Case of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt", 2009, p. 13

⁴³ Fletcher, Holly. "Jamaat al-Islamiyya", 2008

⁴⁴ Mandaville, Peter. "Global Political Islam", 2010, p. 241

⁴⁵ Bulut, Faik. "Islamcı Örgütler-2", 2009, p. 125

⁴⁶ Rabasa, Angel M., et al. "The Muslim World after 9/11", 2004, p. 94

⁴⁷ Jackson, Sherman A. "Beyond Jihad: The New Thought of the Gama'a Islamiyya", 2009, p. 63

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 54

⁴⁹ Sullivan, Denis J. and Sana Abed Kotob. "Islam in Contemporary Egypt: Civil Society vs. the State", 1999, p. 79

⁵⁰ Mandaville, Peter. "Global Political Islam", 2010, p. 241

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Jackson, Sherman A. "Beyond Jihad: The New Thought of the Gama'a Islamiyya", 2009, p. 54

⁵³ Mubarak, Hisham. "What Does the Gama'a Islamiyya Want?", 1996, p. 40

Its creation as an independent movement followed a three phased period.⁵⁴ First, in the “traditional phase” between early 1970s and mid-1970s, they conducted a reactionary stance against the regime and western style way of life and invited people to return to Islam.⁵⁵ Second, in the “preferences phase” since mid-1970s, they had confusion to choice one of three influential wings; first group consisted of members who have very close affinity towards Brotherhood, the second towards jihadist (al-takfir) movements whereas the third group towards traditional salafiyya movements.⁵⁶ They mostly engaged with the Brotherhood and their discourse in this period were so similar, worked together so closely and hidden their radical discourse.⁵⁷ Third, in the “emergence phase” in 1979, ideas and vision of Gama’a has been matured and begun an independent organization.⁵⁸ The Port Said wing of the Group conducted violent events towards the government forces, and this wing named as the Jihadist Group and launched subversive attacks on Christian students in the Port Said province as well as they threatened Anwar al-Sadat.⁵⁹ As a result, they separated their path with Brotherhood and divided into three subgroups; Brotherhood, Jihadists, and Salafists.⁶⁰

In 1980 an eleven-member Majlis al-Shura (consultative assembly), elected Sheikh Omar Abd al-Rahman as their spiritual leader because of his el-Ezher credential.⁶¹ They focused on individualistic and social morality and exhibited some rigid behaviors e.g. rejecting common schools in which girls and boys attend together.⁶² In the mid-1970s, Gama’a obtained eight out of twelve Egyptian universities administrations⁶³ by Sadat’s tolerance towards Islamic movements’ advancements vis-à-vis Nasserist and communist ones in this period.⁶⁴ But, Camp-David Resolution of 1978 constituted a real turning point Sadat’s vision over not only the Brotherhood but also the Group. Both Islamic organizations began to criticize resolution harshly and demonstrations took place all over the country. Thus, Sadat realized the danger and arrested some leaders of the Group.⁶⁵ In this competition, radical Islamists particularly the Group gradually hardened their words and deeds whereas the Brotherhood kept its moderate approach after renouncing violence.⁶⁶ The members of Group attacked university parties and cocktails, launched pressure on student girls in order to make them dress in terms of Islamic principles, and also attacked on Christian students.⁶⁷ Their thought began to overlap the idea of rejecting political parties and regime; they also demanded to be implemented of Shari’a (Islamic law) by the government, and coinciding with these events, the Group accused the Brotherhood of collaborating with the regime.⁶⁸ So, some leaders of students converged with al-Jihad movement in this period.⁶⁹ But, Tal’at Fuad Qasim, one of the founder of the Group and a spokesman, after having been arrested in Croatia because of joining Bosnia Herzegovina war, rejected this merger with al-Jihad and said that;

Meanwhile, Sadat’s assassination occurred and Egyptian intelligence agency put forward the name of al-jihad, actually they meant the Gama’a. Actually their purpose was getting a pretext to arrest the Islamists as many as possible. For example, Ayman al-Zawahiri was not a member of the Gama’a. Al-jihad actually was a marginal group.⁷⁰

