HOW AN ISLAMIC SOLUTION BECAME AN ISLAMIST PROBLEM: EDUCATION, AUTHORITARIANISM AND THE POLITICS OF OPPOSITION IN MOROCCO

By

ANN MARIE WAINSCOTT

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2013
To Tom and Mary Wainscott
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is hubris to try to acknowledge everyone who contributed to a project of this magnitude; I’m going to try anyway. But first, another sort of acknowledgement is necessary.

The parsimonious theories and neat typologies I was taught in graduate school in no way prepared me to understand the tremendous sacrifices and risks of physical and psychological violence that individuals take in authoritarian contexts to participate as members of the political opposition; that is something one learns in the field. I’d like to begin the dissertation by acknowledging my deep respect for those activists, regardless of political persuasion, whose phone calls are recorded and monitored, who are followed every time they leave their homes, who risk their lives and the lives of those they love on behalf of their ideals. For those who have “disappeared,” for those who have endured torture, sometimes for years or decades, for those who are presently in detention, for those whose bodies are dissolved in acid, buried at sea or in mass graves, I acknowledge your sacrifice. I know some of your stories.

Although most of my colleagues, interlocutors and friends in Morocco must go unnamed, they ought not go unacknowledged. For always answering my requests for interviews with “Marhaban” or “welcome,” and an invitation for a couscous, thank you. How will I ever do research anywhere else? For the men who manage the archives at al-Tajdeed, thank you for your friendly support of my project, and especially to Ahmed for asking me why Americans smile so much, but especially for asking, “Why do I like all of the Americans I meet but hate all of America’s policies?” I think about his questions a lot. Mohammad Masbah recited full theses on request, on a host of topics. He always had a theoretical framework, an argument and copious evidence to respond to even my
simplest questions. If I had to name one person who guided me to my present intellectual interests, it was he. I thank Maâti Monjib for making sure my chair was in the sun, so the Moroccan intelligence agents following us around got better pictures of me. His humor diffused a lot of tension. I learned a lot from him that cannot be expressed in footnotes. Saida, my Moroccan mama, cooked me good food, pointed out my every mistake in Arabic, really taught me how to say “Salamu al’aykum” and once spoke to me for a week in nothing but Ism Fa’il construction because I was having trouble understanding it. Living in her home was a pleasure and very constructive. She also introduced me to the politics of Islamic education in Morocco, and for that I really owe her more than I can say.

I am humbled by the brilliant minds that have advised me along this path.

A few years into my graduate training I ran into my advisor, Leonardo Villalón, at an African music performance. He asked me how I was doing. I lamented that very little of the literature in the discipline was asking questions in which I was interested. “My questions aren’t political science,” I told him. He laughed at me. “Well if you’re a political scientist, and you’re asking it, then its political science,” he counseled. Somehow that was all I needed to hear to stay in the program. For the thousand other unnamed times he took something I’d been mulling over for months and gave me new direction, frequently in two sentences or less, I acknowledge him here. I gladly thank him for his friendly counsel, his commitment to intellectual integrity as well as his legendary hospitality to my colleagues and me.

I should highlight one scholar who consistently painted a more complete picture of authoritarianism than is frequently captured in the literature. I still remember the day I
noticed his quiet activism. In a graduate seminar on democratization, a graduate student took an insensitive and ignorant position about life under an authoritarian regime that most professors would have ignored. Michael Bernhard, however, responded, “I wonder if you’d feel differently if you were the one living under authoritarianism.” I acknowledge him here for not letting this comment slide, for constantly defending the best interests of graduate students and for consistently finding a way to make difficult things seem simpler to me. I learned a lot from him.

Ken Wald is a subtle teacher and advisor. For not only allowing me to design my own second field in Religion and Politics, but for also overseeing it, giving me an independent study in his signature course, and for having a kind, generous, and funny spirit along the way, I thank him.

I also thank Aida Hozic for showing me what an activist graduate syllabus can look like. Her criticisms of the discipline make me feel more at home here. Matthew Jacobs has also contributed to the project in subtle but significant ways. More than anything, though, the type of questions he asks gives me hope for the future of Middle Eastern studies.

In the spring of 2010, I defended my comprehensive exams in Comparative Politics before a committee of Leonardo Villalón, Bryon Moraski, and Patricia Woods. After the defense, the committee commented that I had been somewhat deferential to the literature in my exams; they suggested that I start “saying what I actually think.” With this sentence the committee transformed the experience from a mere pedagogical and evaluative one to a true rite of passage. I acknowledge and thank them for their wise counsel. I hope they do not regret it.
I also acknowledge the beautiful intellectual community I experienced at the University of Florida, particularly among the Africanists. Thank you Staffan Lindberg for building that community so intentionally through your “Firesite” chats, Winifred Pankani for graciously hosting and making such delicious ground-nut soup, and the participants: Goran Hyden, Benjamin Smith, Joe Krause, Ramon Galiñanes, Steve Lichty, Cara Jones, Patricia Mupeta, Ann Lee Grimstad, Levy Odera, Ashley Leinweber, Keith Weghorst, Dominique Lisanti, Nic Knowlton, Jenny Boylan and all the speakers who enriched the gathering. Thank you to my other colleagues at UF, specifically the Friday Sahel group of Dan Eizenga, Emily Hauser, Hashem Zanaty, Ibrahim Yahaya, Mamadou Bodian, Oumar Ba, Sheldon Wardwell and Aaron King. I thank those of my cohort who stuck with the program, Pauliera Rippere, Tristan Vellinga, Chi-Hung, Stuart Strome, Chris Tecklenburg and my dear colleague from African Studies, Alison Montgomery. I am especially grateful for the friendship and research assistance of Lina Benabdallah and Rhonda Youssef. Lastly, the undergraduate students of Introduction to Comparative Politics, Politics of the Middle East, and Politics of the Arab Spring asked questions, challenged my positions, and in general gave me the will to go on when I was otherwise discouraged. Writing all of their letters of recommendation is a small price to pay for all that I learned from them.

The fieldwork experience was greatly enriched by a group of American scholars working in Morocco including Roger Anderson, Matt Schumann, Alison Wohlers, Ahmed Khanani, Matt Buehler, Lillie Greiman, Eric Fischer, and Eric Christianson. I especially acknowledge the group of scholars working in Rabat and particularly Yasmine Yu, Megan Macdonald, Amanda Rogers, and Allison Minor. They demonstrated that a new
generation of women is joining and shaping the academy. Our conversations were truly priceless. I also gratefully acknowledge the teachers and administrators at the Arabic Language Institute of Fez. Christopher Witulski was my main companion in Morocco, and served as a partner, friend, academic advisor and caretaker for several pivotal years of this project.

The dissertation was made possible by generous funding from the Boren Fellowship and pre-dissertation fieldwork funded by the Department of Political Science and the Center for African Studies (CAS), both at the University of Florida. Thank you for the support, financial and otherwise. I also acknowledge generous funding from the Center for European Studies that facilitated my research at L’Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris. At the university, I am particularly indebted to the weekly Baraza program, hosted by the CAS every Friday, for adding breadth to my doctoral training. At the center I acknowledge the support and friendship of the faculty and staff and particularly Fiona McLaughlin, Abe Goldman, Todd Leedy, Corinna Green, and Ike Akida. I also gratefully acknowledge the counsel and friendship of Sue Lawless Yachisin, the Graduate Secretary in the Department of Political Science, and Aimee Kreppel and Bryon Moraski whose guidance as graduate coordinators will pay dividends in my career and the careers of my colleagues for years to come. I’d also like to thank Kate Baldwin, who on several occasions gave me wise counsel for the dissertation and for managing research.

For the personal sacrifices they have made, for putting up with my absence for over a decade now, for pretending like they were not really stressed by my fieldwork in Morocco and for their constant support, I acknowledge my parents, David and Laura
Wainscott. In the last decade my family has endured, in addition to my frequent fieldwork, at least ten deployments by my brothers: Matthew, Joseph and Joshua, who all serve or have served in various branches of the military. I acknowledge how their sacrifices are rooted in a very real patriotism, and hope that they see that my scholarship is motivated by similar values. My cousin Cary Gang has been a true friend, and her apartment in Morningside Heights is a refuge. My grandparents, Tom and Mary Wainscott, called me once a week and asked me, “Annie, did you finish that paper yet?” or “When are you graduating? Grandpa wants to plan a fishing trip.” In response to their constant questions, I once sent my Grandfather drafts of three of my chapters. He wrote back, “Dear Annie, Thank you for sending your chapters. I enjoyed them very much. You sure convinced me. I wonder what your committee will think. Love, and anxiety, Grandpa.” For all the love, and all the anxiety, and the constant interest in my intellectual pursuits, I thank them both. I dedicate this dissertation to them.

Finally, I’d like to acknowledge the intellectual community provided by the Gainesville Ladies Literary Salon, specifically Kendra Patterson, Lanier Harper-Dickson, Cathy Jean, Autumn Ta, and my dear friend Polly Werner. She deserves special mention for daily asking about my work, and actually listening to my answers. Thanks Pollinator. Many other individuals and institutions assisted me with this project. Ricardo Apostol taught me to be more discriminating, and that most academic projects can be completed in a daily discipline of ninety minutes of scholarly writing. I confess to having worked a hell of a lot more than that on this project, but the idea is nice and a constant inspiration. Holy Trinity Episcopalian Church has so many intellectuals as members that I frequently got as much academic advice there as on campus. The Academy of Five
Element Acupuncture, and especially Julia Susman and Autumn Ta, kept things moving. Melissa Montilla and her studio, Sanctuary Yoga, kept things in perspective. Justine Caguiat consistently gets excited about my research and edits my proposals, grants, posters and handouts. I do not even mind that it's motivated by her hope that she will get to take another vacation. Alexander Thurston walked with me through the writing and job search process, making me laugh the whole time, and ignoring my less savory qualities. For that, I will always be grateful. Lastly, my cats Hiba and Fritzel convinced me to go outside once in a while, and frolicked and scampered alongside.
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What are the long-term effects of reforms to a country’s educational system on party politics? How can authoritarian regimes employ public education to influence the significance of particular ideologies? In this dissertation I address these questions in the case of Morocco, an authoritarian monarchy in North Africa. Despite the waves of democratization that have swept sub-Saharan Africa and beginning in 2010, North Africa, Morocco remains under the control of a monarchy that faces very few constraints on its exercise of power. In this work, I address how the regime employed educational reforms to discourage ideological contestation and democratization, even in the midst of liberalizing reforms. I argue that fear of a vibrant leftist student movement on university campuses in the midst of the Cold War led the regime to pay more attention to educational politics and specifically, to direct the country’s public school curriculum to discourage students from adopting leftist ideologies. Two forms of educational reforms were significant in this process, those aimed at weakening the left and those aimed at encouraging Islamist beliefs and practices. Those aimed at weakening the left included the closing of university departments believed to be the center of leftist ideology such as philosophy and sociology departments. At the same time, new departments of Islamic
sciences were opened. In the public schools, the hours of Islamic education were increased, while the curriculum was rewritten to include more references to Islamic modernist thinkers and ideologies. The state’s suppression of a major opposition movement, however, had a number of unintended consequences, including the rise of Salafist Islamist opposition groups in the 1980s and 1990s. In the twenty-first century, the state’s educational apparatus has been redirected away from discouraging support of leftist ideologies and toward supporting Sufism, an interpretation of Islam conceived of by the regime as more tolerant and less political than Salafism. This work is based on 12 months of fieldwork in Morocco including interviews with Islamic education teachers, Ministry of Education bureaucrats, politicians, journalists and university professors as well as archival research at al-Tajdeed, the newspaper of the Parti de Justice et Democratie.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

“L’arabe s’écrit et se lit de droite à gauche, le français de gauche à droite.”¹

At the beginning of my fieldwork, in the fall of 2010, my Arabic teacher arrived late for class. Hamid was usually early enough that we would find him leaning his elbow on the coffee bar, reading the newspaper, sipping espresso and smoking a cigarette before class. On this particular day, however, he stumbled into the room, fumbling with a large stack of papers that had a cup of espresso precariously balanced on top. “I’m sorry,” he explained, “but there was a knife fight in the hallway at the university, and I had to wait until it settled down to leave my classroom.” Feeling the explanation he had given was sufficient, he began the day’s lesson. “Excuse me,” I interrupted. “Did you say knife fight?” He smiled, sensing my unease. “Don’t be worried, Lala² Ann. This sort of thing happens all of the time.” Once again he tried to return to the assigned reading of the day. “I’m sorry,” I interrupted again, “but who was fighting?” Hamid responded, “The Islamists and the leftists,” an answer that he punctuated with an exasperated “Of course.”³ And class went on as usual.

I begin the dissertation with this anecdote because it captures a number of factors that frame this project. As with all research based on fieldwork, casual encounters like this one had long-term implications for my argument, and in many cases unplanned conversations and comments were just as significant in shaping the

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² A Moroccan title of respect for a woman
³ See chapter five for a discussion of the terms leftist, Islamist, and Salafist.
dissertation as scheduled interviews. Secondly, the anecdote captures my own naiveté about the stakes of opposition politics in authoritarian contexts, a condition rooted both in my own sheltered upbringing but also in the field of Comparative Politics’ style of sterilizing the study of authoritarianism into typologies and theories, abstracting to such a degree that scholarship can be divorced from narratives of real people and their experiences. Although I make an effort to write within the conventions of my field, I want to be explicit from the outset that I think these conventions have very real consequences for the quality of scholarship and the training of graduate students. Finally, the anecdote reveals the nonchalance with which acquaintances and interviewees mentioned the physical violence through which ideological struggles are enacted in authoritarian contexts, highlighting the very different conceptions of what is “common sense” that made communication with colleagues in the field difficult.

In the months following that fateful encounter with my Arabic teacher, I became more acquainted with the significance of the conflict between Islamists and leftists. One roommate of mine frequently returned home from his job teaching English at a local university frustrated that an Islamist interrupted the day’s lessons. The Islamists dominate university politics because the size of their constituency allows them to control the Moroccan student union, Union Nationale des Étudiants Marocains (UNEM). The union is so powerful that it can require all students to strike at any time for a host of issues. A member of the union needs only to show up to a classroom and announce the strike. All students must comply by leaving the classroom immediately or they risk physical assaults. Class can be interrupted at any time during the semester, leaving a

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4 In Arabic, al-ittihad al-waTani li-Talabat al-maghrib.
professor standing alone in his classroom during a strike, like my friend, or waiting in the classroom to avoid a knife fight in the hallway, like my Arabic teacher.

UNEM was originally started and controlled by leftists in the late 1950s and 1960s, so its domination by Islamists in contemporary years represents a shift. This complete reversal of influence captured my attention while incidents such as the ones described above alerted me to the fact that I had cast the net for my research much too narrowly. I originally intended to study the political factors influencing the reforms to the public school Islamic education curriculum that took place in Morocco following the Casablanca bombings of 2003. With time, it became evident that these reforms were part of a larger narrative intimately related to opposition politics and specifically, the ideological cleavage between leftists and Islamists. This dissertation is a retelling of this narrative, framed by the question: “How has the Moroccan monarchy employed educational reform to shape the significance of various ideologies in Moroccan society, and what have the effects of these policies been?”

Summary of Argument

After the end of the French protectorate in 1956, internal conflict within the ruling Independence party, Istiqlal, became unsustainable, and a splinter group broke off and formed their own faction in 1959, the Union Nationaliste des Forces Populaires (UNFP), effectively becoming a separate political party, the Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires (USFP) in 1974. Although the particular constellation of actors and organizations shifted over time, the two ideologies that the Independence party and the UNFP represented, Islamic modernism and socialism respectively, characterized the

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5 Mehdi Ben Barka, a well-known leftist, created UNEM in Rabat after independence in late 1956 and early 1957 (Park and Boum 2006:344). See Chapter 4 for more on the history of the union.
main cleavage within the opposition for the next fifty years. This dissertation tells the story of this cleavage and the regime’s efforts to structure it through education. It argues that the Casablanca riots of 1965 led by university students mark a significant change in the regime’s way of managing political opposition. Prior to this date, the regime ignored university politics. After leftist student movements mobilized thousands of protestors and oversaw a series of nationwide riots, the risk of an uncontrolled left became apparent. At the same time, the context of the Cold War encouraged concern that leftist activists had access to resources outside of domestic control, while the defiance of regional leftist leaders such as Gamal Abdel Nasser frightened the regime. The Americans, who valued their military bases on Moroccan soil as a staging ground for troops and equipment, and feared the spread of communist and socialist ideologies in North Africa, also opposed a powerful leftist opposition in Morocco. With the cooperation of the country’s governing party, Istiqlal, the Moroccan monarchy undertook a series of reforms intended to weaken the influence of the left in Moroccan society. In the dissertation, I examine the educational reforms intended to support this project and argue that a strategy intended to weaken the left actually resulted in its near decimation.

In suggesting conflict between leftists and Islamists, I mean only to highlight a broad cleavage. I do not mean to suggest that the political parties that have carried the banner of Islam were unified. The religious orientation of the Istiqlal, firmly rooted in Islamic modernism, gave way to a more strict interpretation of Islam, Salafism, in the 1980s and 1990s. The political party most closely associated with this interpretation in contemporary times is the Parti de Justice et Développement (PJD). The activists who formed the PJD out of another party, the Mouvement Populaire Démocratique et Constitutionnel (MPDC), originally hoped to align themselves with the Istiqlal. The fact that separate parties have carried the banner of Islam at separate moments was then the result of tactical decisions made by Istiqlal leadership, who refused to absorb the early PJD leaders, not necessarily conflicts over ideology. I expand on this cleavage in Chapter 4.
opening the door for the Salafization\(^7\) of public space and the dominance of Islamist political organizations.

Two forms of educational reforms were significant in this process, those aimed at weakening the left and those that encouraged Islamist beliefs. Those aimed at weakening the left included the closing of university departments believed to be the center of leftist ideology such as philosophy and sociology departments. At the same time, new departments of Islamic sciences were opened. In the public schools, the hours of Islamic education were increased, while the curriculum was rewritten to include more references to Islamic modernist thinkers and ideologies. Although education is significant in this process, my focus on educational reforms is not to suggest that these were the only or the most significant aspects of this process. Other efforts to weaken the left included the assassination and forced disappearance of party leadership, the violent crackdown on leftist-led protests and the censorship of leftist publications.\(^8\)

These methods were part of a larger project of controlling public discourse.

The long-term effect of this strategy was the rise of a particular interpretation of Islam, Salafism. Similar to the rise of leftists, the strength of Islamists with Salafi sympathies was demonstrated in several significant public protests as well as in the development of a number of clandestine Islamist organizations. In response to the

\(^{7}\) Salafization is a term first used by Hicham Ben Abdallah al Alaoui (2011) to describe the public norm in Arab societies that gives deference to Salafi interpretations of Islam.

\(^{8}\) The closing of the leftist periodical La Revue Souffles (Breaths) created by the activist poet Abdelatif Laabi is one of the quintessential moments of this crackdown on public discourse (interview with Moroccan university professor, 2011). A comment in the 1966 edition of the publication demonstrates that those who wrote for the publication were aware of how controversial their actions were: “The poets that signed their texts in this edition of the Souffles publication are unanimously conscious that a publication like this one is an act of taking a position on their part in a moment when the problems of our national culture have attained a degree of extreme tension.” An online archive of the publication is maintained at: http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/deanhum/langlit/french/souffles/s12/6.html
growing Islamist trend, the regime attempted to withdraw state support of Salafism once it became evident that the Islamist current in Moroccan society had developed its own momentum and was difficult to control. The appointment of a socialist prime minister in 1998 was the regime’s first effort to reverse the decline of the left. His Minister of Education attempted to undo some of the pro-Salafist educational reforms of earlier decades, but was unable to do so due to the pressure of a number of interest groups who had a stake in the prominence of this interpretation of Islam in Morocco. As in the 1965 Casablanca riots, an outside event was necessary to create the conditions for reform. In the early twenty-first century, the 2003 Casablanca bombings, combined with the conditions created by September 11th, 2001, both perpetrated by young Salafi Jihadis,9 provided the opportunity. In the years following the bombings, the regime made more subtle reforms to the country’s educational curricula. These reforms focused on removing the Islamic content from a number of school subjects as part of a wider effort to depoliticize Moroccan Islam. Just as the state once fostered Islamist belief to stem the tide of leftism, so it later began to discourage belief in Salafism. In its place, the regime encouraged Moroccans to adopt Sufism, or the mystical interpretation of Islam, considered widely by many to be the “tolerant” Islam.10

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9 It should be noted that most Salafis reject violence as a means of political reform. The term Salafi Jihadi signifies those Salafis who advocate violence as a methodology of dissent or political action.

10 Many groups present Sufis as “the tolerant Muslims.” See, for example, the Rand Corporation report “Building Muslim Networks (Rabasa et al., 2007). The section “Potential partners [for America]: Traditionalists and Sufis.” Is of particular interest. An excerpt: “Because of their victimization by Salafis and Wahhabis, traditionalists and Sufis are natural allies of the West…”(p.73). My interviews suggest that Moroccan Salafists are aware of this report and sensitive to the claims that the West prefers to cooperate with Sufis. For a discussion of the relationship between Sufism and tolerance in Senegal, see Diouf, Mamadou. 2012. Tolerance, Democracy, and Sufis in Senegal. Columbia University Press.
This dissertation thus demonstrates how modern public education systems function as resources to authoritarian regimes in their efforts to influence the significance of particular ideologies among their subjects in order to strengthen or weaken particular opposition movements. By manipulating party politics and blunting ideological contestation, the regime effectively discouraged political reform and thus discouraged democratization. But the Moroccan case also suggests that these strategies are dangerous for authoritarian regimes since they are difficult to control and can have a number of unintended consequences. This was particularly evident in the Moroccan case in the growth of interest groups that opposed reforms to policies that the ruling regime no longer wanted to maintain. Regime efforts to discourage leftist ideologies in the end created the conditions that allowed for the rise of Islamist political movements who pose at least an equal if not more of a threat to the regime.\textsuperscript{11} Finally, the Moroccan case highlights how particular ideologies are not inherently a threat to a regime, even religious ideologies in countries with regimes that rely on a degree of religious legitimacy. In Morocco, the same ideology that was once seen as a panacea later became a threat. This shift is due in part to international factors outside of the regime’s control. The conditions of the Cold War heightened fears of the left in the 1960s and 1970s, while the rise of militant Islamist movements across the region in the 1980s and 1990s similarly influenced the perception that the Salafist groups posed a threat to stability.

\textsuperscript{11} For this reason the title of the dissertation references the rise of Islamist movements as a “problem.” I am not taking a normative position, rather, I am highlighting how the regime at one time saw fostering Islamic beliefs as a solution to a powerful left, but later saw the effects of this development as a “problem.”
Why Morocco?

Morocco is an interesting case to examine an authoritarian monarchy’s use of education to structure ideological conflict for several reasons. First, and foremost, Morocco’s monarchy has survived for 1200 years. Few ruling monarchies remain in the world today and those that do are concentrated in the Arab world. They include: Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (Anderson, 1991). Excluding countries of the Gulf, who have their own dynamics due to their location in Saudi Arabia’s sphere of influence and extensive natural resources, this leaves Morocco and Jordan. Morocco and Jordan’s political systems vary in a few significant ways, including the fact that opposition parties were illegal in Jordan from 1957 to 1992 (Lucas, 2005). While opposition parties have been repressed and coopted in Morocco, they have been legal for most of the post-independence period. Morocco is thus one of the only monarchies in the world and the only one in the Middle East to survive despite allowing oppositional contestation, albeit limited.

In addition to the age of the monarchy, Morocco is an interesting case because it was not colonized until late in the game. Although technically a part of the Roman and Byzantine empires, many of the Berber tribes in Morocco’s mountains were never under effective control. Further, Morocco was never a part of the Ottoman Empire and the French were not able to establish a protectorate in the country until 1912. This is a stark contrast to neighboring Algeria, where the Ottomans took effective control in the early 1500s and the French invaded the capital city of Algiers in 1830, controlling nearly the entire territory by 1848, and remaining until 1962. Moroccans take great pride in the fierce independence that their ancestors preserved for centuries. Additionally, the
monarchy’s ability to thwart would-be occupiers demonstrates just how powerful it had to be in order to maintain effective, though constantly shifting, control over various Moroccan cities and tribes for hundreds of years. Because the territory has been effectively ruled for most of its history by the same monarchy, Morocco can be considered a case of monarchical survival with minimal outside intervention. It is reasonable to assume that under such circumstances, the regime must have highly developed strategies for maintaining its independence and controlling dissidents.

This monarchical survival is all the more impressive given the protests that swept through the Arab world during 2011-2012, toppling regimes across North Africa. Although plagued by similar problems as nearby Tunisia and Egypt including high youth unemployment and authoritarian rule, protests held in Morocco were significantly smaller than in other countries in the region and resulted in only a superficial reform of the country’s constitution. The February 20th movement, named for the day of the country’s first gatherings, led the protests, which were held on Sundays. Large protests were held once a month and smaller ones on every Sunday. The campaign was relatively sophisticated, with professional quality video calling for Moroccans to join the movement in multiple languages, a developed infrastructure for communicating with members through various webpages, and a visible leadership body that took interviews with the Moroccan press. Initially the protests called only for elections to replace the current prime minister and his cabinet as well as a new constitution. During most protests, there was no mention of ending the monarchy. But the protests did change something about the atmosphere, and the Spring of 2011 marked the first time I heard criticism of the king in public arenas. Prior to this time, I had not heard public criticism of
the King even from my friends. The protests suggested that political space in Morocco was opening and giving more room for ideological contestation. Despite the sophistication of the February 20th movement, the protests did not lead to any significant devolution of power from the monarchy.\textsuperscript{12}

Morocco is also unique in its foreign relations. The country maintains close ties with French and American governments and has been a significant contributor to Israeli-Palestinian negotiations while also maintaining close relations with Saudi Arabia. In this, the Moroccan tradition of autonomy continues. Few countries have been able to maintain relatively strong relations with America, Israel,\textsuperscript{13} Palestine and Saudi Arabia at the same time, but Morocco has generally managed to do so through careful diplomatic maneuvering and measured participation in peace negotiations. While Morocco rejects Saudi Arabia’s strict Wahhabist interpretation of Islam, it accepts a rather large level of influence from the Saudi monarchy in Moroccan affairs, and also accepts large amounts of funds from them. In 2012, the kingdom accepted $1.25 billion from the Saudi Fund for Development as part of a five billion dollar package from the Gulf Cooperation Council.\textsuperscript{14} Morocco’s maintenance of these varied foreign relationships, particularly with Western powers, is particular impressive given the country’s Islamic identity, which calls for a certain amount of solidarity with other Muslim countries.

\textsuperscript{12} I regard the 2011 Constitutional reforms as superficial at best, and at worst, a strategy of containing opposition that closely resembles the goals of educational policy described in this document.

\textsuperscript{13} This tradition of involvement has not been consistent under Mohammed VI. Diplomatic relations with Israel were suspended in October, 2000 and have not been resumed. See: Israel’s Diplomatic Missions Abroad: Status of Relations. 2013. Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Available at: http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/AboutTheMinistry/Pages/Israel-s%20Diplomatic%20Missions%20Abroad.aspx (5 September 2013)

Research Design

Historical Institutionalism

The discipline of political science contains a number of tools that are useful to facilitate analysis of the politicization of education. This dissertation is a work of historical institutionalism (HI), an approach that assesses broad processes of social change mediated by intermediate level structural variables. Historical institutionalists define institutions as “the formal or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organizational structure of the polity or political economy” (Hall and Taylor, 1996:938). In a general sense, historical institutionalists are interested in identifying how state institutions “privilege some interests while demobilizing others” (Hall and Taylor, 1996:937, emphasis mine). As such, the project is rooted in the assumptions of historical institutionalists and particularly the cultural approach.

The cultural approach emphasizes that actors’ behavior cannot exclusively be explained by rationality or maximization of interest, since actors’ conceptions of what is possible is “bounded by [their] worldview” (Hall and Taylor, 1996:939). Historical institutionalists attempt to demonstrate how institutions limit the choices individuals perceive as possibilities. In this perspective, institutions “provide moral or cognitive templates for interpretation and action. The individual is seen as an entity deeply embedded in a world of institutions, composed of symbols, scripts and routines, which provide the filters for interpretation, of both the situation and oneself, out of which a course of action is constructed. Not only do institutions provide strategically-useful information, they also affect the very identities, self-images and preferences of the actors” (Hall and Taylor, 1996:939).
In this project, the institution of interest is the country’s system of public education but the ideology privileged shifts over time. Because of the reach and scope of public education, reforms to the country’s curricula have far-reaching effects. From the 1970s to the 1990s, education promotes Salafism, while beginning in the twenty-first century, a kind of generic Islam is supported while Sufism is simultaneously presented as a distinctly Moroccan and tolerant form of Islam. People pay deference to this norm not necessarily because they have assessed a broad range of interpretations of their faith and have come to the conclusion that this interpretation most closely resembles their own religious commitments, but because the country’s system of public education has presented certain interpretations of Islam as the ideal. This interpretation is so omnipresent that it is taken for granted. By the 1990s, it was common sense that one would at least publicly express support to Salafism, regardless of one’s beliefs. Additionally, the supported ideology has also been presented as an ideology that can facilitate a complete political system negating the need for communism, democracy, capitalism and other systems of political organization. By structuring public education, the regime influenced the “very identities, self-images and preferences” of its citizens (Hall and Taylor, 1996: 939).

Because the primary weakness of the HI approach has been its tendency to treat institutions as consistent in their impact, it is important to specify that this dissertation is rooted in a view of institutions as dynamic and continuously in flux, the result of negotiations between social groups and actors whose influence is continuously shifting. Historical institutionalists have been grappling with how to explain institutional dynamism for decades. Thelen and Steinmo (1992) identify four sources of institutional
dynamism. First, changes in the economic, political or social context may make “previously latent institutions suddenly become salient” (p.16). Second, changes in context may shift the purpose of existing institutions. Third, external changes may influence the end of already existing institutions. Finally, major changes within institutions are also possible, as power struggles are enacted both internally and in the wider political environment.

By following one institution over several decades, this dissertation highlights examples of each of these forms of institutional dynamism. The opening of this narrative, in the 1960s, examines how the rise of opposition student groups attracted attention to the country’s system of public education. Second, the growth of leftist opposition groups led to the regime to employ public education to weaken the ideology that underpinned these groups. While Islamic education courses in the public schools were a natural outgrowth of the role of madrasas in providing education prior to the rise of the public state system, the use of religious education to influence the significance of political opposition groups marks a change in the purpose of the institution. Third, the growth of Islamist groups in wider Moroccan society led to attempted changes to the system’s curriculum in the late 1990s, eventually resulted in their redirection toward generic and Sufi interpretations of Islam. Finally, the rise of relatively democratic standards within the Ministry of Education reflects the growth in democratic values among bureaucrats at the ministry as well as globally acceptable practice. The project is thus intimately tied to the idea of institutional development and change and captures the reciprocal nature of institutions; institutions affect politics, politics affect institutions, institutions change.
The historical institutionalist approach has contributed a stronger understanding of how institutions shape choices for individuals, but has suffered criticism for not specifying the mechanisms that bridge culture and structure, thereby “translating critical junctures into lasting political legacies” (Thelen, 1999:388). In other words, the approach has done a good job of specifying which institutions shape behavior, but has done a weaker job of clarifying how they do so and how long they do so. This dissertation addresses this gap by arguing, in Chapter 3, that educational reform is such a mechanism. Educational reform processes open an arena for contestation. Groups compete to direct educational reform in particular directions in line with their ideological commitments. The winners of these conflicts or the negotiations that result in compromises are institutionalized into the curriculum. Meanwhile, the effects of educational reform are path dependent; that is, the ideological struggles that are institutionalized into curricula and programs continue to shape values and behavior, year after year, until another reform takes place. Educational reform thus possesses an internal mechanism for reproducing the winners and losers of ideological struggles. Most scholars will agree that the identification of education as a mechanism linking culture and structure is common sense; this dissertation’s contribution is, in part, in specifying the significance and functioning of the mechanism in one case.

My reliance on HI also has implications for research design. In line with this approach, I have developed my central argument, that the regime employed pro-Islamist educational reforms to weaken the left, while assessing data collected, rather than prior to data collection. As noted, the original design for this research project was much more limited in time and scope. In the course of fieldwork, Moroccan scholars
nudged me in the direction of contextualizing the twenty-first century reforms to Islamic education in the history of the post-independence period. Upon return from my fieldwork and reading my interview notes, I realized that I had to consider the suggested revisions to the project. After a review of the secondary literature, I concluded that a project that assessed the politics of Islamic education since independence was not only wise but was necessary to prevent the mischaracterization of post-2003 reforms.

I have chosen to be explicit about this change in research design because it has several implications. First, while there has been significant traffic in the idea of doing “puzzle-driven” research where one allows intellectual questions to guide the selection of one’s methodology (Anderson, 2005), there has been less discussion on the responsibility of scholars in allowing local experts to influence research design, a situation that suggests that our questions and conceptual concerns are the primary movers of our research programs. My experience with political scientists has been considerably different. Despite our rather public, sometimes virulent methodological and epistemological debates, my sense is that many scholars are motivated by a number of normative concerns in addition to scholarly ones, and their research is largely rooted in hopes for widespread human flourishing and freedom or, in the least, less suffering. In addition, it seems to me that in Comparative Politics, interviewees frequently shape research projects but are not credited with doing so. There is an unspoken norm that scholars must present work as their own, although a careful reading of the acknowledgements of any scholarly work more clearly captures the shared nature of the

15 I am grateful to Geoffrey Porter for first encouraging me to reflect on this when, in a Skype call in 2011, he said, “you write the dissertation that people are telling you.” I understood his comment to mean that while one may go into the field with a project in mind, one ought to remain open to how the actual data available to you influences the project.
undertaking. Personally, I see no reason to not attribute to Moroccan scholars their significant influence on the direction of my research.

Secondly, I think it is important to be explicit about my change in research design because it makes clear that I approached a topic, rather than a question, in the initial stages of my research, a situation which gave anxiety to one of my advisors. “That’s not very efficient,” he quipped. I agree with him, but I am not dissatisfied with the results of my approach. I think significant questions worthy of research emerge out of knowledge of the particulars and in-depth reading of multiple literatures. In many cases, this will require data collection prior to making final decisions about research design. After all, scholars who do quantitative work refine their designs in light of what data is available and in some cases already coded. Rarely is the perfect data available for any particular question. The evaluation of what data is available is part of the research design process and thus cannot precede fieldwork. Anyone who has done fieldwork knows there is no way to predict what data will be uncovered, regardless of how carefully structured interview questions are, or how many focus groups one has done during the pre-dissertation stage. Although my general topic remained consistent, my final research design and argument could not have been predicted prior to fieldwork, since I did not yet realize the significance of the 1965 Casablanca riots to larger educational reform processes.

At the same time, there are real costs of approaching research this way. The data of any project can serve multiple conceptual arguments. One who has collected her own data is likely to have a stronger connection to it than someone who works from secondary literature and is thus at risk of being too close to the data and seeing too
many connections to the wider literature. Doctoral students are already notorious for thinking their research is related to virtually anything. This problem can be exasperated in studies that approach a topic rather than a question. Overcoming the temptation to connect one’s research to too many literatures is difficult. I certainly have not done so in this project. I intend to narrow the theoretical scope of the argument considerably in the transition from dissertation to a book but I needed to process of writing and rewriting (and rewriting) the dissertation to realize how narrow an academic project needs to be in order to make an effective contribution.

In addition, this approach to research design is, as one of my committee members knew, a tremendous time commitment and is thus not appropriate for all scholars. I have a life long commitment to the study of Morocco, so I was comfortable with slowing down the process and reading and rereading my data and the secondary literature. In some ways, this is a luxury of graduate studies that I took full advantage of and that I recommend to others with long-term commitments to individual places. This lengthy commitment, however, pays dividends. It builds a strong foundation for future projects, develops relationships with a network of in-country scholars and is a perpetual reference for evaluating other scholars’ theoretical arguments.

Finally, I want the reader to know about my change in research design because I think it lends credibility to the story that I am telling. I did not go into the field with this idea in mind, looking for evidence to support my presuppositions. I actually ignored this story for longer than I’d like to admit, blinded by my initial intentions to focus exclusively on the twenty-first century. Consequently, the bulk of the primary sources I gathered during fieldwork are from the most recent period, and I have had to do further research
to uncover sources for assessing and writing the earlier phases of the narrative. The fact that the majority of the research gathered in the field was focused on one period is a weakness of the dissertation that I intend to remedy in the transition to a book; I readily acknowledge it from the outset.

Fieldwork

To collect data for this dissertation, I completed three months of pre-dissertation fieldwork during the summer of 2009, and nine months of dissertation fieldwork and language training from November 2010 to August 2011. I also worked in the archives of the Institut de Monde Arabe (Arab World Institute) in Paris during the summer of 2012. Prior to working on the dissertation, I lived in Morocco with a Moroccan family and studied Arabic during the summers of 2006 and 2008. Portions of this dissertation have thus been germinating in my mind in various forms for seven years. The bulk of the material for the dissertation was gathered during forty in-depth elite interviews with Islamic education teachers, Ministry of Education bureaucrats, politicians, university professors, religious leaders and journalists. The interviews typically lasted between two and five hours and were completed in English, French, and Modern Standard Arabic or some combination of these languages. Some interviews were split into several sessions, since I have a two-hour tolerance for speaking Arabic. I did not use an interpreter or recording device (with the exception of two interviews that I had express permission to record), and so it is possible that I have misunderstood more complicated ideas. Not using a recorder was an intentional choice, as I felt respondents would feel more comfortable if they knew they were not being recorded. I came to this conclusion because, as I began the research phase of my fieldwork, I quickly learned that cold-calling high profile members of the Moroccan elite was not constructive. If I was not
referred by a friend or acquaintance, the interview did not yield useful information. I concluded that recording interviews would have a similar effect. In light of the significance of introductions, I used snow-ball sampling, where any time I did an interview I asked for recommendations of who to speak to next and in some cases asked for an introduction to the person. Even though respondents were not randomly chosen, they represent a diverse group of elites whose political persuasions span the spectrum of ideologies active in Morocco and included both militant secularists and committed Islamists. I am comfortable with the range of opinions that have contributed to the project.

