

UNDER THE BANNER OF VIOLENCE: HAMAS, AL-GAMA'A AL-ISLAMIYYA, AND RADICAL ISLAMIC TERRORISM

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Abstract:

Examining the process by which religious and political groups undergo radicalization to a point where they eventually espouse the instrumentality of violence and terrorism for achieving their political objectives is a prevalent issue in the post-post-9/11 world, or in an era that might come to be known as the “9/11-century.” This topic is timely and relevant in the context of religion and politics in the current geopolitical world given that we consistently see cyclical patterns of violent (Islamic) extremism, especially during times of crises, and in which members of entire demographic spectrums have become involved. This paper presents an examination of the religious radicalization of the highly ritualistic and extremely conservative Muslim group Hamas (*Harakat Al-Muqawamah Al-Islamiyyah*) or “The Islamic Resistance Movement” and former armed revolution group in Egypt during the 1970s and much of the 1990s *Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiyya* (GAI). In doing so, it connects with the subjects of radicalization and deradicalization of such groups analyzing why some extremist groups eventually undergo a process of deradicalization while others do not. As one perspective commonly held among experts on terrorism and political violence underscores, terrorism is ultimately the product of parallel radicalization, and focuses on three groups; those of: victims, perpetrators, and bystanders (Baumeister, 1997; Miller, 1999; Staub, 1989). Thus, terrorism or asymmetric conflict and forms of political violence may be seen as the product of the interaction of multiple agents that consider their actions correct, a legitimate method of expressing discontent, and is consequently conducive to a vicious cycle of violence, aggression, and insecurity.

Keywords: Aggression, cycle of violence, insecurity, ritualistic, the Muslim brotherhood

Introduction:

Examining the process by which religious and political groups undergo radicalization to a point where they eventually espouse the instrumentality of violence and terrorism for achieving their political objectives is a prevalent issue in the post-post-9/11 world, or in an era that might come to be known as the “9/11-century.” This topic is timely and relevant in the context of religion and politics in the current geopolitical world given that we consistently see cyclical patterns of violent (Islamic) extremism, especially during times of crises, and in which members of entire demographic spectrums have become involved. This paper presents an examination of the religious radicalization of the highly ritualistic and extremely conservative Muslim group Hamas (*Harakat Al-Muqawamah Al-Islamiyyah*) or “The Islamic Resistance Movement” and former armed revolution group in Egypt during the 1970s and much of the 1990s *Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiyya* (GAI). In doing so, it connects with the subjects of radicalization and deradicalization of such groups analyzing why some extremist groups eventually undergo a process of deradicalization while others do not. As one perspective commonly held among experts on terrorism and political violence underscores, terrorism is ultimately the product of parallel radicalization, and focuses on three groups; those of: victims, perpetrators, and bystanders (Baumeister, 1997; Miller, 1999; Staub, 1989). Thus,

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Radicalization and Deradicalization as Concepts of Subjectivity:

Specific indicators can be taken as means of observing a process of radicalization, which can often times transition into violent extremism. Although there is no absolute way of knowing that any one individual will become radicalized to the point where they will become the perpetrator of violent extremist acts, a great deal of experience suggests a number of indicators that are worth stating. It is also of value to note that while terrorist radicalization has been an ongoing issue in many parts of the world, new breeding ground for terrorism has surfaced, where it has not been traditionally observed. The US, UK, and parts of Western and Eastern Europe (i.e., Germany, France, Norway, the former-Yugoslavia, and Russia) have provided fertile breeding grounds for “homegrown” terrorism or terrorist acts that occur within the states that those terrorists target (Khawla, 2010).

Terrorism, whether associated with an international organization (IO) or with an isolated individual or individuals that have not been radicalized as part of larger and compatible group, is the likely peak of a systematic process of radicalization (Khawla, 2010). This process, according to Silber and Bhatt (2007), is one through which “local residents or citizens gradually adopt an extremist religious/political ideology hostile to the West, which legitimizes terrorism as a tool to affect societal change,” and that is then advanced by a number of ideological and extremist influences (Silber and Bhatt, 2007: 16). Although this definition is not one that can be universally accepted, given that terrorist radicalization has taken place elsewhere in the world and by those seeking to engage in violent extremist acts against non-Western states and actors (not just those within the Western world), it should be taken in specific context as outlined by those defining it. The US has defined radicalization in terms of violent radicalization, referring to “the process of adopting or promoting an extremist belief system for the purpose of facilitating ideologically based violence to advance political, religious, or social change” (House Representative [HR] 1955, 2007; Silber and Bhatt, 2007: 16).