⁵⁴ Bulut, Faik. “*İslamcı Örgütler-2*”, 2009, pp. 130-133

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 130-131

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 131-132

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 132-135

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Sullivan, Denis J. and Sana Abed Kotob. “*Islam in Contemporary Egypt: Civil Society vs. the State*”, 1999,

p. 79

⁶² Mubarak, Hisham. “*What Does the Gama'a Islamiyya Want?*”, 1996, p. 40

⁶³ Bulut, Faik. “*İslamcı Örgütler-2*”, 2009, p. 127

⁶⁴ Rabasa, Angel M., et al. “*The Muslim World after 9/11*”, 2004, p. 93

⁶⁵ Bulut, Faik. “*İslamcı Örgütler-2*”, 2009, p. 127

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 127-128

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 127

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 128

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.129

Although he rejects, Hisham Mubarak, director of the Center for Human Rights Legal Aids in Cairo, argues that; “in 1981, the Gama’a Majlis recruited artillery officer Khalid al-Islambuli to carry out its decision to assassinate president Anwar al-Sadat and in same year killed him, after the assassination, Islambuli arrested and executed, and Qasim escaped from Egypt and went to Pakistan”⁷¹. On the other hand, according to Sherman A. Jackson, assassination of Sadat was part of a plan to take over the country and Islamic state, and it was carried out by an amalgamation of militant Islamic led by two fundamentalist leaders; Muhammad Abd al-Faraj from Cairo, and Karam Zuhdi from Upper Egypt.⁷² The decision-making body of this coalition was its “Majlis al-Shura” or Consultative Council which consisted of Faraj, Zuhdi and nine others.⁷³ Faraj was executed in April 1982, along with Khalid al-Islambuli and three others, for assassinating Sadat.⁷⁴ The plan failed and Zuhdi and other members of the Consultative Council were arrested and given long prison sentences.⁷⁵

In prison, internal differences led to the dissolution of the Cairo–Upper Egypt coalition, and the Group resumed its status as an autonomous organization.⁷⁶ “The Charter of Islamic Action (Mithaq al-’Amal al-Islami)” were prepared and taken into effect by the imprisoned leaders of Gama’a which constituted the first written paper on the organization’s ideology clearly defining basic goal as to establish an Islamic state and the caliphate through jihad.⁷⁷ From that time on, Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya tried to overthrow Mubarak's secular, autocratic regime and establish an Islamic state instead.⁷⁸ In late 1989, in Peshawar, Tal’at Fuad Qasim began publishing al-Muratibun (the Holly Fighters), the first magazine of the Group, in order to legitimize for some assassinations and targeting tourists.⁷⁹ He was also involved in setting up a Mahkama Shari’a (Islamic court), which ratified death penalties for various Egyptian officials and secularists.⁸⁰ The Group has been involved in a series of bloody attacks in Egypt, including an assassination attempt of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak during Ethiopia visit in 1995, in 1997 attack on tourists at Luxor that killed fifty-eight tourists, a series of Cairo bombings in 1993, and several attacks against intellectuals and Coptic Christians throughout the 1990s in Egypt.⁸¹ Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman (the Blind Imam), the spiritual leader of the Group, was arrested and sentenced to a life term in U.S. prison for his involvement in the 1993 bomb attack on the World Trade Center, and after the arrest of Sheikh Abd al-Rahman, Qasim became the Gama’a leader.⁸²

On 5 July 1997, during the trial, imprisoned leaders of the Group announced an immediate cease fire; actually, this was the formal declaration of “Mubadarat Waqf al-Unf (the Initiative to Stop the Violence)”.⁸³ At that time, Karam Zuhdi was recognized as the leader inside the prisons, and also there were some leaders outside of the prison, and imprisoned members of the Consultative Council defined to themselves as the “Historical leadership” of the Group.⁸⁴ These members created the initiative and strived to be ratified it other leaders, consequently, Sheikh Omar Abd al-Rahman expressed his approval of the Initiative in 1999, and violent attacks of the Group were terminated.⁸⁵ It was a real landmark of the Group’s ideology in which some important concepts e.g. jihad and

⁷¹ Mubarak, Hisham. “What Does the Gama'a Islamiyya Want?”, 1996, p. 40

⁷² Jackson, Sherman A. “Beyond Jihad: The New Thought of the Gama'a Islamiyya”, 2009, p. 54

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Sullivan, Denis J. and Sana Abed Kotob. “Islam in Contemporary Egypt: Civil Society vs. the State”, 1999, pp. 84-85

⁷⁸ Fletcher, Holly. “Egyptian Islamic Jihad”, 2008, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/16376/egyptian_islamic_jihad.html>, Accessed 09 Dec. 2010

⁷⁹ Mubarak, Hisham. “What Does the Gama'a Islamiyya Want?”, 1996, p. 40

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Fletcher, Holly. “Jamaat al-Islamiyya”, 2008, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/9156/jamaat_alislamiyya.html>

Accessed 09 Dec. 2010

⁸² Mubarak, Hisham. “What Does the Gama'a Islamiyya Want?”, 1996, p. 40

⁸³ Jackson, Sherman A. “Beyond Jihad: The New Thought of the Gama'a Islamiyya”, 2009, p. 55

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 56

⁸⁵ Ibid.