In addition to interviews, I worked for about a month in the archives of Al-Tajdeed, the newspaper of the Parti de Justice et Democratie (PJD), the moderate Islamist party governing the country as of the November 2011 Parliamentary elections. Because al-Tajdeed is the newspaper for an Islamist party, it took more interest in reforms to the Islamic education curriculum than other newspapers. At the time that I worked in the archives, PJD was in the opposition in the Moroccan parliament. At the archives, I collected information such as the White Papers that provided the framework for the educational reforms of the late 1990s and early 2000s, as well as a number of articles from PJD’s newspaper that capture debates in public discourse about Islamic education. For the most part, I limited myself to articles published between 2004 and 2005, in order to get a sense for how the Casablanca bombings of 2003 shaped debates about Islamic education in the Moroccan public schools.

During the summer of 2012, I read a number of issues of the periodical La Nation Arabe from the 1930s and 1940s at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris. Shakib Arslan
founded and edited the publication in Geneva, but a number of Moroccan nationalist leaders read the publication in Morocco and Paris or worked in his office in Geneva. The publication was also read by independence leaders across North Africa and the Middle East and was distributed as widely as Indonesia. Arslan used the publication to encourage a spirit of solidarity among members of the Islamic elite working for nationalist causes. I used the publication to get a sense for the nature of the ideology underpinning the Moroccan nationalist movement and to understand its political and religious foundations. The major conclusion of my time in the archives was that the ideology that united nationalists across the region and particularly in Morocco is best described as “Islamic modernism” rather than Salafism. I discuss the significance of this differentiation in Chapter 4.

I have also collected some documents from the Digital National Security Archives (DNSA), a set of declassified United States Government documents. These archives are beginning to distribute documents from the National Security Agency and the State Department regarding the relationship between Morocco and the United States during the 1940s and 1950s. Many significant pieces of information remain unavailable for public consumption making an evaluation of the role of the Americans in shaping domestic policy decisions in Morocco difficult. The information that is available is discussed below. There is an urgent need for someone to do a more complete assessment of these documents and to begin the lengthy and brutal process of using the leverage provided by the Freedom of Information Act to request some of the classified materials. It is evident that the Americans were very interested in the rise of the left in Morocco, wanted to contain it, and hoped to maintain military bases on
Moroccan soil as long as possible. It is also clear that a series of quid-pro-quo exchanges characterize the relationship between the Moroccan monarchy and the Americans well into the twenty-first century, but it is frequently unclear who is getting what and when. I am less conversant on the role of the French in influencing domestic and foreign policy choices in Morocco, though it seems likely their influence was more significant than the Americans in the post-Independence period.

Method

To assess these varied materials, I relied on the method of process-tracing. “In process-tracing, the researcher examines histories, archival documents, interview transcripts, and other sources to see whether the causal process a theory hypothesizes or implies in a case is in fact evident in the sequence and values of the intervening variables in that case” (George and Bennett, 2005:6). In short, all forms of evidence are considered when assessing how well a theory explains a series of events. The goal is to evaluate how much support there is for a theory. This approach is appropriate because existing theories for the Salafization of public space across MENA suggest an organic “resurgence of religion” in response to the challenges of modernity. This dissertation suggests an alternative theory, that the resurgence of religion in Morocco was encouraged by regime policies as part of a strategy to maintain a divided opposition.

Once begun, the process had the characteristics of path dependence. According to Paul Pierson (2000), a path dependent argument has the following characteristics. First, it identifies a change that opens new opportunities. At this stage, it is necessary to provide evidence that demonstrates a period of indeterminateness or randomness. Then, it demonstrates that a choice was made. In other words, the critical juncture is identified. Thirdly, there must be evidence of a closing of the political opportunity
structure\textsuperscript{16} as a result of the choice. In this step, a counter-factual is required to demonstrate what the alternative course of action would have been without the critical juncture. Finally, the system stabilizes and it is reproduced by a mechanism. The researcher must identify this mechanism in order to demonstrate the self-sustaining nature of this process. Though I do not employ the form of economic logic employed by Pierson, his general description of the path dependence process is useful. In the place of his increasing returns process, however, historical institutionalism emphasizes power asymmetries (Hall and Taylor, 1996). Institutional analyses are inherently about power asymmetries because institutions “give some groups or interests disproportionate access to the decision-making process” (Hall and Taylor, 1996:941). When the winner of a political struggle inscribes their interests in an institution, the political opportunity structure changes. The institution continues to reproduce the result of the power struggle even if the balance of power changes.

**Chapter Outline**

In Chapter 2, I discuss the framework of analysis that shapes the project and situate it in the relevant Comparative Politics and area studies literature. In Chapter 3, I provide background on Morocco’s legacy of authoritarianism and its position during the Cold War. In the Chapter 4, I discuss the concept of Competitive Authoritarian Regimes and their relationship to educational reform. In Chapter 5, I theorize how the characteristics of competitive authoritarian regimes encourage the co-optation of public education. In Chapter 6 I turn to the specifics of the Moroccan case. I discuss the

\textsuperscript{16} “Political opportunity structure includes six properties of a regime: “The multiplicity of independent centers of power within it,” “Its openness to new actors,” “The instability of current political alignments,” “The availability of influential allies or supporters for challengers,” “The extent to which the regime represses or facilitates collective claim making,” and “Decisive changes” to the first five items (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007:205).
opening in the political opportunity structure afforded by independence, and assess the two ideologies that were popular in the 1950s. In his discussion of path dependency, Pierson describes this period: “Under a set of initial conditions conducive to increasing returns, a number of outcomes—perhaps a wide range—are generally possible” (2000:263). In order to address these “initial conditions,” I discuss how the country’s independence from the French created an opportunity for institution building that could have been shaped by either of the ideologies active within the country: Islamic modernism or socialism. I capture this multiplicity of initial conditions by describing a split in the independence party, the biographies and ideas of the leaders of these two factions, and the ideologies of the resulting two political parties following their separation. I argue that at the time of independence, it was not yet known whether one of these groups would be privileged in the curriculum or if it would reflect a negotiated settlement among various interest groups.

In Chapter 6, I describe why the 1965 Casablanca riots constitute a critical juncture. I describe the situation on university campuses prior to the riots, the actual events of 1965 and the aftermath. In doing so, I demonstrate why these events were such a threat to the regime. This chapter thus addresses Pierson’s conception of contingency, “Relatively small events, if they occur at the right moment, can have large and enduring consequences” (2000: 263). In Chapter 7 I describe how the regime’s response to the riots, both short-term and long-term, closed the political opportunity structure by institutionalizing support for Islamic modernism, which effectively incentivized Salafism in the 1980s. In particular, I discuss the educational reforms that
discouraged Moroccans from adopting leftist ideologies and encouraged them to view Islam as a political ideology in conflict with communism and socialism.

In the Chapter 8, I present evidence to suggest that the response described in Chapter 7 closed the political opportunity structure, though this does not mean that Moroccan educational policy was successful. In its efforts to weaken leftist opposition, the regime eliminated it. This leads to the question, “When the regime realized that it had created an Islamist problem, why didn’t it reverse course?” The short answer is, it tried, twice. The clearest example of this effort was the period of *alternance*, whereby the main leftist party was invited to govern in 1998. During this period, there was an effort to halt the Salafization of public space by reducing the number of hours that Islamic education was taught in the public schools among other reforms. By this point, however, resistance was too strong from those with a stake in the current arrangement including Islamic education teachers and inspectors. They aligned with parent organizations to fight all efforts to weaken the influence of the religious curriculum. In the end, all observers of Moroccan politics agree that *alternance* was a failure both in the larger sense of trying to revive the left, and in terms of the more specific efforts to reduce the significance of Islamic education in the public schools. In the period after the 2003 Casablanca bombings, the regime once again attempted to weaken Islamic education by removing Islamic references from the philosophy curriculum, moving away from traditional Islamic educational practices such as memorization of texts and toward promoting more universalist values like tolerance and communication. Like the 1998 effort, however, powerful interests aligned with Islamic education resisted and in many cases, prevented these reforms.
This chapter thus addresses Pierson’s conception of timing and sequencing, which states, “In increasing returns processes, when an event occurs may be crucial. Because earlier parts of a sequence matter much more than later parts, an event that happens “too late” may have no effect, although it may have been of great consequence if the timing had been different” (2000:263). Though this project is better understood as an example of power asymmetry, Pierson’s description of timing captures the significance of Chapter 8 to the dissertation’s larger argument. In the context of this project, alternance or an effort to revive the left, paired with the post-2003 reforms, came too late to be significant. Consequently, this chapter also demonstrates how education functions as a mechanism that reproduces the system. In the Moroccan case, this means that once the system of public Islamic education was put in place, it was difficult to dismantle or even weaken it in light of the interest groups that had grown up around it. In Chapter 9, I examine the long-term consequences of these policies. I assess how the regime has adjusted its strategies in light of its inability to reverse policies, highlighting how the emphasis has shifted from supporting the general Salafization of society to framing and containing Islam and specifically, promoting Sufism.
CHAPTER 2
SITUATING THE DISSERTATION

In formulating my argument, I have relied on a tremendous amount of work done by scholars over the past sixty years. This literature can be broken down into roughly three major concepts: critical junctures, the study of authoritarianism within Comparative Politics, and the so-called “resurgence” of religion examined by area studies experts.

Critical Junctures

Lipset and Rokkan (1967) first identified critical junctures as concepts in the discipline of political science. “A critical juncture may be defined as a period of significant change, which typically occurs in distinct ways in different countries... and which is hypothesized to produce distinct legacies” (Collier and Collier, 1991:29). A critical junctures analysis intended to contribute a theory requires an examination of multiple cases that signify the range of responses to a critical juncture. This work is thus only one step in a process of making a broader critical junctures argument. It focuses on examining a critical juncture in one country as a first step to assessing a broader set of cases. In this work, I examine how anti-leftist policies during the Cold War had a legacy of encouraging the growth of Islamist parties in Morocco. Long-term, I will expand the analysis to evaluate in a more general sense if a country’s domestic response to the Cold War conditioned the later success of Islamist or extreme right parties.¹ Since this work does not compare multiple countries’ responses to the Cold War, it is only the

¹ This is only one of multiple projects that are possible. One might examine how the development of a party system prior to the Cold War had distinct effects than if a country’s party system was developing during or after the Cold War. Or one might examine how a country’s position vis-a-vis the Cold War influenced later party system development. Or the project could be even more abstract, do anti-leftist policies encourage a rise of radical parties on the right, since the spectrum for electoral competition is shortened?
beginning of a long process of comparison before a true critical junctures argument could be made.

Civil and Political Society’s Role in Democratization

Authoritarian regimes have strategies to prevent democratization. I employ the literature on democratization in order to understand a case of authoritarianism because it allows for the identification of the arenas that an authoritarian regime must control to prevent losses of power.

In their seminal work, Linz and Stepan suggest that there are five interacting arenas necessary for the consolidation of democracy.² “First, the conditions must also exist or be crafted for the development of a free and lively civil society. Second, there must be a relatively autonomous and valued political society. Third, there must be a rule of law to ensure legal guarantees for citizens’ freedoms and independent associational life. Fourth, there must be a state bureaucracy that is usable by the new democratic government. Fifth, there must be an institutionalized economic society” (1996:7). The differentiation of these arenas is not to suggest that they function independently. Each arena supports and is supported by the other four. Health in one arena encourages health in the others, and dysfunction in one encourages dysfunction in the others.

Although related, these two concepts are different. Civil society’s primary organizing principle is the freedom of association and communication; it generates the interests and values that underpin political society. Political society, meanwhile, organized around free and inclusive electoral contestation, needs to be legitimized by

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² This model is based on several assumptions: that a state exists, is widely accepted by its population and is functioning (see Linz and Stepan, 1996:7). For a discussion of the nature of the state, see the end of this section.
civil society and crafts the legislation that governs it. In addition to function, these two areas can be differentiated by the primary actors that perform these functions. The primary actors in civil society are associations; the primary actors in political society are political parties.

Jan Kubik (2007) makes a strong case for the separation of political parties out of civil society into a separate sphere of analysis called “political society.” In his conception, political society includes any “explicitly political organizations” that “provide institutional channels through which various societal interests and claims are aggregated and translated into generalized policy recommendations” (2007:39). It is the competition for power that separates political organizations from the rest of civil society. Thus any group that seeks to influence elections and governing is better understood as a part of political, rather than civil society.

Despite the significance of this relationship between arenas, scholarship on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) focuses disproportionately on the first arena, civil society, (al-Sayyid, 1995; Norton, 1995, 2001; Nasr, 2005; Jamal, 2007) to the detriment of the second, autonomous political society. This emphasis on civil society has several implications. First, some treat the development of civil society as the most fundamental arena to democratization, neglecting the significance of the other four. This is problematic because civil society is not sufficient or even primary for the preservation of democracy; civil society must be paired with effective national government and political institutions. Second, several recent studies suggest that civil society is not inherently democratizing. These works suggest that civil society is not only insufficient
for preserving democracy it also can actively support the maintenance of authoritarianism.

Sheri Berman’s (1997) examination of Weimar Germany highlights the danger of assuming vibrant associational life is sufficient for the preservation of democratic government. She argues, “high levels of associationalism, absent strong and responsive national government and political parties, served to fragment rather than unite German Society. It was weak political institutionalism rather than a weak civil society that was Germany’s main problem during Wilhelmine and Weimar eras” (1997:402, emphasis mine). The Weimar case demonstrates that associational life is possible in the absence of strong political institutions Although these two arenas are related, they can vary significantly in strength. In the case of Weimar Germany, the strength of associational life facilitated the rise of the Nazis, by training party members and developing networks that were later directed to non-democratic ends.

Another implication of Berman’s work is that institutionalization is “logically prior and historically more important” than civil society (1997). Her work builds on Huntington’s (1968) assertion that institutions unable to contain the public’s desire to participate in politics will lead to instability. In light of the difficult period experienced by several North African countries in the so-called “Arab Spring” such an assertion appears obvious. Nevertheless, the emphasis of a number of policymakers, NGOs and IGOs not to mention scholars on civil rather than political society suggests that there is still a widespread belief that civil society is itself sufficient or in fact a first step in preserving and nurturing democratization.

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While Berman (1997) demonstrates the insufficiency of civil society, several recent contributions highlight how civil society can be harnessed to authoritarian ends. Ellen Lust’s (2005) *Structuring Conflict in the Arab World: Incumbents, Opponents, and Institutions* examines how incumbent elites in authoritarian contexts put rules in place that influence the behavior of members of the political opposition in an effort to maintain their positions of privilege. Similarly, Amaney Jamal (2007)’s *Barriers to Democratization: The Other Side of Social Capital in Palestine and the Arab World* questions the idea that participation in organizations always builds civic values conducive to democracy. Rather, she finds that civil society can just as easily encourage the development of authoritarian values like obedience. Her work reinforces Berman’s (1997) argument that context structures the impact of civil society. Nicola Pratt’s (2007) work similarly argues that civil society can just as easily contribute to the stability of authoritarian regimes as democratic regimes. Civil society is structured by the regimes with which it coexists and consequently, in authoritarian regimes, may contribute to the robustness of authoritarianism. In light of these recent studies that demonstrate civil society is not the lynchpin to democratization, and in fact can contribute to the longevity of authoritarianism, civil society’s relationship with the other four arenas is in need of further specification.

The emphasis on civil society is not purely based on an overestimation of its role in democratization; emphasis on civil society is sometimes rooted in the conflation of civil and political society. Azzedine Layachi, for example, argues that Morocco has no civil society “in spite of the perennial existence of associative life” (1998:viii). Most observers will disagree, arguing that Morocco has robust civil society (Jamal, 2007).
Layachi’s call to differentiate between civil society and associative life is rooted in his concern that too much attention is paid to organizations or what he is calling “associative life” and too little is paid to political parties, that when combined with unions and associative life form the foundation of “civil society” (1998:39). Layachi conclusion is confusing due to his very broad definition of civil society. His conceptual concern, however, is an important one. If rephrased employing Linz and Stepan’s (1996) terms, his argument is clearer. Layachi is calling for the differentiation between civil and political society and for more attention to be paid to political society. It would be easy for a policymaker referencing Layachi’s work to misunderstand his central idea because of the language he uses.

Differentiation between political and civil society is important in light of the distinct roles that each plays in democratic transitions: “At best, civil society can destroy a non-democratic regime. However, a full democratic transition, and especially democratic consolidation, must involve political society” (p.8). The differentiation between civil and political society is then significant both practically and theoretically; the development of civil society is not enough to facilitate democratic transition. Because of these distinct roles, it is incumbent on scholars to be clear about what they mean when advising policymakers. Scholarship that calls for the development of more civil society when what it means is political society can easily be misinterpreted.

The significance of this differentiation was clearly demonstrated in the recent North African revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. These revolutions highlight how the organization and mobilization of citizens and their demands shape the relationship between regimes and opposition movements when they take to the street in mass
numbers. But the ability to overthrow an authoritarian regime and the ability to build a
democratic one are two separate tasks, each one overseen by a different arena. Now
that the regimes have been removed, we are witnessing the negotiations by members
of political society to build new regimes. A study that examines the mechanisms through
which regimes can structure political society and hence prevent or discourage its
autonomy is then particularly salient in light of the increased attention focused on
political society.

Although it is important to differentiate analytically between civil and political
society, there are important shared characteristics. In the same way that civil society
can be co-opted to the designs of authoritarian regimes, so the development of political
society under authoritarian regimes is subject to the risk of cooptation, due to the
shared experience of political parties and civil society in the “topography of opposition”
(Langohr, 2004). However, studies that address the ability of regimes to structure
political society tend to emphasize the electoral institutions through which regimes or
elites shape opposition politics such as legal codes (Wiktorowicz 2000), electoral laws
(Lust, 2002), structures of contestation (Lust, 2005), or the more general role of political
parties (Gandhi, 2008) or elections (Brownlee, 2007) in containing elites. This
dissertation, on the other hand, is interested in the more subtle ways that regimes
shape opposition politics over time. While regimes do regulate who can and cannot
participate in party politics through a number of structures, another concern for
democratic activists are regime efforts to encourage adherence to particular ideologies
and thus manipulate long-term ideological support for certain parties. The foundation for
autonomous political society is both the right to contest elections and the right to adopt
a political ideology and act on its behalf. In this process, mass public education presents large-scale opportunities for regimes to influence opposition politics. The significance of education in this process is further elaborated on in Chapter 4.

**Autonomy**

Having established the significance of autonomous political society, one task remains: conceptualizing it. Linz and Stepan (1996) identify the institutions and functions of political society and discuss the relationship between civil and political society, but they offer relatively little on what the *autonomy* of political society looks like:

By *political society* in a democratizing setting we mean that arena in which the polity specifically arranges itself to contest the legitimate right to exercise control over public power and the state apparatus... The composition and consolidation of a democratic polity must entail serious thought and action concerning the development of a normatively positive appreciation of those core institutions of a democratic political society—political parties, elections, electoral rules, political leadership, interparty alliances, and legislatures—by which society constitutes itself politically to select and monitor democratic government... Democratic consolidation requires parties, one of whose primary tasks is precisely to aggregate and represent *differences* between democrats. Consolidation requires that habituation to the norms and procedures of democratic conflict regulation be developed. A high degree of *institutional routinization* is a key part of such a process. *Intermediation* between the state and civil society and the structuring of *compromise* are likewise legitimate and necessary tasks of political society. In short, political society, informed, pressured, and periodically renewed by civil society, must somehow achieve a workable agreement on the myriad ways in which democratic power will be crafted and exercised (1996:8-9, emphasis in the original).

Underpinning Linz and Stepan’s conceptualization of political society are a set of institutions that facilitate conflict and ideological competition, and socialize political actors into the norms of the political process. What does the autonomy of such institutions look like? Some ideas can be gathered from the function of these institutions. The role of political society in *representing* differences, *facilitating* conflict
and compromise in predictable and institutionalized ways and *bridging* state and civil society require certain implicit conditions of stability, legal and protected ideological pluralism, reasonably undisturbed electoral laws, and relationships among actors facilitated by bonds of trust. Linz and Stepan’s description of the functions of autonomous political society thus provide some understanding of the concept, albeit implicit.

A further understanding of autonomy can be garnered from past scholarship, though political scientists who have dealt with the concept have done so as regards the state’s relationship to society, rather than the reverse. Eric Nordlinger (1982), for example, measures state autonomy according to its ability to get what it wants despite opposition. For Nordlinger,

The lowest level of state autonomy (type 3) refers to situations in which state and society preferences do not diverge and the state acts on its own preferences; that is to say, the particular policy adopted is the one preferred by state officials even though it does not encourage opposition from society. The second level of autonomy is one in which society’s preferences differ from the state’s preferences but state officials persuade society to adopt state preferences. The third and highest level (type 1) is represented in situations in which the preferences of state and society diverge; but the state nevertheless enacts a policy consistent with its preferences. This extreme case, crucial to the support of Nordlinger’s theory of state autonomy, is illustrated by analysis of the various ways in which the state can play on social divisions and employ the formidable powers of government (Wuthnow 1989:858).

In Nordlinger’s conception, the state’s autonomy is measured in its ability to act regardless of the will of society. The most autonomous state is the one who can act against the will of its people. This conception highlights how the state’s ability to maintain a divided opposition facilitates its own autonomy. The cost of acting against a unified society that agrees on its needs are much higher than the costs of acting against a divided society. What does this conception offer for an understanding of the autonomy
of political society vis-à-vis the state? It suggests that if political society can force compliance from the state against its will, then political society can be viewed as autonomous. It would be difficult to employ such a conceptualization in practice, however, because it requires the identification of state and society’s interests, which is rarely possible. It also does not leave room for the collaboration that is possible across the boundaries of state and society. Even if one could identify these interests, this approach would likely not be useful since there is constant competition and collaboration within and between various sectors of state and society.

Robert Wuthnow (1989) rejects Nordlinger’s conception of autonomy since state interests cannot be identified, he advocates a different way of measuring state autonomy rooted in a conceptualization of autonomy as a relationship between the regime and groups in society. If the regime is financially or administratively dependent on a particular social group, it is not autonomous from it. Nor is it autonomous if it depends on the assent of a particular group for its own legitimacy. If the regime wishes to institute some sort of ideological change, it must have the financial and administrative resources to do so, as well as the legitimacy, independent of any groups who oppose the change. If it is able to do so without the support of powerful groups, it is autonomous. In Wuthnow’s conception it is virtually impossible for a state to be autonomous. The analysis would focus on specifying the groups to whom the state is obligated and the extent of the obligation rather than a black and white distinction between autonomous and restricted state capacity.

The literature on state autonomy thus provides two separate conceptions of autonomy. According to the first, if one assumes that the state’s actions reveal its
preferences, the degree of opposition it faces in implementing its policies reveals the degree of its autonomy. Those states that force policies to which there is significant opposition are the most autonomous. According to the second conception, preferences are irrelevant and impossible to identify; the number and significance of groups with whom the state must compromise in order to accomplish its goals reveal the level of state autonomy. The focus is not on what each group wants but on the process state actors go through to obtain consent. According to the second conception, willingness to cooperate indicates a degree of dependence. Autonomy is then the density of the web of social relations in which the state is embedded. If the state is indebted to many (or few but powerful) social groups, it is much less autonomous than if it contains within its own ranks members of significant social groups to legitimize it.

These two conceptions of state autonomy are rooted in assumptions about the nature of the state. Theda Skocpol (1985) identifies two streams of research about the state. The first stream treats the state as an organization or an actor. The more autonomous the state is from society, the more it can pursue its own goals. This aligns with Nordlinger’s conception of autonomy where the state has preferences. In the second stream, the state is seen as a configuration of institutions. The state does not act intentionally as an actor, it is not autonomous, but structures access to the political system. Social groups act through the state to accomplish their interests.³ Wuthnow’s conception of autonomy focusing on the relations between groups and the state is more closely aligned with this second conception of the state, though in Wuthnow’s

³ “On the one hand, states may be viewed as organizations through which official collectivities may pursue distinctive goals, realizing them more or less effectively given the available state resources in relation to social settings. On the other hand, states may be viewed more macroscopically as configurations of organization and action that influence the meanings and methods of politics for all groups and classes in society.” (Skocpol 1985:28).
conception the state is still an actor to a certain degree. Thus the focus on preferences is rooted in the first approach to the state, as an actor, while the second, the focus on relationships, is rooted in the conception of the state as an arena that structures conflict among groups.

Lisa Anderson (1987) cautions that scholars should not assume that the state itself is an actor; “Whether the state in any given case acts as an independent causal factor, autonomous from social forces [as in the first research stream], or serves simply as a vessel for social conflict and domination [as in the second stream] is more appropriately the subject of empirical investigation than a priori assumption. To what extent and by what means any state maintains an autonomous capability to influence social relations is properly an empirical question” (p.1). Anderson suggests that both definitions of the state are possible and which one explains a particular case depends on the specifics of the case.

A third conception of the state is also possible. Timothy Mitchell (1991) argues that although the boundary between state and society does not exist, the effort to craft this boundary is important to understanding the nature of the modern state. The focus on the state as an actor or arena is misplaced; it assumes a differentiation between them. Mitchell suggests, “Rather than searching for a definition that will fix the boundary, we need to examine the detailed political processes through which the uncertain yet powerful distinction between state and society is produced” (p.78). In other words, Mitchell asks, what can we learn about the state by examining efforts at creating and reinforcing its boundary with society? Through which processes and institutions does the perception of a monolithic state take shape in the mind of citizens?
Joel Migdal’s (2001) conception of interpenetration addresses Mitchell’s concern with the shifting boundary between state and society. In this approach, the state is construed as a part of society, rather than as a separate sector. Migdal agrees with Mitchell that particular actors try to construct the state as monolithic and mysterious: “State leaders attempt to create an aura of invincibility about the state. The more the state seems all-powerful, the more likely are subjects to accept it in their ordinary lives and, in the process, reduce the burden of enforcing all its dictates” (2001:14). In this formulation, the more the state becomes common sense to its citizens, the less elites within the state must employ resources to force compliance. In response to this formulation, Migdal calls for a new “anthropology of the state” that examines the institutions of the state at multiple levels, rather than focusing exclusively on elites. Additionally, Migdal suggests that analyses of the state venture into new territory by examining “the interplay of power and symbols in state-society relations” (2001:15). Migdal’s language is informative. Though he locates the state within society, he continues to view the examination of state-society relations as a priority of political scientists, particularly as regards how representations of meaning influence power relations.

This dissertation, following Migdal, locates the state embedded in society. Nevertheless, it examines how the state as an institution has access to resources. Individuals in significant positions of authority can direct these resources in order to provide incentives that shape citizens’ behavior. Those individuals who had the most access to state institutions and resources in the Moroccan case are the Makhzan, the group of elites surrounding the monarchy. They employ the resources of the state to
protect their own positions and to construct a belief in the primacy of the king. For convenience, I use the term “regime” to describe this group of royalist elites.

Mitchell’s conceptualization also highlights a characteristic of authoritarian regimes in need of further examination. Authoritarian regimes seek both to impress upon the population the distinction between state and society, while at the same time, attempt to shape society. The regime seeks to differentiate itself from society at the same time that it claims the legitimacy to shape it. This is where the assumptions of historical institutionalism are helpful. Most regimes are not able to force changes to society’s beliefs and practices. Rather, they, provide incentives and therefore encourages particular behaviors, practices and beliefs. Even those regimes that make certain ideas omnipresent, such as the Assad regime in Syria, are not able to force belief. Rather, the consistency and presence of messages may itself be a demonstration of state power even in the presence of dissidents and challengers (Wedeen, 1999).

The focus on preferences and relationships offered by studies of state autonomy can guide a conceptualization of the autonomy of political society. Political society is autonomous when it structures ideological and electoral conflict and socializes actors with relatively little interference from the state elites. This requires several elements:

1. Free and fair elections based on
2. Open ideological conflict (including relatively absent self-policing)
3. And positions held by elected officials that actually have power and influence over public policy and the budget. Otherwise, opposition leaders lack the motivation to take the risks participation in politics requires.
4. Control of socialization processes (rule-making, legislation, education) by elected, not appointed, officials.
The most significant aspect of this conceptualization for the purposes of this project is that political society must be allowed to structure itself; it must have control over the mechanisms that constitute and reconstitute it. If regime elites structure political society then it can become an extension of the state. The special role of education in this process will be discussed in Chapter 4.

_Autonomous_ political society, then, requires institutions that restrain the regime from exercising its influence on the competition between ideologies. Elites have access to tremendous resources within the organs of the state. If allowed to direct these resources without hindrance, it is likely that they will act in ways that benefit themselves. Since they already have access to the resources of the state, their efforts will be focus on maintaining their own positions rather than establishing and defending fair rules of the game. Actors with access to state resources must then be restrained by institutions. One could imagine an ideal case where a regime is relatively unhindered by institutions, but one does not have to, since the twentieth century provides an example. Under General Qadafi, the institutions of the Libyan state were destroyed. Prior to the 1969 revolution, there were very few state institutions as the Ottomans, Italians and the Sanusi monarchy had all exercised a minimum amount of control over Libyan territory. Nevertheless, Qadafi eliminated those institutions that were in existence establishing in their place a set of people’s congresses that were little more than glorified neighborhood associations. Wright explains, “His first ‘cultural revolution’ proposed a five-point programme that included the suspension of all existing laws; the destruction of bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie; the arming of the people to defend ‘their’ revolution; the purging of political undesirables; and the rejection of everything contrary to the Holy
Koran... As Gadafi set about creating his ideal ‘stateless society’, the state indeed became irrelevant as a focus of political activity” (Wright, 2010:206). In short, Gadafi eliminated the already weak Libyan state. At the same time, Gadafi had access to tremendous resources from Libya’s oil industry. When Gadafi took power, the Libyan oil industry was generating three million USD per day (Wright, 2010). Because of oil revenues, the Libyan state had no reason to collect taxes, and therefore had no incentive to offer goods to citizens. In effect, there was no relationship between ruler and ruled. Although this is an extreme example, it demonstrates the type of self-interested behavior that is possible in the absence of institutions that restrain the behavior or leaders.

Though most state elites do not have access to the tremendous resources that characterized revolutionary Libya, they do have access to significantly more resources than those without access to the state. In the contemporary period, it is becoming increasingly difficult for these elites to act too far outside of accepted international norms without inspiring revolt from citizens or sanctions from the international community. Thus, state elites are unlikely to destroy the institutions of the state in the style of Gadafi. It is more likely that elites with access to state power will allow the development of a set of institutions that provide a facade of democracy, satisfying international observers, but will do all that they can to prevent those institutions from functioning in ways that threaten their positions and the system in which they flourish. There are multiple ways of achieving this end including coopting institutions or using state resources to discourage unified opposition movements from developing or participating in the political process.
Moreover, democratic contestation, by virtue of the fact that it allows alternations in power, is undesirable to those who already have access to the resources of the state. Thus there is no reason to assume that members of the political opposition who call for democratization will themselves act in democratic ways once in positions of authority. One need only briefly examine the politics of public education in democracies to see a host of examples of how elites attempt to employ the resources of the state to limit ideological contestation. One can conclude that the autonomy of political society is continuously under threat under all regime types. In calling for autonomous political society then, Linz and Stepan are emphasizing the need for the institutionalization of democratic norms that protect ideological contestation. Under such circumstances ideological contestation can take place relatively unhindered regardless of which groups are in control of the resources of the state. My desire to call attention to the need for autonomous political society is to highlight both the institutions and environment that are necessary for ideological contestation to take place. While the Libyan case is extreme for its destruction of the institutions of the state, the Moroccan case is an extreme case of when elites within an authoritarian regime employ state resources to limit ideological contestation by influencing the ideologies available to the political opposition.

In sum, although regimes can certainly be identified as more or less actively constraining political society, and although they exert ideological influence in all polities including democratic ones, democratization requires the confluence of international, domestic, and local norms, paired with formal institutions that work together to restrain them from exercising the full extent of their resources to influence political society. Regimes possess the resources and ability to exercise incredible influence on the
behaviors and public performances of their citizens; a panoply of barriers, both formal and informal, must be constructed to prevent them from doing so. A fruitful research program would systematize the study of those institutions that restrain regimes from manipulating political society, providing indicators by which states can be measured and compared. This dissertation contributes to this conversation by highlighting how state elites have access to the country’s system of public education to prevent the development of autonomous political space.

“Resurgence?” of Islam

Political science scholarship on the Middle East emphasizes two themes: the resurgence of Islam as a political ideology and the resiliency of authoritarianism. Culturalist explanations for the resurgence of religion and religiously based political parties in the Middle East have in many cases been discredited or eclipsed by structural explanations. Even before Bernard Lewis (1990) wrote “The Roots of Muslim Rage,” Daniel Pipes (1983) argued that the rise in Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East was a response to Westernization’s failure to improve the material conditions of Muslims. In doing so, he lumps all Muslims around the world into a single analytical category, claims they have had a similar experience in history and that their behavior is consistent. He also makes the West the major frame of reference for Muslims, a claim that would be impossible to demonstrate empirically. Lewis (1990) makes a similarly essentialist argument attributing to a massive group of people a shared sense of rage in the face of Western modernization. Samuel Huntington’s (1992) *Clash of Civilizations* is perhaps the most well-known culturalist explanation for the rise of religion. Huntington argues that culture will be the root of conflict in coming decades. In his view, there are seven major civilizations, and conflict should be expected along the fault lines of those
civilizations. A wise scholar once said to me, “Huntington’s civilizations are thinly veiled religions” and I agree. The argument for the article and later book is based on a quote from Bernard Lewis’ 1990 article where he asserts that conflict between Muslim countries and the West is rooted in an “ancient rivalry” (p.32) as if Muslims are bound up in a primal conflict with Europe and the United States in which they cannot extricate themselves. According to Huntington, the increasing salience of religious identity is part of an embracing of civilizational identity or what Huntington terms “kin” identity. He distinguishes himself from Lewis, however, in that he argues this trend is happening globally to all people.

Olivier Roy (1996), on the other hand, rejects the idea of a resurgence of religion in the sense of a return to the past and instead argues that the so-called resurgence in the visibility of religion should be seen as a sort of protest against modernity. In this he questions the idea that there has been a “resurgence,” at all, since the term implies the return of something as it once was. Rather, Roy discusses how the resources of religion and activated in a particular context. For example, some people argue that the increasing popularity of women wearing the veil is evidence of this resurgence. Roy, on the other hand, argues, “It is not that the Middle Ages are invading our modern world, but rather that modernity itself produces its own forms of protest” (Roy, 1996:1). Arguing for a resurgence of religion suggests that religion is something of the past that is once again rearing its ugly head. This position seems rooted in the assumptions of modernization theory. There is general evidence that when a society’s economic position strengthens, religious practice declines (Inglehart, 1997; Norris and Inglehart, 2011). However, the idea that societies develop in linear ways that can be charted and
predicted has been increasingly abandoned as the number of countries that have not
developed as expected by modernization theory increases. Nevertheless, the
assumption that it is normal for religion to become less salient is still in vogue and
indeed seems to underpin the “resurgence” argument. Religion is seen as being
resurgent particularly because it is expected to not be the basis of political mobilization.
However, in states where a majority of the population holds to one religion, it is likely
that symbols from the religion will be activated at various times when deemed
convenient by political leaders.

Some make the argument that a resurgence of religion has taken place by
looking at when concepts or interpretations have been espoused by various opposition
leaders. One could make the case for resurgence by saying that in Morocco religious
ideology was used to unite the nationalist movement of the 1940s and 1950s. Religion
was once again the basis for opposition movements in the 1980s. Because a number of
opposition movements were secular in the 1960s, the use of religion in the 1980s
constitutes resurgence after a period of decline or relative inactivity. This position treats
religion as a monolithic and unified ideology rather than as a source of symbols that can
be directed to various ends. It uses a term at such a level of abstraction that it has
virtually no meaning. Even to say that Islam was an ideology of political opposition in
both the 1940s and 1980s elides the interesting question of how ideology is being
interpreted in light of present circumstances. It would be more accurate to say that
Islamic modernism unified a number of nationalists, while several opposition
movements that developed in the 1980s were united by their espousal of Salafist
ideologies. I elaborate on the differences between these ideologies in Chapter 3.
Finally, it is not appropriate to speak of “resurgence” because that term implies the return of something that has been lying dormant. Islamic modernism and Salafism are different in a number of ways, but most significantly in how they deal with Islam’s encounter with Europe. However, even if these two ideologies espoused similar responses to technological and institutional advances outside of the Muslim community, it would still be inappropriate to use the term resurgence because the context in which each of these ideologies surface is so different, that the positions espoused mean different things. Moroccan nationalists gravitated to Islamic modernism at a time when the country was ruled by an imperial power. Opposition movements committed to Salafist interpretations of Islam arise in the 1980s in opposition not to an external and secular enemy but in opposition to other Muslims who espouse a different interpretation of the religion. Religion is thus being used for different ends, and in different ways, by the two groups (who can only loosely be construed as groups).

Some scholars have taken a different approach to understanding the relationship between religion and political life. They examine how religious actors participation in electoral contestation influences the group’s relationship to religious doctrine. Most scholarship on the rise and salience of Islamist political parties examines the moderation thesis. In this vein, Wickham’s (2004) work is one of the first efforts to explain Islamists political behavior employing a structural explanation. She looks at how even limited democratic openings can encourage Islamist parties to moderate their values. Her work escapes the essentialism of other political scientists by integrating the study of Islamists into the study of other extremist actors, such as leftists in Western Europe and Latin America. Similarly, Schwedler (2007) examines the impact of political
inclusion and internal organizational structure on moderation. She in no way implies that her theory of interest is applicable only to Muslim political actors, so her work is also firmly structuralist.

Finally, Driessen (2012) also contributes to this discussion, though his work is more essentializing than other authors. He argues that inclusion in the democratic game moderates the behavior of ambivalently democratic actors and influences the salience of religious identities in public space. Though Driessen attempts to explain Islamist political actors with reference to a structural argument, the work is grounded in an essentialist conception of “Islamist participation.” He writes, “I argue that Islamist participation in some form of electoral politics ought to give 1) some indication about the ‘moderating’ effects of democratic participation on Islamist behavior and discourse but also 2) reveal something about what kind of democratic society Islamist participation would likely help form” (p.3, emphasis mine). What exactly is Islamist participation? And how does it differ from other forms of political participation? Without a satisfying answer to these questions, it is unclear why he singles out Islamist participation as different than any other political actor. In sum, works on the moderation thesis focus on the impact of participation in politics on religious actors. These works constitute a significant contribution to understanding the role of religion in state-society relations. However, by focusing on those religious actors located in political society, these actors do not examine what is distinctive about Middle Eastern and North African states: that elites from within the state become religious actors.