While government authorities in the US have formulated numerous definitions for radicalization, further definitions put forth by other government bodies and agents beyond the US serve as useful intellectualizing devices while also revealing that relatively limited attention has been afforded to understanding what the concept entails. The European Commission (EC) (2012) recognizes radicalization “as a complex phenomenon of people embracing radical ideology that could lead to the commitment of terrorist acts.” The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) (2009) highlights the existence of gaps in the legal definition of critical terms such as “extremism” and “terrorism,” and shows that while “radicalism” might be understood as one’s support for opinions and methods of an extreme nature, it draws attention to the fact that the term itself and when applied remains problematic. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has not put any definition forward regarding what is considered “radical,” nor has it properly engaged with any derivatives of the word, including “radicalism” or “radicalization” so as to provide definitions that can be either theorized or put into practice. Even the US Department of Defense (DoD), as of 2008, has not produced a working definition of any of the terms, nor can definitions for the concepts of “radicalization,” “radicalism,” or “radicalize” be found in the Concise Oxford English Dictionary (COED). Thus, a lack of consensus exists regarding the meaning of these terms, what they actually involve, and how they relate to a wider range of conditions within society. This area is still expanding, but not at the same rate as the issues with which the terms would assist in addressing.

In a chapter of a report by Neumann (2008), published through The International Center for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence (ICSR) entitled, “Perspectives on Radicalization and Political Violence,” radicalization is simply referred to as “what goes on before the bomb goes off” (4). Della Porta and LaFree (2012) define radicalization simply as “a process leading towards the increased use of political violence, while de-radicalization, by contrast, implies reduction in the use of political violence” (5). These definitions denote that a social and political aspect is involved, but focus on an expectation that violence is the ultimate goal. According to Della Porta (2012), much of the current research on radicalization has delved deeply into the idea of social movements and transitions as significant shares of the process (See, Della Porta, 1995; Tilly, 2004; Wood, 2003). In order to reflect the social currents that fuel the radicalization process and for the purpose of this study, radicalization is understood as a flexible process that includes the adoption of an extremist belief system shared by others, and the willingness to use or support the use of violence and the fear of violence in order to achieve the desired social or political changes in any given society. While this can take place with a group or on an individual basis, the process of radicalization does not have to result in the use of violence.

Radicalization as a fluid process implies that a different meaning of the process is assumed differently either by those going through it or by those associated with it by other means. The fluidity of radicalization also holds that there is no specified timetable involved, and that violent extremist acts need not be the ultimate result of the entire process as noted. An individual may begin radicalizing, remain latent in any one of the four stages previously discussed, exit the process, or even re-enter the process of radicalization at any time (Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI] Counterterrorism Division, 2006: 3-4).

Internal and external factors are observed as the core expedients of initial radicalization. These can be factors that are unique to each individual but that may hold a common bond among them. Those becoming involved in the process are identified using a typology that considers distinct motivations and conversion types. The USG, while identifying would-be extremists as jilted believers, protest converts, acceptance seekers, and faith reinterpreters, contains all of them within a single lens that perceives them as having the potential to become involved in Jihadi violence (FBI, 2006: 3). Movement is made toward radicalization whereby an individual drifts from a previous life (i.e., social routines and customs or activities, and bonds or relationships) and associates with others sharing similar thoughts and convictions that can serve to maintain but often strengthen their collective dedication to their faith (i.e., Islam) (FBI, 2006: 3). An individual reaches a level of indoctrination when he or she has become influenced by and committed to a call for action in order to serve the cause to which the individual has become dedicated. This point represents a testing ground for both the organization or group and the individuals to assess the individual’s willingness to serve the cause and their resolve. Instances of action, which can be interpreted in multiple ways, including the direct participation in violent extremist acts (Jihad), support of the group’s operations that involve violent attack, recruitment and training of potential supporters, and financing are indicative of completing the entire radicalization process (FBI, 2006: 3).