relations with the existing regime redefined in the light of the concept of “understanding reality”.⁸⁶ Although the group did not conduct any attack in since 1997 and rejected violence, some members were alleged to have connections to al-Qaeda⁸⁷. The group was added to the U.S. list of terrorist organizations in 1997⁸⁸, and still the Group is being defined as a terrorist.⁸⁹ After their renouncing of violence and declaring their regret on Sadat’s assassination, President Mubarak’s government released the Group’s leader Karam Zuhdi and hundreds of Islamists in 2003.⁹⁰ According to US official resources, as of 2007, loosely organized the Group was *not active* and has not claimed responsibility for any recent attacks.⁹¹

3. BASIC IDEOLOGICAL CANONS OF THE BROTHERHOOD AND ISLAMIC GROUP:

To get reasonable and consistent results, this work examines basic ideological tenets of two organizations in terms of nine factors. Even though the both Islamic organizations have same roots, the Islamic Group preferred the second important ideologue of the Brotherhood, Sayyid Qutb; whereas the Brotherhood steadily followed founder father al-Banna’s line exemplified by renunciation of violence in mid-1970s. First of all, Qutb should be separated from the Muslim Brotherhood, as the second leader Hudaybi did, in order to get consistent results. Otherwise, one cannot understand the differences between two organizations. According to Diaa Rashwan, an Egyptian scholar, in terms of their affiliation to Islam, Islamist movements may be classified under two groups: sociopolitical and puritanical religious groups. First group accepts that the society is already fully Muslim and only thing they need is a reorganization of their politics with a program based on Islamic law whereas the second group denies that their society is not fully Islamic and must be channeled into true path and re-Islamized either by persuasion or coercion.⁹² According to Professor Amitai Etzioni; there is an important difference between “Muslim warriors” and “Muslim preachers”. Warriors oppose and threaten the west while preachers only oppose of some western ideals.⁹³ In sum, moderates derived mostly from al-Banna’s ideas whereas radicals mostly from Qutb’s. Taking into consideration previously discussed historical backgrounds of two Islamic organizations; the Brotherhood is categorized as moderate, peaceful, sociopolitical or preachers; and the Group as radical, violent, puritanical or warriors for this research.

In view of moderate movements’ success, in terms of their survivability, influence, and election victories proved the radical movements’ failure.⁹⁴ In the same vein, reasons behind the Brotherhood’s international success, according to Rashwan, has been stemming from its flexibility and adaptability.⁹⁵ Although the Brotherhood mostly pursued his founder’s ideas; they also criticized them, espoused political pluralism and multi party system and explicitly endorsed pluralism in the course of the time. Particularly after mid-1970s, namely since the second founding of the organization, the Brotherhood espoused not only the ideas of internal thinkers but also external thinkers’ like Rashid al-Ghanushi and Faisal Mawlawi.⁹⁶ Hence, the Brotherhood, through its flexibility and adaptability, embraced democratic values like elections, popular sovereignty, political pluralism, and peaceful transfer of power. Particularly after 1994, the Brotherhood confirmed its reliance on democracy by several official documents and initiatives. The Muslim Brotherhood’s ideology essentially based on Hasan al-Banna’s works and writings including

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 59

⁸⁷ Fletcher, Holly. “*Jamaat al-Islamiyya*”, 2008, < http://www.cfr.org/publication/9156/jamaat_alislamiyya.html > Accessed 09 Dec. 2010

⁸⁸ Pan, Esther. “*Egypt: Islamist Opposition Groups*”, 2005, < <http://www.cfr.org/publication/8582/egypt.html> > Accessed 09 Dec. 2010

⁸⁹ U.S. Department of Homeland Security. “*Terrorist Organization Reference Guide*”, 2004

⁹⁰ Fletcher, Holly. “*Jamaat al-Islamiyya*”, 2008, < http://www.cfr.org/publication/9156/jamaat_alislamiyya.html > Accessed 09 Dec. 2010

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Rashwan, Diaa. “*Political Islamist Movements: The Case of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt*”, 2009, pp. 3-4

⁹³ Jackson, Sherman A. “*Beyond Jihad: The New Thought of the Gama'a Islamiyya*”, 2009, p. 52

⁹⁴ Rashwan, Diaa. “*Political Islamist Movements: The Case of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt*”, 2009, p. 5

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 6

“Between Yesterday and Today”, “Towards the Light”. After assassination of Banna, the Brotherhood faced a real dilemma between Banna and Sayyid Qutb’s radical ideas. Thanks to the Hudaybi’s coming to office the Brotherhood continue to pursue Banna’s moderate, pragmatic, and long term path. For example, even though one of the previous leaders of the Brotherhood, Muhammad Akef, was actually old guard, he had to declare “2004 Reform Initiative” stemmed from reformist wing’s pressure like Abd al-Munim al Futuh. This initiative actually constituted a watershed of the Brotherhood’s fundamental ideology which confirms that the Brotherhood support “a republican, parliamentary, constitutional and democratic political order, derived from a free and true popular will”⁹⁷.

