

The muslim brotherhood: From the caliphate to the modern civic state

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Abstrak

The Muslim Brotherhood plays a prominent role in the politics of many Muslim countries as one of the largest Islamist groups. As a politico-social movement, the Muslim Brotherhood has gone through many tactical and ideological shifts over the past 90 years since its founding in 1928. Studying these shifts and the reasoning behind them can help us to understand the behaviour of certain groups. This paper studies one of the major shifts in the discourse of the movement, from the advocacy for restoring the Caliphate to the call for a modern civic state, despite the idea of the Caliphate having been one of the core motives behind the founding of the Brotherhood. This paper traces the change in Muslim Brotherhood discourse of the Caliphate through a thick analysis of the writings and statements of the prominent leaders of the group, starting with Brotherhood's founder, al-Banna, and progressing to the leaders of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. This paper examines this shift's degree of significance and its underlying rationale. Instead of addressing changes collectively, each change is considered individually to gain further insight into the incentives driving the major shift under study, namely the overhaul of the political discourse of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in so far as shifting from adopting the caliphate to the modern civic state. This shift in the Caliphate discourse is approached singularly, opening room for exclusive explanations that are unique to the altered concept. While a wholesale approach that treats changes as a collective succeeds in explaining the changes within some social and political movements, it ignores substantial factors and elements that are advantageous for profound understanding of the case in question. The shift in the Caliphate discourse, though it was not significant in practice, is useful in suggesting an alternative method for the justification of tactical and ideological shifts of the Muslim Brotherhood.