To address the concept of deradicalization we can simply refer to this through the use of a wide array of facilitating word, including those of: “desertion,” “demobilization,” “defection,” “rehabilitation,” “reconciliation,” “dialogue,” and “disengagement” (Noor and Hayat, 2009). The inclusion of such a diverse constellation of terms probably services more to mar and cloud our understanding of the process, yet it might serve as a useful vantage point for formulating a rich cross-section of concepts, impressions, beliefs with which we might move forward. As noted by Noor and Hayat (2009), “the main reason for the use of different terms in different societies seems to be the realization of the socio-political activities attached

to each of them” (1). Whereas some are used in Asian societies, others are employed primarily in European, which vary considerably to those employed in the US.

The Tide of Terror: *Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiyya* and *Harakat Al-Muqawamah Al-Islamiyyah: The Islamic Group*

Since the late-1970s Egypt's largest militant group, that of GAI (also referred to as Al-Gama't, Egyptian Al-Gama'at Al-Islamiyya, or Islamic Gama'at), was active as a loosely organized network, and was supported beyond the borders of the Egyptian state (US Department of State [DoS], 2006: 194). In fact, has been referred to more as a phenomenon rather than an organization that was “mainly affected by the militant ideology of Sayyid Qubt (executed in 1966), who paved the way for the establishment of several Islamic branches in Egypt and the Arab world” (ICT, 2013). When Egyptian President Anwar Sadat released a large number of Islamic prisoners from state jails and prisons, militant groups began organizing throughout Egypt and assumed such names as the “Islamic Liberation Party,” “Al-Takfir wal Hijra” (Excommunication and Emigration), “Al-Najun min Al-nar” (Saved from the Inferno), and “Jihad” (Holy War) as well as “Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiyya” (ICT, 2013). “Each cell operated separately and was self-contained,” states the ICT (2013), “a fact that allowed the organization to be structured, but at the same time loosely organized.”

In 1997, IG issued a ceasefire that resulted in the fragmentation of the group into two parts. The first was led by Mustafa Hamza (who supported the ceasefire put forward by the group) while the splinter group operated under the leadership of Rifa'I Taha Musa, who “called for a return to armed operations” against the state of Egypt and its internal as well as external supporters (US DoS, 2006: 194). After issuing a second ceasefire in March 1999, the spiritual leader of the group, Shaykh Umar Abd Al-Rahman, was detained by US authorities for his involvement in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center and subsequently repealed his support for the group's ceasefire in June 2000 (US DoS, 2006: 194).

Targets of IG are divided into two groups based on specific periods. Prior to the group's 1997 ceasefire, Egyptian security and government officials as well as Coptic Christians, and Egyptian opponents of Islamic extremism were the principle targets of IG. However, following the issuance of the ceasefire, the faction (under the leadership of Taha Musa) expanded the scope of violence waged by IG so as to include foreigners such as tourists within the country (i.e., the attack at Deir el- Bahri in Luxor). IG also was responsible for the attempted political assassination of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak while he was visiting Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (US DoS, 2006: 194). The 1997 Luxor massacre that led to the deaths of 58 tourists and four Egyptians was the last attack undertaken by IG, however, in February 1998, one of the group's senior members backed Osama bin Laden's *fatwa*, which called for violent attacks against the US and American citizens throughout the world (US DoS, 2006: 194). In spite of seemingly misguided violence with attacks against Egyptian nationals and foreigners, the primary objective of IG and for the group's members remained the overthrow of the Egyptian government and its replacement with an Islamic state (US DoS, 2006: 194).

On a structural level, IG's close ties with AQ facilitated an exchange of communication that could be used to support the growth and operations of the organization in a number of ways. Its direct ties with strong terrorist networks meant that it was able easily launch attacks within Egypt at any time. IG considered the secular state of Egypt a threat to its perceptions of Islamic principles and used extreme interpretations of the religion in order to channel discontent and hatred toward agents that were pro-Western and pro-Christian, and that stood in strong opposition to the Islamization of Egypt and other states in the Middle East. In this vein, religion played one of the primary methods of bringing together peoples with or strengthening and honing their extreme political and social ideals and aspirations. A common factor in the radicalization of extremist groups across the globe, the Islamic religious

component supported efforts to achieve aims of IG through both violent and non-violent means, although a focus should be maintained on the radicalization of IG and its supporters using Islam as a medium into violent extremism.