In general, these works highlight how social scientists have moved away from culturalist explanations and toward structural ones in discussing the resurgence of
religion and religious political parties. With the exception of Roy (1996), however, few of these works question the idea that there has even been a resurgence of religion. There are multiple ways to understand the concept. A “resurgence” of religion may imply the rise of political ideologies rooted in Islam. In this case, the initial “surge” of religion may be the dynamics resulting from the Iranian revolution in 1979. And the resurgence may be the rise of Salafism in the twenty-first century. A second way to understand the concept is that religion is again becoming of prominence after a period of secularism, a perspective that is appropriate for some countries such as Tunisia, but that certainly does not capture the experience of most countries in the region. A more problematic perspective is a third approach that postulates that religion was once dominant as a political ideology and is now dominant again. Those who make this argument tend to look at the early twentieth century nationalist movements as the first expression of the rise of political Islam, and the Islamist movements of the 1970s to the present as the “resurgence.” This position does not take into account the very different way that nationalist movements and later Islamist movements have instrumentalized religion, nor the very different interpretations of religion that led to its employment for political ends. In this case, the terminology “resurgence” is misleading, since it suggests a rise of a similar phenomenon, a position that elides the ways in which religion was significant in order to highlight the fact that religion was relevant politically at all. This position is rooted in the ideas of modernization theory, since it views the presence of religion at any time in the “modern” period is an anomaly and at some level comparable.

In the Moroccan case, the ways that the nationalist movement(s) of the 1950s instrumentalized religion, and the political salience of religion in the 1970s to the 1990s
are in many ways poles apart. I differentiate between the relevant interpretations of Islam that underpin these two movements, Islamic modernism and Salafism, in Chapter 5. Because two very different interpretations of Islam colored these two movements, it seems inappropriate to speak of a “resurgence” of religion in the Moroccan case. Rather, I take the position that there has been a very real shift in how Islam is viewed as an organizing factor in Moroccan society. I prefer terminology that clarifies why religion made a useful resource to various political movements and how they employed the language of Islam to express political dissent. Additionally, works of historical institutionalism are directly in opposition to culturalist explanations. While culturalist arguments, such as that made by Lewis (1990) above, suggest there is something to Muslim values or perception of historical experience that conditions behavior, historical institutionalists examine how institutions “[structure] collective behaviour and [generate] distinctive outcomes” (Hall and Taylor, 1996:937). In this vein, I examine how public education has encouraged various interpretations of Islam rather than assuming there is something about Moroccan identity of practice of Islam that is attracted to Salafism at an instinctive level.  

**Authoritarianism**

Similar to studies of the rise of Islamist ideologies, scholars have explained the resiliency of authoritarianism along similar lines, employing both culturalist and structuralist explanations. Many of these arguments are framed in terms of the compatibility debate. This debate asks, “Is Islam compatible with democracy?” or the inverse, “Is democracy compatible with Islam?” Those who offer answers to these

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4 This is a contrast to some of my colleagues, who have made arguments about Morocco’s tendency to conservatism.
questions tend to take one of three lines of arguments. Frequently, those who engage this question make essentialist arguments. They identify something supposedly intrinsic to Islamic doctrine or practice that makes the relationship between the religion and democracy obvious and inherent or common sense. In some ways, anyone who engages a compatibility question at all is at least somewhat guilty of making an essentialist argument, because to assert that there is any relationship between a religion and a regime type at all ignores the varied interpretations of every religion available to influence believers in crafting a political system. In this debate, I side with Gudrun Kramer (1993) who asserts, "It is not possible to talk about Islam and democracy in general, but only about Muslims living and theorizing under specific historical circumstances" (p.4).

Pipes (1983), mentioned above, was one of the first to participate in the compatibility debate, suggesting that democracy is not possible for Muslims. More methodologically sophisticated, but no less essentialist, Fish (2002) claims he has found conclusive evidence of this incompatibility, employing a cross national assessment of regime type. The first part of the article is not particularly problematic; few would argue with the conclusion that Muslim countries have overall been democratic underachievers. Fish is also careful to assert, “Muslim countries appear to have some disadvantages in terms of possible determinants of democracy that are not due to Islam per se” (2002:10). In this, he sounds as though he might make a structuralist argument after all, or that he in the least recognizes a number of intervening variables in his relationship of interest. But he does not stay the course. Instead, seemingly forgetting those mediating variables he has just mentioned, Fish concludes, “Due perhaps to cultural sensitivity or
to an understandable reluctance to characterize nearly one-third of the world's polities as intractably resistant to popular rule, scholars have tended to treat the relationship between Islam and democracy circumspectly and have steered clear of examining it rigorously. The evidence presented here, however, reveals a link that is too stark and robust to ignore, neglect, or dismiss" (2002:13). This assertion is a change of tone from his earlier caution. The most concerning aspect of Fish's work is its presumptuousness and lack of humility. He makes grander conclusions than his data allow, he presents his interpretation of his data as the only available one."

In attempting to explain the causal linkage between Islam and authoritarianism, Fish is able to discount the hypotheses that Muslim societies are more prone to political violence, or less secular. Instead, he argues that the subordination of women is the defining factor that links Islam to authoritarianism. To evaluate this link, he uses the following proxies for the status of women: literacy differences between men and women, sex ratio, female leadership positions in government, and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). The GEM is intended to measure “whether women and men are able to actively participate in economic and political life and take part in decision-making” (quoted in Klasen, 2006:257). The GEM includes measures of representation in national legislatures, prominence of positions women hold in the economy, and earned income. When these measures are included in the original analysis, the affect of Islam diminishes, leading Fish to conclude that part of the link between Islam and Authoritarianism can be explained by the treatment of women. He concludes, “Women's

5 His self confidence is reminiscent of the title of a book that claimed to assess “What a billion Muslims really think” (Esposito and Mogahed, 2008).

6 Perhaps it goes without saying that I gladly dismiss his analysis without dismissing his data.
status is, on the whole, inferior in Muslim societies; and this factor appears to account for part of the link between Islam and Authoritarianism” (p.29). He admits that endogeneity may be a problem (see p.29).

A number of scholars have expressed concerns with the UN’s Gender Empowerment Measure (Sen, 1998; Klasen, 2006; Klasen and Schuler, 2011) used by Fish to compare the empowerment of women in Muslim and Catholic countries. The measure “focuses on agency concerns rather than well-being concerns” (Klasen, 2006:257, quoting Sen, 1998) and is “not grounded in a clear conceptual framework” (Klasen, 2006: 258). Further, with the way the measure is calculated, “a poor country can never achieve a high value for the GEM even if it had equality of earned income” while “a rich country might do well in the GEM either because the gender gaps in political decision-making, representation in the economy, or in earned incomes or low, or because the country is simply rich” (Klasen, 2006: 258). After adjusting how the GEM is calculated, Klasen (2006) found that the scored greatly increased for sub-Saharan African countries. In Fish’s piece, data is only available for twenty Muslim countries on the GEM, and they are not named. If a number of those countries are in sub-Saharan Africa, the gap in literacy between Catholic and Muslim countries may be exaggerated.

Despite the concerns expressed by scholars about the GEM in a general sense, there are reasons to question Fish’s indicators in a Muslim context. The overarching issue is that the indicators selected are narrow interpretations of what it means for a woman to be empowered. There are other indicators that are more appropriate to depict women’s status in Muslim societies. For example, under ideal circumstances it would be possible to measure both who earns the money in a household and who manages and
spends the money. Both actions are illustrative of economic independence, but one is influenced by religious belief. Islamic law deems the financial needs of a household the man’s responsibility. Any money that a woman earns she may keep for herself because a man is responsible for the expenses of his family. Some may argue that a man’s financial responsibility is unique to Islam, but this principle has precedence in Western society as well. Into the 1950s and 1960s American businessmen were paid more if they were married with the assumption that they were providing for the needs of a family. In the American military in the twenty-first century, a married soldier makes significantly more money than a single one, since it is assumed that he or she is supporting a family or a spouse. While earning money is seen as a man’s responsibility in Islam, managing and spending it are not affected by religious doctrine making this a better indicator for assessing women’s autonomy. Who keeps and spends the household’s money? Who holds money on their person for safekeeping? Who determines what is eaten, what kids wear to school, when new appliances are purchased?

Another measured used by Fish is literacy. Most observers will agree that literacy is a fundamental right of all human beings. In many Muslim contexts, memorization of texts was seen as the highest mark of intelligence into well into the 1980s (Boum, 2008). The advent of reading and writing are relatively new phenomena. Additionally, public school systems that are responsible for the transmission of literacy were developed largely by colonial powers in Muslim countries. They restricted enrolment to boys for decades. Taking the Moroccan case as an example, the Moroccan state only obtained responsibility for public education in 1956. As the data Fish uses is from 1990,
the Moroccan state had thirty-four years in which to develop public schooling that would teach students to read and write. Half way through this period, the Moroccan educational system was Arabized, meaning that the language of instruction was changed from French to Arabic. Neither the version of Arabic taught in schools, nor French is spoken in most Moroccan households. Most Moroccan households speak a version of Moroccan Arabic or a Amazigh language. Thus, though I agree with Fish that literacy is an important measure of respect for human rights, and therefore of female empowerment, I find the simplistic analysis which evaluates Middle Eastern systems of public education that were only a few decades old against well-developed European systems to be not an ideal way to measure female empowerment and probably more of a measure of state capacity.

Alfred Stepan and Graeme Robertson (2003) adjust Fish’s argument, claiming that there is “An ‘Arab’ more than ‘Muslim’ Electoral Gap.” Though their analysis is an assessment of electoral competitiveness, not democracy, it is in some ways a more impressive measure of democracy because of the two criteria employed. When conceptualizing electoral competitiveness, Stepan and Robertson consider both the quality of the elections and the power of the offices those elected fill, by measuring both if “the government sprang from reasonably fair elections” and if “the elected government was able to fill the most important political offices.” In an ideal world, country experts would have evaluated the second category since it is not always clear to the outside observer if “the most important political offices” actually have access to the budget and the means of accomplishing something. This is particularly rare in competitive authoritarian regimes (Levitsky and Way, 2002). To Stepan and Robertson’s credit, they
acknowledge this in their section titled “Qualitative Data”: “There is strong *prima facie* evidence that in *none* of these countries were the most political powerful positions filled by a government that had achieved office through a reasonably free and fair vote.”

Stepan and Robertson conclude, “If our two subsets of countries [Arab Muslim and non-Arab Muslim] share the predominance of Islam in common, but differ sharply on so crucial a political measure as electoral competitiveness, then Islam cannot, by itself, explain the exceptionally low performance of one of them” (p.39). They also address the issue I mention above, that is the “multivocal” nature of religion. In other words, they express that there is no inherent relationship between a religion and a concept; there are only interpretations that rely on various scriptures, doctrines, teachings and precedents. They conclude, “Unless a compelling case can be made that there is something unique about Arab political culture that makes it permanently more inimical to electoral competitiveness than any other major political culture in the world, it seems likely that both theorists and policy makers will do better to search the *political*—as opposed to the ethnic or religious—particularities of the Middle East and North Africa for clues to the obdurately antidemocratic features of political life in those regions” (p.41, emphasis in the original).

This point was echoed by Donno and Russett (2004) who are “skeptical of cultural arguments about why some states are authoritarian” (p.583). Their work similarly suggests that it is not something inherent to Islam that explains the presence of authoritarianism in the country. Rather, they note that the relationship between religions and regime type varies over time. They also question the idea that female empowerment functions as a causal mechanism. They find “the relationships among
regime, Islamic/Arab tradition, and the status of women to be more complex than Fish suggests” (p.583). In particular, Fish’s models are underspecified; when a number of other measures are added, the statistical significance of Islam declines. Additionally, their analysis of Catholic countries demonstrates how significant changes in the relationship between religious tradition and regime type can occur over brief periods of time, further supporting the notion that religions do not have inherent relationships with regime types. Their work also supports the conclusion of Stepan and Robertson that Arab countries are more highly correlated with non-democratic regimes than Islamic ones. To their credit, Donno and Russett suggest that it is not something to Arab culture, but perhaps further unspecified variables, which explain the relationship between Arab culture and the democratic deficit.

A number of other scholars have offered structural explanations for authoritarian survival. H. Mahdavy (1970) was the first to describe Iran as a rentier state. He specified that a wealth of natural resources may prevent a regime from needing to collect taxes, and thus grant it a unique independence from the people. Vandewalle’s 1998 analysis of Libya also expanded on understanding the role of natural resources in light of Libya’s unique path. He explains Libya’s political development as an ideal “distributive state” where resource wealth is plentiful at the same time that state formation is taking place. The Libyan case is best understood as an example of a distributive states. These states are unresponsive to citizens and have weak relationships with them. Michael Herb (1999) looks at the role of ruling families in the Middle East and their role in sustaining monarchies. His optimistic conclusion suggests these regimes could transition to constitutional monarchies. Wedeen (1999) assessed
how the creation of a personality cult around an authoritarian ruler is itself an exercise of power, even if most people do not buy the mythology the regime offers.

Similarly, Eva Bellin (2004) identifies the Arab state’s extensive security apparatus as a significant reason for the presence of authoritarianism in the region. Her work suggests that Donno and Russett’s analysis could be strengthened by taking into account the size of a country’s intelligence services relative to the size of its population. Bellin draws on the theoretical insights from Skocpol’s (1979) work on revolutions. Skocpol identifies a number of conditions that may cause revolutions but also notes that these conditions are frequently present and revolutions do not occur. Her reasoning, that the strength of the state’s coercive means, its coherence and its effectiveness, explain why some revolutions are possible while others are not. Bellin concludes, “The same might be said of democratic transitions. Democratic transition can be carried out successfully only when the state’s coercive apparatus lacks the will or capacity to crush it. Where that coercive apparatus remains intact and opposed to political reform, democratic transition will not occur” (p.143). Bellin suggests that scholars should focus not on what prerequisites of democracy are lacking in Middle Eastern countries, but on “present conditions that foster robust authoritarianism.” My work is in line with this approach, and is an effort to discuss how education fostered robust authoritarianism in one case. Bellin’s later work (2012) discussed how the events of the Arab Spring provided further confirmation of this theory while suggesting the significance of two relatively new variables: mass mobilization and social media.

The Area Studies Literature

Literature on the Moroccan context mirrors these themes, examining how religion has shaped relationships of authority (Gellner, 1969; Geertz, 1971; Eickelman, 1976;
Eickelman, 1985; Munson, 1993; Ruedy, 1996; Hammoudi, 1997) or electoral politics (Zeghal, 2008) and the dominance of the Moroccan monarchy in the day to day governing of the country (Waterbury, 1970; Bourquia and Miller, 1999; Maghraoui, 2001). Abdellah Hammoudi, was one of the first scholars to explain the presence of authoritarianism in a particular country with a structuralist argument in a 1997 work, titled *Master and Disciple: The Cultural Foundations of Moroccan Authoritarianism*. Hammoudi argues that the form of Islam most widely practiced in Morocco, Sufism, encourages authoritarian values because it stresses strict obedience between disciples and master. He stresses how one’s day-to-day lived experience may influence the types of political authority that one finds acceptable. He is not saying there is something about Islam that makes someone authoritarian. Rather, it is the practice of a particular variation of Islam that encourages someone to be submissive and more willing to accept an authoritarian ruler. This argument was supported in the decade since the work’s publication, where a decline in Sufism has seen a concurrent rise in discontent with the monarchy. This work is also significant to mention because I think it explains why the monarchy began promoting Sufism in the twenty first century, after a rise in Salafism. Salafism stresses personal interpretation of scripture and the equality of all believers. Following Hammoudi’s logic, this would contribute to discontent with an authoritarian ruler. The monarchy’s efforts to encourage Sufism in the twenty-first century can be interpreted as an attempt to reinvigorate the virtue of obedience in the Moroccan population.

Lust (2005), discussed above, also makes a structural argument to explain the persistence of authoritarianism in Morocco. She argues that whether a structure of
contestation (SOC) is unified or divided explains when opposition groups make demands on authoritarian regimes in times of economic crisis. By unified or divided, Lust means how much of the political opposition is allowed to participate in the formal political sphere. If some opposition groups are allowed to participate, while others are not, this is a divided SOC. If elites exclude the entire opposition, then the SOC is unified but exclusive. When the SOC is unified, the opposition is likely to make demands for liberalization on the regime during times of crisis because it will likely benefit from the reform. Under a divided SOC, however, the opposition is unlikely to push for reforms during times of crisis because those who are allowed to participate are less likely to benefit and may even lose the privileges that they hold. In the Moroccan case, Lust argues Hassan II’s efforts to craft a divided Structure of Contestation (SOC) and poor economic conditions explain why the opposition was unwilling to make demands on the regime during the 1980s. Her theory focuses on the impact of a legally divided opposition, whereas this dissertation focuses on the mechanisms by which the regime influences the significance of various opposition movements. In general, though, we agree on the broad details of the significance and impact of the regime-opposition relationship in Morocco with one possible exception. It is unclear from the text the level of intentionality Lust attributes to the King in facilitating the rise of an Islamist opposition. At one point, she writes, “Despite their potential for anti-regime activity, however, King Hasan II allowed the growth of the Islamist opposition in the early 1980s as a counterweight to his secularist opponents” (2005:59, emphasis mine). This quote suggests that the King’s role in facilitating the growth of an Islamist opposition was in his inaction. Later, however, she writes, “the King was widely believed to have covertly
fostered the growth of Islamist parties” (2005:71), a position closer to what is argued in this project. This dissertation examines one of the means by which the regime participated in this process.

**Connecting Authoritarianism and Religious Revival**

Much has been made in recent years on the resurgence of religion and the resiliency of authoritarianism in the region. While past scholars making culturalist arguments have looked for something inherent in Islamic theology or political culture to explain the relationship between religious revival and authoritarian longevity, this dissertation suggests that, in the particular context of the Cold War, where leftist ideologies were making significant advances across the region, regime efforts to discourage the rise of popular leftist opposition movements pragmatically focused on encouraging adherence to Islam as an alternative political program. The Moroccan case suggests that the dominance of religion in public discourse in the region may have been encouraged by regimes that are now fumbling to redirect it. This is not to say that there are not ardent, devoted, pious Muslims across the region. I am not interested in evaluating the beliefs of millions of people. I am interested in specifying those ways that regime policy encouraged the Salafization of public discourse, providing incentives to facilitate adherence to Islamist values at the expense of leftist ideologies.

By setting up the religion as a political ideology, particularly through education, regimes bolstered conservative factions and encouraged competition among political parties as a means of preventing true contestation of regime power. I thus suggest that the relationship between authoritarianism and Islam is time-bound, rooted in the specific conditions of the Cold War and fear of leftist social movements. This is not to say that authoritarianism will decline in significance in coming years, it is only to clarify that in so
far that I think the religious “resurgence” and regime type are related, it is under specific conditions that no longer prevail. This dissertation’s contribution to North African studies is to suggest that the rise in Islamism in Morocco was not an organic phenomenon but was facilitated by regime policy, suggesting that purely structural or culturalist explanations are insufficient. Efforts to understand the relationship between regime and religion must specify the mechanisms of connection between the two or they risk essentializing Islam or ignoring the role of religion entirely. Secondly, the dissertation situates the rise of Islamism in its proper context, the Cold War, a fact well documented in historical epigraphs but frequently ignored in political science accounts. Chapter 3 discusses the history of authoritarianism in Morocco and highlight relevant details of the Cold War to situate the dissertation in both time and place.
CHAPTER 3
BACKGROUND: THE MOROCCAN CASE

In the 19th century, the forerunner to state-society relations was the division of Moroccan territory into two units: *bilad al-makhzan* and *bilad al-siba*, the lands of government, and the lands not governed by a central authority. *Makhzan* is Arabic for storehouse, another term for the monarchy and the elites that surround him. The three cities of Fez, Marrakech and Rabat formed the triangle of territory where state power was exercised, the *bilad al-makhzan*, or translated literally: the lands of the storage house. This was not a formal policy choice but rather the result of the sultan’s inability to exercise influence throughout his entire territory. The areas outside this triangle have largely maintained some form of self-rule for hundreds of years. The French colonizers inherited this division in 1912 (Abu-Nasr, 1987) and in many cases employed local rulers in the *bilad al-siba* to exercise control, resulting in what Mahmood Mamdani (1996) refers to as a “bifurcated state” where local or “traditional” leaders and systems of justice governed rural areas, while urban areas were under French civil law. Although today the country is under one unified legal system, the weak institutional legacy of state influence in rural areas remains.

**A Legacy of Authoritarianism**

The institution of the monarchy has its own legacy. The contours of the *makhzan* before, during and after the protectorate have already been dealt with in detail elsewhere.\(^1\) Only a few points need to be reiterated. First, the primary source of the sultan’s authority prior to the protectorate was his role as leader of the Islamic community. As long as he had the military might to maintain control of a territory, he

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\(^1\) See Waterbury, 1970. This paragraph is a brief restatement of his main ideas.
protected its inhabitants from rulers who would require their conversion from Islam. In return, the tribes owed him a tax to pay for that protection. But only the tribes that had been subdued by the sultan’s soldiers, however, had to pay the tax. Once subdued, the tribes could rebel again at any time, which lead Waterbury (1970) to conclude that the sultan “enjoyed only a relative monopoly of coercive means” (p.21). Consequently, the sultan was constantly on the move, traveling from one region to another fighting rebellious tribes and asserting his authority. The boundary of his influence, and thus the Makhzah, was constantly in flux. In Weberian terms, the Moroccan sultan attempted to maintain legitimacy by reference to his traditional authority. However, the sultan’s need to constantly assert his authority through force suggests the tribes of bilad al-siba rejected the legitimacy of the monarchy.

Under the protectorate, however, the sultan was no longer permitted to maintain an army. “In essence, pacification made the administrative authority of the sultan coextensive with that of his baraka” (Waterbury, 1970:35). In other words, because the sultan was no longer offering protection to the tribes, his legitimacy as ruler came to rest solely on his position as a descendent of the prophet Muhammad and his family’s legacy of rule. By preventing the sultan from enacting violence on the population, the French increased the importance of his religious role. The sultan’s inability to prevent French encroachment, however, voided his relationship with his people according to the understanding described above where the people only owed him allegiance if he protected them from foreign encroachment. Following the end of the protectorate in

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2 *Baraka* is an Arabic word roughly meaning religious favor or blessing. It is passed hereditarily, particularly among those believed to be descended from the prophet and through presence or physical contact.
1956, the King\(^3\) regained his military but also maintained his increased religious status.\(^4\) Evidence of this increased status include the title bestowed in the post-independence Constitution of 1962, where the king was declared *amir al-mouminin* or commander of the faithful. The Protectorate thus altered the institution of the monarchy in a fundamental way, by increasing the significance of the sultan's role as religious leader, an informal development that was later codified in the post-independence period.

The Moroccan monarchy is generally considered to be the most powerful institution in Moroccan society. Legally, the king is the supreme religious leader, and he claims descent from the prophet Mohammed. He is also the highest political authority with the power to dissolve the legislature, appoint and dismiss ministers, and introduce legislation, among other powers. Politically, the monarchy benefits from a long and well-documented tradition of authoritarianism. A powerful executive has ruled the *bilad al-makhzan* for twelve centuries under various titles such as prince, sultan, or king, with the exception of the period of the French protectorate from 1912-1956, during which the ruler did not, in practice, exercise sovereign political authority. King Mohammed V's cooperation with the nationalist movement in the early 1950s and shrewd political maneuvering facilitated his return to the throne following Moroccan independence when he consolidated rule over the entire territory of modern-day Morocco. This consolidation

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\(^3\) The nationalists began using the term King in place of Sultan because they thought it was more modern in 1934. At independence, the title was officially changed. See Waterbury, 1970:53.

\(^4\) Evidence of the shift in the role of his religious prestige can be found in Augustin Bernard (1922). *Le Maroc* 6\(^{th}\) ed. Paris. P.202 quoted in Waterbury 1970:26. Bernard commented, “The marabouts are the greatest political power in Morocco; the people revere them infinitely more than the sultan, despite the religious character of the latter.” This could no longer be said in the years following the protectorate, and can certainly not be said to be true today. See, for example, William Zartman. 1964. *Destiny of a Dynasty.* Carolina University Press, p.28 (note) where he says “Allal al-Fassi probably has more religious stature than Hassan al-Alawi as a person, but the latter, as Hassan II, is by his office the dominant religious figure in Morocco.”
required a series of conflicts known as the “Rif Wars” because they took place in the Rif Mountains. These conflicts were necessary in order to re-establish the relationship of subjugation between ruler and ruled voided by the Protectorate. The violence engendered in these conflicts was severe, but pales in comparison to the rule of Muhammad VI’s son, Hassan II, from 1961-1999. This period is known as “the Years of Lead” (ar: sanawat ar-rusas) because of pervasive human rights abuses including the torture and disappearance of dissidents. The period is also significant for how the monarchy monopolized political discourse and decisions: “When King Hasan took the reins of government in his own hands, Moroccan political parties became no more than marginal groups occasionally expressing their opposition to the regime” (Kedourie, 2004:57). In a sense, the pre-colonial understanding between ruler and ruled based on physical subjugation shaped Moroccan state-formation and the behavior of the monarchy in the post-independence period.

**Evolution of the Regime**

A thawing of relations between the monarchy and the opposition did take place, however, during the 1990s. This opening was made possible by a number of domestic, regional and international factors. Domestically, this period was initiated in 1991 by the public testimony of Mohammed Bensaid, leader of the Organization for Democratic and Popular Action (OADP), when he mentioned the secret prison of Tazmamart publicly in testimony to the lower house of the Moroccan Parliament. Prior to this time, no one spoke of the secret prisons where political dissidents and military officers were sent during the Years of Lead. Those who survived Tazmamart did so despite being held in

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5 This discussion on the political opening of the 1990s relies heavily on Monjib (2011).
solitary confinement for twenty years.\textsuperscript{6} It was widely anticipated that Bensaid would be arrested for the action, but he was not. Domestically, there was internal resistance to the monarchy’s position during the Gulf War. While the monarchy supported the United States and its defense of Kuwait, Saddam Hussein painted the invasion of Kuwait as the only way to liberate Palestine. As a result, huge numbers of Moroccans, who hold tremendous sympathy for the plight of Palestinians, demonstrated in support of Iraq in Moroccan cities.\textsuperscript{7} These protests mark a significant moment in Moroccan history in that it was the first time that Islamists protested openly as Islamists. They were also significant in that Islamists and leftists marched side by side. Even though the crown outlawed such demonstrations in January 1991, they continued, and the king was forced to allow a nation wide protest, which took place on February 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 1991. The peaceful nature of the demonstrations, despite the presence of nearly 500,000 people on the streets, created pressure on the regime to end the ban on demonstrations. This event initiated a season of informal liberalization in the country, as dissidents became more outspoken of their criticism of the monarchy and its policies. At the regional level, the atmosphere in Morocco was affected by the opening political climates in Tunisia, Algeria and sub-Saharan Africa. At the international level, both the French and the Americans pressured Morocco to address its long history of human rights abuses. These abuses were brought to light by Gilles Perrault’s bestseller \textit{Notre ami le roi} ("Our Friend the King") published in 1990. Perrault’s work was the first to draw attention to the

\textsuperscript{6} One prisoner’s experience of not seeing the sun for twenty years while in the harrowing prison is memorialized in Tahar Ben Jelloun’s (2004) \textit{This Blinding Absence of Light}.

\textsuperscript{7} Eickelman and Piscatori’s (2004:13-16) description of Saddam Hussein’s use of Islamic symbolism and the Palestinian cause to garner regional support captures the Moroccan case well.
secret Tazmamart prisons that had been rumored for decades but consistently denied by the palace.

The political opening afforded by these conditions were enshrined in the 1990 establishment of the Consultative Council on Human Rights and the 1992 Constitutional reform that increased the power of the Prime Minister. The significance of the change should not be overstated, however. “In reality, the Moroccan Constitution is not a sacrosanct text but rather an optional reference to which the monarchy can look; it cannot overrule the ultimate decision of the king. Instead, a more fundamental element of the governing system is the concept of tradition (adapted and reinvented as suitable) that plays the role of an implicit constitution” (Monjib, 2011:4). Monjib goes on to explain that this does not make the Constitution worthless; it means that the degree society can force the regime to be bound by the Constitution fluctuates according to the relationship between the regime and the political elite. The political opening signified by the constitutional reform also included the increased liberalization of Moroccan society including an expansion of the freedom of the press, expression, assembly, and association, a significant decline in the use of torture and forced disappearance toward political dissidents, the growth of civil society, and increasing transparency of elections (Monjib, 2011). This opening was halted by a combination of local and international factors such as the retreat from liberalization seen in both Algeria and Tunisia. The rise of Islamists and decline of support for liberal ideals were also significant. In this environment, the well-known illness of Hassan II contributed to the regime’s willingness to compromise with the opposition, leading to a period of alternance, or the empowerment of the political opposition.
Alternance

The palace made history in 1997 when it appointed Abderrahmane Youssoufi, leader of the USFP, to lead a coalition government. The choice was historic because he was the first prime minister chosen from the opposition in Moroccan history as well as in the greater Arab world (Khatibi, 1998; Mountassir, 2011). Further, it was not just an opposition leader who had been enfranchised, but an outspoken critic of the regime who had been both imprisoned and exiled during his political career (Ottaway and Riley, 2006). The period was also significant because it suggested the turning over of a “new leaf” in Moroccan politics. The appointment of the opposition led some to believe that the country was undergoing a genuine process of democratization (Ottaway and Riley, 2006).

This period came to be known as “alternance,” a term frequently used in the French-speaking world to describe the opposition taking power. In the Moroccan case, however, it refers specifically to this period of the late 1990s. Though the USFP gained the highest percentage of votes, roughly 14 percent, and seats, roughly 12 percent, in the November 1997 parliamentary elections, this was no guarantee that the regime would invite the USFP to form a government. Since the monarchy frequently appoints palace technocrats or leaders of palace parties to positions of authority, and the USFP had not achieved an electoral majority on its own, there was no reason to expect the king to select a prime minister from the USFP (Willis, 1999; Ottaway and Riley, 2006).

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8 The story behind the agreement has become a matter of folklore. It is said that Hassan II invited Youssoufi to dine at one of his palaces to work out the outlines of the deal. When he introduced the opposition leader to his two daughters he said, “This is the man who took up arms against your father and that tried to kill him.” The two men then worked out an agreement that remains a secret until this day (Bennani, 2009). Some even claim that Youssoufi was made to swear his allegiance to the King on the Quran before he was allowed to take on his role as Prime Minister (Bennani, 2009).
However, the fact that King Hassan II selected Youssoufi encouraged speculation that he was initiating a democratic opening in the kingdom. Youssoufi led a government coalition of seven parties including the USFP, Istiqlal, the Communists and initially the moderate Islamists, the PJD. The fact that the feared Interior Minister Driss Basri was not removed from his position, despite his involvement in the forced disappearance of thousands of Moroccan leftists, suggests that Youssoufi had very little power in the new government (Joffé, 1998), a fact that was not surprising giving the varied ideologies present in the coalition.

It is said that Hassan II chose Youssoufi because he knew he was very ill, and feared leaving his son to rule the country with a growing Islamist problem (Howe, 2005:232; Ottaway and Riley, 2006). By empowering the socialists, some argue that Hassan II thought he could reverse the spread of Islamism in Moroccan society. Others suggest that the USFP were willing to participate in *alternance* out of the same concern (Ottaway and Riley, 2006). Youssoufi himself, when interviewed by a French newspaper *Libération* commented, “When we were in the opposition, we were already saying that the situation was such that it could open the way to a more extreme and radical opposition. Now in power, we are condemned to succeed. For if we fail, we will open the way to an opposition of another sort” (Willis, 1999:73). The quote suggests that Youssoufi saw the period of *alternance* as the last chance to preventing the rise of radical Islamism. The “opposition of another sort” that Youssoufi feared, or at least publicly claimed to fear, was an Islamist opposition. While it is impossible to know if he

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9 This point was reiterated to me by a member of the PJD in an interview in 2011.

10 A Moroccan university professor who I believe to have previously been a leftist student activist made this assertion in an interview in 2011.
actually feared the rise of Islamism, was claiming to do for political purposes or was called on to do so by someone from the Makhzan, it’s likely that a combination of all three motives were present to some degree. The war against organized Islamists in neighboring Algeria during most of the 1990s likely contributed to the salience of this sort of rhetoric across North Africa.

The country was initially optimistic about *alternance*. Youssoufi’s first speech in parliament was very promising.\(^\text{11}\) He “spoke fervently of his determination to bring about a more prosperous and just society, the establishment of a state of law, the development of modern education, an end to rural exclusion, and a transition to real democracy” (Howe, 2008: 232). Further, international actors seemed convinced that Morocco was undergoing a true democratic transition. Some even say it was the policy of *alternance* that convinced the World Bank and the IMF to restructure Morocco’s debt.\(^\text{12}\)

**The Ambiguous Legacy of Mohammed VI**

When Hassan’s son Mohammed VI took the throne in 1999, the country breathed a collective sigh of relief. The young king promised democratic reforms and did oversee a process of gradual liberalization. The King even charmed the international community.\(^\text{13}\) In the first few years of his reign, he implemented a number of policy reforms that were taken as evidence of his democratizing intentions. Particularly important to this image was the firing of Driss al-Basri, the Minister of Information under

\(^\text{11}\) Interview with a Moroccan university professor, 2011.

\(^\text{12}\) Ibid.

his father, widely considered a key player in maintaining a culture of fear during the
“Years of Lead” because of his responsibility for the forced disappearance and torture of
high profile opposition figures. The implementation of The Equity and Reconciliation
Committee to bring into the open human rights violations under his father's rule was
taken as further evidence of the young king's desire to lead in a new direction. Evidence
of liberalization under the new monarchy was not consistent, however. Increasingly,
the regime harassed journalists and newspaper editors who published controversial stories
and even tried and convicted some on charges widely viewed as unconstitutional by
international observers. Questions about the judiciary’s independence increased.
Scholars and international observers continue to criticize the monarchy for its failure to
take any real steps toward democratization or sharing power with other state
institutions, despite its willingness to spearhead liberalizing reforms.

Although Mohammed VI has allowed ideological contestation and limited
liberalization, the country has not experienced a significant process of democratization,
since the monarchy has not shared power with other institutions. A 2011 revision to the
Constitution granted one small concession to the people, in that the Prime Minister is
now selected from the party that receives the highest number of votes in legislative
elections. This is a relatively insignificant change, however, since the parliament, Prime
Minister and his government possess little power relative to the king and his advisors.
The king is the head of the country’s armed forces and intelligence services. He and a
coterie of his unelected advisors make all significant decisions regarding the governing
of the country at the national level. Parliament functions more as a deliberative body
than a decision-making one. As Marina Ottaway and Meredith Riley put it, “A veritable
shadow government of royal advisers keeps an eye on the operations of all ministers and government departments. Not only are important decisions made by the palace, but their execution is also managed... by the royal entourage. The question is not whether Morocco will continue its democratic transformation, because, contrary to the views of some, such a transformation has not even started" (Ottaway and Riley, 2008:162, quoted in Monjib, 2011:16).

In addition to this cornucopia of powers, the king also possesses a number of powers that are neither formal nor codified. First, he is the "businessman in chief." His wealth was estimated at 2.5 billion USD in 2009 and royal businesses account for an estimated 6 percent of Morocco’s GDP.14 Secondly, he possesses immense popularity and influence among the Moroccan people and their leaders. A 2009 public opinion poll conducted by several of the country’s major publications found that 91 percent of the population approved of the new monarch after his first ten years in office.15 Thirdly, he controls the legislative agenda in practice. Legislation that he does not support does not pass and legislation that he favors will eventually become law, regardless of the amount of opposition. Reforms to the country’s family code are a case in point. Protests in favor of liberalizing the family code in 2000 garnered 50,000 activists in Rabat, while Islamists opposed to the changes gathered more than 500,000 (some estimate as many as one million) protestors in Casablanca (Guessous, 2011: 243). Although those opposed were


far more in number than those in favor, the changes were made because the legislation was supported by the king.\textsuperscript{16}

In addition to his legislative influence, the king exercises excessive influence over the judiciary of the country. People are frequently tried on trumped up charges if they have irritated his majesty, or are not tried if they are in his close circle of advisors. Rather than allow judicial processes to run their course, the king will pardon those for whom there is international outcry. The case of Fouad Mourtada is a case in point. Mourtada was arrested on 5 February 2008 for making a Facebook page for the king’s brother, Crown Prince Moulay Rachid. He was charged with “villainous practices linked to the alleged theft” of the prince’s identity and found guilty. He was sentenced to 3 years in jail and a fine equivalent to around 1,200 USD. After Moroccan bloggers and international human rights groups brought attention to the case, Mourtada was given an official pardon, rather than the right to a fair trial.\textsuperscript{17}

Although no formal institutions limit the king’s power, there is a notable difference between Hassan II and Mohammad VI in their sensitivity to international opinion, as evidenced in the above Facebook trial. While Hassan II felt no hesitation in disappearing, jailing, torturing and assassinating thousands of his subjects, Mohammed VI has not been willing to exercise the same degree of violence on his population. His thugs do disappear, jail, torture and assassinate people, but not anywhere near the

\textsuperscript{16} “A survey on the Moroccans’ perception of Mohammed VI’s politics, carried out by the French daily \textit{Le Monde} and the Moroccan weeklies \textit{TelQuel} and \textit{Nichane}, showed that the reform the Moroccans most disagree with is the reform of women’s rights. The Ministry of Interior destroyed the 100,000 copies of \textit{TelQuel} and \textit{Nichane} on August 1, 2009. The issue \textit{Le Monde} was prohibited in Morocco. See \textit{Le Monde} (Paris), August 3, 2009” (Monjib, 2011:8fn25).

\textsuperscript{17} The details of this case are available at the Threatened Voices online database of bloggers denied the freedom of speech. See: http://threatened.globalvoicesonline.org/blogger/fouad-mourtada
extent that his father’s regime did. Perhaps due to the country’s heavy reliance on tourism and its collaboration with the United States in the War on Terror, Mohammed VI appears very responsive to international public opinion and eager to make a good impression on world leaders and the international press. Although this sensitivity does, in practice, limit the monarchy’s actions, the institution remains tremendously powerful.