With regard to Islamic Group; Faraj’s “the Neglected Duty”, Mithaq al-Amal al-Islami (Conventions/Charter of Islamic action), and “Silsilat Taṣḥih al-Mafahim” (Correcting Misunderstandings) constituted three main resources of the ideology of the Group. They are also reflects three different period of history. After assassination of Sadat in 1981 *mithaq* was the main manual of the Group, after renunciation of violence in 1997 *silsilat* has been main guide of the organization. In this part of this paper, particularly first two has been used to make comparison, because the third one mostly reflects very similar ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood’s approach. But particularly in the jihad and the relations with the regime sections, *silsilat* was also used to clarify the Group’s new approach.

3.1. Agenda:

Hassan al-Banna explains the Brotherhood’s agenda in “Between Yesterday and Today” by two fundamental goals:

Freeing the Islamic homeland from all foreign authority, for this is a natural right belonging to every human being which only the unjust oppressor will deny... The establishment of an Islamic state within this homeland, which acts according to the precepts of Islam, applies its social regulations, advocates its sound principles, and broadcasts its mission to all of mankind.⁹⁸

As mentioned by Banna, the Muslim Brotherhood’s agenda comprised both political and religious issues while Islamic Group was focusing primarily on political issues and mobilizing Islam to achieve political goals.⁹⁹ Particularly, religious aspects of the Brotherhood brought much more power, reputation and influence not only in Egypt but also all over the Muslim world. Besides, because the Brotherhood mostly preferred to act legally in existing political system, it had also a chance to participate in politics and establishing parties or collaboration with some existing parties contrary to the Islamic Group.

3.2. Strategy:

The Muslim Brotherhood preferred a gradual, evolutionary or bottom-up strategy to achieve its ultimate goal of establishing an Islamic state and the unity of Muslims (pan-Islamism).¹⁰⁰ It was indeed a highly pragmatic organization which rejected violence and calls for more democracy instead of espousing violence.¹⁰¹ Because they experienced a quite long history and discerned the fact that they wouldn’t achieve ultimate goal through violence. In compliance with al-Banna; first of all the Brotherhood was calling for da’wa (preaching) in order to Islamize people, then, by means of Islamized society was aiming at establishing Islamic state in which Shari’a would reign.¹⁰² On the contrary, the Islamic Group preferred a revolutionary or top-down strategy. Even though their ultimate aim overlaps, there were some serious differences between their conceived Islamic states,

⁹⁷ Elad-Altman, Israel. “Democracy, Elections and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood”, 2006, p. 28

⁹⁸ Al-Banna, Hassan. “Between Yesterday and Today”, <<http://www.islambasics.com>>, Accessed 03 Feb. 2011

⁹⁹ Rabasa, Angel M., et al. “The Muslim World after 9/11”, 2004, p. 76

¹⁰⁰ Çağlayan, Selin. “Müslüman Kardeşler'den Yeni Osmanlılara İslamcılık”, 2010, p. 187

¹⁰¹ Sullivan, Denis J. and Sana Abed Kotob. “Islam in Contemporary Egypt: Civil Society vs. the State”, 1999, p. 66

¹⁰² Commins, David. “Hasan al-Banna” in Ali Rahnama, “Pioneers of Islamic Revival”. 2008, pp. 148-149

methods, and strategy. In compliance with Qutb's and Faraj's revolutionary approach, the Group chose first and foremost to overthrow the existing infidel state institutions and to construct an Islamic order.

3.3. Democracy, Islamic State, and the Caliphate:

The main goal of the Muslim Brotherhood is to establish an Islamic state governed by Islamic law. Even though this aim seems to westerners as a threat, the Brotherhood's concept of Islamic state, indeed includes some key western democratic ideas; liberty, representation, accountability, socio-economic justice and so on.¹⁰³¹⁰⁴ The modern Shura, as advocated by al-Banna, entails the necessity of people's involvement not only political matters but in all concerning the community.¹⁰⁵ Shura denies the legitimacy of authoritarian rule or political monopoly over the community and makes the community the source of executive power. In dealing with governments he always favored compromise, and focused on the concept's unitary aspects.¹⁰⁶ Even though Banna believed that European civilization consisted of atheism, immorality, individual and class selfishness, and usury¹⁰⁷, he posits no problem with western style constitutional rule, because in accordance with Islam it maintains personal freedom, upholds Shura, postulates people's authority over government, specifies the responsibilities and accountability of rulers before their people, and defines the responsibilities of the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary.¹⁰⁸ According to Banna; Islam does not stipulate any particular form of government, therefore, Islamic state could take many forms including constitutional parliamentary democracy.¹⁰⁹ In order to keep preserving the nation's unity, he rejected the multiparty system and preferred no-party system instead. But particularly after mid-1990s the Brotherhood espoused and endorsed pluralism and multi party system implicitly. Particularly "Statement of Democracy"¹¹⁰ and "Reform Initiative"¹¹¹ confirmed their commitment to democracy. On the other hand; political legitimacy derived if and only if from God for Islamic Group and government should be accountable only to God.¹¹² The Charter of Islamic Action (Mithaq al-'Amal al-Islami) stated that their goal was "to establish Islam as a totality in each soul, and over each handbreadth of land, in each house, in each organization, and in each society".¹¹³ So, this would be accomplished by reestablishing the caliphate through jihad and replacing Western laws with Shari'a.¹¹⁴ Briefly, the Group rejected all western thought including democracy, aimed at creating Islamic society and Islamic state in which shari'a would reign through overthrowing existing system.