With the Egyptian government showing strong disinterest in waging aggressive action against Israel during the 1970s, IG began to view Egypt's governing authority as a Zionist sympathizer, using this distorted image of Egypt's Muslim leaders as a method of arousing anti-Semitic feelings in the group's followers. In other words, "peace with Israel in 1979 yielded a new sense of fundamentalist outrage" (ICT, 2014). From that point onward, Sadat increasingly aligned himself with US foreign policy. IG used the resultant outrage as a dual strategy to simultaneously incite hatred toward their Zionist enemy and toward the Egyptian government, which brought about what was referred to as a "shameful peace with the Jews" (Kepel, 2003: 149). Sadat, "in the minds of Islamists ... personified domestic failure and external betrayal. He was seen to be neglecting his Arab neighbors in favor of closer ties with the West, particularly Israel and the United States" (ICT, 2013). As opposition by the Egyptian government toward the group began to build, an incentive was further created to resist the government. By the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, the number of followers of IG began to grow significantly.

Domestically, a number of significant factors should be considered and taken into account forces equally potent as those at the structural level. The religious component enabled leaders to emphasize an alleged assault against the values of Islam and Islam itself so as to tap into both individual and group grievance and was being cultivated by other structural, domestic, and individuals elements at work. The resilience and lethality of the group played a considerable role in the ongoing radicalization of IG as well as the non-existence of other radical or extremist within the country. Its violent narrative through the 1990s consists of hundreds of law enforcement officers' deaths, the killing of numerous soldiers, many civilians including foreign tourists as well as attempts against secular intellectuals, and Christian Copts (ICT, 2013). The group is even closely connected to the 1981 political assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. IG, according to Kepel (2003), is said to be the "Islamic movements only genuine mass organization" in the country (129).

The struggle between the government and IG began to increase dramatically on university campuses through legislation in Cairo with the aim of weakening the influence of the group by reducing the group's decision making powers on campuses and instead place more control in the hands of institution administrators. This was a moment when clashes between the opposing groups resulted in greater calls on the part of IG to reduce female enrollment, bring gender-mixed classes to an end, and halt a great number of social function and customs such as film activities, music concerts, dances. Their calls for extreme change in these forms were supplemented by a use of physical force against those who opposed it (Metz, 1990; Kepel, 2003: 149).

The individual basis for understanding some of the causes of the group's radicalization process is difficult to isolate given the crossover between all three categories. Notwithstanding this problem of delineation of factors and explanations, it is worth noting that the aftermath of the Muslim Brotherhood's renouncement of violence in Egypt in the 1970s left a large swathe of individuals seeking entry to Egyptian militant students groups. As previously mentioned, the group was primarily active during its early days at academic institutions and university campuses and sought to attract a student minority that may have felt threatened by the majority of leftists. With rapid expansion on campus, individual supporters of IG began to form the new majority. Thus, they found themselves in an ideal position from which to express their strong social and political beliefs. Accordingly, the associations were able to push for requirements regarding Islamic dress codes, the veiling of female students, and strong gender divisions amongst classes on campuses. Opposition to

their social aims at various university campuses fuelled their desire to apply fundamental Islamic principles to an even greater extent (Metz, 1990).

Even before the 1990s, the group had become fully radicalized, employing violence to a great extent, and seemingly targeting individuals at random and targeting specific officials within the government. Perhaps the pinnacle of IG's violent radicalism was demonstrated in 1997 with the Luxor massacre. This event was a response to the apprehension and incarceration of Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman by US authorities for attempting to motivate Muslims around the world to violently engage with the US (US Department of Justice, 200). The call for Muslims to fight in the name of IG and in the name of Islam was one that spread quickly across communities of supporters of IG's cause and well throughout the organization itself. Not only was it an attitude that helped strengthen the pitch of IG extremism and radicalization, it was also one of the perfect propaganda tools for the leadership of IG that was readily employable on both the domestic and individual levels.