**Morocco’s Electoral Landscape**

Though this work concentrates on how the regime employs education to influence the significance of various opposition movements, another strategy is the creation of pro-regime parties to compete in elections alongside political parties formed independently. The first such party, Mouvement Populaire, was formed in the 1950s as a party of Berber nationalist to compete with the Arab nationalist party Istiqlal (Monjib, 2011). In 1963, Ahmed Réda Guédira, one of the king’s confidantes, created a party, ironically called *Front Pour la Défense des Institutions Constitutionnelles* (Monjib, 2011). Although the party was created right before the legislative elections, the party won the plurality of votes (Monjib, 2011). In 1977, the king’s brother-in-law Ahmed Osman created the *Rassemblement National des Indépendants*, yet another ironic party name (Monjib, 2011). In 1983, the king’s prime minister Maâti Bouabi created the *Union Constitutionnelle*, just prior to legislative elections, which it won (Monjib, 2011).

Morocco’s electoral system is rife with corruption and interference. Electoral districts are redrawn before every election by the Ministry of the Interior in order to prevent any party from garnering a majority of votes (Monjib, 2011). This is possible because the Ministry of the Interior appoints local and regional officials including
provincial governors and local caids. These officials report to the Ministry of the Interior the political views of those under their control (Monjib, 2011). In addition to this localized surveillance, political parties must be approved by the Ministry of the Interior before they can participate in politics. At the same time, the ministry maintains informers within unions and on university campuses to further monitor political activities. Formally, the ministry also controls the Border Police, the National Security Police and the Judicial Police and it is known that the ministry interferes with the activities of the judiciary. Public officials themselves admit that the regime structures elections. In a 2006 interview, then Prime Minister Driss Jettou was being interviewed by a French newspaper. When asked if he was concerned about the possibility of Islamists winning the upcoming legislative elections, he responded that he was unconcerned, since the Moroccan system does not allow one party to win (Monjib, 2011).

The Moroccan Ministry of Interior also misreports basic electoral data. For example, the ministry reported that the total population registered to vote in 2009 was

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22 For the original article, see "Les Islamistes marocains tentés par le modèle turc," August 2007. *Le Monde Diplomatique*.
nearly 13.4 million people. Maati Monjib (2011) has demonstrated that such figures are literally impossible. Over the course of the previous decade, the voting population increased around thirteen percent between elections. In 1992, 11.4 million voters were registered, while in 1997, that number jumped to 12.9 million voters, an increase of 13.5 percent. From 1997 to 2003, a similar increase of thirteen percent was recorded. But the 2009 figures would require a 8.6 percent decline in the size of the Moroccan voting population! This is all the more unlikely given that during this interval, the voting age was lowered from twenty-one to eighteen, making an additional two million Moroccans eligible to vote. It is simply impossible that such figures are accurate. They were inflated to suggest a higher rate of participation, 52 percent, than actually took place. Even if this figure is accepted, however, it still suggests a dismal level of participation in elections at a time of severe economic difficulties for most Moroccans, suggesting widespread belief that participation has no influence on the state’s economic policies.23

The delegation of elections to the ministry most closely associated with spying on citizens has, unsurprisingly, not inspired large amounts of trust in the democratic process in Morocco. Disaffection with politics in Morocco is demonstrated in low voter turnout, and the high number of votes spoiled by those who do vote. In the 2007 legislative elections, following the Prime Minister’s alarming comments mentioned above, participation reached an all time low of 37 percent. In addition, “the highest rate of invalid votes (36 percent versus a nationwide level of 19 percent) was registered in Casablanca-Anfa—one of Morocco’s richest neighborhoods, with one of the lowest rates of illiteracy” (Monjib, 2011:14). When the most highly educated voters are those

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23 This is accurate. The Moroccan monarchy exercises a “monopoly on the allocation of the state budget” (Monjib, 2011:12).
most likely to spoil their votes, it suggests that it is not confusion over voting procedure but disaffection with the process. Such disaffection continued in later elections. In legislative elections of 2011, there were more spoiled votes cast than the combined totals of the two leading parties: the Istiqlal and the PJD (Monjib, 2011).

**Regime Type**

According to Roessler and Howard (2009), Morocco under both Hassan II and Mohammed VI is “closed authoritarian.” Closed authoritarian regimes are those where the public plays no role in selecting the executive. Because the highest political office in the country, the monarchy, is inherited, rather than elected, Morocco fits in this category. Although Morocco possesses a prime minister, he is not effectively the head of state. Roessler and Howard’s conceptualization is useful in providing a straightforward way to evaluate regime type, but it is unclear how to deal with variation at levels lower than the national executive. There has been substantial change in the freedom of electoral contestation for lower offices in the Moroccan governing apparatus from independence to the present, but this change is not reflected in the categories available. Roessler and Howard’s typology suggests other indicators significant in assessing regime type. Those countries that allow the presence of multicandidate national elections with the participation of opposition candidates as well as the participation of the general electorate in voting are the most democratic. Although Morocco has no variation on the selection of its executive, it has experienced significant variation on these lower dimensions.
The Casablanca Bombings of 2003

A pivotal event in Mohammed VI’s young reign occurred at 9pm on 16 May 2003 when suicide attackers hit five targets in Casablanca. The plot killed at least 41 people, injured at least 100 and created an atmosphere of panic in the city. The attacks targeted Jewish centers of activity including a luxury hotel, a popular restaurant and a Jewish cemetery. Although historically significant, the Jewish population of Morocco has dwindled to around 4,000 people since the establishment of Israel in 1948. The coordination of the attacks encouraged suspicion of an al-Qaeda link who eventually claimed responsibility for the attacks (Al-Qaeda linked... 6 July 2003). A Moroccan investigation reported that Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a man believed to be an associate of Osama bin Laden, coordinated the attack (Al-Qaeda linked... 6 July 2003).  

In response to the bombings, Mohammed VI called for a series of reforms of the state’s management of “the field of religion”, la champ religieuse, including a review of the Islamic education curriculum. The overall goal of the reforms to the religious and educational fields was the formation of more “open,” “rational” and “modern” citizens. This program was announced in the speech given by the king on May 29th, 2003, less than two weeks following the attacks:

This battle [against terrorists] will be won thanks to our [the monarchy’s] overall integrated and multidimensional strategy. In its political, institutional and security aspect, this strategy aims at more rigor and efficiency in the framework of democracy and the supremacy of the law. It aims, in its economic and social aspects, to liberate initiatives and to mobilize energies in the service of development and solidarity. Finally, in its religious, educational, cultural and media-related dimension, this strategy proposes to

24 The source for this paragraph, unless otherwise noted, is: Martin Bright, Paul Harris, and Ali Bouzerda. 2003. “Horror in Casablanca as al-Qaeda Toll Hits 41.” The Guardian. Available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2003/may/18/alqaida.terrorism2; accessed April 2013.
educate, to form the citizen in impregnating the virtues of openness, modernity, rationality, seriousness in that which it accomplishes, in straightness, in moderation and in tolerance (Mohammed VI, 2003, my translation).

The speech demonstrates that the regime views education as a means of shaping the values and behaviors of citizens. The timing of the call for reform, in the period after the Casablanca bombings, demonstrates there was a perceived relationship between ideological extremism, violence and school curriculum. This relationship is also evident in a number of the newspaper articles I collected in the al-Tajdeed archives. By April of the next year, the king announced the beginning of the restructuring of the religious sphere, which has included the placement of imams on the government payroll, the creation of a government-run Islamic television station, the installation of a series of plasma TVs in mosques across the country, the distribution of a “Moroccan” Quran, the creation of a training program for female religious leaders (the first of its kind in the Middle East), the reform of the Superior ‘Ulama Council, the restructuring of the Ministry of Endowment and Islamic Affairs, and the unification and reform of Islamic education programs. The monarchy’s increasing involvement in the religious affairs of the country, and especially the appointment of a number of religious leaders to positions within the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs (MIA), prompted some observers\(^{25}\) to claim that a “the bureaucratization of religion” was occurring. While many scholars attribute the crown’s attempts at framing and containing the religious field as a means of garnering legitimacy, this project suggests these efforts are the continuation of a larger strategy. The use of education to influence citizen values has a long history in Morocco.

\(^{25}\) See, for example, the Maghreb Blog, a popular blog on Moroccan politics written by a Moroccan expat academic. Available online at: [http://maghreblog.blogspot.com/2010/02/blogging-in-moroccoand.html](http://maghreblog.blogspot.com/2010/02/blogging-in-moroccoand.html)
In the 1960s and 1970s, this strategy was an attempt to structure opposition politics and specifically to suppress leftist political parties inadvertently resulting in the rise of Islamist ones. When the Islamist opposition became too powerful, the Casablanca bombings provided an opportunity for the monarchy to take greater control of the management of the religious affairs of the country and to redirect citizens toward beliefs in the values of toleration and moderation.

**International Context: The Cold War**

The dissertation shows how the monarchy’s response to the Casablanca bombings was not a new strategy but a reframing of a strategy developed in response to leftist opposition from the 1960s to the 1980s. The efforts by the Moroccan monarchy to suppress the left during this time cannot be divorced from the international context in which such efforts were tolerated and encouraged. This section presents some relevant details of the Cold War context focusing on the Truman and Eisenhower doctrines, while the final section situates Morocco within the politics of this era.

During the Cold War, the United States viewed communism as a “monolithic force” (Gettleman and Schaar, 2012:245). Similarly, US policymakers conceived of the Middle East as one entity, although it is important to note that this conception predated the Cold War (Jacobs, 2011:3). The confluence of these two misconceptions had implications for American foreign policy in the Middle East distinct from its impact on other regions. The impact of the Cold War climate on American politics is well known and well documented: “McCarthyism wiped out the communist movement, the heart of the left-labor Popular Front that had inspired and organized for so much political and social change in the 1930s and early 1940s” (Hartman, 2011:73). While the results of the Cold War on American opposition politics are well known, the impact of the Cold
War on American foreign policy in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) remains under-assessed in the discipline of political science.\textsuperscript{26}

American Cold War Policy can be summarized in four doctrines: the Truman Doctrine (1941-1952), the Eisenhower Doctrine (1953-1960), the Nixon Doctrine (1961-1972), and finally, the Carter Doctrine (1980-1981).\textsuperscript{27} In this section, I summarize the first two of these doctrines to contextualize the international environment in which Morocco gained its independence in 1956. The Truman Doctrine was rooted in several assumptions: first, that the USSR was attempting to extend its influence along its southern border, an assumption that most scholars agree was appropriate, and secondly, the assumption that the UK would maintain its dominant position in the Middle East, an assumption which proved untrue. Soviet meddling in Iran in 1941 and later in Turkey and Greece combined with the weakening dominance of the British in the region were the initial reasons the United States strengthened its involvement in the region. Because the US viewed Soviet encroachments in Iran, Turkey and Greece as evidence of larger ambitions, these incidents influenced American policy toward the entire region. “The capitulation of Greece to Soviet domination through lack of adequate support from the U.S. and Great Britain might eventually result in the loss of the whole Near and Middle East and northern Africa” remarked Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson on 21 February 1947. This quote demonstrates how fear of the expansion of Soviet influence motivated early American Cold War policy toward the Middle East (Little, 2004:123).

\textsuperscript{26} This is not the case in history. See, for example, Little (2004) and Jacobs (2011).

\textsuperscript{27} For a more complete analysis of these doctrines, see Douglas Little (2004, Chapter 4). The time period’s identified by Little do not line up with the presidency’s after those for whom they are named, because Little includes precipitating events that encouraged particular policies in his periodization.
The Truman Doctrine claimed: “it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures” (Little, 2004:123). In practical application, the Truman Doctrine included financial support for Greece and Turkey and coexisted with the Marshall Plan for rebuilding Europe. In addition, it included the creation of the NSC and the CIA through the National Security Act of 25 July 1947. In the 1940s, based on the assumption of continuing British dominance in the region, the Americans focused on Europe and Asia and left the Middle East and North Africa to the UK. The arrangement was complicated by American support for the creation of Israel in 1948 and the UK’s resistance to self-determination for people in the region. Sir Michael Wright first suggested an increased role for the Americans in November 1949 and the new policy was formulated by April of the following year (Little, 2004). The policy, embodied in NSC-68, called for quadrupling U.S. defense spending as well as “rapid development of thermonuclear weapons, a psychological offensive against communism both at home and abroad, and the establishment of anti-Soviet regional defense groupings modeled on the recently created North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)” (Little, 2004:125).

Effectively, the Americans took over the position as the dominant power in the region under president Eisenhower. The Eisenhower doctrine was formulated largely in response to the Suez Canal crisis propagated by Gamal Abdel-Nasser. Nasser, who came to power in Egypt in 1952 as part of the Free Officer’s coup, began irritating the United States soon afterwards. His refusal to join the Baghdad Pact, a military alliance that provided American economic and military assistance in exchange for cooperation, set him apart from the rulers of other countries in the region like Turkey, Iran, Pakistan,
and Iraq. In addition to refusing to join the alliance, he also successfully discouraged Jordan and Syria from participating. Nasser’s refusal was rooted in the belief that the alliance was a form of neo-Imperialism that allowed Western powers to continue to dominate Arabs, and should not be interpreted to suggest that Egypt was not in need of military assistance. It was, in order to patrol the border with Israel that had been the site of continuous hostilities since 1948. Nasser’s refusal to join the Baghdad Pact prevented him from garnering the needed Western assistance to buy arms. Instead, he sought aid from the Soviets through Czechoslovakia as a broker, who provided $200 million in Soviet equipment in exchange for Egyptian cotton in September 1955. The arms deal negated the Baghdad Pact in that it provided the Soviets a base in the Middle East. Since the American plan for the containment of communism was based on a “northern tier,” the development of friendly relations between the Soviets and a country seen as the heart of the Arab world made the Baghdad Pact futile, further complicating Egypt’s relationship with the United States. The United States blamed the British for pushing Egypt into the Soviet camp by joining the Baghdad Pact, initiating a break in the cooperation between the US and the UK on foreign policy matters in the region.

The Suez Crisis occurred in 1956. The Aswan Dam was originally to be financed by a World Bank loan underwritten by the Americans and the British. In July 1956, the Americans unexpectedly pulled out of the loan. In response, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal on 26 July 1956. Despite American efforts to calm tensions, the crisis resulted in a military conflict. The British, French and Israelis conspired to regain the canal in a meeting that culminated in the Protocol of Sèvres. In accordance with the agreement, Israel invaded Egypt and the British and French entered the conflict.
ostensibly to prevent escalation. The United Nations intervened in the conflict, and peacekeeping forces remained until forced out by Nasser in 1967. The event effectively marks the end of British dominance in the region, and highlighted the need for the Americans to develop a new approach. American concern that other countries in the region would seek military and economic aid from the Soviets, and aware of the opportunity the weakening of the British represented to the Soviets, the Americans initiated the Eisenhower doctrine. The agreement was signed March 2nd, 1956. The height of Nasser's popularity and fear of leftist movements thus reached an apex in the same year that Morocco gained its independence.

The Eisenhower doctrine, articulated by President Eisenhower in a speech to a joint session of Congress on 5 January 1957, expressed the United State's willingness to intervene militarily in the Middle East if necessary to prevent the spread of International Communism:

Thus, the United States through the joint action of the President and the Congress, or, in the case of treaties, the Senate, has manifested in many endangered areas its purpose to support free and independent governments—and peace—against external menace, notably the menace of International Communism. Thereby we have helped to maintain peace and security during a period of great danger. It is now essential that the United States should manifest through joint action of the President and the Congress our determination to assist those nations of the Mid-East area, which desire that assistance. The action which I propose would have the following features. It would, first of all, authorize the United States to cooperate with and assist any nation or group of nations in the general area of the Middle East in the development of economic strength dedicated to the maintenance of national independence (quoted in Gettleman and Shaar, 2012:248).

Eisenhower continues to suggest military assistance and, if necessary, military intervention to defend “against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by International Communism” (quoted in Gettleman and Shaar, 2012:248). At the same
time, Nikita Krushchev was promising an ideological and diplomatic offensive to convert
countries from North Africa to Southeast Asia to its ideology (Little, 2004:130). Further,
the populations of Arab countries viewed Nasser as a hero in the wake of the Suez
crisis, creating anxiety among American policymakers that his influence might
encourage the spread of Arab nationalism and friendly relations with the Soviets among
Arab states. The irrelevance of the Baghdad pact, combined with the presumed
intentions of the Soviets, and fears of the spread of Nasserist ideologies led to an
adjustment in US policy of building relationships on a country-by-country basis. It is in
this context that a newly independent Moroccan state negotiated its relationship with the
Americans.

**Morocco’s Position in the Cold War**

It is outside the scope of this project to evaluate the role of the relationship
between the Americans and the Moroccans in influencing Moroccan policy toward its
leftist opposition. At the same time, it is inappropriate to ignore this muddled relationship
entirely. This brief section provides an overview of these relations in order to
demonstrate how the relationship between the United States and Morocco matured
since the time of Morocco’s independence. In addition, because there has been some
discussion about a relationship between Islam and authoritarianism, and because I think
this relationship is rooted specifically in the conditions of the Cold War, such an
overview is necessary to underpin that argument of the dissertation.

The relationship between Morocco and the United states dates to 1776 when
Morocco became the first country to recognize the United States. This date is frequently
invoked as the beginning of a strong relationship between Morocco and the United
States. This cooperation, however, only began in serious form during the Second World
War, when the American troops landed in the Mediterranean kingdom. Roosevelt was so touched by the welcoming his troops received that he began a correspondence with the sultan that culminated in the meeting at Anfa, Casablanca in January 1943 between Roosevelt, Churchill and de Gaulle. Eventually, the Americans established a series of military bases in the country. The arrangement was justified to the Moroccan people as an effort to prevent an Axis invasion of their country. In addition, the Americans claimed they had no intention of occupying the country (Park and Boum, 2006:347). The Americans viewed Morocco as a significant country in the fight against International Communism primarily because of the country’s location. In a 1954 report to the National Security Council, the region was described as a possible “new base of Allied operations in the event of WWIII.”

Of the North African countries, Morocco was seen as the most significant to US National Security interests “because it serves as a keystone of a bridge between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean.”

The relationship was not an easy one to manage, however, as the United States attempted to maintain two separate and frequently contradictory policies: the first, a strong relationship with France to encourage their support of NATO and second, support of Morocco’s national liberation movement to discourage its alignment with the Soviets (Lawatch, 2011). The friction caused by these two policies is exemplary of the larger struggle American policymakers faced: the conflict resulting from the need to garner support from Western European powers in the fight against communism while disapproving of their colonial empires.

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The first indication that the American military presence in Morocco was not temporary came in a memo in 1946 titled “Atlantic and Pacific Outlying Bases, Modifications of Missions.” In it, the Americans recognized the less than ideal conditions one of the Moroccan bases presented, but suggested it was preferable to no base at all: “The hazards of operating under conditions such as in Port Lyautey are well recognized; nevertheless, assigned tasks are such as to require a naval supplementary station within good receiving distance of European radio traffic...” The memo continues to suggest that some of the bases should be maintained: “The costly delays which were experienced at the beginning of World War II in obtaining necessary sites and establishing supplementary facilities in various parts of the world make it imperative that certain strategic positions be retained for future emergencies.” Based on the earlier discussion of the Moroccan base and the title of the memo, it is appropriate to assume that from this point onward American policy was to maintain their base at Port Lyautey if at all possible.

In 1950, the Americans negotiated with the French to make the bases permanent as part of the talks leading to the creation of NATO (Zartman, 1964:24). Although the Americans frequently requested that the Moroccans be consulted in the

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31 The bases included “two active installations of the Strategic Air Command (SAC) at Sidi Sliman and Ben Geurir, near Meknes and Marrakesh respectively, and an inactive SAC base at Bensliman, near the Moroccan Army camp between Rabat and Casablanca; an air force matériel depot with SAC and fighter units at Nouasseur, by Casablanca; a naval air station at Port Lyautey; an air force radar warning system that ran along the ridge of the Atlas ranges from Marrakesh to the eastern frontier; and a navy communications system based on Sidi Yahya and Sidi Bouknadel on either side of Port Lyautey” (Zartman, 1964:23).
matter, the French refused to do so. On 8 April 1952, the French agreed to allow non-nuclear weapons to be deployed on Moroccan soil without prior consent of the French authorities. Upon independence, the American mission in Morocco was compromised because many of the nationalists-turned-independence leaders opposed the presence of foreign troops on Moroccan soil. The Americans were aware of this dynamic. When an American embassy officer met with the nationalist leaders Mehdi Ben Barka and Abderrahim Bouabid on 23 October 1962, he reported to then Secretary of State Dean Rusk that the opposition leaders’ general attitude suggested that the UNFP, the primary leftist political party in Morocco, “has no present intention utilizing Cuba issue [Cuban missile crisis] to flagellate US bases in Morocco issue.” The meeting demonstrates that the Americans were monitoring leftist opposition political activity and were concerned about how anti-Communist policies in one region may influence leftist factions elsewhere. During the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, President Kennedy personally wrote to Hassan II to request his help in preventing over flights of Soviet aircraft en route to Cuba. Morocco complied in the first of a series of quid pro quo exchanges between the two countries. Later, the Moroccans supported American interests in Zaire and Angola in return for aid in the war with the Polisario (Park and Boum, 2006:xix). Recent evidence demonstrates that this cooperation remains intact today.

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32 The details of these negotiations are available in Zartman (1964) Chapter 2 titled “Diplomatic problem: Evacuation of American Bases,” pages 23-60.


34 For more on the varieties of ways the two governments collaborated, as well as a host of entertaining conspiracy theories, see William Blum. 2000. Killing Hope. Black Rose Books: 259-262, 278-279.

35 Morocco continues to allow Americans to use its prisons for torture and interrogation of suspects in the War on Terror. It also appears to be a staging ground for transfer to Guantanamo Bay. See “Morocco" in
The strong relationship between America and Morocco has resulted in a host of conspiracy theories. There is speculation that the Kenitra facility, which, unlike other American bases, was never fully evacuated, is the CIA’s main base for operations in Africa and the Middle East. The base is believed to have been set up in 1981, when a series of high-ranking government officials visited Morocco. “In 1981 alone, he [Hassan] was visited by Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and Secretary of State Alexander Haig, as well as the Deputy Director of the CIA, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations committee, and a host of other high-level Washington officials. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security arrived with a team of 23 military advisers and experts; more than 100 Americans were reported to be working with the Moroccan armed forces” (Blum, 2000: 278). One journalist reported that the Secretary of State arranged for “at least $100 million in credits for Moroccan arms purchases [in 1983]. . In return Morocco agreed to establish a joint American-Moroccan military commission and to give the United States landing rights at Moroccan air bases” (Wright, 1982:22). While it cannot be known definitively what material exchanges form the basis of the Moroccan-American friendship, there is quite a bit of evidence to suggest that the relationship was a close one, and it is oddly convenient how well Moroccan domestic policies were in line with American foreign policy objectives at the same time that Moroccans were granting Americans significant liberties on the use of their territory.

With the exception of Chapter 4, the remainder of the dissertation focuses on the domestic politics of education in Morocco. This brief section on the Cold War context

and the relationship between the Americans and the Moroccans is an effort to acknowledge the international context in which these domestic policies were formulated and to provide framing conditions for the overall argument of the dissertation. Morocco, a country with an excellent authoritarian pedigree, maintains an impressive number of authoritarian strategies, but veils them with liberalizing veneer. This dissertation examines one of these strategies, the use of public education to manipulate ideological beliefs. It is necessary to specify the Cold War context in which this strategy was formulated and deployed because it helps to explain the over-success of this regime strategy, resulting in the elimination of leftist political actors as meaningful opposition. This over-success and its implications are discussed in Chapter 7.
CHAPTER 4
EDUCATION AS MECHANISM

This chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section, I discuss the literature in political science that deals with education. I begin by highlighting foundational works and how their arguments encouraged assumptions about education and democratization. I then discuss the literature on political socialization and its emphasis on the American context to show how this emphasis in the literature encourages a conception of education as inherently democratizing. In the second section, I discuss competitive authoritarian regimes and how education in these contexts can be better understood in light of Louis Althusser’s (1976) conception of ideological state apparatuses. Because the nature of competitive authoritarian regimes requires the prevention of the development of a meaningful opposition, educational reform will be shaped by the desire to prevent the development of autonomous political space and therefore democratization. Due to the path dependent nature of educational reform, such reforms will likely cripple the targeted members of the political opposition, and may even allow for the proliferation of a competing ideology perceived as more sympathetic to the regime. Long term, however, the elimination of an opposition movement may allow for another to balloon, prompting the need for further educational reform. In such a cycle, education becomes increasingly politicized and divorced from the pedagogical needs of students.

Education and Political Science

In general, political science has overlooked the study of education in favor of more overtly political topics. This is somewhat surprising given that education is a significant ideological battleground with long-term implications for future political
contexts. The lack of attention paid to education is problematic in authoritarian contexts given that “Under authoritarianism, politics extend far beyond the official realm of the state” (Chomiak, 2011:3). Because those living under authoritarianism frequently outwardly profess allegiance to the regime (Wedeen, 1999), a focus on overtly political institutions distracts from the study of arenas where ideology is more genuinely contested. A focus on education in an authoritarian context provides the opportunity to both assess the long-term impacts of educational reform and to demonstrate how ideological struggles are contested in arenas not immediately considered as political.

This is not to say that education is never mentioned in the discipline. Rather, the present scholarship on education tends to focus on level of education without paying much attention to the quality of education. Level of education is a well-known prerequisite for the maintenance of a democratic system (Lipset, 1959). The political socialization literature specifies a number of democratic beliefs and behaviors that tend to be associated with high levels of education. At the same time, the experiences of many scholars of Comparative Politics and the empirics of work in authoritarian contexts demonstrate that educational curricula can be harnessed to ends that are distinctly not democratic. The discrepancy between the conclusions of the political socialization literature about the democratizing effects of education and the role of education in authoritarian contexts in facilitating the development of authoritarian values has been possible because the majority of the literature assessing the socializing potential of education does so in democracies, and particularly in the American context. As a result, scholars know very little about what factors facilitate the cooptation of education by authoritarian regimes. Because of the expansion of mass public education around the
world, and the high number of authoritarian regimes, a stronger understanding of the relationship between regime type and education is of great scholarly and public policy importance.

**Lipset’s Social Requisites of Democracy**

Although scholars have been interested in the relationship between education and democracy for centuries, Seymour Martin Lipset introduced the subject to the field of Comparative Politics. In his seminal work on the social requisites of democracy, Lipset argues economic development and legitimacy are the foundation that supports democracy (1959:72). While the work is not directly focused on education, he does employ education as an indicator for economic development along with three other factors: industrialization, wealth, and urbanization. Lipset is careful and measured, providing a host of caveats to the relationship he presumes between education and democracy. He cautions, “The high correlations which appear in the data to be presented between democracy and other institutional characteristics of societies must not be overly stressed, since unique events may account for either the persistence or the failure of democracy in any particular society” (1959:72).\(^1\) Repeatedly throughout the article, Lipset counsels that attention must be paid to local circumstances in assessing why an individual country does or does no support a democratic system.

Lipset’s conception of “social requisites” is rooted in his view of democracy. According to this view, “a democratic political system gathers some momentum, and creates some social supports (institutions) to ensure its continued existence” (1959:72).

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\(^1\) Further thoughts on Lipset’s view of the relationship between education and democracy can be found in footnote 18 where he highlights how Dewey differentiates between education that promotes personal development and disciplinary training.
Democratic regimes produce institutions that serve to uphold the systems; they contain internal mechanisms for their own reproduction. Recent scholarship suggests Lipset’s theory is cast too narrowly; it is not democracy which has its own momentum, but regimes regardless of type. Regimes develop institutions that further entrench their own rules of the game. In the same way that democracy is supported by a host of “social requisites” that the regime has a role in crafting, so authoritarian regimes are self-reinforcing, developing institutions that “support” their longevity.²

Although Lipset employs education as an indicator of economic development, his theoretical discussion of the relationship between education and democracy signals that his understanding of the relationship between the two is more concerned with political, rather than economic, development. Lipset’s conceptualization of education, based on the work of John Dewey, is laced with a certain set of assumptions that he makes explicit: “Education presumably broadens men’s outlooks, enables them to understand the need for the norms of tolerance, restrains them from adhering to extremist and monistic doctrines, and increases their capacity to make rational decisions” (1959:79). Lipset’s view of education, although framed as an indicator for economic development, is rooted in the idea that education is a project for socializing citizens. Taking into account the broader conception of the relationship between regime type and social requisites discussed above, Lipset’s theory of the relationship between education and democracy can also be extended. In Lipset’s conception, education supports democracy because it encourages people to be open-minded, tolerant, moderate and

² See, for example, the work of Amaney Jamal (2007) on civil society or Jennifer Gandhi’s (2008) work on the role of seemingly democratic institutions in authoritarian contexts.
rational. Following a similar logic, education supports authoritarianism when it encourages people to be close-minded, intolerant, extremist and irrational.

**Almond and Verba’s Civic Culture (1963)**

Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba’s *Civic Culture* initiated the political culture literature and served as the forerunner to the political socialization literature. Interestingly, even though the political socialization literature has overwhelmingly addressed democratic cases, the work that would inspire it was not focused exclusively on democratic cases. This was due in part to the experiences of scholars coming of age during World War II. Gabriel Almond, perhaps the father of Comparative Politics, explained his choice of research subjects with the following rationale:

I have been concerned about the big problems, first the Depression, the New Deal, the war, National Socialism, fascism. Take Germany. Here’s the country that invented higher education in the social sciences, where the first real social science journal was published, edited by Max Weber, going Nazi. It drove me crazy. I felt obliged to study these problems however I could. (Munck and Snyder, 2007:6, fn11).

The contradiction that propelled an aspect of Almond’s research agenda was the shock that education is not a panacea. It does not necessarily prevent authoritarianism. In the German case it even facilitated horrific violence. His work with Sidney Verba assessing the existence of a “civic culture” was his attempt to make sense of the relationship between culture and regime.

It was Almond and Verba who first attempted to conceptualize the relationship between culture and regime type. They argued that culture is related to regime through individuals’ orientations. They saw political culture as rooted in cognitive, affective and evaluational orientations, each having four dimensions: systems, inputs, outputs and the self as a participant. Based on these orientations, political cultures can be divided into
three types: parochial, subject and participant and several mixed-types. The three main
types of political cultures correspond to the three types of polities: traditional,
authoritarian and democratic. Political culture is then rooted in an orientation, rather
than a set of values. The orientation is fostered through socialization, but Almond and
Verba saw the environment in which the individual is raised and participates as more
significant for developing these orientations than the content of school curricula.
Further, the authors acknowledged that though political culture plays an important role
in linking state and society, at the individual level there are frequently contradictions and
competing orientations. To assess this relationship, the authors examine five cases: the
USA, Britain, France, Italy, and Mexico.

The heart of the work is Chapter 15, where they assess whether there is a
distinctly democratic political culture, a “civic culture” that “fosters democratic stability”
(1963: 473). Note that the interest is in how culture sustains a particular political system,
rather than whether it facilitates a transition. Almond and Verba conceive of this culture
as a balance between participation and non-participation and affective (emotional) and
instrumental (pragmatic) involvement. The system is underpinned by linkages of trust
among citizens themselves and between citizens and elites. Finally, in a civic culture,
cleavages must be significant enough to facilitate choice and therefore elections, but not
so severe as to undermine stability.

This early effort to understand the relationship between political culture and
regime, although focused on the relationship between the civic culture and democracy,
offers a starting point for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between
education and the socializing potential of education. The work implies that socialization
can lead to different types of political cultures, a position which suggests education can just as easily be used to encourage the development of authoritarian values as democratic values. Unfortunately, the program that it inspired, the political socialization literature, has thus far done little to assess the socializing power of education in authoritarian contexts.

The Political Socialization Literature

The work that has most directly addressed the role of education in the political process is the political socialization literature. Political socialization looks at the process through which people develop an understanding of the political culture in which they live. This section presents those weaknesses in order to highlight their impact on the wider field of Comparative Politics and the discipline in general. I argue that an emphasis on studying socialization in democratic contexts has contributed to a belief that education is inherently democratizing, obscuring the potential of education to inculcate values conducive to authoritarianism.

“Political socialization as a sub-field was born during a brief and uneasy marriage between social anthropology and political science. If society had a culture, so also did the polity. Thus, reasoning by analogy, it was held that a thing called “political culture” could be empirically identified and thence applied to the study of politics. The analogy continued. If a political culture could be assumed so also could the processes whereby each new generation came to know the expectations and obligations of that culture. These processes and the agencies of their transmission came to be known as political socialization” (Prewitt, 1975: 105).

The above quote demonstrates how the study of political socialization is embedded in the study of political culture, a field that has been plagued by criticism.
Political culture research has been called a “residual category” (Lane, 1992:362), meaning that it is used as an explanation when other explanations have been exhausted rather than because of the strength its theories offer. It has also been called a “degenerate research program” since it has not maintained momentum or consistently made significant contributions to the study of politics (Laitin, 1995:168). It has been criticized as dealing “very inadequately with political change,” a critique first made by Rogowski (1974) (Eckstein, 1988:789). This difficulty with explaining change is similar to the critique of historical institutionalism discussed in the Introduction, that it poorly handles institutional dynamism. In light of this critique, educational reform offers an interesting means of explaining both political change and resulting institutional change.

Eckstein himself addresses the field’s need to more directly address political change, and to do so he refers to education. Eckstein (1988) suggests, “although learning is regarded as continuous throughout life (which is not likely to be questioned) early learning—all prior learning—is regarded as a sort of filter for later learning: early learning conditions later learning and is harder to undo.” (Eckstein, 1988:791). Based on this understanding of early learning as particularly significant for filtering future information and decisions, Eckstein offers the following summary of how political socialization is embedded in political culture and structures behavior: “cultural' people process experience into action through general cognitive, affective, and evaluative predispositions; the patterns of such predispositions vary from society to society, from social segment to social segment; they do not vary because objective social situations or structures vary but because of culturally determined learning; early learning conditions later learning and learning involves a process of seeking coherence in
dispositions and this is so in order to 'economize' in decisions to act and to achieve predictability in social interactions" (Eckstein, 1988:792, emphasis mine). Political cultures vary because processes of political socialization vary. In addition, not all processes of political socialization are equal. Those that occur earlier in one’s life influence how later processes of political socialization are integrated into one’s belief system. According to this logic, elementary education and early experiences with the family are particularly important for processes of socialization. One way to systematize the study of political culture is to systematize the study of political socialization and to look for regional patterns or significant relationships.

The political culture research program offers another point of interest for the purposes of this study. Culture is not merely values but is “points of concern” that are “janus-faced” (Laitin, 1988:589), meaning that people do not have to have shared values to be of the same culture, they need only to be concerned with the same issues, though they may fall on either side of those issues. In addition to these points of concern, people also instrumentalize culture. They are not only shaped by it but they also use it in ways that are convenient. This is important for the study of this project because it is irrelevant rather the Islamic education program actually changed people’s core beliefs. What matters is that it changed the way that they present their beliefs in public, thus shaping and limiting others beliefs and behaviors.

The political socialization literature itself also suffers from several weaknesses.\(^3\) Perhaps the most significant issue is that political socialization research has overwhelmingly focused on the American context. Langton and Jennings (1968), one of

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\(^3\) See Prewitt (1975) for a more in-depth analysis of the problems of the field.
the leading works on political socialization, and Diana Owen (2004) examine the role of civics classes in the United States. Similarly, the authors in McDonell et al. (2000) argue that although American public schools are facing new and unique challenges, they can continue to be effective means of training the next generation of citizens. Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996), take the study of political socialization a step further, assessing the impact of Americans knowledge about politics and how it influences their decisions. Conover and Searing (2002) extend their study to a comparison of the United States and Britain, assessing the impact of political discussion and the structural impediments to higher quality conversations.

Although focused almost exclusively on the American context, a number of findings are useful for understanding the socialization process. Political socialization scholarship has found overwhelming support for the idea that what children are taught in school matters for future political contexts (Langton and Jennings, 1968; McDonell et al., 2000, Owen, 2004). Increased civic knowledge encourages commitment to democratic values and political participation, and helps citizens to understand the connections between their interests, specific public policy proposals and candidate platforms while also decreasing the likelihood that voters will select candidates based on personal characteristics (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996). In other words, coursework can influence student values and how they choose to act on those values. Interestingly, Conover and Searing (2002) found that courses not traditionally associated with civics training, like English classes, could be more effective at socializing students than traditional civics courses. Because a great deal of the empirics offered in this project assess the long-term effects of changes to the Islamic education curricula for public
schools, the work of Conover and Searing (2002) suggests these changes were particularly significant.

Jaimie Bleck’s dissertation (2011) *Schooling Citizens: Education, Citizenship, and Democracy in Mali* makes a contribution to the study of education and democratization. She finds that any kind of schooling whether public or private, religious or secular contributes to “democratic deepening” or to higher levels of political knowledge and participation. Interestingly, her work also identifies a negative correlation between parents who enroll their children in private religious schools and voting. Bleck’s work in a West African country is a welcome addition to a field otherwise dominated by studies of the American context. As Mali descends into authoritarianism after the 2011 military coup, her continued work in the country may yield important contributions to the relationship between authoritarianism or democratic transition and education.

**Education and Authoritarianism**

Though the political socialization literature has not yet taken into account the role of education in authoritarian contexts where the content of school curriculums is frequently tightly controlled and imbued with ideology, other disciplines have examined these trends. As early as the 1930s, scholars expressed concern about the educational system in Nazi Germany for exactly these reasons.\(^4\) Nazi control of the educational system extended to the minutest detail; every book, paper, magazine, and school subject was proscribed from a centralized authority (Beard, 1936). The Chinese educational system is known for similar characteristics (Pepper, 2000; Curran, 2005; Schneewind, 2006). Chinese schools are saturated with ideology. Schneewind, for

\(^4\) For example, see above comment by Gabriel Almond.
example, discusses how Chinese community schools were used to stress harmony and respect for authority as virtues, supporting the above suggestion that the socializing potential of education applies to democratic and authoritarian regimes. It is not that education builds democratic values and behaviors, but that it is influential on beliefs and practices. Most relevant for this study is Pepper’s (2000) work examining educational reform conflict in Maoist China during the Cultural Revolution. Pepper discusses how the educational politics of the Cultural Revolution were not random reforms but the culmination of a much-longer term policy. Pepper demonstrates how contemporary policies must be understood in light of the history of educational reform. This project makes a similar argument, that the educational reforms of Morocco in the early twenty-first century must be understood in the broader context of twentieth century history, but is unique in that it focuses on the specific strategy of using education to fragment the opposition.