3.4. Secularism:

From the al-Banna's perspective, separating Islam from politics was not Islamic, owing to the fact that Islam is a complete and active religion that must relate to all aspects of life.¹¹⁵ To mithaq and some other writings of al-Rahman, secular law has been derived from western thought, and it was alien to Islam, so, it must be eliminated and the rulers must be forced to see the folly secular rule.¹¹⁶ The rulers who have replaced God's law must be fought until they return to God's law or must be uprooted.¹¹⁷ In terms of secularism, it is clear that there is a convergence between two

¹⁰³ Sullivan, Denis J. and Sana Abed Kotob. "Islam in Contemporary Egypt: Civil Society vs. the State", 1999, pp. 84-85

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 65

¹⁰⁵ Moussalli, Ahmad S. "Moderate and Radical Islamic Fundamentalism", 1999, p. 121

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 123

¹⁰⁷ Commins, David. "Hasan al-Banna" in Ali Rahnema, "Pioneers of Islamic Revival". 2008, p. 133

¹⁰⁸ Moussalli, Ahmad S. "Moderate and Radical Islamic Fundamentalism", 1999, pp. 124-125

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 135

¹¹⁰ El-Ghobashy, Mona. "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers", 2005, pp. 384-385

¹¹¹ Rashwan, Diaa. "Political Islamist Movements: The Case of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt", 2009, p. 7

¹¹² Rabasa, Angel M., et al. "The Muslim World after 9/11", 2004, p. 77

¹¹³ Ibid., pp. 93-94

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Moussalli, Ahmad S. "Moderate and Radical Islamic Fundamentalism", 1999, p. 109

¹¹⁶ Sullivan, Denis J. and Sana Abed Kotob. "Islam in Contemporary Egypt: Civil Society vs. the State", 1999, p. 85

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

organizations, namely both of them rejected the idea of secularism and espoused the idea of inseparability of religion from politics.

3.5. Human Rights and Freedom of Expression/ People Participation:

To Banna, Muslim nation has a right to monitor the rulers' actions, to give advice them, and the rulers must be accountable to the people.¹¹⁸ In view of his period of life, these ideas indeed reflected very modernist and democratic ones. Particularly since 1990s, "although the Muslim Brotherhood seeks to establish a political system based on Islamic law, it affirms the principle of popular sovereignty as the basis of legitimate state power, endorses pluralism in all spheres of social and political life, and supports equal rights for all citizens, including women and non-Muslim minorities"¹¹⁹. The Brotherhood also allows protected status for certain non-Muslim communities.¹²⁰ Contrarily, the Islamic Group completely rejected western concepts of human rights and individual liberties and believed that; the full imposition of Islamic law (Shari'a) creates a just society, and denies rights to religious minorities and even to Muslims who do not share their views.¹²¹ According to mithaq, Islam demand group activity, and they encouraged conformity to Islamic codes of behavior, and, even though there might be differences within the group, very similar to ideas of Qutb, these must represent a variety of ideas limited by the Islamic Shari'a.¹²² As long as shari'a permits, the people would have a chance to use freedom of expression and other human rights. It is also impossible to talk about the concept of accountability, because, the ruler would be responsible only to God for the Islamic Group.

