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ABSTRACT

“Islamic Political Thought after the Arab Spring”

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This paper will explore the following questions: (1) How has the Arab Spring contributed to and influenced contemporary Islamic political thought?; and (2) What were the reactions of major Islamist actors to the uprisings? By examining writings, statements, and actions of Islamist actors during and after the Arab Spring, this paper aims to discover new developments in Islamic political thought. The focus will be on the Islamist actors in Tunisia (al-Nahda) and Egypt (the Muslim Brothers, Freedom and Justice Party, and the Salafi al-Nour Party), and such influential individual Muslims scholars as Yusuf al-Qaradawi. By analyzing official and unofficial statements, documents, writings, and media statements of major Islamist actors, this paper attempts to arrive at the understanding of new developments in Sunni political thought. This paper argues that the Arab Spring has challenged and amended the traditional Sunni political thought through four developments: (1) The changed nature of the concept of political obedience (*ta'ab*); (2) Parliamentary preference over the presidential system; (3) The Salafis' turn toward electoral democracy; and (4) The emergence of *maqasid al-shari'ah* discourse among the Islamists. These four areas are addressing what were traditionally theoretical blind spots in the Sunni political thought. As a result, these new developments are not simply expanding the political thought in Islam, but are challenging it in very powerful ways. The paper attempts at capturing these (still early) dynamics of change.