Recent work examines the relationship between state-provided Islamic education and authoritarianism. Gregory Starrett, in his seminal work *Putting Islam to Work: Education, Politics and Religious Transformation in Egypt* (1998) argues that the incorporation of Western pedagogical techniques paired with the state’s increasing involvement in the provision of religious education has led to a religious resurgence in Egypt. Starrett differentiates between private Islamic education based on the recitation of texts and state-led systems of Islamic education rooted in moral indoctrination. I make a similar differentiation in the conclusion of the dissertation, where I argue that the

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5 Egypt under Hosni Mubarak is more accurately an electoral authoritarian regime than a competitive authoritarian regime (Levitsky and Way, 2002). Although not a competitive authoritarian regime, the work demonstrates how Islamic education can be harnessed to larger authoritarian strategies.
Moroccan curriculum is now focused on promoting universalist values like toleration and communication as well as Islamic mysticism, or Sufism, that is considered more tolerant rather than encouraging the memorization of texts.

The most significant contribution of Starrett’s work for the purpose of this dissertation, however, is the identification of Islamic education as a means of structuring political opposition. Starrett argues that with the regime’s increasing reliance on Islamic symbols to compete with Islamist opposition movements “clear alternatives disappear, and the country is moved ever closer to political crisis” (1998:19). More specifically, the regime’s use of religion as a tactic has encouraged the Salafization of society. “Each new attempt to correct mistaken ideas by furthering the penetration of Islamic discourse in public space creates an intensification of the conflict between parties seeking to control the discourse. In becoming hegemonic, Islam (like political economy, or evolutionary theory, or Marxism, or any of a half-dozen other comprehensive ideological systems) is forced by necessity not only to provoke limited counterlanguages, but to become itself the language in which cultural and political battles are fought by the vast majority of interested parties” (p.219). It is not clear how much the lack of “clear alternatives” inspired the social movement that overthrew the regime of Hosni Mubarak in 2011, though it undoubtedly played a role. The Egyptian case thus highlights the dangers of regimes relying on the same religious symbols utilized by the opposition; the resulting hegemony encourages rather than discourages reliance on religious forms of dissent. Education, when used as part of a larger strategy of promoting a particular ideology, risks encouraging rather than framing religious dissent.
Louis Brenner’s (2001) *Controlling Knowledge: Religion, Power and Schooling in a West African Muslim Society* also documents the ways Islamic education becomes enmeshed in conflicts over what it means to be a Muslim in a particular context. Brenner shows how prior to the 1980s, médersas facilitated social integration and did not facilitate the development of extremist religious belief, which he calls intégrisme. In the 1980s, however, the Malian state incorporated these institutions into the larger public education landscape. Brenner fears that this policy politicized local Islamic education as part of larger state strategies to control the population and may actually encourage the development of intégrisme. Like Pepper (2000), Brenner’s work also captures the intersection of international development discourse and the domestic politics of education.

As a predecessor to the present work, the most significant point to emphasize is how Brenner demonstrates the difficulties of “controlling knowledge” and how much conflicts over knowledge reveal about society at large. In fact, Brenner’s work is both a history of educational politics and a social history of Mali, a vivid illustration of the intimacy of educational politics with wider social conflicts. Specifically, conflicts over schooling involving identity and educational politics: Who are we? What types of knowledge do we value enough to transfer to our children? What is the best means of communicating that knowledge? Brenner writes,

> This confrontation produces a discursive space (on the level of savoir) in which, for example, the médersa constituencies and the advocates of secular schooling debate about schooling. An individual might participate in this debate in the hope of influencing its shape as well as the views of others, but no single participant can control the ‘knowledges’ that circulate in this discursive environment. Nor, seemingly, can governments: secularist policies have never succeeded in prohibiting Muslim issues and
‘knowledges’ from entering the public discursive space, just as French-language schooling did not succeed in producing loyal subjects (2001:306).

Conflict over educational reform mirror larger social conflicts. The multiple groups and individuals that participate in these conflicts have varying degrees of significance and impact, but no single group really controls the outcome of these conflicts. In the same way that the Malian state was never able to control knowledge, so the Moroccan regime’s educational policies have had a number of unintended consequences, a fact I address in Chapters 6 and 7.

**Ideological State Apparatuses**

An understanding of education and authoritarian regimes can be further strengthened by reference to Louis Althusser’s (1976) concepts of repressive state apparatuses and ideological state apparatuses (ISA). The former includes the usual suspects: “the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the courts, the Prisons” while the latter includes “the religious ISA (the system of the different Churches), the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private ‘Schools’), the family ISA, the legal ISA, the political ISA (the political system, including the different Parties), the trade-union ISA, the communications ISA (press, radio and television, etc.), the cultural ISA (literature, the Arts, sports, etc.).” (1976:142-3). The distinction is meaningful because “no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses” (1976:146). In other words, the group that controls ideology, will eventually control the instruments of repression. In addition to the primacy of ideological state apparatuses, Althusser argues that of the assorted institutions which form them, education is the most significant: “I believe that the ideological State apparatus which has been installed in the
"dominant" position in mature capitalist social formations as a result of a violent political and ideological class struggle against the old dominant ideological State apparatus, is the educational ideological apparatus" (1976:152). He reasons that prior to the reformation, the church monopolized a large number of ideological functions. In contemporary times, the public school is the primary locust of regime efforts to shape citizens' beliefs and practices because a number of countries have moved to remove the church from the political sphere and because the creation of national public education systems is seen as desirable by the international community. Consequently, the cost of manipulating citizens' political culture is less and the effects are more widespread in the educational ideological apparatus than in other ISAs.

Combining the ideas of Linz and Stepan with Althusser, the public school can be theorized to be the primary mechanism employed by authoritarian regimes to prevent the development of autonomous political space. The public school participates in the prevention of the development of autonomous political space in multiple ways. First, it provides a training ground that facilitates the understanding of the power relations in which the child will function as an adult:

the reproduction of labour power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order, i.e. a reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they, too, will provide for the domination of the ruling class 'in words'. In other words, the school (but also other State institutions like the Church, or other apparatuses like the Army) teaches 'know-how', but in forms which ensure subjection to the ruling ideology or the mastery of its 'practice'. All the agents of production, exploitation and repression, not to speak of the 'professionals of ideology' (Marx), must in one way or another be 'steeped' in this ideology in order to perform their tasks 'conscientiously' – the tasks of the exploited (the proletarians), of the exploiters (the capitalists'), of the
exploiters’ auxiliaries (the managers), or of the high priests of the ruling ideology (its ‘functionaries’), etc. (p.133).

Second, schools can provide a “sorting” function conducive to the needs of the state and employers (Pepper, 2000:29). Schools facilitate the identification of the most talented individuals to run state and private institutions. Finally, schools that function as institutions of discipline reduce the cost of repression by increasing consent. The significance of the school in performing these functions was highlighted in the 1970s in response to the work of the comparativist James Coleman. Coleman, in a report for the United States government, demonstrated that the expected inputs such as amount of spending per child were not the most significant at influencing student performance. Other factors like parents’ economic class were much more significant at predicting student performance. In response, “Adherents of the ‘new’ perspective argued that although formal schooling might not be particularly reliable in terms of either cognitive or economic outcomes, it did play an important role in reproducing the social order... ” (Pepper, 2000:29). Schools function as extensions of the ideological apparatus by producing obedient workers easily distributed to fulfill functions needed by the state.

**Competitive Authoritarian Regimes**

In light of the understanding that education can facilitate the development of a number of different values, the role of education in authoritarian regimes is in need of greater examination, particularly in terms of the varying forms of authoritarianism. Since identified by Juan Linz (1975), the study of authoritarianism has led to the development of a number of different types of authoritarianism including Bureaucratic Authoritarianism (O'Donnell, 1973), military authoritarianism (Geddes, 1999), monarchies, competitive authoritarian regimes (Levitsky and Way, 2002) and electoral
authoritarianism (Schedler, 2006). The idea that education may function differently in different types of regimes was specified by Linz (1975). Linz acknowledges that education has a special role in totalitarian systems, and that subjects are more likely to be educated in totalitarian than other forms of authoritarian systems, but he does not address the politicization of that education. Rather he seems to imply that any education is better than none at all: “The importance of ideology also has positive aspects, in the sense of making education a highly valued activity, making selective cultural efforts and their mass diffusion highly desirable” (p.192). I share Linz’s suspicion that regime type is significant for the nature of educational politics in any given country, but I question his suggestion that an ideological education is superior to no education at all. The focus on this dissertation on competitive authoritarian regimes is not to suggest that education will not be politicized in other forms of authoritarianism, but rather to specify what it is about competitive authoritarian regimes that suggests they are likely to politicize educational reforms.

Competitive authoritarian regimes are best characterized by the terms cooptation, subtlety, and instability. They differ from authoritarian regimes in that they maintain the appearance of democratic institutions, though the rules of the game are so frequently violated “that the regime fails to meet conventional minimum standards for democracy” (Levitsky and Way, 2002:52). While competitive authoritarian regimes are not democratic, it is also inappropriate to classify them as pure authoritarian.

Authoritarian regimes, unlike competitive authoritarian regimes, do not even attempt to

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6 These minimum standards are: “1) Executives and legislatures are chosen through elections that are open, free, and fair; 2) virtually all adults possess the right to vote; 3) political rights and civil liberties, including freedom of the press, freedom of association, and freedom to criticize the government without reprisal, are broadly protected; and 4) elected authorities possess real authority to govern, in that they are not subject to the tutelary control of military or clerical leaders” (Levitsky and Way, 2002:53).
appear democratic. While the democratic rules of the game are manipulated in competitive authoritarian regimes, “they are unable to eliminate them or reduce them to a mere façade” (Levitsky and Way, 2002:53). As a result, competitive authoritarian regimes resort to more understated ways of manipulating the playing field and harassing the opposition. It is this need to subtly influence opposition politics that makes educational reform an appealing approach to managing relations with the opposition.

Because competitive authoritarian regimes maintain democratic institutions, opportunities arise for the opposition to challenge the regime in particular arenas. Levitsky and Way suggest that the four most significant arenas are electoral competition, the legislature, the judiciary, and the media. While these four are significant, they are also distinctly political. Because a characteristic of competitive authoritarian regimes is subtlety, another useful area of democratic contestation is public education. Although a significant number of foreign aid dollars are frequently present in competitive authoritarian regimes to pay for education, this arena is also much less likely to be monitored by foreign NGOs and governments who are more concerned with elections, personal freedoms, and the power of elected bodies. As such, it is an area ripe for manipulation.

The “coexistence of democratic rules and autocratic methods” make competitive authoritarian regimes inherently unstable (Levitsky and Way, 2002:59). Democratic institutions, by definition, provide opportunities for the opposition to challenge the regime. Because of the costs of repression and the presence of a number of actors monitoring the traditionally political arenas highlighted above, the manipulation of public education is a particularly appealing course of action. The political socialization
literature has demonstrated that what is taught at school matters for future political contexts. Thus the use of education to manipulate the appeal of various ideologies and therefore opposition movements allows competitive authoritarian regimes to maintain their democratic institutions without seriously risking their own monopoly on power.

Competitive authoritarian regimes are not all equally likely to undergo democratic transitions. Levitsky and Way argue that proximity to the West is a significant factor in predicting democratic transitions in competitive authoritarian regimes. Due to Morocco’s consistently strong relationship with France and the United States, the failure of the country to undergo democratic transition suggests a puzzle. How has the country been able to prevent democratization? I argue in this dissertation that the manipulation of public education is one mechanism by which the regime has prevented the development of autonomous political space and therefore democratic transition. How does this process take place? Because competitive authoritarian regimes by definition present opportunities for challengers to contest the regime, the regime must prevent the development of a viable opposition. Regimes can employ reforms to public education to discourage or encourage adherence to particular ideologies, therefore maintaining a weak and divided opposition unable to capitalize on the opportunities afforded by the arenas of contestation. The regimes ability to encourage or discourage particular ideological orientations is rooted in its access to ideological state apparatuses (Althusser, 1976).

The difference between democracies and competitive authoritarian regimes is that the former “do not fundamentally alter the playing field between government and opposition” (Levitsky and Way, 2002:53). In a regime defined by its tendency to
manipulate the opposition, education can be expected to be co-opted in a similar way to electoral institutions. In a democracy, education is also politicized, but in a different way; groups attempt to influence school curricula in competition with one another. While education is politicized in both democratic and authoritarian regimes, the defining characteristics of competitive authoritarian regimes suggest that education will be politicized in a particular direction, with the goal of discouraging the development of meaningful political opposition. In Linz and Stepan’s (1996) terms, competitive authoritarian regimes are likely to use education to prevent the development of autonomous political space. Though the politicization of education in either democratic or authoritarian contexts is not ideal for educational goals, I conclude by arguing education in competitive authoritarian regimes can have particularly nefarious effects on the development of autonomous political society due to the path-dependent effects of educational reform.

**Educational Reform and Path Dependence**

Educational reforms create the conditions of path dependence. Educational reforms have long-lasting effects because of the role of early childhood socialization in serving as a filter for future political decisions and behaviors. At the same time, struggles over educational reforms are institutionalized and in some ways reified in their distillation into curricula. This is in line with the approach of “historical institutionalists [who] see institutions as enduring legacies of political struggles” (Thelen, 1999:388). School curriculum is an institution that reflects the struggles over educational reforms and continuously influences future political actors until the next reform. All educational reforms thus create the conditions of path dependence. But these effects are different in competitive authoritarian regimes than in democracies because the former must
consistently work to prevent the development of an effective political opposition in order to maintain itself. As a result, struggles over educational reform will not be “fair fights.” The interests of the ruling regime will be given preference over other groups competing to influence school curriculum. The long-term impact of these policies is in reducing the autonomy of political society by manipulating the ideological landscape with a particular interest in preventing the development of meaningful political opposition.

The logic of competitive authoritarian regimes reducing autonomous political space follows the steps of a path dependent argument based on the work of Paul Pierson (2000). As discussed in the introduction, path dependent arguments require a series of steps: a period of indeterminateness, a choice, the closing of the political opportunity structure as a result of the choice and the stabilization of the system through a mechanism of reproduction. By definition, educational reform in competitive authoritarian regimes fulfills these criteria. Because competitive authoritarian regimes maintain the institutions of democracy, they allow a degree of debate on policy matters. The educational reform is the choice, and its implementation implies the closing of the political opportunity structure to a degree, based on the assumption of a unified statewide public school curriculum. The training of teachers in the reform and their position as bureaucrats provides incentives to implement the curriculum reforms. This is not to say that there are not ways that teachers can and do subvert goals. This does not negate a path dependent argument. Rather, the scholar needs only to show that a particular course of action has been incentivized or encouraged, not that all possible actors always take that course of action. Mass public education, by its very nature, provides its own mechanism of reproduction. Reform processes are costly politically.
and financially, thus they are not undertaken continuously. During the period before reforms, the most recent reform will continuously be implemented year after year, socializing students in particular ways that will continue to shape their political beliefs and behavior even if the reform is later repealed. Thus, educational reform is inherently path dependent, but educational reform in competitive authoritarian regimes in unique in the predictability that it will facilitate the stunting of effective political opposition.
CHAPTER 5
ISLAMISTS AND LEFTISTS

This dissertation argues that post-Independence educational reforms have been used to privilege certain ideologies or interpretations of Islam as part of larger efforts to structure opposition politics in Morocco. This chapter provides a history of the primary ideological cleavage in Moroccan society, between Islamists and leftists,¹ setting the stage for a later analysis, found in Chapters 6 and 7, of how the monarchy and the Independence party oversaw reforms to the educational curricula that eventually led to the decimation of leftist opposition groups and the Salafization² of Moroccan public space. In line with the overarching critical junctures argument, this chapter addresses how independence represented an opening in the political opportunity structure when competing ideologies active in the country vied to institutionalize their values. This opening is represented both in the structural opportunity afforded by the end of colonial rule and by the multiplicity of ideologies active in the country at the time of independence.

The chapter begins by discussing the difficulties of characterizing the ideology that underpinned the Moroccan nationalist movement and the later independence party. I specify why I prefer the term Islamic modernism to describe the ideology of this period instead of the more politicized term Salafist. I then detail the history of Islamic modernism in the country by specifying four key Moroccan believers and their role in

¹ I am aware that there are those who would disagree with me on this point. But there are a number of scholars who agree. Monjib (2009), for example, writes, “As to the divide between secular advocates and Islamists, it remains obviously the major divide that splits political activists.” Later in the same work, he writes “Is democracy-building in Morocco possible without an entente between the two main and most vibrant intellectual currents in Moroccan civil society: Islamism and the Left?” (p.27-8, emphasis mine).

² See discussions below for my understanding of this term.
facilitating the spread of Islamic modernism and joining it with the nationalist movement.

This combination of a political movement, the nationalist movement and a religious movement, Islamic modernism, strengthened both of them. I then describe how a splinter group in the nationalist movement developed, eventually breaking off and forming its own political party initiating what would become fifty years of Islamist-leftist conflict in the country, a development I address in the fourth and final section.

**Islamic Modernism and Salafism in Morocco**

There are some complications with describing the ideology deployed in the Moroccan nationalist struggle. Although much of the literature refers to Moroccan nationalists as Salafists, the ideology was rooted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Egyptian Islamic modernism of Jamal al-din al-Afghani, Muhammad ‘Abduh and Rashid Rida (Nasr, 1963; Pennell, 2000). This discrepancy between the actual ideology employed and the name by which it was called is likely due to the fact that the major Moroccan nationalist ‘Allal al-Fasi himself used the term “Salafiyah” in his memoirs (1948). Subsequent scholars, presumably relying on al-Fasi, have characterized the nationalists as Salafists. Because al-Fasi’s ideology was rooted in the ideas of al-Afghani, ‘Abduh and Rida, and because they did not refer to themselves as Salafists (Lauziere, 2010), I have chosen to use the term Islamic modernist to refer to the ideology of the Moroccan nationalists, which has a more specific and less politicized connotation. This is all the more necessary because in contemporary times Salafism refers to groups with very different ideologies than it did at the time when al-Fasi employed the term.

Even though I use the term Islamic modernist to describe the ideology of the nationalists, the Islamist movements that develop in Morocco in the 1980s and 1990s
are more closely aligned with the contemporary connotation of Salafism. For this reason I name the social changes inaugurated by educational reform as the “Salafization” of Moroccan public discourse in line with Hicham Ben Abdallah El Alaoui (2011). I feel some hesitation in doing so since the contemporary media frequently use the term “Salafist” as interchangeable with terrorist or extremist, without concern for the content of the ideology motivating the individual. This is irresponsible and inaccurate; Salafism is a particular interpretation of Islam popular in the twenty-first century, but it should not be conflated with Salafi jihadism, which is the term for those Salafis who advocate violence. So to summarize, the Moroccan nationalists and the subsequent Independence party are rooted in the ideas of Islamic modernism, an ideology that is the forerunner to contemporary Salafism but is distinct from it. More recent Islamist movements in Morocco, however, are better characterized as Salafist.

In the twenty-first century, Salafism is an attempt to apply an understanding of Islam based on a literalist reading of scripture and an attempt to replicate the practices of the first three generations of Muslims (Meijer, 2011). Salafist belief is characterized by rejection of non-Islamic institutions. The Islamic modernists, on the other hand, had a very different approach to reconciling their faith with the challenges of the day and indeed called for the incorporation of many European institutions.

The Islamic Modernists and the Moroccan Nationalists

This section defends my assertion that Moroccan nationalists are more appropriately referred to as Islamic modernists rather than Salafists, by describing the congruency of the nationalists ideology, as expressed by the nationalist leader ‘Allal al-Fasi, with the Islamic modernists and specifically Muhammad ‘Abduh. It also specifies one way in which the Moroccan nationalists did resemble modern day Salafis, and that
is in their rejection of Sufism. The illumination of the antagonism in Moroccan Islamic modernism toward Sufism is necessary because long-term policy in the country eventually shifts from supporting the former to the latter, a development I address in the conclusion. Without an understanding of the hostility between these two interpretations, it is impossible to understand what a dramatic shift in policy this represents.

The writings of Muhammad ‘Abduh, were very influential on ‘Allal al-Fasi, the leading member of the Moroccan nationalist party. Muhammad ‘Abduh was a nineteenth century Egyptian scholar and one of the founders of Islamic modernism, the first major ideological movement that sought to reconcile Islam with European institutions and ideas. Al-Fasi came into contact with this ideology during his years as a student in his father’s school and later as a university student at Qarawiyyin University in Fez where activists circulated major Islamic modernist publications, such as the Rida’s newspaper al-Manar.

‘Abduh did not reject the changes that characterized late-nineteenth century Egyptian society, but he was concerned with how such changes were fracturing society. In particular, ‘Abduh feared “the danger of a division of society into two spheres without a real link—a sphere, always diminishing, to which the laws and moral principles of Islam ruled, and another, always growing, in which principles derived by human reason from considerations of worldly utility held sway” (Hourani, 1962:136). ‘Abduh did not reject change, but he feared that those who too easily accepted it would become alienated from those who too quickly dismissed it. ‘Abduh felt his life’s purpose was to stand in the gap between these two divisions, in hopes of preserving the unity of the Islamic umma or community:
Abduh’s purpose, in all the acts of his later life as well as his writings, was to bridge the gulf within Islamic society [between those who accepted and those who rejected modern institutions and ideas], and in so doing to strengthen its moral roots. He thought this could only be done in one way. It could not be done by a return to the past, by stopping the process of change begun by Muhammad ‘Ali. It could only be done by accepting the need for change, and by linking that change to the principles of Islam: by showing that the changes which were taking place were not only permitted by Islam, but were indeed its necessary implications if it was rightly understood, and that Islam could serve both as a principle of change and a salutary control over it (Hourani, 1962:139).

This quote demonstrates the primary difference between Islamic modernists and contemporary Salafists: their views on the relationship between religion and social transformation. ‘Abduh believed that change was inevitable and proper Islamic practice, not heretical innovation. The religion itself assisted in filtering change, but was in no way hostile to it.

‘Abduh’s influence on al-Fasi is evident in a text the latter wrote while in Cairo in 1952. In it, al-Fasi laments, “One aspect of the intellectual weakness which has afflicted most people today is the division of society into two camps: those who hold that whatever the Ancients did or thought constitutes the truth… and those who are so dominated by their desire for novelty and invention that they come to believe that everything inherited from the past should be swept away” (Abdel-Malek, 1983:97). It is important to note that al-Fasi would not place himself in either camp, although later scholars would characterize him as a man of “tradition,” as compared to Moroccan leftists like Mehdi Ben Barka. Like ‘Abduh, al-Fasi sought a sort of synthesis between these two camps, rooted in critical evaluation of ideas, both new and old.

Fasi argues that some institutions that are old in age are actually quite modern in idea and utility, while some ideas that are in vogue at the time would never have been acceptable in ages past. “The root of the mistake some people make is that they
confuse the contemporary with contemporaneity, what is contemporary with what is happening contemporaneously” (Abdel-Malek, 1983:97). It is evident that al-Fasi defined contemporary as that is what is useful in the present times, not that which is developed during that period. Al-Fasi thought that innovations should be judged on their own merit, regardless of their age. Through critical reflection the best ideas of the past could be united with the innovations of the present to form the basis of a healthy, modern, Islamic society.

From their writings, it is obvious that both al-Fasi and ‘Abduh noticed and feared how society was already being split. ‘Abduh argues that this division was reflected in two types of schools: traditional schools and European schools. Each school had a primary strength and weakness. The former, maintained connection with the past and one’s moral foundation but was stagnating in imitation of the West by uncritically adopting Western subjects. The latter taught the European sciences at a high level but did so without a moral foundation. ‘Abduh believed the ideal school would combine the strengths of both of these two institutions. Prior to his exile in Egypt, al-Fasi taught at a school that attempted to do just what ‘Abduh advocated, combine the teaching of the latest scientific advances with Islam as a moral compass. The centrality of education to the Islamic modernist project would remain a significant influence on al-Fasi’s political ideology throughout his life and would influence policy once the Moroccan nationalist party, Istiqlal, was in a position to govern.

Abduh’s suggested educational reforms should be understood as part of his larger purpose in life: to bridge the gap between the two spirits that reigned in Egypt in an effort to secure the country’s moral foundation. In this process, Islam was the
“controlling and limiting factor” (Hourani, 1962:161) that helped believers to determine what should be accepted from modernity and what should be rejected. “Islam as he [Abduh] conceived it was a principle of restraint: it would enable Muslims to distinguish what was good from what was bad among all the suggested directions of change” (Hourani, 1962:140).

While ‘Abduh highlights the role of Islam in determining what was good in modernity, al-Fasi emphasized national unity above all else. In the same text quoted above, he wrote, “Any thought which seeks to divide [the nation.] to disrupt its unity and extinguish it as a national entity with its own specific and particular characteristics is inadmissible” (Abdel-Malek, 1983:99). According to al-Fasi, decisions should be made about what is good in modernity according to its impact on national unity not according to Islamic principles. Indeed, it is rather remarkable how little Islam is mentioned in the remainder of the text.

Like ‘Abduh, al-Fasi did not reject change, but he feared changes that moved Morocco too far from its identity. For al-Fasi, there was something fixed and unchanging about Morocco and all reform had to be subordinated to that essence in order for the nation to be preserved. He wrote, “Now although the preservation of the nation in precisely the form it had in the past is not essential to this kind of continuity, it is vital that the transformation should take place within the framework of an established identity and on the basis of a progressive methodology which will open new vistas, without either diverting our society from its fundamental course or disfiguring its sense of self. For us, Morocco is only worth something as the homeland of the people who united Arab civilization and Islamic culture; Morocco, swollen with immigrants and foreigners
and forced into an alien mould, would no longer be the Morocco for which we are prepared to die and to which we are so devoted” (Abdel-Malek, 1983:99, emphasis mine).

Al-Fasi called for a type of synthesis that maintained the essence of the nation while still allowing it to advance. “The only way to avoid such an outcome [the destruction of the nation] is to direct the nation towards progress, to blend the nation’s past, present and future into a harmonious melody, held together by the high ideals it has always set itself as it moved ever forward through the stages of its existence” (Abdel-Malek, 1983:99). For al-Fasi, synthesis was the method while national unity was the goal.

‘Abduh’s influence on al-Fasi is certainly evident in his beliefs about the importance of maintaining unity, but there is some variation in how they anticipated going about that goal. While both believed education to be a central part of the Islamic modernist project, ‘Abduh prioritized the unity of the Islamic community while al-Fasi acknowledged and defended the unique nature of the Moroccan nation even while he advocated synthesis with scientific advances and Islamic values. Despite the centrality of unity to al-Fasi’s values, he would be unable to prevent a split in the Moroccan independence movement. Al-Fasi’s view of Islam as an ideology through which contemporary institutions could be filtered demonstrates how he reconciled his religious beliefs with his view of how best to advance society. In this, he shares more with Islamic modernists rather than Salafists.

One caveat is in order, however. There is one way in which Moroccan nationalists resemble modern Salafis more than Islamic modernists, and that is in their

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hostility toward Sufism. Due to the political and social context in which Islamic modernism was incorporated in Morocco, where Sufis were perceived of as collaborating with the French colonizers, anti-Sufi elements were played up amongst the nationalists more than among the original Islamic modernists. Al-Fasi’s claim that “the manner in which the Salfiyah movement had been conducted in Morocco had secured for it a degree of success unequalled even in the country of Muhammad ‘Abduh and Jamal al-Din, where it originated” should be interpreted as in reference to the success of the movement in taking a militant stand against Sufism (al-Fasi, 1948:112). This is not to say that the Islamic modernists were successful in eradicating Sufism from Morocco, only that the nationalists opposed it in tangible ways. Further, Al-Fasi’s stance against Sufism did not prevent him from instrumentalizing French acceptance of the brotherhoods. In fact, al’Fasi’s early nationalist secret society was known as a zaouia, (or zawiya) a term used as a meeting place for Sufis, and al-Fasi was sometimes referred to as “Sheikh,” a term widely used in Morocco to connote the leader of a brotherhood (Esposito, 1998:82).

The Islamic modernists on the other hand, and particularly Muhammad ‘Abduh, were sympathetic to a certain kind of Sufism. ‘Abduh first encountered Sufism at the hands of his father’s maternal uncle, Sheikh Darwish Khadir who was a disciple of the Moroccan founder of the Darqawiyya order, Mawlay al-‘Arabi al-Darqawi (Sirriyeh,

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3 For more on the history of anti-Sufi religious reform in Morocco see Burke (1976:37). For more on ‘Abduh’s relationship with Sufism see Scharbrodt (2007). For a critique of Geertz’s analysis of the ideology underpinning the Moroccan nationalists see Munson (1993).

4 See al-Fasi (1948) for more on these campaigns.
There is also some support for the argument that ‘Abduh was drawn to his teacher al-Afghani because of his views on Sufism. The two do appear to have similar beliefs on the subject. Both men believed that Sufism could contribute to proper Islamic practice but rejected many of the behaviors of their Sufi contemporaries. “For the true mysticism, as he conceived it, ‘Abduh had a great respect: it was right that Muslims should interiorize their obedience to the law. But another type of mysticism he regarded as dangerous to the mind and morals: that type which gave its devotion to the ‘saints’ (friends of God, awliya’) and their miracles, and so tended to divert attention from God and to place intermediaries between God and man...” (Hourani, 1962:149-50). ‘Abduh’s position is so ambiguous that it has led some scholars to conclude that he was a “salafi Sufi,” (Sirriyeh, 1999:96) a term that is unthinkable in the context of the modern usage of salafi. ‘Abduh’s careful discrimination between appropriate and inappropriate forms of Sufism has largely been lost by subsequent followers, including the Moroccan modernists, who were, in general, anti-Sufi.

Similarly, the father of Islamic modernism and ‘Abduh’s teacher, al-Afghani, had a nuanced relationship with Sufism that is frequently oversimplified. ‘Abduh likely gleaned his relationship with Sufism from his teacher, who both appreciated great Sufi thinkers while questioning the actions of his Sufi contemporaries. ‘Abduh writes that al-Afghani was responsible for deepening his knowledge of Sufism. In particular, al-Afghani is known to have introduced ‘Abduh and several other disciples to the Naqshabandi mystical poet ‘Abd al-Rahman Jami, an author whose works were not

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5 It is not known if this connection facilitated later relations between the Islamic modernists and the Moroccan nationalists but it may have played a role in ‘Abduh’s special concern for the North African nationalist movements.
taught at al-Azhar (Sirriyeh, 1999:69). At the same time, al-Afghani saw Sufis as preventing the Islamic community or umma from modernizing. Although he rarely criticized Sufis directly, his complaints about the relationship between sheikh and disciple that required total obedience, and the style of instruction offered at al-Azhar mosque university that relied on rote memorization capture his concerns and place them within his larger intellectual priorities. He was more focused on the advancement of the umma than opposing the brotherhoods. Al-Afghani felt that both Sufism and rote memorization prevented the development of the critical faculties and open mind necessary for rational debate and hence were a threat to the progress of the community (Sirriyeh, 1999:71). His anti-Sufi discourse should then be understood in the context of admiration for European rationalist thought and his hopes for renewal of Islamic thought.

The socio-political context encountered by the Moroccan nationalists was quite different. In early twentieth century Morocco, a number of Sufi sheikhs cooperated with the French in order to maintain their positions of authority.\(^6\) Thus, the emphasis on the anti-Sufi strain of thought in Islamic modernism in the Moroccan context was rooted in resistance to French domination, while al-Afghani’s critique of Sufism was related to his concerns about the decay of the umma in failing to adopt European institutions and technologies. Although this anti-Sufism could be used as the basis of an argument that the Moroccan nationalists are best identified as Salafists, their approach to social change rooted in a critical process of integration between religious values and

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\(^6\) This is an oversimplification. Many Sufi sheikhs originally opposed the French until they realized that the Sultan was sympathetic to Islamic modernism and its anti-Sufi connotation in Morocco, and then began cooperating with the French in order to protect their positions of authority.
European political institutions and ideas demonstrate that it is more appropriate to consider Moroccan nationalism as underpinned by Islamic modernism.

**History of Islamic Modernism in Morocco**

While a number of individuals were significant to the spread of Islamic modernism in Morocco, four are of particular importance: Abdullah ibn Idris al-Sanusi, Abu Shu’ayb al-Dukkali, Muhammad ibn al-‘Arabi al-‘Alawi, and ‘Allal al-Fasi. Al-Sanusi is credited with being the first to try to spread Islamic modernism in the country. Al-Dukkali was the first to win converts to Islamic modernism among Moroccan religious scholars, one of whom, Al-‘Alawi, would go on to be the teacher for many future nationalists. His student was ‘Allal al-Fasi the nationalist leader discussed above who led the Independence party in the years after independence. This section presents a brief introduction to the spread of the ideology in the country, setting the stage for the conflict that would develop within the nationalist movement in the 1950s.

Abdullah ibn Idris al-Sanusi was a lecturer at Qarawiyyin University. Al-Sanusi reached a position of importance upon return from a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1870 when sultan Mawlay al-Hassan appointed him to his Royal Learned Council (Abun-Nasr, 1963:96). During his travels, al-Sanusi was exposed to the ideas of Islamic modernism, although it is not known how.7 His appointment to the council suggests that the sultan approved of al-Sanusi’s Islamic modernist principles. The other members of the council, however, including Ahmad b. al-Talib b. Sudah and ‘Abdullah al-Kamil al-‘Amrani al-Hasani, both Sufis, accused al-Sanusi of being a Mu’tazilite (see Abun-Nasr, 1963:96)

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7 The conceptual confusion between Salafism and Islamic modernism is captured well in the scholarship on al-Sanusi. Many authors (Halstead, 1967:122; Munson, 1993; Pennell, 2000:142) refer to him as a Salafist. The exception is Burke (1976:37) who uses the term Islamic modernist.
and forced him into exile (Pennell, 2000:142). Al-Sanusi’s experience demonstrates that the conditions in Morocco in 1870 were not ripe for the spread of a new ideology. The content of the ideology taught by al-Sanusi is not elaborated in any source that I have come across. His expulsion, however, suggest that he was preaching anti-Sufi religious reform.

While al-Sanusi came into contact with Islamic modernism through the hajj, Abu Shu’ayb al-Dukkali (1878-1937) actually studied at al-Azhar following the implementation of ‘Abduh’s reforms and likely came into contact with the ideology there (Abun-Nasr, 1963:97). In addition, the rector of al-Azhar chose him to teach in Mecca, suggesting he was an exemplary student. He returned to Morocco in 1907 after being invited by then sultan ‘Abd al-Hafiz to serve on his Royal Learned Council (Burke, 1976:135). He began teaching Quranic exegesis (tafsir) at Qarawiyyin University in 1908 (Halstead, 1967:123; Burke, 1976:135). This is significant because Islamic modernists believe that individuals must practice ijtihad or individual interpretation rooted in Quranic exegesis. By adding this subject to the curriculum, al-Dukkali was giving students the tools they needed to live as Muslims in line with Islamic modernism. Al-Dukkali’s return to Morocco was memorialized by the nationalist leader ‘Allal al Fasi in his memoirs. He wrote, “The Sheikh had returned imbued with a burning desire to propagate the principles of the Salafiyah reform movement. A group of young enthusiastic supporters gathered around him. They distributed the publications of the Salafiyah movement in Egypt and accompanied him on his tours to pull down trees and shrines which had been made the object of popular veneration” (Al-Fasi, 1970:111). This quote identifies several strategies employed by al-Dukkali’s disciples such as the
distribution of Egyptian Islamic modernist literature and the destruction of sites venerated by Sufis. Further, these activities highlight the anti-Sufi tone of the Moroccan Islamic modernists.

Al-Dukkali’s activities focused on religious, not political, revival and were largely educational initiatives. The most significant of his activities was his involvement with the Free School movement. The name Free Schools refers not to the cost of attendance, but rather to schools free of French ideology. The curriculum of these schools emphasized Quranic studies with an Islamic modernist interpretation and employed textbooks from Egypt (Halstead, 1964:438). In order to raise funds for the schools, theatrical troupes toured the country discussing the need for educational reform and collecting donations for the schools (Halstead, 1964: 441). Mohammed Lyazidi, one of al-Dukkali’s students, is responsible for spreading Islamic modernism from Fez to nationalists in Rabat (Ashford, 1961:30).

In addition to his involvement with the Free Schools, al-Dukkali was deeply concerned with the training of future religious scholars at Qarawiyyin mosque-university in Fez. Despite his opposition to Sufism, al-Dukkali cooperated with Sufi Abdelhay al-Kittani in opposing French efforts to reform Qarawiyyin in the 1930s (Segalla, 2009:38). He then enlisted the support of the sultan, ‘Abdul-Hafiz, to oversee his own reforms to the curriculum. “Through ‘Abdul-Hafiz’s help, Abu Shu’aib succeeded in formally adding the teaching of tafsir to the curriculum of the Qarawiyyin University. During the three years which al-Dukkali spent in Fez, he himself taught the subject in the Qarawiyyin, and while there a group of enthusiastic disciples formed itself around him. It was to one of
these disciples, Mawlay al-‘Arabi al-‘Alawi, that he handed on the torch of the Salafiyya in Morocco” (Abun-Nasr, 1963:98).

Al-Dukkali’s student, Muhammad ibn al-‘Arabi al-‘Alawi’s most significant contribution to Islamic modernism was transforming it from a movement of religious reform to one of political reform. Al-‘Alawi, a former member of the Tijaniyya brotherhood, was converted to Islamic modernism by reading Ibn Taimiya’s *The Separation between the Disciples of God and the Disciples of Satan* as well as *al-Manar* (Halstead, 1967:125). He came into contact with al-Dukkali while a lecturer at Qarawiyin. He was also a teacher at Collège Moulay Idriss (see Halstead, 1967:123). As a committed Islamic modernist, he participated in the reforms to Qarawiyin’s University’s curriculum in 1933 (Porter, 2002:156-165). Al-‘Alawi’s students included many nationalists such as ‘Allal al-Fasi and Ibrahim al-Kittani (Abun-Nasr: 101). In his memoirs, al-Fasi described al-‘Alawi’s activities: “Ibn al-‘Arabi’s reform circle at Fez and Sheikh Abi Shu’ayb’s group at Rabat carried on an intensive reform campaign through the media of public lectures, exchange of visitors, and articles in the press of Algeria and Tunisia; [since] Morocco did not at that time possess a single newspaper that was not under French influence or control” (Al-Fasi, 1970:112). The groups that al-Fasi referred to were Islamic modernist circles, a type of reading group that had outreach activities such as those listed above. They also wrote op-eds in Islamic modernist publications such as *al-Manar* (Abun-Nasr, 1963: 101). It was under al-‘Alawi’s leadership that Moroccan reformers went from consuming Islamic modernist publications to contributing to them. Further, in these reading groups Moroccan nationalists began to view their struggle against the French and their Sufi collaborators
as part of a larger struggle for religious reform. This fusion of movements for religious and political reform would help them gain public support for their position through the activities listed above.