3.6. Women Rights:

To al Banna, women's place was her home, and her primary roles were mother, wife, and housekeeper. Women have no need to learn law, foreign languages, or technical sciences because their place is in the home.¹²³ Although after mid-1990s the Brotherhood recognized the equal citizenship of women, their role in the society was still being discussed. On the contrary, the Group was willing to use coercion and violence to enforce their conception of Islamic dress and behavior.¹²⁴

3.7. Jihad:

With respect to concept of jihad, as mentioned in previous section of this paper in detail, neither Hassan al –Banna nor following leaders of the Brotherhood never endorsed use of any means of violence. Particularly, the second leader Hassan al-Hudaybi rejected Qutb's radical ideas and deported him from the movement. Indeed, Hudaybi worked hard to refute Qutb's thought so much so that simply because published a book named "Preachers, Not Judges".¹²⁵ Hudaybi did it so, because Banna had emphasized that "the civil nature of the concept of the jihad, and saw it as a personal and social path in which one made the words of truth and persuasion to a misguided ruler while struggling to a better one's spiritual and social lot in life"¹²⁶. According to Banna, jihad was mostly a personal struggle, and entails an obligation when the Muslim soil faces an attack by enemy. Although most of works assert that Banna has defensive jihad ideas, in view of his establishment of "special apparatus" brings some suspicions of which whether he has a secret agenda or not. Some contemporary scholars still insist that the Brotherhood has a hidden agenda

¹¹⁸ Moussalli, Ahmad S. "Moderate and Radical Islamic Fundamentalism", 1999, p. 135

¹¹⁹ Wickham, Carrie Rosefsky. "The Path to Moderation: Strategy and Learning in the Formation of Egypt's Wasat Party", 2004, p. 207

¹²⁰ Rabasa, Angel M., et al. "The Muslim World after 9/11", 2004, pp. 77-78

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Sullivan, Denis J. and Sana Abed Kotob. "Islam in Contemporary Egypt: Civil Society vs. the State", 1999, p. 85

¹²³ Commins, David. "Hasan al-Banna" in Ali Rahnama, "Pioneers of Islamic Revival". 2008, p. 143

¹²⁴ Rabasa, Angel M., et al. "The Muslim World after 9/11", 2004, p. 78

¹²⁵ Rashwan, Dina. "Political Islamist Movements: The Case of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt", 2009, p. 10

¹²⁶ Sullivan, Denis J. and Sana Abed Kotob. "Islam in Contemporary Egypt: Civil Society vs. the State", 1999, p. 79

and there are many inconsistencies the documents which published by the organization.¹²⁷ For instance, Muhammad Akef one of the former general guides of the Brotherhood declared explicitly that they could have sent ten thousand mujahedeen to fight against Israel.¹²⁸ Whether these claims true or not are too difficult to prove, but given post al-Banna period, like Hudaibi's attempt for uprooting the special apparatus and embracing democratic values in 1990s, it seems reasonable to argue that the Brotherhood has been engaged essentially a moderate, defensive conception of jihad. Contrarily, the Islamic Group espoused Faraj's (firm follower and admirer of Sayyid Qutb) understanding of jihad as follows; "jihad was an armed struggle with the purpose of destroying the evil in the state and replacing it with Islamic rule"¹²⁹. According to Faraj, the Qur'anic sword verses have abrogated all other verses regarding peace, and he argued that jihad is an obligation as fasting or other main pillars of Islam.¹³⁰ Jihad has been defined in Mithaq as "a struggle to change the ways of those who abandoned the good and also seen as a two-step struggle; first step entails preaching, and if it does not succeeded in second step jihad would transform to a coercive one".¹³¹ That is to say, it would include using physical force and violence. But, between 1997 and 1999, imprisoned historical leadership of the Group made a re-assessment and wrote four short books under the series title, "Silsilat Taṣḥih al-Mafahim" (Correcting Misunderstandings) published in 2002 in order to condemn any means violence. The Series included the following titles; "Initiative to Stop the Violence: A Realistic Vision and a Shari'a Perspective, Shedding Light on the Mistakes That Have Befallen the Understanding of Jihad, Advice and Clarification to Correct Misunderstandings Among Those Who Police Public Morals and The Impermissibility of Religious Extremism and of Declaring Fellow Muslims To Be Infidels".¹³² It was a real turning point of the Group's ideology and endorsement of their new stance. These books constituted a re-assessment and a correction of Group's doctrine and mostly focused and questioned the concept of "jihadism". The concept of "understanding reality" or "pragmatic jurisprudence" has been placed on the base of new thought.¹³³ They insisted that Islamic law is inextricably bound to a balancing exercise that seeks to maximize benefits and minimize harms rather than pure benefits and pure harms; and they emphasized particularly "relative benefits" and "relative harms".¹³⁴ To them, their bloody confrontations with the Egyptian government did not realize any religiously recognized benefits; on the contrary, this brought harm not only to the Group, but also all Islamic movements. Indeed, they insisted, the only ones to benefit from this chaos were Israel, America and the West in general, Copts, and various groups of Egyptian secularists.¹³⁵ They came to the idea that violence undermines da'wa, or propagation of Islam, therefore, they concluded that; "jihad against the Egyptian state is, therefore, not islamically sanctioned".¹³⁶ Moreover, during an interview in 2001, Abd al-Rahman, co-author of "Shedding Light on the Mistakes that have befallen the Understanding of Jihad", explains their new stance towards jihad as follows:

