

AMSS 40th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

“Looking Beyond 9/11: Islam in the West and
Democratic Trends in the Middle East and North Africa”

Cosponsored by:
Department of Sociology &
Dispute Resolution Consortium
at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY
&
Institute of Global Cultural Studies, Binghamton University, NY
Friday, September 23, 2011

ABSTRACT ONLY – WORK IN PROGRESS

“Toward a Sustainable Peace in the MENA Region:
Exploring Conflict Management Techniques in Islam”

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The Arab spring that suddenly spread like wildfire in the Middle East and North African (MENA) region in 2011 is paradoxical considering the fundamental religious beliefs of the citizens of those countries. This is principally due to the dramatic turn the uprising took despite the existence of conflict management techniques in the age-long beliefs of Muslim Arabs. This paper examines the dynamics of the Arab spring and the available mechanisms for conflict management in Islam, which is a predominant religion in the MENA region. The traditional techniques for conflict management in Islamic law are applicable to the modern uprising in the MENA region. It is argued that conflicts or uprisings arising from political issues in civilized societies, such as the demand for political and economic reforms, can be effectively managed to avoid turbulent escalation and unimaginable loss of lives and destruction of property. The prime sources of *Shari'ah* provide for principles of conflict management such as sincere advice (*nasihah*), constructive criticisms of leaders (*hurriyyat al-mu'aradah*), political arbitration (*tabkim*), consensus-building, mutual consultation (*shura*) and cooperative conflict management through cooperation (*ta'awun*). There is an inextricable nexus between Islamic rituals and amicable resolution of disputes through mediation (*sulh*). This paper concludes that for a sustainable peace in the MENA region, the conflict management techniques in Islam should be utilized to arrest the appalling situation of unrest in order to promote sustainable peace and development.