The Islamic Resistance Movement

The Islamic dimension is characteristics of Hamas' struggle on behalf of the Palestinian people although it has been influenced during the 1960s and 1970s by attitudes of the Palestinian *fida'iyeen*, the group strongly considers itself as a "natural extension of the Palestinian resistance – in its various manifestations – to the Zionist invasion" (Marzouq quoted in Hroub, 2000: 11; Hroub, 2000: 11). Founded in 1988 as a result of the first Palestinian *Intifada*, Hamas was quick to respond to the Israeli occupation that was taking place at the time by printing leaflets and advocating the use of violence means to confront the Israeli surge (Schiff and Ya'ari, 1989; Berman, 2003). The Israeli invasion was therefore a cardinal factor in radicalizing militants who were prepared to use excessive violence as an immediate response to the exogenous threat confronting them. From nearly the very beginning of its formation, Hamas underwent an ideological shift, "adopting a nationalist position more extreme than that of the [Palestinian Liberation Organization] PLO, making the immediate conquest of all of Palestine (as opposed to just the West Bank and Gaza) a religious obligation" (Berman, 2003: 9).

Hamas is a product of the Muslim Brotherhood and views itself as one of the wings of the Muslim Brothers in Palestine (Hamas Charter, 1988). Although Hamas has a strong connection with "the broad current of general Palestinian resistance, the characteristics, make-up, ideology, and political discourse of Hamas reflect its organization roots and its historic ties to the Muslim Brotherhood movement in particular" (Hroub, 2000: 11-12). Despite its position as a militant Islamic group in a mostly secular society strained by constant violent conflict, Hamas has been able to continuously appeal to and maintain the support many around it (Levitt, 2006). Violence is taken by Hamas as a political means, and experience has shown that the group's continued use of violence in order to achieve many of its political objectives and to facilitate its existence has not precluded its continued and even growing support.

The main expedients of Hamas' radicalization and the continued radicalization of Palestinian youth share a wide range of similarities with IG. "The process of becoming an adherent of radical Islam is fundamentally a didactic process," states Levitt (2007), "as is the indoctrination to any ideology – whether political, philosophical, or religious." When individuals benefit from the support of Hamas, they in turn support the group that assisted them. As Hamas militants underwent a process of indoctrination, participated in the Hamas *dawa*, as agents and as subjects and "instructed in the language of radical Islam," Palestinian youth are also currently schooled in the ideological tenets of Hamas in addition to being "supervised, mentored, cajoled, threatened, and praised" (Levitt, 2007). A striking similarity between IG's rise to radicalism and Hamas' radicalization processes is their use of educational institutions and campuses, public syndicates, health institutions, cultural

institutions, technical institutions, sports clubs, media, religious institutions, and women's institutions, all of which serve as rich human resources for the groups. This deep reach into Palestinian society means that Hamas is able to maintain a productive recruitment process of young men and woman in the organization who are also able to “melt” into the regular communities through employment and “hide in plain view” (Levitt, 2006: 85-86).

Even though Islam appears to play a central role in Hamas and its ideology, Islamic values vary from one member of Hamas to another and cannot necessarily be attributed to the group's original process of radicalization (Goldberg, 2009). The “revanchist dream” (failures of national determination) and not religious fervor as a primary drive is at the heart of Hamas' radicalization process. Unlike IG in Egypt, a group that was not predicated upon the concept of national determination, Hamas is in a constant struggle primarily to bring about the establishment of a Palestinian state (O'Sullivan, 2009). IG poised itself, not to establish a state from nothing, but rather to reform the current state from one that is secular to one that is purely Islamic. As reasoned by O'Sullivan (2009), the conflict in the Palestinian territories and the rise of Hamas took place “in the setting of the British Empire” and were augmented as a result of “displacement generated by colonization, carried out by a vastly more powerful and ethnically distinct group of settlers” (12). In Palestine, ethnic and economic discrimination, political repression, and the occupation of ancient and historically significant lands by military forces melded so as to bear the radicalization of a large grouping of peoples, neighborhoods, and communities not necessarily connected in any way (O'Sullivan, 2009). Thus, “the injustice of ‘Al-Nakba,’ as the Palestinians call the loss of their country in 1948 ... is inextricably bound to future militancy” (O'Sullivan, 2009: 18).