Finally, the fourth major Moroccan Islamic modernist was ‘Allal al-Fasi. His biography has been detailed elsewhere,\(^8\) so I will give only the relevant details. He was born into a wealthy Fassi family. His father was a teacher at Qarawiyyin University as well as a merchant who founded the Nasiriyah Free School in the city of Fez. The school “offered Arabic and Islamic education based on Arabic literature and grammar, poetry, and the study of religion as opposed to the new French protectorate schools which used French as the medium of instruction and promoted French culture” (Shaw, 1984:16). Al-Fasi himself was a student there, before attending Qarawiyyin University at the ripe young age of 14. It was there that he met al-‘Alawi and was exposed to Islamic modernist doctrine. He was involved in a number of nationalist activities from the early age of 17, including secret societies and the publication of a nationalist newsletter titled *Umm al-Banin*, as well as communication with student organizations in France and Egypt (Shaw, 1984). Like his father and his mentor al-‘Alawi, al-Fasi was a teacher in the Free School movement. Al-Fasi’s popularity as a nationalist leader earned him the distrust of the French and he was exiled to Gabon for nine years. He returned in 1946, only to leave for Cairo a year later. While in Cairo al-Fasi lectured regularly at al-Azhar University (Johnston, 2007:85). These speeches are collected in the volume *From the West to the East (Min al-gharb ila l-sharq)*. He also gave a number of radio talks that are collected in the work *The Call from Cairo (Nida al-Qahira)*. Al-Fasi’s concern for

\(^8\) See, for example, al-Fasi (1948), Cohen (1966), Halstead (1967), Shaw (1984), Mogilski (2006), and Wyrtzen (2009).
Moroccan students to receive an education in Arabic and founded on Islamist values became significant in the post-independence era when he supported the Arabization of the Moroccan public school curriculum, discussed in Chapter 5.

One final actor deserves mention, though he was not Moroccan. Shakib Arslan, a Lebanese Druze prince and former student of Muhammad ʿAbduh, maintained a strong relationship with a number of Moroccan nationalists including ʿAllal al-Fasi, Mohammed Hassan Ouazzani, and Ahmed Balafrej. Out of his office in Geneva, where Ouazzani worked as his personal secretary from 1930-1933, Arslan intermittently published *La Nation Arab*, a pan-Islamic newsletter from 1930 to 1938. In contradiction with the publication’s name, the main goal of the paper was to promote the idea of pan-Islamism, not pan-Arabism (Cleveland, 1985). Although Arslan had tremendous influence with Moroccan nationalists, it is unlikely that he is responsible for introducing Moroccan nationalists to Islamic modernism. By the time he began his publication, most Moroccan nationalists had already been converted to Islamic modernism as described above. His significance is in assisting them to translate their grievances into political action and in building a shared sense of struggle among Muslims across North Africa and the Middle East and as far away as Indonesia.

**Combining Religious and Political Reform Movements**

It is not surprising that Islamic modernism, a doctrine focused on the reform of the individual, became the ideological basis for a political movement. The doctrine itself, as specified above by ʿAllal al-Fasi, but also as described by its founders, argued for an intrinsic relationship between the reform of the individual and a reform of society. At the

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9 At the Imperial School in Beruit, not at al-Azhar (Cleveland, 1985).
same time, factors local to the Moroccan context provided an added impetus to the adoption of the ideology. In particular, the surrender of the great Riffian rebel Muhammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi (d.1963) in 1927 made it obvious to the nationalists that the French could not be defeated in military struggle, encouraging the nationalists to work for cultural reform. Some argue that Islamic modernism was then a tactical ideological choice, since the French attempted to allow the Moroccans a degree of autonomy as regards their religious affairs (Halstead 1964: 440; El Mansour, 1994:61). In practical terms, French efforts to not interfere with religion allowed the young nationalist ‘Allal al-Fasi to give distinctly political speeches under the veil of religious learning while lecturing at Qarawiyyin mosque university, launching his political career (Johnston, 2007:84). The adoption of Islamic modernism can be seen as a pragmatic choice because a secular nationalist ideology would not have been afforded the same kind of organizational autonomy. Secondly, there is general agreement among scholars that a secular nationalist ideology would not have been capable of mobilizing the type of mass support that Islamic modernism did.

While the need to oppose the French culturally and unite Moroccans along religious lines are certainly contributing factors to the success of Islamic modernism, the most compelling argument for the effectiveness of Islamic modernism was French policy and particularly the Berber Dahir crisis of 1930 (al-Fasi, 1948; El Mansour, 1994). This and other French policies turned religious reformers into political revolutionaries (El Mansour, 1994:60). The Berber Dahir of 1930\(^\text{10}\) was the height of French efforts to establish separate judicial systems for Berbers and Arabs. The nationalists viewed it as

\(^{10}\) The Berber Dahir of 1930 has received extensive scholarly attention. For more, see al-Fasi (1948), Ashford (1964), Halstead (1967), Eickelman (1985), Porter (2002), Pennell (2000).
an effort to divide the *umma* or Muslim community and they vehemently opposed the reforms. Islamic activists as far away as Indonesia joined them in their efforts.\(^{11}\) The whole affair was further complicated by the fact that there was a vague ethnic and geographic division between Islamic modernists and Sufis. Islamic modernists tended to claim Arab descent and live in urban areas while Sufis tended to claim Berber descent and live in rural areas (Halstead, 1967:122). The divide between the two then had political, religious and ethnic dimensions. These divisions, however, did not prevent their temporary cooperation during the Berber *Dahir* campaign of 1930.

The primary result of the Berber *Dahir* crisis of 1930 was the short-lived early cooperation between Berber Sufis and nationalists that was negated by the sympathy that Mohammed V showed for Islamic modernism. “Thus, while staunchly Berberist orders like the Derqawa and its derivative, the Kittaniyya, originally opposed the French occupation, when they were later confronted by a reforming sultan who openly sympathized with the aims of the Salafiyyist nationalists, they often leagued themselves with the French authorities who promised, however ambiguously, to respect their prized autonomy, religiously as well as politically” (see Halstead 1967:122). Although Berbers, such as the above mentioned Abd el-Krim, originally vehemently opposed the French presence in Morocco, the anti-Sufi position of Moroccan nationalists and their champion the sultan encouraged Sufis to cooperate with the French out of an interest in self-preservation. This cooperation then provided fodder for political grievance between Islamic modernists and Sufis since the former began to see Sufis as both political and religious rivals; they represented an impure Islam and traitors. This merging of political

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\(^{11}\) This campaign, led by Shakib Arslan, is well documented by Cleveland (1985).
with religious grievance only added intensity to the conflict between them. ‘Allal al-Fasi, Mohammed al-Fasi and Mohammed Lyazidi all argue that this combination of religious and political grievance is what made both Islamic modernism and nationalism successful in Morocco (al-Fasi, 1948; Halstead 1967:119).12

**Split in the Nationalist Movement: The Beginning of a Moroccan Left**

The Istiqlal party led by ‘Allal al-Fasi that oversaw the Moroccan transition to independence in 1956, split three years later. Waterbury (1970) characterized this as a split between the old guard and the new guard of the party, with the new guard forming the Union Nationaliste des Forces Populaires (UNFP) under the leadership of Mehdi Ben Barka. The old guard continued under the banner of Istiqlal lead by ‘Allal al-Fasi.

This division can be better understood by a comparison of the biographies and ideologies of their leaders. Al-Fasi’s biography and ideology were described above. To review, he was born and raised in the spiritual capital of the country, Fez, where he studied Islamic Sciences and later taught at the prestigious Qarawiyyin University. The second faction was led by Mehdi Ben Barka who was French-educated and a Mathematics professor at the University of Rabat. As discussed above, al-Fasi based his ideology on the ideas of the Islamic modernists and particularly Muhammad ‘Abduh while Ben Barka’s ideology was rooted in Islamic socialism. Henry Munson (1993) summarized the break-up as follows: “With respect to the leaders of the factions involved, the split was to some extent a conflict between the devoutly Islamic elite and a new generation of French-educated Marxist intellectuals from relatively humble social

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12 There are a number of examples of the power of combining religious and political movements. The most significant may be “the pact of 1744 joining the sword of Muhammad bin Sa’ud to the religious call (da’wa) of the preacher Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab” that predated the founding of the Saudi state in 1932 (Lacroix, 2011:8). It was the combination of these movements that greatly expanded the reach of the movement for religious reform.
backgrounds” (p.109). At first glance it may appear that these two factions represent a simple conflict between tradition and modernity, but that would be a mischaracterization of both of their positions.

**Allal al-Fasi**

Al-Fasi’s primary ideological commitment was his commitment to Islamic modernism and to maintaining the unity of the Moroccan nation. Ideologically, Al-Fasi’s Islamic modernism combined unity and tolerance with individual freedom of thought and belief. Politically, it called for self determination, cooperation among separate Muslim nations (rather than a unified Arab political entity), the installation of the Arabic language as the dominant language throughout the Muslim world, Sharia as the basis for civil law “subject to constant review and interpretation” (p.115), a popularly elected assembly, and liberation from foreign control “both material and moral” (p.115). Finally, it is worth noting, “Above all, the new Salafiyah rejects the idea of a secular state” (p.115).

**Mehdi Ben Barka**

Mehdi Ben Barka received both Quranic schooling as a child and a European-style education as an adult. His involvement with the nationalist movement began at age 14, when he joined the Committee of Moroccan Action, the forerunner of the independence movement. His participation in the movement was so significant that he was one of the sixty signatories of the Independence Manifesto signed in 1944 (at age 24) and one of the founders of the Istiqlal party. His career was also successful. He was appointed to teach Mathematics at Rabat University, and he also served as one of the crown prince Hassan II’s tutors. He was involved with the Moroccan Labor Union (UMT) during his years of exile in the south of Morocco and he maintained an interest in the labor unions and the conditions of workers throughout his life. Upon his return to the
North, he was named the editor of the weekly *al-Istiqlal*, the newspaper of the independence party.

In the years following independence, Ben Barka believed that Morocco was in need of “an enlightenment” because the physical and human capital of the country had been completely absorbed in resisting occupation. There was a need to “build a new society” to “allow human flourishing,” “to make disappear all forms of exploitation” and to “bring high the torch of science” (Jean, 1959:4). Thus while al-Fasi called for a type of synthesis, Ben Barka called for a creation of a new Moroccan society.

Even while a member of Istiqlal, Ben Barka was a spokesman for such ideas. In a speech given to the party in 1957, two years before the split, Ben Barka said,

> Our country is still economically, culturally and socially backward, and our general level is still low. The progress that the world has known, especially in the Mediterranean basin, has yet to include us. We are lagging behind, and it is our duty – at the same time as we are struggling to erase the effects of colonialism—to fight, to act with force and depth to erase the effects of two centuries of deep slumber. All this time has been devoted to defending our country. Our ancestors focused their energies on consolidating our country and protecting it against external aggression... *But these same ramparts, these places of strength and of defense that were erected by our ancestors to fight against foreign invasions, have contributed to preventing the perfumes of science and the smells of progress...from entering our country*” (Guessous, 2011:111, emphasis mine).

Ben Barka believed that the post-independence era was fundamentally different from the era of foreign occupation. Those “ramparts” that were useful to protecting the country, were now responsible for stalling its progress and development of the sciences. The question remains, however, to what “places of strength” is he referring? Which ideas or institutions were useful under occupation but no longer beneficial? While he is not explicit in what needed to change, his position may be better understood in the context of the political faction that he founded.
Ben Barka helped to found the UNFP in 1959. Ben Barka hoped to base his political movement on a coalition of labor activists, peasants and former resistance fighters. In his public address announcing the split, he said, “We must bring about a synthesis of the three great forces of Morocco, the syndicalists, the peasantry, and the resistance. It is the resistance that will provide us a bridge to the rural world neglected by previous governments” (quoted in Waterbury, 1970:217).

The major issue that divided the Istiqlal and resulted in the founding of the new party was the form of government that post-independence Morocco would take. Ben Barka, along with Abdullah Ibrahim and other younger members of the party supported the establishment of a constitutional monarchy while ‘Allal al-Fasi hesitated and did not force the issue (Park and Boum, 2006:279). Ibrahim and other young members of the independence party referred to as the “Young Turks” presented a memorandum to the king in 1958 that was not accepted calling for real devolution of monarchical powers to parliament (Park and Boum, 2006:176). In public address, al-Fasi spoke of the plans of the independence party to coordinate with the monarchy. In an address in Cairo in 1946, for example, he declared, “As soon as we recover our independence, we will build a Moroccan regime in coordination with our people and with king Mohammed V” (quoted in Rahmouni, 2004:1). The establishment of a constitutional monarchy was a goal of the Istiqlal party, but for a combination of reasons al-Fasi allowed the opportunity to pass; he had been informally promised that a constitutional monarchy would be established in the future, and he had reasons to trust that Muhammad V was a man of


14 The UNFP was technically a branch of the Istiqlal party until 1975. It was not legally a separate political party until that time. Nonetheless, it functioned as a separate party from the time of its inception onward.
his word. The king’s sudden death in 1961 closed this opportunity, and Istiqlal was never able to reassert this issue. The dominance of the monarchy in the Moroccan post-independence political system dates to this period.

The fact that Ben Barka was upset enough over al-Fasi’s hesitation that he started a separate political faction demonstrates the importance of this issue to the nationalist leader. From this position, it seems likely that Ben Barka thought the monarchy was the institution referred to in the above speech that was holding Morocco back. During the fight for independence, the monarchy had served as the symbol of the nation and the voice of the people against the French. In the absence of an outside occupying force, however, Ben Barka felt that the monarchy needed to retreat into solely being a symbol of the nation. Not surprisingly, this position would later complicate his relationship with the monarchy. Other Moroccan leftist groups also exhibited less support for the monarchy than the independence party. The leader of the Moroccan Communist Party, Ali Yata, in a memorandum to the UN in 1950 called for “a Moroccan national constituent assembly elected through the universal suffrage and the forming of a Moroccan government responsible before it” (Rahmouni, 2004:1), a suggestion that seems to leave little room for a governing monarchy. The sultan himself expressed commitment to this ideal, calling for “a free Morocco…with democratic institutions in line with the fundamental principles of Islam and the expectations of modern times” (Rahmouni, 2004:2).

But it was not just ideological differences that divided Istiqlal from the UNFP. The Moroccan monarchy also actively encouraged a split in the independence party. The

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15 In a general sense, Muhammad V liked Ben Barka and his ideas. It was his son Hassan II who distrusted him and opposed his political activities.
most visible part of this effort was the appointment of members of the UNFP, including ‘Abderrahim Bou’abid and ‘Abdullah Ibrahim, to his government in 1958 (Waterbury, 1970). “By making Ibrahim prime minister, the king had given the impression that the left wing of the Istiqlal [the wing led by Mehdi Ben Barka] had become the royal favorite. The appointment indisputably contributed to the final and irrevocable split of the Istiqlal and from the point of view was very much in the interests of the palace” (Waterbury, 1970:218; see also Pennell, 2000). The appointment of Ibrahim to the position of Prime Minister marked a high point in popularity for the UNFP: “For a few months the UNFP was indeed at the forefront of Moroccan politics” (Waterbury, 1970:218).

The appointment of UNFP members to the government initiated a strategy that his son and grandson continued after his death: from time to time, give the opposition positions of authority without any power. Waterbury explains, “The king had formed a government based upon his most outspoken critics. He challenged them, in a way, to act upon their criticisms but deprived them of the powers they needed to do so” (Waterbury, 1970:218). The strategy had its desired effect, creating discord among members of the UNFP. Some believed that the UNFP members of the government should resign: “As it became increasingly evident that the palace was determined to complicate the task of the government and to embarrass its leftist members, dissension among the leaders of the UNFP developed as to how best to cope with the situation... The prince seemed to have organized a shadow cabinet whose objective was to harass Ibrahim at every turn, employing the army and the Sureté Nationale under Laghzaoui for this purpose. Some members of the UNFP felt that Ibrahim should have resigned rather than allow the palace to make a fool of him” (Waterbury, 1970:218). This harassment at
the hands of the crown prince foreshadowed his style of rule upon his father’s death in 1961.

The left found ways to express its dissent toward the monarchy. The labor union attached to the UNFP, the UMT, held a strike at the end of March, 1960 (Waterbury, 1970). More importantly, the Prime Minister subordinated the national security forces under the Ministry of the Interior on April 13th of that year (Waterbury, 1970). On May 8th, the UNFP won the elections for the local Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The relative insignificance of the elections was greatly strengthened in that they suggested the strength of the UNFP in the weeks before local elections, which were scheduled for 29 May (Waterbury, 1970). The last straw was the government’s declaration on 23 May that Commander Blair, an American naval officer whom the prince had made a member of his personal cabinet, was persona non grata on Moroccan soil (Waterbury, 1970:fn). The government was dissolved that day and the king made himself Prime Minister (Waterbury, 1970). He had wanted to give the position to his son, but the Istiqlal members of the government argued that they would leave the government, and so the crown prince was declared the vice prime minister (Waterbury, 1970). Interestingly, the humiliation suffered by the UNFP did not seem to affect the local elections, and the UNFP took 54 percent of the vote while the Istiqlal took only 36 percent (Waterbury, 1970:220). This performance marks the high point of the UNFP’s popularity in the country.

Ben Barka was also responsible for founding the Union Nationale des Etudiants Marocains, commonly known as UNEM, in the years following independence. The organization united a number of student movements. “The initial demands put forth by
UNEM were for the Moroccanization of the administration, the departure of French and American forces, the Arabization of education and the establishment of a modern and independent Moroccan university” (Park and Boum, 2006:344). Not surprisingly, following the party split, UNEM maintained its affiliation with the UNFP rather than the Istiqlal. Similarly, the Union Marocaine de Travail, a trade union established in 1955 was also affiliated with the UNFP from the faction’s founding.

The establishment of such an organization was generally supported both by all political parties and the crown prince Hassan, who was named the honorary president of the founding conference (Park and Boum, 2006). The warm relations were short-lived, however. Ben Barka’s continued success as an organizer brought him the respect of the King Mohammad V, but hostility from his son the crown prince, who viewed the politician (and his former tutor) as a rival (Howe, 2005:97, 224). When Hassan II took power in 1961 following the death of his father, he immediately accused Ben Barka and more than eighty other members of UNFP of subversive acts. Following a strong showing in June elections by the UNFP, arrests were made (Park and Boum, 2006:288). As a result, Ben Barka went into exile in Paris in 1961 and again in 1962-1963. He was tried in absentia and sentenced to death in 1965 for his involvement in plots. Major student protests in March 1965, discussed in Chapter 6, demonstrated the strength of leftist ideologies and their ability to mobilize the wider Moroccan population. A short time later, on 29 October 1965, Ben Barka was disappeared on the streets of Paris. The events surrounding the disappearance remain disputed although it is asserted that he was murdered, his body returned to Morocco and dissolved in acid. Regardless of the details of his disappearance, he is presumed dead.
Not surprisingly, French writers preferred Ben Barka, referring to him as the “Moroccan man of tomorrow” presumably in comparison with ‘Allal al-Fasi (Jean, 1959). In the words of one interviewer, he was, “the inspiration of the true builders of independence” as if to imply that al-Fasi’s nationalists were false ones (Jean, 1959:III). He continued, “In this decisive quarrel of ancients and moderns, he is the witness and an actor at the forefront (Jean, 1959:III). Such a characterization, however, of ‘Allal al-Fasi as the leader of the traditionalists and Mehdi Ben Barka as leader of the progressives is misleading. ‘Allal al-Fasi should not be understood as someone who was married to tradition. Rather, he was committed to a synthesis of the traditional and the modern, a method that proved to be appealing to both the Moroccan people and the monarchy.

As part of al-Fasi’s commitment to synthesis, he did not isolate religion to the private sphere, as others such as Ben Barka did. Consequently, his movement had widespread appeal, and religion helped him to build the most successful organization of nationalists in Morocco. “Through its ability to rally mass support, religion became a compelling nationalist message for ‘Allal al-Fassi, sidelining other expressions of nationalism” (Boutieri, 2011: 164). In other words, the faction represented and lead by al-Fasi was more successful in its nationalist claims than other nationalist leaders, including Ben Barka, because of its reliance on religious terminology and symbols that resonated with the Moroccan population.16

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16 The use of Islam as a rallying cry had its own consequences. In one example of such a catch-22, the nationalist movement led by al-Fasi, relied on the king as a symbol, but was then unable to limit his power to a constitutional monarchy, as had been its original goal. I discuss this issue later on in the chapter.
But the major divide between nationalists in the years immediately following independence revolved not around some perceived conflict between tradition and modernity, or whether or not religion would be a political resource, but around the issue of who were to be the main players in Morocco’s future. ‘Allal al-Fasi and Istiqlal have been the most successful political party in Moroccan history not only because of their use of religious terminology but also because of their willingness to cooperate with the monarchy. Mehdi Ben Barka and fellow leftist activists, who advocated a greatly reduced role for the monarchy and building a “new” Moroccan society, have had periods of influence but have been continuously coopted by the monarchy and at times, coordination between the monarchy and other political parties, namely Istiqlal. The [presumed] assassination of Ben Barka in 1965 then, symbolizes more than the death of a major nationalist leader, but of an assault by the monarchy on a possible Moroccan future that would have significantly limited its own involvement.

In the early years after independence, however, it was not yet clear which of these two movements would lead the young country. A number of factors suggested that the faction led by Ben Barka was the most influential, including its control of the student and labor unions and its ability to mobilize protestors. In particular, the Casablanca riots of 1965 led by university students highlighted the significance of leftist ideologies among Moroccan students. These events and their significance are discussed in Chapter 6. The main conclusion for this chapter is that the regime felt threatened by the left, and took a number of actions to prevent its growth. Marvine Howe (2005), a journalist and personal friend of Hassan II during the 1950s, effectively captures the nature of the regime and its fear of the left, “Crown Prince Hassan…
viewed Arab Socialism, as personified by Egyptian revolutionary Gamal Abdel Nasser and its Moroccan exponent, Ben Barka, as the main threat to his regime. A skilled politician, King Hassan fashioned a closely controlled pluralistic system that had many attributes of democracy, but was aimed at containing if not eliminating the Left” (p.224). This containment turned elimination is the subject of Chapter 6 of the dissertation.
CHAPTER 6
“ONE SPARK CAN IGNITE A PLAIN”: THE 1965 CASABLANCA RIOTS

In Chapter 5, I discussed how a split in the nationalist movement evolved into the primary ideological cleavage in Morocco politics in the post-independence period, between leftists and Islamists. In this chapter, I present the 1965 Casablanca riots as a critical juncture in Moroccan history. I argue that prior to the riots, the regime ignored the ideological struggles on university campuses because it did not realize the strength of the left or the role of universities in spreading ideologies. This changed after the Casablanca riots. In response to the number of students and workers that leftists mobilized on 23 March 1965, the regime invested not only in monitoring but in shaping the ideological struggles taking place on university campuses. These measures to shape ideologies will be described in Chapter 5. The riots are also significant for how they initially galvanized and energized the leftist opposition who would be forced to go underground in the anti-leftist climate following the riots.

This chapter is divided into three sections. First, I present evidence that the regime was uninterested in university politics in the period from 1957, the year of the founding of the first Moroccan university to early 1965. Then, I describe the events of 1965, focusing on the role of the Moroccan student union, UNEM, in structuring and fomenting ideological conflict as well as the aftermath of the riots, and the actions of the regime to establish order and the resulting consequences for citizens. Finally, I describe the evidence that exists regarding the growing influence of the left on campus. The regime’s extreme response to the riots demonstrates how threatened it felt by the growing power of leftists and explains why they undertook a harsh set of policies to weaken the left, a development I address in Chapter 6.
Ignoring and Neglecting University Politics

At the time of independence, there were no modern Moroccan universities. There were several institutions of higher education affiliated with the French University in Bordeaux, and the illustrious Qarawiyyin mosque university for training in the Islamic sciences, ¹ but there were not yet any Moroccan institutions of higher education for non-religious subjects of study (Meziani, 1999). The first modern Moroccan university was founded a year after independence, in 1957. Originally named “Rabat University,” the institution is now known as “Muhammad al-Khamis” or Muhammad the Fifth, after the king of Morocco who ruled the country at the time of independence. Originally the university had two faculties: of humanities and law (Meziani, 1999). In the early sixties other faculties were added including medicine, engineering, and public administration (Meziani, 1999). This was the only modern institution of higher education until the late 1970s. During the 1963-1964 school year, there were about 7,000 students at the institution; by 1978, the institution served 62,000 students (Meziani, 1999:216). Thus, at the time of the riots in 1965, the university’s small number of students likely contributed to the perception that the university was not a threat to the regime.

Mehdi Ben Barka and other members of the independence party Istiqlal formed the first Moroccan student union, Union Nationale des Étudiants Marocains (UNEM) in December 1956 in order to unify a number of student organizations at various institutions (Park and Boum, 2006). “The establishment of UNEM was broadly supported by the political parties, and the crown prince, mawlay Hassan II, was the honorary president of the founding conference” (Park and Boum, 2006:344). The warm

¹ Qarawiyyin mosque-university was founded in the mid-ninth century. It was converted into a modern university in February 1963 (Park and Boum, 2006).
relationship between the student union and the palace would fade after the death of Mohammad V and the ascension of Hassan II, but in the early years of independence, and particularly 1956-1961, there were good relations between the palace and the union. This was probably due in part to the demands of the union, which, if implemented would largely reinforce the power of the young fledgling monarchy at a time when it had not yet consolidated its power. These demands included “the Moroccanization of the administration, the departure of French and American forces, the Arabization of education, and the establishment of a modern and independent Moroccan university” (Park and Boum, 2006:344). The university’s small size and the confluence of the union and the monarchy’s interests in the early years contributed to the initial good relations between the monarchy and the university.

At the same time, there are reasons for why the regime would have been more concerned about the activities on the campus of Qarawiyyin University in Fez. The university was the seat of resistance to the protectorate and the home of the country’s religious scholars. The fact that the regime chose to create a new modern university in Rabat instead of reforming or developing Qarawiyyin is significant. It cannot be argued that the regime did not realize Qarawiyyin was in need of reform since there were calls from within the university for reforms at the time of independence. In 1956, Qarawiyyin students went on strike repeatedly, expressing frustration that their degrees were not as competitive on the job market as those with more “modern” degrees (Zeghal, 2008). One striking student described his position: “The creation of a Moroccan university is the only way to unify education... I think that this Moroccan university should be named the Qarawiyyin University, because it was the Qarawiyyin that stood up to the colonizer
and thereby had the honor of preserving the language and religion” (quoted in Zeghal, 2008:36). His statement highlights the desire of students for the unification or standardization of higher education while honoring the importance of the religious university in the nationalist struggle. At the same time, the regime likely did not want to glorify Qarawyyin’s role in the nationalist struggle at a time when its role in Moroccan political life was still uncertain. The students eventually garnered enough attention that they were addressed by then king Muhammad V. It is then not surprising that although some reforms were undertaken, they were, in the words of a student, “superficial and incomplete” (Zeghal, 2008:37). In general, the university was left to crumble while resources were channeled to Rabat University.

The inaction toward Qarawiyyin makes sense as part of a larger effort to sideline Qarawiyyin and its ‘ulama or religious scholars. Initially, the ‘ulama responded to this inaction by trying to unify into a national association with the explicit goal of spreading their religious ideology, Islamic modernism or what they called at the time, Salafism, through education: “Defining our plan of action for a Salafist revolution [thawra] which will engender reform of our society and the education of Salafist youth deeply attached to religion” (Zeghal, 2008:41). The ‘ulama saw itself in this mission in conflict with the Ministry of Education, who had relegated religious education under the titles “original” or “traditional” education in the context of a general secularization of education. The ‘ulama claimed “the two names had been chosen only to avoid the words ‘religion’ and ‘Islam” (quoted in Zeghal, 2008:43). The ‘ulama desired their independence from the official state bureaucracy, but were not able to effectively reform their own institution or maintain control of it.
At the time, tensions were mounting between the ‘ulama and the crown. In the writing of the 1962 Constitution, the nationalist leader ‘Allal al-Fasi and Dr. ‘Abd al-Karim Khatib\(^2\) encouraged the king to institutionalize his religious authority in the title “Commander of the Faithful” (*amir al-mu’minin* in Arabic) (Zeghal, 2008). This title is significant in Islamic history as the name traditionally given to the Caliph, or the leader of the entire Muslim community on Earth. The Constitution increased tensions between the monarchy and the ‘ulama, who were increasingly siding with the left (Zeghal, 2008). In particular, the Islamic modernist religious scholar Muhammad Ibn al-‘Arbi al-‘Alawi and the leaders of the leftist UNFP faction of the Independence party opposed the Constitution (Zeghal, 2008). When the UNFP was allowed to govern briefly in 1958, al-‘Alawi resigned from his post as Minister of the Crown Council to express his disgust for the way the monarchy treated the leftists (Zeghal, 2008). This put al-‘Alawi in conflict with his former student, al-Fasi.

Muhammad Ben Abdeslem al-Fasi (1908-1968), cousin of ‘Allal, was appointed Minister of Education\(^3\) in December 1955 (Zeghal, 2008:35). He oversaw the initial reforms of the educational system in newly independent Morocco. Al-Fasi’s early education was at a *collège musulman*, an institution developed by the protectorate to train the Moroccan elite. Al-Fasi attended the *collège Moulay Idriss* where the languages of instruction were both Arabic and French (Zeghal, 2008:279). As regards higher education, Al-Fasi was educated in a mix of Islamic and European universities

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\(^2\) Khatib later allowed individual members of the Mouvement Unicité et Réforme to join his party, a situation that resulted in the country’s first Islamist party, the Party of Justice and Development, discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

\(^3\) He was technically *Ministre de l'instruction publique et des beaux arts* from December 1955 to October 1956 and *Ministre de l'éducation nationale* from 28 October 1956 to 16 April 1958.
including Qarawiyyin mosque-university in Fez where he later served as rector in 1941, as well as the Sorbonne, and the Écoles des Langues Orientales in Paris (Park and Boum, 1996). Prior to being appointed to serve as the Minister of Education, al-Fasi served as tutor, alongside Mehdi Ben Barka, to crown prince Hassan. Under his leadership the Arabization of Moroccan education began.

The monarchy did not feel threatened by the university, the student population or their organizations in the early years after independence because their demands reinforced rather than weakened the power of the monarchy. Further, the small size of the student population suggested it was not a significant source of opposition. Finally, the monarchy’s concern with the university students was likely more focused on teh Qarawiyyin than at the newly formed Rabat University. This would change after the Casablanca riots and student strikes of 1965.

One final point deserves mention. Muhammad V, the king at the time of independence, had a strong relationship with Mehdi Ben Barka, the man who started UNEM. It is unlikely that he saw Barka’s “militants,” as party activists are called in French, as a threat to the regime. His son, on the other hand, viewed his former tutor Barka as a rival, personally and politically. He resented Barka’s strong relationship with his father and feared the significance of his political movement as threatening his own position (Howe, 2005). This makes sense in light of the weakness of the monarchy at the time that he took over control of the country. But this dynamic is part of a larger difference in style of rule between the father and son. “Unlike his father, who was content by being a fatherly figure for a political life managed by the Istiglal [sic] Party,

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4 The monarchy’s disinterest with the university was further supported in an interview with Sadik Rddad, 11 May 2011.
Hassan II was determined to rule...” (Mousa, 2005:161). The unexpected death of Muhammad V in 1961, then, cannot be ignored as a condition that set the stage for a showdown between leftists and the monarchy in 1965.

It should also be noted that while the monarchy did not view the university as a major threat until the riots, it had already started a crackdown on leftists. The communist party was banned by the regime in 1960 and a number of UNFP activists were arrested in 1963 (Guessous, 2011:4). Eighty-five total activists were arrested between 1963 and 1964, accused of treason and put on trial (Park and Boum, 2006). The initial arrests began on 16 July 1963 following the party’s success in the June elections (Park and Boum, 2006). Those arrested were denied communication with representation and family and were subject to torture (Park and Boum, 2006). “The tenor of the trial and remarks from the palace made it clear that the UNFP itself was on trial” (Park and Boum, 2006:288).

The Left on University Campuses

My interviews with individuals who were university students during the 1960s frequently made unsolicited references to the strength of the left on campuses at that time. One Moroccan scholar, Saddik Rddad, painted a particularly compelling picture of the state of ideology in the 1960s. According to Rddad, the university was a “radically secular” place (Rddad, 2011). It was literally dangerous to be politically conservative. The independence party, Istiqlal, was considered “plus royaliste que le roi” meaning the party was more committed to the monarchy than the King himself (Rddad, 2011; Monjib, 2011). In response, UNEM, which was dominated by UNFP members, held open trials of Istiqlal students that ended with beatings to punish the “convicted” student (Rddad, 2011). Other evidence of the radically leftist environment include the fact that students
would publicly eat during Ramadan and publicly burn the Quran, actions which are unthinkable today anywhere in the Arab world (Rddad, 2011).\footnote{Some students did recently eat publicly during Ramadan to protest their lack of religious freedom. Even the UNSP, the party that carries the mantle of the UNFP, called for the students to be punished (El Alaoui, 2011). This event is a good indicator of the shift to the right in Moroccan politics, what el Alaoui (2011) calls the Salafization of Moroccan politics.} But it was not only unthinkable to be conservative, it “was almost hashooma [Ar. shameful] to be praying” (Rddad, 2011:np). It was unacceptable to pay deference to Islam as a university student. One had to hide both conservative and religious allegiances.

**Events of 23 March 1965**

There has yet to be any definitive study of the events of 23 March, 1965, and there is much that is not know. Early that month, the Moroccan Minister of Education, Yousef Belabès, announced restrictions on students over the age of 17 from attending certain schools, forcing them to pursue vocational training instead of a college preparatory route, and an overall 10 percent cut in the state education budget (Hughes, 2006: 130; Brouksy, 2005; Kadiri, 2005). At the time, university and high school students were very politicized and were organized by UNEM (Brouksy, 2005). A number of factors set the stage for the educational reforms to inflame public opinion, including discomfort with the constitution promulgated in 1962, the increasing price of sugar and the arrests of members of the left on 16 July 1963 (Park and Boum, 2006). Casablanca was also facing particular struggles. The number of rural migrants to the city at that time is estimated at 36,000 people each year while the city had over 600,000 unemployed people living in its slums (Kadiri, 2005). At the time, people saw education as the only means of offering their children a different life, a situation which explains why so many parents joined their children in the streets in 1965 once protests began (Kadiri, 2005).
With this in mind, the protests in 1965 can be understood as an event that “initiated educational politics that continue to the present day” (Kadiri, 2005:np). In mid-March, representatives from UNEM contacted students and encouraged them to react to the announcement of the minister (Brouksy, 2005). On 22 March 1965, approximately 15,000 high school students assembled on the football field of Muhammad V High School in Casablanca by 10am. The plan was to march to the headquarters of the delegation for education to draw attention to what many saw was an attack on public education. The students only made it to the French Cultural Center, about 1.6km from the high school, before police dispersed them (Brouksy, 2005). See Figure 5-1 for map of anticipated route. The police were rough with the students, but not a gunshot was fired (Brouksy, 2005). Some report that the students reacted with violence, smashing windows. Others claim the march was peaceful. The next day the students reassembled on the same football field, but this time the unemployed and passersby joined them. On this day they marched first toward a neighborhood of workers, Derb Sultane, and then towards Bab Marrakesh in the old city. On this day, sources agree that the students rioted; shops, schools, banks and a railway station were looted or vandalized, and buses, cars and a movie theatre were torched (Armored Troops Patrol..., 1965; Hughes, 2006). The protestors soon found themselves face to face with the army. At three o’clock in the afternoon, the army was given orders to shoot at the students (Brouksy, 2005). The number of victims is disputed. The official death toll was 7 dead and 69 injured (Hughes, 2006), but the opposition and foreign press

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6 “Mars 1965 livre les clés d’une politique éducative qui sera menée jusqu’à nos jours”

7 One source reported that initial protests were held on 21 March 1965 (Kadiri, 2005). Other sources suggest the events begin on the 22\textsuperscript{nd} of March (Brouksy, 2005; Hughes, 2006).
reported 1000 dead (Park and Boum, 2006). A *New York Times* article from that week said that the opposition claimed “at least 40 persons were killed, hundreds injured, and over 2000 arrested and about 5 million francs’ ($1 million) worth of damage done” (Curfew is imposed... 1965:A10). The Moroccan embassy in Washington released a statement claiming “seven persons were killed and 60 policemen and auxiliary forces injured” (Armored Troops Patrol..., 1965). The numbers cannot be confirmed because the victims were buried in mass graves. The riots continued for forty-eight hours (Curfew is imposed... 1965:A10) resulting in the arrests of 844 rioters (Hughes, 2006). After two days, a dusk to dawn, 9pm to 6am, curfew was imposed and even Istiqlal newspapers were seized, despite the party’s pro-monarchical stance (Curfew is imposed... 1965:A10; Armored Troops Patrol..., 1965; Hughes, 2006). On the 23rd, protests spread to Settat, Khouribga, Meknes, and Kenitra (Kadiri, 2005). In the coming days, protests were held across the country in solidarity with the students cities such as Fez (Braestrup, 26 March 1965). Hassan II responded to the riots by radio address on the 29th of March (Braestrup, 30 March 1965). One newspaper account reported, “Informed Western sources, who regard the Casablanca riots as a serious warning of public discontent, said the lack of specifics in the King Hassan’s speech indicated that he was still planning means of coping with possible exploitation of the riots by left-wing opposition” (Braestrup, 30 March 1965:10).

