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“The Concept of Authority in Muslim Societies:
Political, Religious, Social and Literary”

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ABSTRACT

“*Shari’ab* Density in Post-Arab Spring Constitutions:
The Landscape of Post-Conflict Authority and Transition”

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My proposal draws on our empirical database in which we examine “*Shari’ab* density” - the amount of *Shari’ab* language, norms, principles, prescriptions, prohibitions, and guarantees - in the constitutions of all modern Muslim-majority states, 1947-present. The dataset includes the revised and fluctuating constitutions from recent conflict states (i.e., Afghanistan, Iraq, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, etc.). While the role of religion, Islamist parties, and *Shari’ab* in governance is receiving renewed attention in the aftermath of the post-9/11 wars and Arab Spring, few scholars have comparatively examined exactly how *Shari’ab* principles are embedded in states’ formal constitutions - a fascinating study in history, political consensus, and blending religions with state law. Moreover, *Shari’ab* is often distinguished as God’s law – “that which Allah has ordained in the Qur’an, complemented by the *Sunna*,” as M. Cherif Bassiouni notes - whereas Islamic law includes both divine *Shari’ab* and human-made *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence). Thus, since *Fiqh* includes efforts by jurists to interpret *Shari’ab*, constitutions are a fascinating test-case to probe the differences between *Shari’ab* aspirations and *Fiqh*-based articles in actual charters, the formal structures of authority in *Fiqh*-based knowledge, and how states in conflict settings negotiate *Shari’ab* principles to establish post-crisis forms of authority.