Hamas flourished as a result of a continued radicalization process in much the same way as did IG in Egypt. With greater achievement and success that led to an overall strengthening of the organization, support continued to find its way to Hamas. Their successful attacks, ability to offer and deliver on their promises of protection to select communities as well as offer support to those willing to back Hamas in other ways were seminal factors in the rise of this group over the years. The structural component of Hamas is the single most important factor in its success and its ability to maintain and strengthen its radicalization efforts over time. A blend of moderate and hardliner voices at the table has enabled the organization to make decisions that result in its longevity and serve the overall life expectancy of the group. This results in a series of positive “checks and balances within Hamas,” according to O'Sullivan (2009), that makes up Hamas' flexible, adaptable, and inclusive structure even in spite of it being a highly ritualistic and extremely conservative Muslim group (Berman, 2003).

Both IG and Hamas have been able to show its supporters and even dissidents that their key objectives are achievable through violent means. It is through their ability to deliver to their supporters through violence that reinforces the notion that violence is thus necessary and readily available to achieve explicit goals. Even if the use of violence has spawned a call for action against the users of violence, through violence, the result has been positive for Hamas in its radicalization efforts. To some extent it can be claimed that the West's responses to Hamas' violent acts provide the very sustenance required for its continued existence. The existence of and radicalization of the Islamic Resistance Movement would not have been possible in the first place had it not been for political repression – the kind of repression that Israel and its Western allies have been eager to provide in spite of its obvious cultivation of an ever-evolving and ever-strengthening group. In turn, Hamas uses this repression to cast a narrative that serves its purpose of recruiting Palestinians, softening them to the indoctrination methods and arguments for adherence, and creating a mobilized social network that can strengthen itself (O'Sullivan, 2009).

Transformation of Violent Extremism?

IG's violence and influences in Egypt ebbed rather quickly as compared to its long and steady path to radicalization. The Egyptian government's response to IG during the latter half of the 1990s and the beginning of the new millennium resulted in the seizure of handfuls of IG leaders. Their removal showed that IG relied heavily on its leadership to fortify the group and giving it the direction necessary for undertaking struggle. Egypt extremely punitive measures against IG leadership and members resonated strongly throughout Egyptian society while the indiscriminate killings of foreigners and tourists as well as political assassinations by the group led to a wave of resentment among the general Egyptian population. The group was successful in reducing its own profile through excessive use of violence but still manages to retain some prestige among Egyptian Islamists who still hope to see the emergence of a truly Islamic Egypt and the dissolution of Egyptian secularism. After 20 years of imprisonment, the Egyptian government released more than 900 members including its founder in groups over a period of a week (Al Jazeera, 2006).

IG leadership's collective ideological reversal is seen as an exceptional instance among Islamic extremist groups. The group has forsaken violence and delivered public apologies for attacks that it made over the course of its struggle against the Egyptian state, and replaced its violent rhetoric and appeal with a new ideological standing based on the value of coexistence with Egypt (Feldner, Carmon, and Lev, 2006). Renouncing violence as an instrument served as a strident move toward the delegitimization of terrorism as a tactic (Speckhard, 2011: 1). IG's new ideology has also fuelled its efforts to advocate against AQ extremism and inhibit its influence on Muslims and Muslim communities. Even with this exceptional reversal of ideologically fuelled violence and aggression, mapping the changes and the collective shift away from its tradition has been a difficult task. Part of the task has involved the understanding of changes that has taken place in the group's thought and the rationale from the leadership position. The removal of key leaders was probably one of the most decisive factors in the disarming IG that opened the long path to integration into Egyptian society.