Many Moroccans believe the crackdown was led by General Muhammad Oufkir, at that time the interim Minister of the Interior (Brouksy, 2005; Hughes, 2006). Oufkir developed a reputation for brutality for his conduct during the Rif Uprising from 1957-1959 when “whole villages were eliminated” (Park and Boum, 2006:271). During the
Casablanca riots, Oufkir is rumored to have been in a helicopter over the city shooting a machine gun at students (Brouksy, 2005; Hughes, 2006). There is no evidence for the rumor, but its persistence suggests the level of hostility between the regime and the people. In 1951, Oufkir was in charge of guarding Mehdi Ben Barka after his arrest where it is widely believed that the two men developed their distaste for one another. Oufkir was later implicated in the dissident’s death in Paris in 1965, suggesting a personal reason why he may have acted with such brutality against the leftist students (Park and Boum, 2006).

The king’s response was interesting. His initial response, blaming schoolteachers, resulted in a large teacher strike (Braestrup, 26 March 1965). A number of Iraqi teachers were also arrested alongside communists and leftists (Hughes, 2006). He also shut down all telecommunications with the outside world, and restricted the semi-official news network from printing anything other than government reports (Braestrup, 26 March 1965; Armored Troops Patrol..., 1965; Hughes, 2006). The sanctions were lifted three days later (Braestrup, 26 March 1965). In a TV address on March 29th, the King made an interesting comment alluding to who he blamed for the protests: intellectuals. The King said, "Why are they themselves not down in the streets instead of their students? Where are those qualities of bravery, courage and common sense? Let me tell you say that there is no danger for the state as serious as an alleged intellectual. It would have been better that you are illiterate" (Kadiri, 2005:np).

In April, King Hassan II declared a general amnesty and released some opposition leaders from prison (Brouksy, 2005). June 7th, 1965 of that year, the monarchy declared a state of emergency (Brouksy, 2005; Kadiri, 2005; Hughes, 2006).
and suspended parliament (Waterbury, 1970). On October 29th, 1965, Mehdi Ben Barka was disappeared on the streets of Paris and presumed assassinated. In the words of one journalist, “Ben Barka’s death seals the closure of the political field” (Kadiri, 2005:np). In 1967, the offices of UNEM were closed, its leaders were jailed and it was not permitted to hold its 11th conference (Park and Boum, 2006:344). It was completely banned in January 1974 (Park and Boum, 2006:344).

The opposition also responded to the harsh crackdown. They walked out of parliamentary proceedings led by the governing party, Istiqlal, when it refused to discuss the riots and instead stayed to its original agenda (Braestrup, 26 March 1965). The most significant result, aside from disaffection with the regime, was the solidification of a formal relationship between students, workers, and the UNFP. In the immediate aftermath of the riots, leftist began formal organizing on both university and high school campuses. Ahmed Herzenni founded a group *al-shabiba al-taqadumiya al-maghribiya* (translation: Progressive Moroccan Youth) in Mohammed V high school. Others began organizations on university campuses. One known meeting took place in 1966 at a UNFP office in Derb Soltane, the same workers’ neighborhood that the students attempted to march towards in 1965 (Park and Boum, 2006). The meeting gathered leaders including Muhammad al-Habib al-Talib, Mustafa Masdad, and al-Husayn al-Kuwari. “They decided to develop an alliance between students and workers and had members enroll in particular universities for this explicit purpose” (Park and Boum, 2006:213). This formal alliance between leftist and students marks the birth of the educated youth as “one of the two great social movements of independent Morocco, alongside the Islamists” (Kadiri, 2005:np). Thus, the protests did more than alert the regime to the organizing
potential of the university and high schools, they demonstrated to the opposition their need to become more directly involved on university and high school campuses as part of larger efforts to galvanize a whole sector of the Moroccan population.

The riots were also successful for suggesting to the regime the risk of having only one university in a country the size of Morocco. Because students came from all over the country to one central university, they had a network that covered the country. When high school students began rioting in the capital, word quickly spread all over the country. It is believed that the university students were largely responsible for spreading word about the unrest. Nevertheless, another university is not created until 1978 (Meziani, 1999).

It was not just the events themselves but the context in which they took place that created the perception that the left posed an imminent threat to the stability of the country and the king’s consolidation of his rule. In the words of one Moroccan elite, the ideology of the time was “part of coherent global vision of a radical left” (Iraqi and Mrabet, 2012). Participants saw themselves as part of a larger struggle. In the Introduction I suggested the Cold War context of the protests gave the monarchy’s suppression of the leftist students a particular momentum. In this section, I discuss how the 1968 protests in France magnified the effect of the Casablanca riots.

The unrest began at the Sorbonne in Paris, an elite university, when students held an anti-government rally that was violently suppressed by the police (Inskeep and Montagne, 2005). The riots lasted ten days (BBC, 2005). On 13 May 1968, workers and teachers joined the students with a one-day general strike (BBC, 2005). An estimated 800,000 protesters flooded the streets of Paris in opposition to the violent tactics used
on the students in the initial protests and demanding the fall of the de Gaulle government (BBC, 2005). The students were likely inspired by similar protests in the United States and pro-democracy riots in Prague (BBC, 2005). In the aftermath, protests led by students, labor activists and leftist political party student activists spread across the country calling for an end to the war in Vietnam and demonstrating their opposition to the policies of then President Charles de Gaulle (Inskeep and Montagne, 2005). It should be noted that leftist political parties themselves did not participate and tried to discourage the protests (BBC, 2005). Nevertheless, it is estimated that 10 million people took part in the protests across the country, which crippled the French state for nearly two weeks and affected all aspects of daily life including “public transport, air travel, power supplies, postal services and manufacturing” (BBC, 2005:np).

The 1968 protests were significant for highlighting the ability of university students to unite large swathes of the population. They also demonstrated how unrest diffuses across national borders, combining domestic and international grievances. Finally, student protests seem to have a special way of inspiring sympathy when violently put down by the state. In light of the 1965 protests in Morocco, which had a number of similar characteristics, the 1968 French riots further demonstrated that university politics spill over into the national arena and thus should not be ignored. The French riots had a number of tangible and intangible affects on Moroccan politics including creating a general atmosphere of concern and inspiring a particular set of educational reforms which will be addressed in Chapter 7 (Ksikes, 2010). In the immediate years after the riots, Moroccan students who had been living in France and
participated in the riots returned to Morocco and started an organization with Herzenni, the same activist who was organizing leftist students at the same Casablanca high school where the riots had started (Park and Boum, 2006). The group published a newsletter *ruba shararatin ahraqat sahlan* (translation: one spark can ignite a plain) (Park and Boum, 2006).

In the context of the Cold War and the 1968 riots in France, the 1965 Casablanca riots unsettled a young regime and led to a brutal era in Moroccan politics known as the “Years of Lead,” *Les Années de Plomb* in French. The harsh response of the regime demonstrates how much fear these events inspired in the monarchy. In light of the larger critical junctures argument that the dissertation is making, these events illustrate Pierson’s conception of *contingency*: “Relatively small events, if they occur at the right moment, can have large and enduring consequences” (2000: 263). It is the “large and enduring consequences” which occupy Chapters 7 and 8 of the dissertation.
Figure 6-1. Route taken from Mohammed V High School to the French Cultural Center by protestors on 22 March 1965, the day before the Casablanca riots
CHAPTER 7
HOW AN ISLAMIC SOLUTION BECAME AN ISLAMIST PROBLEM

The continuity is apparent not only in these targets but also in the participants: the same individuals who followed Nasser or Marx in the 1960s are Islamists today. There is an abundance of coming and going and of connections between Marxist groups and the Islamist sphere (Roy, 1996:4).

In the previous chapter, I described the events of 23 March 1965 and the regime’s immediate response to them. In this chapter, I discuss the long-term efforts of the regime to take control of the educational ideological state apparatus and to direct it against leftist ideologies. Two sets of reforms are significant in this process, those intended to weaken the left and those intended to strengthen Islamist ideologies. These reforms had leadership, institutional, and content-related elements. Leadership include who was in charge of significant institutions; institutional approaches include what universities were funded and what departments and subjects were taught; content approaches look at the actual curriculum itself. An examination of these three approaches demonstrates how education was used to weaken public support for leftist ideologies and strengthen support for Islamist ones. The final section of the paper discusses the results of these policies including the exhaustion of the left and the growth of Salafist Islam in public discourse.

Although the chapter focuses on the educational reforms that were used to weaken the left, it is important to emphasize that educational reform was part of a larger strategy that employed a number of other means including the use of violence against dissidents, forced disappearances, the maintenance of a culture of fear, and the use of territorial dispute to encourage loyalty to the regime through the Green March of 1975. One Moroccan elite described this period by saying that Hassan “declared war on the
UNFP” (Iraqi and Mrabet, 2012:np). It is also important to note that the independence party, Istiqlal, cooperated with this strategy and it is at times difficult to clarify who is responsible for particular actions since it is not always known when there are behind-the-scene deals between the monarchy and Istiqlal and when they cooperate because they see their interests as overlapping. Most observers agree, however, that king Hassan II dominated public policy. In the words of one journalist, “When King Hasan took the reins of government in his own hands, Moroccan political parties became no more than marginal groups occasionally expressing their opposition to the regime” (Kedourie, 2004:57). The next chapter will address how educational policies were altered as a result of the weakened state of the left and the rise of Islamist groups.

Institutional Reform

Higher Education

It was mentioned in Chapter 4 that UNEM had an intentional strategy of infiltrating university campuses with party militants. The size of the Moroccan security apparatus and the regime’s behavior during this period suggests that it was aware of UNEM’s strategy. One such action was the regime’s closing of Philosophy and Sociology departments at multiple universities. Because leftist activists gravitated to these departments, the closing of the Institute of Sociology in Rabat in 1973 among other institutions was widely seen as an attempt to weaken leftists (Rddad, 2011). In the same year, the entire teaching of the School of Humanities at Mohammed V University in Rabat was Arabized for all subjects.¹ Laila Lalami, a popular Moroccan novelist,

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suggests, “This decision was not due to nationalistic fervor; rather, the government believed it was a good way to prevent the study of texts that it considered “subversive” (2006:np). 2 By Arabizing the curriculum, the regime provided incentives for professors to teach from texts written in Arabic or those with Islamic referents.

There was one aspect of the policy of strengthening Islamist ideologies that had to be dealt with carefully since the regime did not want to increase the power of the ulama or religious scholars, a group that had historically been a powerful opposition group. This goal was achieved by shifting centers of Islamic learning away from Fez and the historic center of protest at Qarawiyyin university and dispersing religious students across the country or locating them in Rabat. As discussed in Chapter 4, this was accomplished in part by not investing financial resources or overseeing significant reforms at Qarawiyyin university. In addition, the regime created branch campuses of the university so that students would be dispersed rather than in a single city. Further, it created a new institution of higher Islamic education in the city of Rabat where it could easily be monitored.

The regime’s neglect of Qarawiyyin University is too blatant to be coincidental. Qarawiyyin University is 1200 years old and was the seat of Islamic learning in North Africa for centuries. Historically, it has also been the center of revolt within the Moroccan kingdom and has been the seat of influence of religious scholars. Malika Zeghal brilliantly summarizes the predicament that the regime was in: “The only way it had to channel the ulama that had come out of the institution [Qarawiyyin] and the nationalist youth connected to it, particularly in traditionally rebellious Fez that had been

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2 The view of French philosophy as subversive is noteworthy because in later periods it was Arabic philosophers who were perceived as subversive. See Chapter 6.
in the nationalist camp, was to neglect the university and to leave it open to attacks from secular institutions of learning. The regime could not in fact afford to reform the institutions of religious education through a major substantive law because this would mean fully introducing the ‘ulama into debates about education in Morocco, and thereby offering [sic] them a basis for political mobilization” (Zeghal, 2008:34-5). To prevent the mobilization of the ‘ulama, while simultaneously encouraging the Salafization of Moroccan society was a delicate process that was accomplished in specific ways including neglect, decentralization and dispersal.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the regime had already begun to neglect Qarawiyyin University prior to the riots of 1965, likely because of its role as a center for revolt. This was evident in the reforms of 1963, which integrated the religious scholars into the government bureaucracy and made the university into an undergraduate institution. This reform left the university “with no possibility for its students to obtain the celebrated ‘alimiyya, the degree that granted the title of ‘alim or religious scholar” (Zeghal, 2008:45). By removing the doctorate from Qarawiyyin, the monarchy removed the institutional means for the ‘ulama to reproduce themselves. Further, the reform institutionalized the subordination of the ‘ulama under government ministries; they thus could no longer serve as a check on executive power as they once had. Finally, the

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3 Prior to the constitution of 1962, when a Sultan or king died or was deemed unworthy to continue his role, the ‘ulama or men of religious learning appointed the new ruler. They also were the ones who decided when the ruler was unfit to continue his duties. The constitution of 1962, however, made male primogenitor the basis for succession. The reforms of the Qarawiyyin in 1963, combined with the constitutional reform to weaken the ‘ulama to the point of insignificance. Prior to this date, they served an important role in checking the authority of the executive. In 1907, for example, Sultan ‘Abdul-‘Aziz was unable to respond to the increasing French influence in the country, so the Fassi ‘ulama declared his brother Mawlay ‘abd al-Hafiz sultan (Segalla, 2009:5). Although the Sultan was the highest political authority at the time, this example illustrates that he remained so only as long as the men of religious learning supported him. This hierarchy of power was gradually reversed and finally institutionalized in the early 1960s; in contemporary times, the king appoints the ‘ulama. A second example of the importance of
reform dispersed the ‘ulama and their students among a series of branch campuses in Fez, Tetouan and Meknes (Zeghal, 2008:45). The reforms have had their intended affect. In a 2011 interview, one Moroccan academic commented "Unfortunately, Qarawiyyin is almost dead now" (Masbah, 2011). These reforms were a necessary corollary to a policy intended to strengthen Islamist ideologies in order to protect the regime from a serious threat to its power from the ‘ulama.

In addition to reducing the significance of the historic Qarawiyyin, the regime also created a new institution of higher Islamic learning, Dar al-Hadith al-Hassaniya or, as one scholar jokingly called it, “Hassan’s House of Hadith” (Zeghal, 2008:49). By choosing to channel financial resources into the new institution, while reducing the mandate of Qarawiyyin, dispersing its faculty and students, and moving its ability to grant the highest degree of ‘alim to an institution completely under the control of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, the regime created a means to develop religious leaders to legitimate its rule without strengthening an institution that could serve as a center of resistance or opposition. The fact that the monarchy chose to open a new institution located in Rabat, rather than to provide needed reform and infrastructure to the Qarawiyyin University in Fez is emblematic of the lengths the regime was willing to go to control potential centers of opposition. Qarawiyyin, the oldest continuously functioning institution of higher learning in the world, was left to deteriorate while money was

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the ‘ulama’s role in granting legitimacy to the Sultan was such that in 1894, when Mawlay Hasan died, and his 14 year old son Mawlay ‘Abdul-‘Aziz was proclaimed Sultan by the deceased’s chamberlain, Ba Ahmad, without consulting the ‘ulama, ‘Abdul-‘Aziz’s brother was able to use the situation to make his own claim to the throne. Although Ahmad was eventually able to consolidate ‘Abdul-‘Aziz’s authority for him, his reign was characterized by chaos and rebellion (Abun-Nasr, 1987:305-6; Park and Boum 2006:8).
poured into a new institution that would be easier to control. One need only to see the magnificent new building where Dar al Hadith is located to know that the regime is more than willing to spend resources on institutions of higher Islamic learning, just not ones that tend to be sources of opposition.

The final institutional measure that facilitated the controlled Salafization of society was the creation of Islamic studies departments at universities in the 1970s and 1980s (Zeghal, 2008:52; Bourqia, 2009; Rddad, 2011). In 1979, the Minister of Education from the Istiqlal party, Azzedine Laraki, replaced the departments of philosophy and sociology at multiple Moroccan universities with Islamic Studies departments (Tourabi, 2009). This included the opening of Masters and PhD programs in Islamic Studies across the country (Masbah, 2011). The Department of Islamic Studies in Rabat was added several years later in 1983 (Rddad, 2011). The regime provided multiple incentives for students to pursue degrees in Islamic Studies. First, the exams required to both gain entrance and to graduate from the program were easy; “If you wanted to succeed, you went to the department of Islamic studies” (Rddad, 2011). In addition, the Arabization of the school curriculum for primary and secondary students, described below, created the need for teachers capable of teaching in Arabic. There were thus a

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4 The audacity of this action can best be summarized by the Moroccan expression, “Fil Maghrib, la testagrib,” or “In Morocco, never be surprised.” This phrase is frequently invoked to explain contradictions in the behavior of the monarchy. Perhaps it goes without saying that it is contradictory to support the Islamic sciences while neglecting one of the world’s leading institutions of Islamic learning.

5 The building contains state of the art computer labs, libraries, archives, auditoriums and Moroccan sitting rooms in addition to offices and classrooms. The entire complex is built in traditional Moroccan style with opulent mosaic tile and plaster work, arranged around two courtyards. There is also a mosque on site. See Figures 2 and 3.

6 Laraki was not well liked. “We thought of him as destroying the system of education” said one professor (Rddad, 3 June 2011). Opposition to his educational reforms was strong, and he was removed from his position, but his policies were not reversed for at least a decade, suggesting they had royal support.
number of incentives for students to study the Islamic sciences at universities, including the fact that programs were easy, accessible and held promise of employment.

The number of jobs available to Arabic speakers created incentives for those otherwise inclined to study other subjects to pursue Islamic science degrees. The biography of Abdel Karim al-Hushairi, former head of the Moroccan Association for Teachers of Islamic Education (MATIE) and parliamentarian, is instructive. He studied Islamic education independently in addition to taking classes at public elementary, middle and high schools. Al-Hushairi completed the science track in high school and then pursued a two-year degree in engineering. After his inability to find a job with an engineering diploma he entered the Islamic Studies program at Rabat University in 1983. After graduation he attended a one-year state-funded training program at a Regional Educational Center in Marrakesh to become an Islamic education teacher for middle schools. Later he also pursued the training for teaching high school. From 1991-1997 he taught Islamic education in high schools. He joined the MATIE in 1991. From 1997-2002, he had various positions in high school administration until he took over as the chairman of the MATIE from 2002-2011. He was elected as a parliamentarian with the PJD in 2007 representing Casablanca. By switching careers, from engineering to a position as a teacher of Islamic education, a new set of opportunities were available to al-Hushairi with economic, political and social implications. His life demonstrates how government policies can create incentives for those who would otherwise pursue different paths.7

7 Interview with al-Hushairi on 23 July 2011.
Moroccan scholars themselves point out that the creation of these departments was intended to combat the left. Rania Bourqia, for example, a professor of sociology and President of Hassan II University in Mohammedia wrote, “Islamic studies currently taught in the humanities at all Moroccan universities are similar to the theological disciplines (Shari’ah) without being called so. Created during the 1980s to counteract Marxist ideology, these studies have not developed the interdisciplinary character and are not included in the framework of the human and social sciences” (Bourqia, 2009:41-2). This position was echoed by one interviewee who explained, “the university was used by the state as a center of conflict with the left” (Masbah, 2011).

**Elementary Education**

It is not surprising that in the wake of the 1965 Casablanca riots led by university students, a number of reforms were focused at the level of higher education. But there was one institutional reform worthy of mention that was implemented for much younger students: the 1968 dahir or executive mandate that all children attend at least one year of Quranic school prior to entering the public school system (Zeghal, 2008:53). The story behind this program is itself indicative of the intentions of the religious education strategy. In an interview in *La Revue Economia* magazine in October 2010, Mohamed Chafiq, explained how the 1968 policy came about. Chafiq is the former advisor on education to the Royal Cabinet, which means that he was an advisor to the King’s advisors. These are unelected and extraordinarily powerful positions. He prefaced the

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8 The comment was originally in French: “les études islamiques enseignées actuellement au sein des facultés des lettres dans toutes les universités marocaines s’apparentent aux disciplines théologiques (ouloum char’iya) sans qu’elles soient ainsi dénommées. Créées durant les années 80 pour contrecarrer le courant de l’idéologie marxiste, ces études n’ont pas acquis un caractère interdisciplinaire et ne se sont pas inscrites dans le cadre du savoir des sciences humaines et sociales.” (Bourqia, 2009:41-2, my translation is provided above in the text).
story by mentioning how the 1968 student riots in France caused anxiety in Rabat (Ksikes, 2010). His reference to the protests of university students is interesting considering the discussion was on pre-school education. According to Chafiq, he was asked to write a report on the pedagogical value of the teaching in Quranic schools or m’sids as they are called in Morocco (Ksikes, 2010). M’sids are the private, local Islamic education schools that at that time were not integrated into the public school system. They provided basic skills in reading and writing but were mostly focused on memorizing sections of the Quran.

Chafiq completed the report, taking a position that was highly critical of the m’sids. “If I remember correctly, the phrase that concluded my report was something along the lines of: “teaching in the m’sids is one of the causes of the backwardness of our civilization” (Ksikes, 2010:24). The Director General of the Royal Cabinet questioned the wisdom of turning in such a report to the Commander of the Faithful, but Chafiq insisted on handing it in (Ksikes, 2010:124). A week later he was called back to the Director General’s office. The Director General burst into laughter informing him that the king was asking Chafiq to write a letter to the Minister of Education calling for the expansion of Quranic education across Morocco (Ksikes, 2010). Chafiq concluded, “In effect, it is the Quranic school, with the inculcated culture of submission and lack of intellectual courage that provides the Makhzan with its best subjects. In other words, the philosophy of power of the Mahkzan is in perfect harmony with that of the m’sid” (Ksikes, 2010:124).

Keeping in mind that this interview was discussing events that were more than forty years old, there is no way to verify the truth of the story. If the story is true,
however, the 1968 executive *dahir* on Quranic education suggests a number of important characteristics of the state’s Salafization campaign. First, his mention of the 1968 riots in Paris supports the assertion that fear of the left motivated state support for incentivizing Islamic education even as early as pre-school. Second, Chafiq’s highly critical report suggests that the monarchy was well aware of the affect of Quranic education in inculcating the values of authoritarian citizenship, and that the desire to spread these values may have actually motivated the policy. The way the Director General burst into laughter upon requiring Chafiq to contact the Minister of Education further suggests that the monarchy itself was aware of the irony of asking Quranic education’s lead critic to call for its expansion. Chafiq’s conclusion, that Quranic education seeks to develop the same characteristics that the *Makhzan* seeks to instill in its subjects is a compelling complementary argument to the one offered in this dissertation, that the policy was motivated by fear of the left.

To conclude this section, the institutional reforms that assisted in the Salafization of Moroccan society included the neglect of Qarawiyyin university, the closing of university departments seen as centers of leftist ideology, the opening of Islamic sciences departments to direct discourse and develop functionaries to assist with the Arabization of elementary and secondary education and the requirement that Moroccan children attend a year of schooling in a *m’sid* prior to entering the public school system.

**Leadership**

In addition to establishing institutions intended to Islamize society, the leadership of those same institutions is further evidence of the ways the regime attempted to direct ideology. By reference to the leadership of educational institutions, one can deduce the programs of studied that were incentivized through promotion and career advancement.
Taking the School of Humanities at Mohammed V University⁹ as an example, the first dean of the college, from February 1957 to October, 1960 was a French journalist and historian by the name of Charles-André Julien. The fact that a French scholar was in a position of leadership over a Moroccan educational institution in the late 1950s supports the position of the Moroccan independence party that there was a need to “Moroccanize” the administration of education. The second dean, until February, 1969 was a Moroccan philosopher with a doctorate from the Sorbonne in Paris by the name of Mohammed Aziz Lahbabi, whose writings were rooted in a form of Muslim humanism.¹⁰ His leadership of the institution, and appointment in 1960, is evidence that there was not yet hostility to the presence of leftists in positions of authority over educational institutions. By the 1980s, the time considered to be the height of Arabization and Salafization under Hassan II, the dean was Mohammed Hajji. Hajji is well-known for his compilation of the massive Encyclopedia *Maalamat al-Maghrib*. He was trained as a child by religious scholars in Salé, and graduated from the Institut des Hautes Études Marocaines in 1958 with a degree in Classical Arabic and translation.¹¹ Abdelouahed Bendaoud, was Dean from December 1989 to January 1998. The most instructive aspect of his biography is the fact that after he served as dean he was made the head of Original Education in the reforms that followed the Casablanca bombings of

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Original education is the name given to the system of public schools in Morocco committed to the development of the next generation of religious scholars. In another context, it is hard to imagine the dean of a school of humanities at a university being promoted to being the head of national elementary religious education. The fact that he was given this position in the wake of a major terrorist attack that was viewed by many as rooted in the system of Islamic education, demonstrates that the monarchy had high regard for him. Taken together, the Deans of the School of Humanities reflect the general trend toward incentivizing the study of Arabic and the general Salafization of society. The leftists, who once controlled universities, were the primary group that was removed from positions of authority and lost their institutional locust of organization.

Similar to the removal of leftists from positions of authority in educational institutions, individuals with particular orientations were put in place as leaders over religious institutions. The monarchy originally chose Mohamed Farouk Annaban (also spelled Mohammad Farouk Al-Nabhan), a Syrian member of the Muslim Brotherhood, to head Dar al-Hadith al-Hassaniya. He was in charge of the institution from 1977 to 2000. Prior to his appointment he taught at universities in Saudi Arabia from 1966 to 1970 and at the Faculty of Law at the University of Kuwait from 1970 to 1977. It is believed that he was chosen because he militantly opposed Nasserism, which by the 1970s had become the foundation for the left across the Middle East (Howe, 2005:127).


This trend is also seen at the ministerial level. Since independence, three men have had tremendous impact on the Ministry of Islamic Affairs (MIA), serving in their position as minister for at least nine years. These leaders include: Hadj Ahmed Bargach, who served from 1963-1972; Abdelkebir Alaoui M'Daghri (Mdaghri), who served from 1985-2002 and Ahmed Toufiq (other spellings include Taofiq and Taofik) who served from 2002 until the time of the writing of this dissertation (2013). These three leaders correspond to three major periods in Moroccan history. The man who held the position for the longest, Abdelkebir Alaoui M'Daghri was replaced because he was seen as “too close to the Salafis” (Maghraoui, 2009:207). This is an interesting argument given that he held the post for twenty years prior to being judged as too close to the Salafis. The time period that he held his position corresponds nicely with the argument of this dissertation, that the height of Salafization was reached between the 1980s and the 1990s. M'Daghri holds Bachelors degrees in law, sharia’, and the humanities. He also received a PhD in Islamic Sciences from Dar al-Hadith al-Hassaniya in Rabat with a thesis on the work of Abu Bakr ibn al-'Arabi (Park and Boum, 2006:25). His biography is a stark contrast with the current Minister of Islamic Affairs, Ahmed Toufiq who has a bachelor’s degree in history, and a master’s degree in history and archeology.14 In addition to serving as a professor of history at Mohammed V University in Rabat and director for the Center for African studies, Taofiq is known for his work as a fiction writer. He was also a visiting scholar at an American institution making him a “good person to copy American models” (Saqi, 2011). His appointment

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was seen as “a means of de-politicizing Islam” (Rddad, 2011). In line with the reforms announced by the king following the Casablanca bombings of 2003, his “main agenda is to reform the religious field” (Rddad, 2011). He oversaw changes to Dar-al Hadith’s curriculum, discussed below, in 2005 that aligned the institution with American educational models and is also responsible for appointing Imams to mosques and religious councils. In terms of ideological orientation, Taofiq is a Sufi of the Boutshishi order, a group known for their apolitical views. His appointment was widely seen as an effort to encourage adherence to Sufism, seen as a distinctly “Moroccan” and “tolerant” form of Islam (Maghraoui, 2009), a topic that will be addressed in Chapter 8. His appointment is then an ideal marker to signify the shift from an emphasis of Salafism to an emphasis on Sufism. His reappointment in 2012 was understood as suggesting, “Sufism maintains its place as a top priority in the Moroccan religious landscape” (Aswab, 2012:np).

**Content**

**Arabization**

In 1956, a priority of the UNEM\(^{15}\) and Istiqlal party was the Arabization of education, or the transition from an educational system where French or Spanish was the language of instruction to Modern Standard Arabic (*fus\(\text{Ha}\)*). The proposal created such a controversy that it was not fully implemented for thirty years. Istiqlal itself was divided over the form and priority of Arabization, and the two factions were led, not surprisingly, by Allal al-Fasi and Mehdi Ben Barka. Al-Fasi viewed Arabization as a means through which to encourage the development of a distinctly Arab Moroccan

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\(^{15}\) Once Istiqlal split in 1959, however, the Arabization of curriculum was no longer a priority for UNEM, as the student union became the center of leftist ideology.
Arabization was a priority for al-Fasi, but it would be an overstatement to say that he wanted all subjects taught in Arabic. It was later activists (not al-Fasi) who demanded the “complete” Arabization of the educational system (Zartman, 1964). Indeed, his own hesitancy over Arabization is probably best described in the fact that he chose to send his own children to mission schools, where the primary language of instruction was French (Boutieri, 2011). Al-Fasi did not, to my knowledge, publicly defend this decision. Ben Barka, on the other hand, did not disapprove of Arabization, but he viewed it as a lower priority than educational development. For him, French was the necessary primary language for Moroccan students because of the gaps in vocabulary in Arabic (Zartman, 1964). He supported some Arabization, but viewed the mastery of French as an economic necessity.

The Arabization of Moroccan public education began in the early years of the post-independence government, when Allal al-Fasi’s cousin, Mohammed, was Minister of Education. He announced the policy at a press conference on 25 June 1956. Beginning the following year, the first year of elementary schooling (cours préparatoires) was given in Arabic, followed by two years of schooling split between Arabic and French instruction (Segalla, 2009:250). However, there were so few proficient Arabic speakers in the country, it was necessary to import a large number of Arabic teachers from Egypt, Lebanon and Iraq (Segalla, 2009:252). In less than a decade, the process was paused by then Minister of Education Mohammed Benhima due to concerns over the quality of instruction, not to mention the ideological influence of the teachers from the Middle East, and French was once again made the language of instruction (Boutieri, 2011:11).
Istiqlal was at the forefront of the reinstallation of the Arabization campaign. In a communiqué published on January 3rd, 1973 in the Istiqlal newspaper Al-Alam, Allal al-Fasi appealed to the Moroccan people to demand the Prime Minister to Arabize education (Grandguillaume, 1990). The appeal instigated six months of petitions published in multiple Moroccan newspapers in both French and Arabic. The campaign was successful. By 1978, Hassan II became fully committed to Arabization: “Arabization should be the irreversible point of departure for educational reform,” he said (Segalla, 2009:255). The process was complete by the early 1990s. The Istiqlal party and specifically Allal al-Fasi are responsible for making Arabization a national political issue, but Hassan II is responsible for its actual implementation. Arabization was a priority of the Istiqlal party for decades, but it did not become national policy until the king threw his support behind it.

There is debate over the reasons why Hassan II reinstated the policy. Some argue it was due to pressure from various social actors such as the Istiqlal party, the Union of Higher Education, the National Association of Moroccan Writers and the public at large (Segalla, 2009). The World Bank and UNESCO also supported the measure “based on the sound pedagogical notion that literacy is best spread when the language of instruction is the language of the home” (Segalla, 2009:255), but the mistaken belief that the language of Arabization, Modern Standard Arabic, was similar to spoken Moroccan Arabic or Darija, which it is not. Others, such as Mohamed Chafiq, the advisor to the Royal Cabinet on educational matters, argues the motives were less well-intentioned. He argues that the initial push for Arabization, which he himself supported, was “more rational” while the second push for Arabization led by Hassan II was “a
frenzied and more dangerous Arabization" where "the political calculations far outweighed the educational rationale" (Ksikes, 2010:123). Since the anti-left policies of Hassan’s government began in the early 1970s, the King’s support of the policy later that decade complicates the argument that Arabization was intended to support the general Salafization described in this chapter. Consequently, one could argue that the policy coincidentally supported other educational initiatives. Regardless of the intent of the monarchy, the significance of the policy for our purposes is its effects and the resulting shifts in state educational policy.

The Arabization of Moroccan schools had a number of effects. First, the work of Aomar Boum (2008) suggests that there is a link between the Arabization of public schools and the increasing number of students studying the Islamic sciences at the university. Students from Arabized schools are more likely to pursue degrees in Arabic language and literature or the Islamic sciences because the degree is taught in the same language between high school and college, unlike many other subjects that are taught in Arabic in high school and in French at the university level. This is problematic because degrees taught in Arabic are less likely to provide economic opportunities than those taught in French or English. The result is that students who attend public schools in Morocco that have been Arabized are less likely than those who attended private schools were French is the language of instruction. The economic costs appear to have been viewed as either temporary or worth the benefit of encouraging students to take advantage of the newly formed Islamic sciences departments at Moroccan universities.

Despite the lack of employment opportunities created by Arabization, many Moroccan citizens supported the policy. This may be explained by reference to a belief
among many Moroccans that someone is intellectually gifted if he or she can memorize
the Quran (Boum, 2008). Because this belief is more likely to be located in the lower
classes, it does not have consistent effects across society. Moroccan elites, who are
much less likely to view the memorization of the Quran as a sign of divine favor,
continue to send their children to private schools that are taught in French. Boum (2008)
concludes that these circumstances have resulted in the “political coherence of
incoherence.” Arabization was a policy intended to reverse French colonial education
policy, which granted limited opportunities to Moroccan elites while providing poor
quality education to the Moroccan masses. Arabization was intended to unify the
Moroccan nation and provide for equality of opportunity. But because economic
opportunities continue to be available to French speakers, the Arabization of education
did not reverse French policy; it actually continued it. Thus a policy that was politically
coherent, was educationally incoherent, to borrow Boum’s (2008) phrase.

Boum’s critique, while damning, implies that this incoherence was an unintended
consequence of Arabization. Others attribute more intentionality to the designers of
Arabization. The strongest critique came from the former advisor to the palace on
education discussed above, Mohamed Chafiq. In discussing those who defended the
Arabization policy for the Moroccan masses but placed their own children in foreign
schools, Chafiq commented, “I believe that in the field of education, there has been a
betrayal by the fringe of the political class” (Ksikes, 2010:122). Because Allal al-Fasi’s
choice to send his own children to private schools is frequently mentioned in
discussions of Arabization, it seems likely that Chafiq is directing his criticism at the
nationalist leader. Other leftists also “began to criticize the government for an
'arabization of the poor,' for maintaining French as a language for the upper class, not only in social life but also in business, law, and administration” (Segalla, 2009:257). In the absence of the release of more public records, it seems unlikely that scholars will be able to definitely settle this conflict.

While some focus on the economic impacts of Arabization, others focus on the social impacts. In terms of religious belief and practice, implementation of the Arabization policy resulted in a generation of Muslims who can read and understand their own holy book, providing for a radical change in one’s relationship to his religion. Whereas Muslims frequently cite their religion’s lack of a central hierarchy as evidence of their religion’s individualist nature, until recently most Moroccan Muslims needed someone else to interpret the Quran for them in order to have even the most basic understanding of the text. Literacy has thus had a fundamental change on the nature of the individual’s relationship with his religion (Eickelman, 1992; quoted in Boutieri, 2011:167).

Taken together, the cultural belief in the value of memorization, the increased competency in the Arabic language and the shifting relationship between believers and their religion combined with the incentives for pursuing Islamic Science degrees at the level of higher education may have facilitated the Salafization of public space among Moroccans discussed below. It is not possible to know, however, how much of this effect was caused by Arabization because a second reform to Moroccan public education, here termed “Salafization” also greatly encouraged a return to religion. This Salafization of Moroccan education will be addressed in the next section. While it is difficult to parse out which reforms had which effects, the overall impact of these
policies combined, as well as the international context in which they were undertaken, facilitated the rise of Salafist groups in Morocco, the topic of the third and final section of this chapter.

**The Salafization of Education**

In addition to Arabization, the Moroccan monarchy oversaw a process of Salafization of both the public schools and the universities. In an article titled, “How and Why Hassan II Islamized Society” in Morocco’s leading and somewhat sensational news weekly, *Telquel*, Abdellah Tourabi describes this process, though he refers to it as “traditionalization.” I chose not to use this terminology because it encourages a conception of religion as traditional, suggesting an opposition to that which is modern, a false dichotomy. Salafization included the increased priority given to Islamic education in the public schools and the rewriting of Islamic education manuals in line with a particular interpretation of Islam, Salafism. Istiqlal supported the monarchy in this process, because the party continued to be inspired by al-Fasi’s Islamic modernist ideas which are part of the intellectual lineage of modern Salafism (Tourabi, 2009). In an interview, Moroccan research Mohamed Layadi told Tourabi that the reforms were intended to combat “imported” ideologies and create “good Muslim citizens” (Tourabi, 2009:np). This section presents some details of this strategy.

**Islamic Content of School Textbooks**

Beyond the reforms to universities, discussed above, changes to Islamic education in the public schools were also targeted specifically at halting the rise of leftist movements. This was particularly evident in the content of public school textbooks, where there was a strict distinction between Muslims and “the others” by glorifying Islam and attacking liberalism and Marxism (Masbah, 21 May 2011). One quote from a
manual, for example, reads, “communism should be fought as it calls for revolution and disorder, creating wars and tensions, sows hatred and diffuses atheism: it is the parent of colonialism and ally of Zionism” (Tourabi, 2009). This quotation illustrates that in addition to identifying communists as “others,” textbooks were used to instruct students that Islam is an ideology in confrontation with other ideologies and that it is the best of the available options (Masbah, 21 May 2011).\footnote{It is worth noting that Muhammad Masbah is an active member of the PJD party. The PJD is the political party organized from one faction of the Islamic Youth Association, which recently won the 2011 Parliamentary elections. His position demonstrates that even members of political parties that have benefitted from these policies are aware of them.} “The students that passed their bac [exams in secondary school] between 1981 and 1994, during the height of the power of Hassan II, had the right to an Islamic education manual literally dedicated to a state crusade against leftist movements. The text, which resembled more of a political tract than a tool for learning and training, presented capitalism, communism, Zionism and secularism as ideologies hostile to Islam” (Tourabi, 2010:np). Islam was presented as an ideology by exposing students in public schools to the ideas of Sayyid Qutb, the ideological father of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, who argues for a differentiation between Muslims and the \textit{jahiliya} or non-believers (literally, “the ignorant ones”; practically, “the non-Muslims”) (Masbah, 21 May 2011). It is important to note that this state support for Salafist ideologies corresponds with the time of Arabization, when a number of Arabic teachers had been imported from the East. It is then likely that at the same time that students were exposed to the ideas of Sayyid Qutb in their Islamic education courses, their Arabic language courses reinforced similar ideologies.