The mistake we made in the past was that we used to privilege (individual) texts over the broader aims and objectives of the law, allowing the texts to run rough-shod over these aims and objectives. We used to engage in jihad without taking any account of the benefits or harms that would accrue to our action. Now, however,

¹²⁷ Said Aly, Abdel Monem. "Understanding the Muslim Brothers in Egypt", 2007, pp. 1-7

¹²⁸ Guitta, Olivier. "Muslim Brotherhood Parties in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)Region", 2010, pp. 1-9

¹²⁹ Sullivan, Denis J. and Sana Abed Kotob. "Islam in Contemporary Egypt: Civil Society vs. the State", 1999, p. 79

¹³⁰ Zuhur, Sherifa, "Egypt: Security, Political, and Islamic Challenges", 2007, p. 63, <<http://www.StrategicStudiesInstitute.army.mil/>>, Accessed 05 Feb. 2011

¹³¹ Sullivan, Denis J. and Sana Abed Kotob. "Islam in Contemporary Egypt: Civil Society vs. the State", 1999,

p. 85

¹³² Jackson, Sherman A. "Beyond Jihad: The New Thought of the Gama'a Islamiyya", 2009, p. 57

¹³³ Ibid., p. 59

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 60

¹³⁶ Ibid.

our understanding has changed: it is the broader aims and objectives that determine the application of the text...This is the sound approach.¹³⁷

This was indeed a profound change compared with their earlier understanding of jihad and its place in Islam, and it caused separating them from radical jihadist movements.¹³⁸ In sum, in terms of the Group's new approach, jihad is the only acceptable in case of contracting truces, treaties and alliances.¹³⁹

3.8. Relations with the Regime:

Al-Banna, unlike Qutb and other radicals, rejected the idea of overthrowing current political order; rather, he advocated reforming it. He insistently preached that the Brothers would not seek to rule the country; only and only if to assist a ruler for acting harmoniously with Islam.¹⁴⁰ After al-Banna, the Brotherhood pursued this "pragmatic" path which provided them mostly to coexist with the reigning secular regime. The leaders, indeed, always avoided directly confrontation with the existing system, beyond this, sometimes supported it. Although they faced very difficult times at the hands of Nasser and Mubarak, they could survive thanks to espoused pragmatism since Banna. Accordingly, the regime tolerated even if it has not recognized the Brotherhood officially as a legal organization. Sometimes they have been accused of executing collaboration with the regime stemming from their pragmatic stance by radical Islamist as in 1970s. But, the fact that through this pragmatic approach they continuously increased the organization's power gradually and survived. As expected, the Islamic Group rejected to work within existing systems and passionately tried to overthrow it.¹⁴¹ The Group also opposed foreign investment in Egypt and declared war on tourism owing to the fact that income from tourism would support the infidel state.¹⁴² But, as mentioned before, after 1999 declaration they changed their attitudes toward Egyptian state, and espoused very similar way with the Muslim Brotherhood. For example Hamdi Abd al-Rahman, explains the new relationship with the Egyptian state as follows:

These are rules that have been legislated by God, and they remain valid until the coming of The Hour. We cannot change them and we cannot expunge the verses that prescribe the punishment for adultery, fornication or theft. However, where the government refuses to apply these rules for particular reasons, such as the fact that we are not alone in the world ... under such circumstances, we accept the government's excuse and we say that the ruler is a Muslim ... And it is absolutely not permissible to brand such a ruler an Unbeliever.¹⁴³

It is also possible to assert that the success of the Muslim Brotherhood as a viable organization despite repressive governments has convinced the leadership of the Group that operating within the existing institutional framework is a more effective way of achieving its long-term goals.¹⁴⁴

3.9. Relations with Similar Movements:

As mentioned, the Brotherhood is the core of almost all Islamic movements in the Muslim world which has some wings in other Muslim countries like Jordan, Tunisia, Sudan, and Syria. In addition, it has also some offshoots like Hamas in Palestine. "The International Organization of Muslim Brotherhood" is another face of its effectiveness in not only Muslim world but also all over the world, in view of their presence in Europe and the United States. Although reformist wing in the Brotherhood preferred to quit international dimension of the Brotherhood, old guards were still trying to enhance its international ability.¹⁴⁵ Despite the Brotherhood's insistent speeches

¹³⁷ Ibid., pp. 60-61

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 62

¹³⁹ Ibid., pp. 64-66

¹⁴⁰ Commins, David. "Hasan al-Banna" in Ali Rahnema, "Pioneers of Islamic Revival". 2008, p. 137

¹⁴¹ Rabasa, Angel M., et al. "The Muslim World after 9/11", 2004, pp. 93-94

¹⁴² Ibid., pp. 94-95

¹⁴³ Jackson, Sherman A. "Beyond Jihad: The New Thought of the Gama'a Islamiyya", 2009, pp. 62-63