On October 8, 1981, two days after the successful assassination of Sadat, members of IG launched an attack against the Security Administration in Asyut with the aim of seizing the city from government control (Feldner, Carmon, and Lev, 2006). In the aftermath of the failed attempt, dozens of IG members has been slain, dozens of government officials were killed, and the leaders of IG were taken into custody. Devoid of leadership, a subsequent struggle for the identification of group authority took place. Some of the members recognized the detained leadership of IG in Egypt as the group's authority while others recognized the power of Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman (Feldner, Carmon, and Lev, 2006). The ideological schism blossomed into the splitting of the group with GAI members moving away from followers of the Jihad organization. Initial discord was based on Jihad members' disagreement with the assault that had taken place at Asyut and the ensuing massacre. Arguments were put forward that the Sheikh was not an appropriate individual to fill his position, and those who opposed him were made aware that he had been appointed Emir during their periods of incarceration. With no agreeable conclusion to be made between the two factions, IG officially divided in 1983.

The 1990s saw waves of violence across Egypt, however, when the conciliation initiative was announced on July 5, 1997, "Al-Gama'a announced a unilateral initiative of conciliation with the Egyptian regime (Feldner, Carmon, and Lev, 2006). During a court hearing, an Al-Gama'a member read aloud a communiqué, signed by six of the organization's leaders, that declared a halt to all armed operations within and outside Egypt, and a stop to incitement to commit attacks" (Feldner, Carmon, and Lev, 2006). This initiative was delivered several months prior to the Luxor massacre, and "then-head of Al-Gama'a's Shura

Council, Rifa'i Taha, a man who deeply opposed the conciliation initiative was sentenced to death in absentia in 1992" (Feldner, Carmon, and Lev, 2006).

It took several years for the conciliation initiative to push forward and really gain momentum. AQ's attacks against the US homeland in 2001 compelled the Egyptian government to publicize what had been referred to as IG's "ideological revolution" (Feldner, Carmon, and Lev, 2006) The reason for the government's swift exposure of the shift that had taken place within the IG is not completely clear. Some argue that the Egyptian government had been in fear of AQ sweeping the country with violence and even possibly reigniting the violence that IG had once demonstrated. Given Egyptian citizens' involvement in 9/11 (i.e., Muhammad 'Atta, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, Abu Hafs, Saif Al-'Adel, to name a few), concern surfaced over possible damage to Egypt's international reputation in much the same as it had for Saudi Arabia given extensive Saudi nationals' involvement in 9/11 (Feldner, Carmon, and Lev, 2006). As part of a unique rehabilitation and reeducation program, Egyptian authorities permitted meetings among the incarcerated IG leaders in Egyptian prisons in order to move the conciliation process along at a quicker rate (Feldner, Carmon, and Lev, 2006).

A surprising element emerged shortly after the conciliation initiative was allowed to move forward within the prison walls. IG leaders published several books that featured at multiple venues around Egypt and that were sold at the Cairo international book fair. These works entitled, "Concept Correction Series," and were the publications of Hamdi Abd Al-Rahman, "the first Al-Gama'a leader to be released after the announcement of the initiative [who] dealt with their publication with the approval of the Egyptian authorities" (Feldner, Carmon, and Lev, 2006). This step was followed by IG's leadership removal of all the handbooks that facilitated the momentum of the movement and encouraged its violent ways to make way for those that have been used by the Muslim Brotherhood. IG leaders that were detained for long periods of time and headed the conciliation initiative stated outright that, "in the past their actions were misguided from the religious standpoint, and pointless from the practical standpoint, they refused to acknowledge that they were morally flawed" (Feldner, Carmon, and Lev, 2006).

Conclusion

The concept of radicalization is one that fit neatly within a paradigm of contestation. Second, understanding radicalization is just as much about formulating broader and deeper interpretations of the terms, "radical," "radicalism," and "radicalizing." As noted earlier in this work, a number of IOs and agents in international affairs have yet to actually produce precise, if any, working definition of the term radicalization or any of its derivatives. The same can be said, and to even a greater extent, of the concept of deradicalization. In essence, the term holds different meanings and implications that remain ultimately dependent on the location of the deradicalization process and those involved. Third, a great deal of research is yet required to fully understand the effects of deradicalization programs in terms of the restoration of members of society who at one point in time became so devoted to violent extremism so as to engage in the discriminate and indiscriminate killing of men, women, and children, sometimes in what seem to be vain attempts, to achieve a desired political end.

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