

ALIAKSANDRA KONDRAL. TRANSFORMATION OF
THE POLITICAL ROLE OF MODERATE ISLAMISM IN EGYPT

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Fattah al-Sisi.*

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*Abstract. The article examines the process of transformation of
moderate Islamism in Egypt using the example of two most popular and
numerous organizations adhering to this ideology: the “Muslim
Brotherhood” and the Salafis “al-Da’awa”. The author traces the main
changes in the political role of moderate Islamism under different rulers,
as well as its key characteristics nowadays.*

Moderate Islamism¹ has a long history in Egypt: it was there
that the Islamic revival movement emerged in response to
growing foreign influence in the second half of the 20th century,
represented by famous ulema Mohammed Abduh, Rashid Rida
and Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani. All of them believed that a return to
Islamic values could combat the socio-economic and cultural crisis
that the Muslim world found itself in during this period, but they
did not put forward political slogans [Murtazin, 2018, p. 191].

The concept of Islamic revival, in turn, became the basis for
the formation of the ideological and political doctrine of the
Muslim Brotherhood (MB) association, created in 1928 in

* Banned in Russia (hereinafter).

Ismailia. The Brotherhood viewed Islam primarily as a state system and insisted on returning it to a political role (as during the time of the righteous Caliphate) [Simms, 2002, p. 573]. Over time, the association became deeply rooted in society, won a large number of supporters and gradually became one of the most popular political forces in Egypt.

At the same time, the political narrative, as well as the goals of the association, changed significantly throughout the period of its existence, which was due to both its internal changes and external circumstances.

At the beginning of its activities, the Brotherhood focused primarily on Egypt gaining real independence and fighting the monarchy, not neglecting violent methods of struggle (an example is the assassination of Prime Minister Nukrashi Pasha in 1948) [Mohammed, 1987, p. 443]. During the reign of President Gamal Abdel Nasser and the official ban on its activities since 1954, the association focused on survival in the conditions of severe repression, which led to the emergence of radical tendencies in its ranks: it was during this period that the works of one of its most famous members, Sayyid Qutb, appeared (*Milestones on the Path, In the Shadow of the Koran*), contrasting the Islamic world with the Western world (*Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb*) and substantiating the importance of armed struggle [Qutb, 1982, p. 43–47]. It was Qutb's works that later became the ideological basis for many extremist organizations. During this period, Islamists opposed themselves to the existing state system, did not consider it legitimate and were not able to interact with it in any way. The next president of Egypt, Anwar Sadat, on the contrary, was quite loyal to the Islamists. He supported them as a counterweight to the Nasserists, whom he considered to be his real opponents, as a result of which, during his rule, the Muslim Brotherhood began to actively expand its activities in the university environment and by the end of the 1970s already completely controlled the National Egyptian Student Union [Wickham, 2002, p. 116]. It was