¹⁴⁴ Rabasa, Angel M., et al. "The Muslim World after 9/11", 2004, p. 99

¹⁴⁵ Rashwan, Diaa. "Political Islamist Movements: The Case of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt", 2009, p. 13

condemning violence, it has been accused of having organic ties with radical groups.¹⁴⁶ With regard to the Group, it influenced the Jamaat-i Islami in Pakistan in 1980s stemmed from Afghan “mujahidin” struggle against Soviet invasion and also exported some thought to this organization.¹⁴⁷ In addition to strong relationship with the Egyptian Islamic Jihad in early years, it mostly alleged particularly by American officials that the Group incorporated with al-Qaeda in some cases.¹⁴⁸ But, by espousing new ideology in 1999, the Group began to criticize harshly al-Qaeda and separate their ways. According to the leadership of the Group, the concept of jihad was misunderstood by al-Qaeda on the grounds that violence could not replace “persuasion”.¹⁴⁹ In addition, the Gama’a insisted that; even if al-Qaeda accepted it a religious duty to fight against America, this did not mean that it was permissible to kill any American civilian anywhere in the world.¹⁵⁰

All in all; as was shown, the Muslim Brotherhood’s ideology was essentially based on literal interpretation of Islamic scriptures whereas the Islamic Group’s was constructed over political interpretation of some basic concepts like jihad.¹⁵¹ The Brotherhood’s ideology mostly reflected the ideas of al-Banna whereas it was easy to discern the traces of Sayyid Qutb on founders’ ideology of the Group until 1997.

4. CONCLUSION:

The Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Group have been two important and influential Islamic movements of Egypt for decades. Like other Islamic movements, if anybody wants to understand the Group, first and foremost, should focus on the father of almost all Islamic movements, the Muslim Brotherhood. Indeed, the Brotherhood played vital role for Islamic revival in 20th century and engendered the birth of many similar Islamic movements. In the contemporary world, whenever one examines any Islamic movement, it is most probable to encounter the traces of Brotherhood. Thanks to al-Banna’s brilliant strategy, it is indeed a very pragmatic and deep-rooted movement which could survive and still alive. Since its foundation in 1928, although the Brotherhood experienced very difficult times including torture, imprisonment, executions and most recently military coup in 2013, the Brotherhood could maintain survival despite all obstacles and pressure of the regime. At that point, Hudaybi’s negative stance towards Qutb’s radical discourse should be taken as one of the most important landmark for keeping moderate approach. Otherwise, the Brotherhood might have channeled its ideology into a radical one, and perhaps couldn’t have been so influential among the Muslim world. Particularly after 2005, by electing as general guide of the Brotherhood, Muhammad Mahdi Akef moved the ideology to a very balanced line between traditionalists and reformists. The struggle between old guards and second and third generations will most probably play important role for the Brotherhood’s ideological future. Even though old guards still dominates over the organization, pressure of reformist wing for modernization seems to continue. Most probably; in the long run, it will be too difficult to for old generation to sustain firm ideological stance vis-à-vis the new generation. Particularly after the military coup in 2013, it is too difficult to predict whether the Brotherhood will pursue moderate path or not.

With respect to the Islamic Group, although it was a radical and violent organization in Egypt until the declaration of New Initiative in 1997, from that time onwards the Group espoused very similar way to the Muslim Brotherhood. After the declaration, the Group embraced the new conception of jihad, condemned violence and decided to act within the existing system of Egypt. In fact perception of the “understanding reality” made the Group a moderate and reconcilable movement,

¹⁴⁶ Kurtoğlu-Eskişar, Gül M. “Political Parties Matter: Explaining Peaceful and Violent State– Islamist Interactions in Algeria, Egypt, Indonesia and Turkey”, 2005, pp. 204-205

¹⁴⁷ Gunaratna, Rohan. “The Ideology of Al-Jama’ah Al-Islamiyya”, 2005, p. 75

¹⁴⁸ Fletcher, Holly. “Egyptian Islamic Jihad”, 2008, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/16376/egyptian_islamic_jihad.html>, Accessed 09 Dec. 2010

¹⁴⁹ Jackson, Sherman A. “Beyond Jihad: The New Thought of the Gama’a Islamiyya”, 2009, p. 64

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 65

¹⁵¹ Rabasa, Angel M., et al. “The Muslim World after 9/11”, 2004, p. 76

therefore, ideological transformation was realized. Given the Group's emergence as offshoot of the Brotherhood, inactive position in 2000s and moderate and non-violent stance since 1997; it may comfortably be claimed that the Islamic Group was absorbed by the Muslim Brotherhood; therefore, the ideologies of two Islamic organizations overlapped in this period.

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