This section describes in greater detail some of these changes made to the curriculum. It is based on research conducted by Mohammed El Ayadi (Bourqia and...
Ayadi, 2000) who reviewed the content of school textbooks from two subjects: Islamic education and Arabic literature. Ayadi analyzed nine manuals from the first, second and third year of high school, meaning that these are also the books from the years when the student will be required to pass a series of examinations before he or she will be permitted to proceed to the next grade level. This suggests that the student will study the books with more intensity than elementary school subjects. Although nine books were examined, only those sections with a religious connotation were systematically assessed for a total of 872 pages.

Several of his conclusions are relevant for our purposes. First, and most importantly, Ayadi found the material supported a distinctly Salafist interpretation of Islam. This conception makes reference to a “true Islam” which it sets up as in conflict with the popular practices of Islam popular in Morocco in the form of Sufism. “The principles of this school, the theories and its principal thinkers are also largely highlighted in many places in the corpus where it is a question of a praise directed at this doctrine and its apostles” (p.120, my translation). In total eight of the nine texts exhibited this quality. Salafist critiques of sufi practices and particularly worship of saints are showcased through the texts of such thinkers as Muhammad ‘Abduh and Abu Ali al-Yusi, a Moroccan sage from the 17th century. The texts rely on a number of reformist authors including Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad ‘Abduh, Ibn Badis, ‘Allal al-Fasi, Sayyid Qutb, Muhammad al-Bahi, Aicha Abderrahman, Abu al-A’la al-Mawdudi, Mohammed Chaltout and others (Bourqia and Ayadi, 2000:161).

17 See footnote 16 on page 249-250 for a listing of the texts and the page number on which these characteristics have been identified.
In terms of political values, the school manuals present a specific relationship of power between religion and the state. “Islam is religion and the state” one manual explains. The separation of political and religious power is set up as a foreign idea. Islam is the basis of political power. The principle of consultation (shura) is a guarantee against despotism (āl-Istibdad). All citizens are obliged to obedience (at-Ta’a) to him who secures their allegiance (al-Bay’a). Islam is then set up as a political system, containing its own internal model of democratic governance. This system is presented as superior to liberalism and communism. The author concludes, “A system of oppositions is employed putting Islam in competition with capitalism and communism. Throughout this double opposition, the authors of the manuals produce an ‘original’ political system that has, according to the manuals, “all the qualities of the other systems without having their faults” (p.131). See Table 1 below. The authors argue that the values of today’s society have been central to Islam for centuries resulting in a constant comparison between a “idealized Islam” and a “caricatured West” (p.134). The current presence of authoritarianism in Muslim countries is explained by the authors of the manuals as a result of straying from the faith and the failure to apply the concept of consultation (shura).
Table 7-1. Depiction of Islam as a complete and perfect political system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAPITALISM</th>
<th>VS</th>
<th>ISLAM</th>
<th>VS</th>
<th>COMMUNISM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capitalism cultivates hate and segregation.</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>Islam recommends liberty, brotherhood and equality.</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>In communism, man is deprived of all liberties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalism cultivates self-centeredness.</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>Islam safeguards individual liberties.</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>Communism deprives man of his liberty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In capitalism, there is no consideration of moral or human values.</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>Islam recommends brotherhood, peace and solidarity.</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>Communism directs man toward anarchy and revolution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalism encourages colonialism.</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>Islam recommends brotherhood and peace.</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>Communist ideology is the sister of colonialism and Zionism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In capitalism there is exploitation and despotism.</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>Islam assures justice and equality.</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>In communism man lives in horror and repression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the capitalist system there is corruption and unemployment.</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>Islam assures the balance between individual and collective interests.</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>Communism animates hate between classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalism protects the privileged against the oppressed.</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>Islam is the religion of justice.</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>Communism animates hate between the classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalism protects the privileged against the oppressed.</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>Islam assures justice and equality.</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>Communism animates hate between the classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalism provokes wars.</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>Islam is the religion of peace.</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>Communism provokes wars and revolts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalism is based on exploitation.</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>Islam is the religion of social justice.</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>Communism is a false ideology and a false utopia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In capitalism, money buys voices and the press.</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>The political regime in Islam is a democracy.</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>Communism is a dictator that privileges the cult of personality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This chart is a translation of the table found in Bourqia and Ayadi (2000:132).

In the economic realm, Islam is presented as the middle path between the extreme individualism of capitalism and the extreme communitarianism of communism.

To accomplish this end, a set of values: property, alms, social equilibrium, usury, monopolization and class struggle, are set up as either positive or negative. The

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18 The author of this document notes with interest the appropriation of France’s revolutionary slogan of 1789 to describe Islam.
positive attributes are property, alms and social equilibrium, while the negative attributes are monopolization, usury and class struggle. In this, a number of Quranic verses are supplied to prove that Islam’s economic system is superior to either capitalism or communism. The foundation of this argument is the presentation of property is Islam as both individual and collective. “Islam, on the other hand, according to the manuals, assures balance between individual interest and the interest of the community because private property in Islam is not an absolute right but a limited one imposed upon the individual by communal solidarity” (Bourqia and Ayadi, 2000:138, translation mine).

While opposing capitalism, communism, Zionism and secularism, the textbooks do not present a general view of Islam, but an Islamic modernist one. Major Islamic modernist thinkers and activists such as al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and Abou Chouib al Dukkali are evoked. Beyond content, the majority of Islamic education teachers hired during this period were themselves Salafists (Tourabi, 2009). Informally, the palace allowed the first organized Islamist group in Morocco, the Islamic Youth Association, which was formed in 1969, to flourish in high schools and universities (Howe, 2005:127). The growth of these movements, as a result of these policies, will be discussed below.

To summarize, at the same time that centers of leftist ideology were being removed from university campuses, public school children were being taught that Islam is a political ideology in confrontation with other ideologies in both their Arabic and Islamic education courses. In essence, Moroccan school children were taught that their religious beliefs required certain political beliefs. At the same time, they were exposed to one particular kind of Islam, Salafism. Tourabi concludes that Hassan II created his
own “Frankenstein,” meaning that the King himself oversaw a process that resulted in the rise of Islamist groups in Morocco. The combined effects of weakening the left, increasing instruction in Islamic education and the Arabization of school curriculum has been the general “Salafization” of Moroccan society.

This section illustrated the monarchy’s support of Salafization through educational reforms and argues that this was a response to fears about the power of a unified left. It would be inappropriate, however, to conclude that the monarchy intended to create the type of social context that has given birth to Islamism. It seems more likely that the monarchy was simply trying to increase the power of one opposition movement to counter the strength of the other. However, as Chapter 7 will show, this strategy was a process that was difficult to reverse once it had been begun. In the final section of this chapter, I present the evidence that suggests Moroccan underwent a return to religion in the 1980s and 1990s.

Rise in Salafi Groups

The split in the Independence party, Istiqlal, that resulted in the creation of the UNFP, was temporarily set aside in 1970, when the two groups formed a united political opposition called the Kutla Watania (National Bloc). Though technically lasting until the 1975 Green March, this collaboration was short-lived. The parties had hoped a union between them would help them resist the proposed changes to the Moroccan

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19 This overlap of Islamist and leftist sentiment was not without precedent in Moroccan history. In fact, the underground movements of 1930-1932 that later formed the nationalist movement led by 'Allal al-Fasi were modeled after the French communist party (Reich, 1990). The French communist party’s support of the Moroccan nationalists is also well documented. Marx’s grandson, Robert Jean-Longuet, for example, published the publication Maghreb in Paris in support of North African independence movements for years. After independence, the collaboration continued, as Members of the Ministry of Education frequently were active in both Islamist and leftist circles (Munson, 1986: 276). The learning and collaboration that took place between leftists and Islamists largely came to an end during the ensuing decade of the 1970s, when more radical groups on both the left and the right emerged.
constitution that would further strengthen the power of the monarchy, but the union was not successful and the changes were adopted (Park and Boum, 2006:288). In the same year, an underground leftist group called *Ila al-Amam* (translation: Forward!) was founded (Guessous, 2011). Leftist activists formed other underground groups for the purposes of violent struggle including one named *Harakat 23 maris* (translation: the Movement of 23 March) named in honor of the 1965 riots (Park and Boum, 2006). It is not surprising that the left went underground during this period, as attacks from the palace became more blatant and violent.

Following coup attempts against the King in 1971 and 1972, the crackdown on the left was heightened. In 1973, two leaders of the UNFP in Rabat, Mohammed El Yazighy and Omar Benjelloun, received mail bombs (Park and Boum, 2006). Though both survived, the latter was assassinated on his doorstep after being released from prison on 18 December 1975 (Park and Boum, 2006). The UNFP’s Rabat branch was closed on April 2nd, 1973 and 159 leaders and members of the party were arrested, accused of “complicity in the terrorist acts of al-faqih al-basri. Meanwhile, the government pushed the Casablanca branch of the UNFP (the UMT) to stop its political activities or risk the loss of government funds (Park and Boum, 2006). On 30 August, sixteen UNFP members were condemned to death, fifteen to life in prison, and fifty-six received lesser sentences. The sixty-five *found innocent* were driven that evening from prison to a military camp where they were accused of complicity in an attempt to abduct the crown prince” (Park and Boum, 2006:288, emphasis mine). The hysterics of state policy during the period suggest the arrests were unfounded and rooted in a fear and paranoia of the left.
It was during this period of virulent attack on the left that a number of Islamist groups were founded (Park and Boum, 2006). Members of the left did not see the crackdown on the left and the rise of Islamist groups as unrelated. “By the early 1970s many UNEM members considered the rise of Islamist groups to be threatening, and some argued fairly persuasively that the new movements were a government supported attempt to weaken the left” (Park and Boum, 2006:344). Others make similar arguments (Rabasa, et al., 2004). The earliest Islamists active in the country were the *jamaʿat al-tablīgh wa-l-daʿwa ila allah* (Community of Transmission and Invitation to God), begun in 1965 under the leadership of Muhammad al-Hamdawi (Park and Boum, 2006). The group gained legal standing in July 1975. “The legalization of a wing of *jamaʿat al-tablīgh wa-l-daʿwa ila allah* in Morocco is often interpreted as signaling the intention of the government to counterattack Nasser’s Pan-Arabism and stress Morocco’s religious ties with the rest of the Islamic world” (Park and Boum, 2006:184). The organization’s beliefs are somewhat extreme, in that they view Sufism as the only right interpretation of Islam (Park and Boum, 2006). Since state-supported Salafism tended to oppose Sufism, the legalization of a pro-Sufi groups suggests state policy was not unified or entirely coherent.

Abd al-Karim Muti’ and Kamal Ibrahim founded the Association of Islamic Youth (*Jamiyyat al-Shabiba al-Islamiyya* or just “Shabiba”) in 1969 (Park and Boum, 2006). Interestingly, Muti’ was a former inspector with the Ministry of Education and a former activist from USFP, the party that the UNFP formed after legally separating from the Istiqlal (Munson, 1986:267). The organization was able to obtain legal status by stressing its non-political activities and its methodology of Islamic education (Park and
The organization was divided into two wings: one for *da’wa* (civil activities) and one for *jihad* (in this instance, armed struggle). The *da’wa* branch had five departments: teachers, scholars, students, workers and professionals. The *jihad* wing was modeled after the ideas of Hasan al-Banna, an the founder of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (Park and Boum, 2006). The activities of the Shabiba came under scrutiny in the wake of the assassination of Omar Benjelloun on 18 December 1975 (Haenni, 2010). Muti’ fled the country for Iran as suspicion of his movement grew in the months after the assassination (Park and Boum, 2006).

Omar Benjelloun was a leading figure of the Moroccan left from before the time of independence until his death. He served as the president of UNEM and was an active member of the independence party. He was one of the members of Istiqlal who broke off to form the USFP (which would become the UNFP) along with Mehdi Ben Barka. During his adult life, authorities frequently harassed Benjelloun. He was arrested first in 1963, released in 1965 in a general amnesty, arrested again in 1966 and imprisoned for a year and a half before being released (Park and Boum, 2006). He spent the next six years involved in political activities for the UNFP and the PTT union in Casablanca (Park and Boum, 2006). The Moroccan courts did not investigate his death until after the detentions following the 2003 Casablanca bombings. A detainee, ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Nu’mani, a former member of the Shabiba, claimed he participated in the planning of the assassination at the orders of Muti’, the leader of the Shabiba, It does not seem coincidental that an Islamist was held accountable for the assassination at a moment when international and domestic attention was focused on the country’s “Islamist problem.” Further, the fact that it took thirty years to learn anything of the
assassination suggests it was either not a regime priority, or that the confession was a false one.

Prior to the death of Benjelloun, the strength of the Shabiba was already too strong for the comfort of the Moroccan government. In response, they hired a Syrian refugee by the name of Baha’ al-Din al-Amiri, who was serving as an advisor to the king, to investigate the group by posing as a professor at Dar al-Hadith al-Hassaniya (Park and Boum, 2006). The infiltration demonstrates the point made above, that a state-run institution for higher Islamic learning in Rabat was more easily controlled than an independent institution like Qarawiyyin University in Fez. Al-Amiri was hired because of his experience dealing with the Muslim Brotherhood and authoritarian regimes (Park and Boum, 2006). He had his daughter join the organization in order to learn more about its male and female wings (Park and Boum, 2006). In addition to surveillance, the regime also used more direct forms of confrontation with the Shabiba, including secret meetings and frequent arrests of Muti’, who was eventually tried and condemned to death in absentia in 1985 (Park and Boum, 2006). It is widely believed that this level of harassment pushed the Shabiba to assassinate Benjelloun, an event that allowed the government to justify its more severe crackdown on the organization (Park and Boum, 2006).

In the wake of Muti’s condemnation in 1985, an Islamist group was founded by the name of al-jama’a al-Islamiya (Islamic community) by former Shabiba members including Muhammad Yatim, Abdelilal Benkirane and ‘Abdallah Baha (Park and Boum, 2006). It is said that the group broke off from Shabiba because of Muti’s “mounting authoritarianism” as leader of the organization (Willis, 1999:46). The group, which
denounced violence in favor moderation, tried repeatedly to gain legal recognition for their movement but were unable to do so despite letter writing campaigns to prominent Moroccan officials and even King Hassan II (Willis, 1999; Park and Boum, 2006). The group changed their name in 1992 to *al-Islah wa-l-Tajdid* (reform and renewal) and then two weeks later to *Hizb At-Tajdeed Al-Watani* (Willis, 1999; Park and Boum, 2006). The name change was one of the ways that the movement tried to assuage the regime’s fears that the group wanted to employ religion as the basis for its movement (Willis, 1999). Despite their efforts, the party was never allowed to participate in politics. The regime’s refusal to give the movement legal standing in 1992 is believed to have been caused by events in neighboring Algeria, where the army cancelled the second round of elections in fear of an Islamist political victory resulting in a violent civil war (Willis, 1999:80, fn93). Since the Moroccan regime did not allow Yatim’s organization to form a political party on their own, they decided to join an already established party. Their first priority was the Istiqlal independence party, because of the party’s relationship with Islamic modernism (Willis, 1999). The party would only allow members to join individually, not as a group (Willis, 1999). The movement rejected Istiqlal’s offer and chose instead to join the *Mouvement Populaire, Démocratique et Constitutionnel* (MPDC) led by Dr. Abdelkrim Khatib on 2 July 1996, eventually changing its name to the *Parti de la Justice et du Développement* (PJD) in October 1998 (Willis, 1999; Park and Boum, 2006).\(^{20}\) Istiqlal’s rejection of their offer signals the formal end of their role as

\(^{20}\) “An observer from the Social Democratic Party (SDP) put forth another reason for the PJD’s success, saying that the rise of Islam as a factor in Moroccan politics is mainly the result of manipulation by the Moroccan government. He said that in the 1970s, the authoritarian government of Morocco depended on the Islamic movements to counteract the leftists. Now, the Islamists have become more independent and are no longer willing to take instructions from the government; they have their own social and popular base with the people” (Rabasa, et al., 2004:165).
the main Islamic political party and inaugurated the beginning of overtly Salafist politics in the country. Some suggest that the student organization of PJD has received government support in order to “spread a moderate and non-confrontational form of Islamism” (Willis, 1999: 62). Others have suggested that the party itself was collaborating with the regime.21

The most significant Islamist group in the twenty-first century is that started by Cheikh Abdeslam Yassine (1928-2012). Yassine, a former school inspector, is known for publishing a letter to Hassan II in 1974, Islam or the Deluge, where he accused the king of corruption and called him to repentance (Park and Boum, 2006; Zeghal, 2008). Written only two years after a set of coup attempts against the monarchy, the letter changed the tone of dissent from one of force to one with religious connotations (Zeghal, 2008). In the letter, Yassine detailed the errors made by the king, pointed out his own powerlessness, and suggested that despite the monarchy’s strength, it may be secondary to the power of the people (Zeghal, 2008). The letter earned him three and a half years of detention in a mental healthy facility without trial (Park and Boum, 2006). Since then he has been arrested or put on house arrest several times, periods that allowed for Yassine’s prolific writing career (Park and Boum, 2006). In 1981, Yassine started usrat al-jama’a (families of the community) along with several other former members of the Boutshishiya Sufi brotherhood. It is said that when the brotherhood

21 “In the by-election held in Salé in April 1999, the candidate from the USFP accused the PJD’s candidate, Benkirane, of being the candidate of the Administration... Suspicions about links between the makhzen and the Islamists went even further in suggesting that one of the main reasons why they had been allowed to participate in the elections was to undermine support for and take votes away from the USFP and the other opposition parties” (Willis, 1999:74-5). While this rationale makes sense in light of the regime’s longstanding policy of maintaining a divided opposition, there are reasons to doubt this explanation. The King’s selection of the USFP to govern in an alternance government in 1998 suggests that he was attempting to strengthen, not weaken, the USFP. The PJD themselves claim, “We are the opposition of his majesty, not to his majesty” (Willis, 1999:76-7).
refused to get involved in politics Yassine left the movement to start his own (Zeghal, 2008). After founding a second organization, *jami‘yat al-jama‘a* (community organization), Yassine founded a third and final movement *jama‘at al-‘adl wa-l-iHsan* (community of justice and charity). The association was banned in January 1990 but it continues to be one of the most populous movements in Morocco (Park and Boum, 2006). It will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

The Islamist population at Moroccan universities in 1976 was estimated at three percent (Eickelman, 1985 quoted in fn18 of Munson, 1986). This estimation was confirmed by a source known to Richard Parker, a former American ambassador to Morocco, though his estimate referred specifically to the size of the Islamist population at Muhammad V University in Rabat (Munson, 1986). “In other words, whatever the precise percentage of Moroccan university students actively involved in the militant Islamic movement, it appears that such students constitute a small minority of a social group [university students] that itself includes only a small minority of Moroccans” (Munson, 1986:272). Although small, this contingent of Islamist students was the center of the Islamist movement in the country. ‘Abd al-Salam al-Yassine, in an interview with Christiane Souriau in June 1980 explained, “The Islamic movement is located primarily on university campuses; it is in the student population that the movement manifests itself the most vigorously because the young people are badly educated, without a future, *losing their leftist illusions* and return to Islam” (quoted in Munson, 1986:270). Note how Yassine connected the appeal of Islamism with the decline of attachment to leftist ideologies, though he presumed the connection was one of disillusionment.22

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22 Yasin refers to the communist East and capitalist west as “the two camps of *al-jahiliyya*” (Munson, 1986:268). Yet Yasin himself draws on Marxist rhetoric, demonstrating the ways that the left and Islamists
This rise of Islamist groups was part of a larger process of “Salafization” of Moroccan public discourse as a result of these and other reforms. This process was first discussed by Hicham Ben Abdallah El Alaoui who argued that there is a “new public norm” in Arab culture, a norm that he describes as “Salafization” (2011:6-7). Ben Abdallah El Alaoui contends that people who interact in the public sphere must pay lip service to Salafism even if they do not agree with it. People must present themselves as more religious than they are, or as a certain kind of religious, Salafi, due to social pressures. In explaining the norm, however, he sidesteps addressing its origin: “The authority and centrality of this new public religious norm derive not from the power of a regime but from the installation of an unapologetic Islam, vaguely salafist, at the heart of Arab identity; it has become the central signifier of resistance to Westernization and neocolonialism, creating a ‘more-Muslim-than-though’ discursive context” (p.6). El Alaoui argues that Salafism has been installed “at the heart of Arab identity”, but does not identify who did the installing. It is clear that he thinks this norm is self-reinforcing, and that it does not “derive from the power of a regime” (p.6). Later in the article, he admits that regimes benefit from this norm, but he at no point attributes responsibility for this norm to the regimes themselves. Indeed, he does not address how this installation took place at all. Rather, his article focuses on addressing what this cultural development means. However, by failing to address how Salafization of public space occurred, his explanation of what it means is incomplete. I agree with El Alaoui that public space in Morocco has been Salafized, but I take a stronger position suggesting

learn from one another: “The poor oppressed people groan under the weight of the injustice of the oppressor class... the call of Islam is a call of love, but there is no love unless social distinction in wealth and in opportunities for education, health care and security are erased” (Munson, 1986: 269).
who is responsible for this development: the Moroccan monarchy. In this chapter, I highlighted some of the educational policies and specifically the institutions, leadership and curriculum that facilitated this development in the Moroccan context.

In the wake of the Casablanca riots of 1965, the Moroccan monarchy directed the resources of the state’s educational ideological apparatus to incentivize Islamist ideologies and weaken leftist ones. The monarchy directed resources at educational institutions perceived as easy to control while denying needed funds and institutional reforms to Qarawiyyin University, an establishment seen as the seat of resistance. Concurrently, those with Islamist leanings were placed in positions of influence while the number of leftists in positions of authority declined. The curriculum itself was Arabized and Islamized, and religious content was added to a number of school subjects outside of religious education such as philosophy and civilization courses in addition to courses where such content would be expected such as Arabic language, Arabic literature and Islamic education courses. Meanwhile, leftist ideologies were attacked not only using the educational apparatus but also employing the resources of the regime’s repressive state apparatus and control of the country’s legal system. The rise in Islamist ideologies and movements that followed the imposition of these reforms was not an “organic resurgence of religion” but as the result of a set of coordinated regime policies and institutional choices that led to a rise in Salafist ideologies in the country for the first time.
CHAPTER 8
SUCCESES AND FAILURES IN DE-ISLAMIZING MOROCCAN EDUCATION

One should not think that a new generation will turn everything upside down.

-Mohammed VI (Macleod, 2000)

In this chapter, I present evidence to suggest that the response described in the previous chapter did in fact close the political opportunity structure. Although there were multiple ideologies available to Moroccan activists in the 1960s, by the 1980s the left was no longer functioning as an effective opposition to monarchical policy. State support of Salafi ideology, meanwhile, bolstered Islamist movements to the point that they were difficult to control. The Salafization of society got off the ground with state support, but over time developed its own interest groups who opposed regime efforts to contain it. This chapter attempts to answer the question, “When the regime realized that it had created an Islamist problem, why didn’t it reverse course?” The short answer is, it did, twice. The clearest example of this effort was the period of alternance, whereby the main leftist party was invited to govern in 1998. During this period, there was an attempt to halt the Salafization of public space that included a Ministry of Education-led effort reducing the number of hours that Islamic education was taught in the public schools. By this point, however, resistance was too strong from those with a stake in the current arrangement including Islamic education teachers and inspectors. They aligned with parent organizations to fight all efforts to weaken the influence of the religious curriculum. In the end, all observers of Moroccan politics agree that alternance was a failure both in the larger sense of trying to revive the left, and in terms of the efforts to reduce the significance of Islamic education in the public schools.
The second attempt to reverse Salafization through education was more successful. It occurred in the wake of the 2003 Casablanca bombings, an event that suggested that Islamic extremist ideologies were growing in the country. In response, Islamic education across the country was standardized and effectively, watered down. Islamic content was removed from a host of subjects such as Arabic language and literature, philosophy and Arab civilization classes while Islamic education itself was directed toward the teaching of “human rights” or ethics values of tolerance, communication and forgiveness rather than providing a grounding in the Islamic sciences. By shifting the content of curricula, rather than trying to reduce the number of hours of Islamic education, the regime avoided the conflicts likely in more direct assaults on Islamic education like those that inspired so much dissent in the reforms of the 1990s.

The chapter is organized around these two attempts to reverse the Salafization of Moroccan society. I begin with a discussion of alternance and resulting education policies. I then discuss the Casablanca bombings and subsequent education policies focusing on the removal of Islamic content from three subject areas: Arabic language and literature, philosophy and Islamic education. I also discuss the public discourse surrounding these reforms to highlight those groups who had developed an interest in maintaining the status quo and who opposed any reforms to the Islamic content of school curricula. This chapter thus addresses Pierson’s conception of timing and sequencing, which states, “In increasing returns processes, when an event occurs may be crucial. Because earlier parts of a sequence matter much more than later parts, an event that happens “too late” may have no effect, although it may have been of great
consequence if the timing had been different” (2000:263). In the context of this project, *alternance* as an effort to revive the left came too late to be significant. In the end, though, the regime found other, more subtle ways, to decrease or reduce the Islamic content of the school curricula in the wake of the 2003 Casablanca bombings, though it was never able to resuscitate the left. *Alternance* then illustrates Pierson’s conception of timing and sequencing, while the Casablanca bombings highlight how certain events are “game changers,” opening up opportunities that were previously closed.

**Alternance and Education**

During *alternance*, the USFP opposed Islamism while attempting to reverse the policies that had increased the presence of Islam in public education. In particular, the party tried to weaken Islamic education requirements in the high schools. At the same time, Youssoufi opened new branches of sociology and philosophy at universities (Masbah, 15 May 2011). Many of the reforms enacted under Youssoufi, however, were not controversial, such as the development of a National Charter and a White Paper to standardize education across the country. It is necessary to describe these reforms because in several speeches after the Casablanca bombings in 2003, King Mohammed VI called for the “standardization” and “unification” of the country’s Islamic education curriculum. In light of how the National Charter and especially the White paper did standardize the teaching of all subjects in the period between 1999-2002, the king’s call for these reforms in 2003 and 2004 suggests that he was trying to veil the real rationale behind the reforms, removing Islamic content. These actions will be discussed after a discussion of the National Charter and the White Paper.

The most significant educational reform of the *alternance* period was the development of a National Charter for Education and Training (NC) published in
October 1999 that set guidelines for all subjects. The underlying foundation of the charter is the Islamic faith. The Moroccan educational system “aims to form virtuous citizens who are a model of uprightness, moderation and tolerance, open to science and knowledge and with the spirit of initiative, creativity and enterprise” (Charte..., 1999). The NC’s concern for tolerance demonstrates that the reforms of the educational system were already headed in the direction of a general ethics-type curriculum prior to September 11th, 2001 and the Casablanca bombings of 2003. The Charter also stipulates the respect of the educational system for Moroccan national identity which includes “faith in God, love of country and attachment to the constitutional monarchy” (Charte..., 1999). Further, it stipulates the significance for all students to develop an ability to read, write and speak Arabic, suggesting that there was no intention to reverse Arabization at the end of the 1990s. The document specifies the objectives of each level of education from pre-school to primary and secondary school, as well as the special system of original education. Finally, it addresses reforms that are needed including increased instruction in Arabic and tamazight, a Berber language.

This charter was supplemented by a White Paper (2002) that specifies the exact curriculum for each subject according to grade level. The Moroccan school year is composed of two, 17-week semesters. As regards Islamic education, the White Paper specifies that the first two years of pre-school, for four and five year olds, known in Morocco as “awwali,” will include 68 hours of education per year. Over the course of the school year, this amounts to two hours of Islamic education per week. For the first two years of elementary school, students take more instruction, for a total of 110 hours of Islamic education or more than three hours per week. For grades 2-6, there are three
hours of daily instruction for a total of 102 hours over the course of the school year. For Middle school students, the White Paper specifies two hours of weekly instruction. Beyond specifying the number of hours for each year of instruction, the curriculum also specifies the exact subject matter to be covered. Each week there is an assigned section of the Quran, part of the creed and religious observances as well as other Islamic literature such as hadith. For example, the second week of elementary school is focused on teaching the suratul-Fatiha or the first sura of the Quran (“the opener”), recited frequently throughout a Muslim’s daily prayers. The significance of the White Paper is that the document unifies Islamic education across the country.

A second major educational initiative under the alternance government was the creation of a Center at the Madrassa al-‘Aoulia al-Asaatitha, the Highest Teacher’s College located in the city of Tetouan. The Highest Teacher’s College trains high school teachers in all subjects. The center is specialized in Islamic Education and also assesses the Islamic content of all subjects. It was established in 2000 by a teacher’s association with the goal of developing Islamic Education curriculum textbooks, technology, conferences and activities. The center is very well equipped with new computers, a printer, desks, filing cabinets, multiple offices, a large meeting space that looks like it could seat 100 people and a library. The center is run by Khalid Samadi, a well known author of Islamic education textbooks who travels to other countries extensively with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) consulting on Islamic education textbooks.

Prior to the creation of the NC, the teacher’s association that created the center began research on Islamic education. After the creation of the NC, a formal relationship
was established between the center and the Ministry of Education. Samadi explains the necessity of this relationship, “Although the NC talks about Islamic values, there are differences in understanding how to implement those values in school curriculum.” The founding of the association was thus with a strategy of reform intended to deal in an institutionalized way, with conflicts over interpretation. At the time, Samadi was a secondary school teacher in Kenitra. He came to the teacher’s college to continue his studies and later became employed directly with the center. In 2001, the center became an official research center with the Ministry of Education’s stamp of approval. Since then, the center has written 12 books for ages ranging form elementary to high school. Entrance into the center is selective. Those interested must submit an application as well as written exams in Fiqh and usul al-fiqh as well as an oral examination. In order to complete the program, students must pass a second set of written and oral exams.

Morocco high school education is divided into two tracks: the literature track and the science track. Students must chose during their first year of high school what they will study for the final two years. The first year has a common curriculum referred to as a “common trunk.” The second and third year curricula are dictated by whether the student has chosen the science or literature track. Under Youssoufi, an attempt was made by the Minister of Education, Abdullah Saaf, also from the USFP, to reduce Islamic education at all levels but to also completely remove it from the science track (al-Hushairi, 2011; S. Idrissi, 2011). At the time, there were 2 hours of weekly Islamic Education in the high schools (S. Idriss, 2011). The plan met with resistance from multiple groups, including the Moroccan Association for Teachers of Islamic Education (MATIE), who wrote an open letter to the minister and published it in all Moroccan
newspapers (al-Hushairi, 2011). They were joined by the *Jama’a al-Abaa’* (Moroccan Parents Association) who argued that the minister should be required to follow the guidelines for Islamic education set up in the 1999 Education Charter (al-Hushairi, 2011; S. Idrissi, 2011).¹ The *Jama’a al-Abaa’* also hosted a series of conferences and published several statements to discuss the proposed changes. Teachers from the ‘Ateeq schools (*madaris al-’ateeq*) and religious scholars (*‘oulama*) also supported the work of the *Jama’a al-Abaa’* and MATIE. The PJD used its party newspaper to publish its own opposition to the policy and to give a platform to others opposed to the proposed changes. The minister backed down from his proposal. When asked why the minister would take up such a controversial reform, one educator commented, “He was just taking our pulse,” (S. Idrissi, 2011) suggesting that the minister was more interested in knowing how much resistance there was to the reform, rather than pushing through the reform itself. When asked if he fears a similar reform in the future, the teacher explained that there is no longer any fear of harmful reforms to Islamic education since changes to the Constitution in 2011 declare Morocco as a Muslim country.

*Alternance* effectively ended after the parliamentary elections of 2002, widely viewed as Morocco’s first free and fair elections. The USFP won fifteen percent of the vote, the highest of any party though the only Islamist party, the PJD took nearly thirteen percent of the seats (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2002). Because the USFP had won the most votes, it was widely anticipated that Youssoufi would be reappointed as prime minister. Instead, Mohammad VI appointed Driss Jettou, a technocrat (meaning

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¹ The National Education Charter of Morocco promulgated in 1999 begins “The educational system of the Kingdom of Morocco is founded on the principles and values of the Islamic faith.” Besides this mention, Islam is not mentioned anywhere else in the Charter. Presumably the above comment was in reference to the White Paper issued subsequent to the Charter, which specifies the exact curriculum for Islamic education on a weekly basis and sets the weekly minimum at 2 hours of instruction for all levels.
he had no political party) to the position (Bennani, 2009). The King’s choice highlighted
the historic nature of the period of *alternance*; the King can chose anyone he wants to
be Prime Minster, the person need not even be a member of a political party. Upon
learning of the king’s choice, Youssoufi was furious since he felt the choice ignored the
personal sacrifices that he had made to participate in the previous government
(Bennani, 2009). Youssoufi sacrificed the USFP’s position in the opposition in order to
participate in the historic government of *alternance*, but in the end he was unable to
capitalize on his party’s goals for educational policy. The USFP’s loss of credibility
added to the hostile environment in which the left operated for decades sealed the
decline of the Moroccan left.

It was in this context that the Casablanca bombings of 2003 took place. The
monarchy’s initial public response was delivered 29 May 2003 to a gathering of religious
scholars. The choice of audience suggests that the bombing was seen as a religious
problem and the King would respond as the country’s primary religious leaders. In it, the
king described the multi-pronged approach the monarchy would take to combat the
growth of extremism in the country.\(^2\) The strategy had three approaches: (1) political, (2)
economic and social and (3) religious. It is this third approach that is interesting for the
purposes of this project. The goal of the approach was to form citizens with the

\(^2\) A quote from the speech: “Ce combat sera gagné grâce à Notre stratégie globale, intégrée et
multidimensionnelle. Dans son volet politique, institutionnel et sécuritaire, cette stratégie vise à plus de
rigueur et d’efficacité dans le cadre de la démocratie et de la suprématie de la loi. Elle tend, dans son
aspect économique et social, à libérer les initiatives et à mobiliser les énergies, au service du
développement et de la solidarité. Enfin, dans sa dimension religieuse, éducative, culturelle et
médiatique, cette stratégie se propose d’éduquer, de former le citoyen en l’imprégnant des vertus de
l’ouverture, de la modernité, de la rationalité, du sérieux dans ce qu’il accomplit, de la droiture, de la
September 9, 2010).
“modern” values of openness, rationality, seriousness, moderation, and toleration. The decision to give a speech calling for these values in front of a gathering of religious scholars was an aggressive move on the part of the monarchy, as if he wanted to make clear that no dissent would be tolerated.

Such an interpretation is supported by another speech delivered on 30 July 2003. In it the king declared: “Does the Moroccan people…need to import rites which are alien to its traditions? We will not allow such a thing to happen… Those who might be tempted to advocate a rite which is alien to our people, shall be opposed as firmly as is warranted by our duty to safeguard the one and only rite of Moroccans…I WANT TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE ISSUE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE AND RELIGION IN OUR COUNTRY IS SETTLED, SINCE THE CONSTITUTION STIPULATES THAT MOROCCO IS A MUSLIM STATE AND THAT ONE OF THE MAJOR DUTIES OF THE KING AS COMMANDER OF THE FAITHFUL (AMIR AL MUMININ) IS TO MAKE SURE THAT THE FAITH IS PROTECTED. The Commander of the Faithful is, for the Moroccan nation, the sole religious leader to refer to” (quoted in Rahmouni, 2004: 9-10, emphasis in the original). It is interesting to note that the king’s initial response to the bombings was to defend his leadership of Moroccan Islam, as if he perceived the bombings as an affront to his own religious legitimacy. Only after he defended his own position that he gave a specific policy response to the attacks.

The details for the strategy announced 29 May 2003 were fleshed out in a royal speech given 30 April 2004. The reform to the religious field was based on a restructuring of both the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and the country’s ‘ulama councils. Changes to these structures, however, “may remain purely formal in the absence of a
third pillar, which is, moreover, the keystone: namely: Islamic education and modern scientific training” (Mohammed VI, 2004). This speech repeated the standard mantra of reforms to Islamic education, calling for the “rationalization, modernization and unification” of Islamic education as well as an interesting addition, the need for “a solid education in the Islamic sciences in all disciplines” (Mohammed VI, 2004). The speech acknowledged how multiple disciplines, not just Islamic education proper, are employed to provide religious formation. The speech called for protecting Islamic education from “exploitation or diversion affecting the Moroccan identity” and the integration of private institutions of religious learning into the state bureaucratic apparatus in order to assure their teaching of modern values “instead of forming obtuse and sclerotic spirits” (Mohammed VI, 2004).

The king’s speech leads to several questions. Firstly, why would he call for the unification of Islamic education, when the teaching of the subject was standardized in the White Paper of 2002? What about the curriculum specified in that document is in need of “modernization” or “rationalization?” From which groups will the reform

**Post-2003 Educational Reform**

The king’s speech sparked a public discussion about the nature of extremism and its relationship with Islamic education. In the speech, the king addresses the subject as follows: “We have reached the stage of finalizing and launching a comprehensive, multi-faceted and integrated strategy which means so much to me. It is a three-part plan designed to overhaul and revamp the domain of religious affairs in order to shield Morocco against the perils of extremism and terrorism. It is also meant to preserve the distinctive Moroccan identity, which is characterized by moderation and tolerance…The aim of all these measures is not simply to provide our country with a
well-thought-out, integrated strategy to help it meet all challenges in the domain of religion. We also want to contribute, in a rational and purposeful way, to redressing the image of Islam, which has been tarnished by vicious campaigns, triggered off by the extremism of villains and the hideous acts of senseless aggressors indulging in terrorism…I shall remain at the forefront of the struggle against all destructive currents that are alien to our society, which remains unwaveringly committed to the moderation and purity of Islam" (Rahmouni, 2004).

The response by civil society groups to the speech is instructive. The National Office of the Islamic Education Teacher’s Association published a statement calling for recognition of the importance of the subject of Islamic education. The statement was authored by Dr. ‘Abd al-Kareem al-Hushairi, then president of the association. The statement emphasized “the immense responsibility that Islamic Education Teachers have in immunizing generations against extremism and terrorism. He also praised the effort of the men and women of education who play an effective role in building an authentic, national character that interacts with the positives of the era, and in vaccinating them against perversion in a fast pacing world” (see translation 3 May 2004). His use of the term “vaccination” is not uncommon. Many other articles of the time period refer to the significance of Islamic education in fulfilling this role. Al-Hushairi called for the use of the most qualified teachers and the implementation of the White Paper exactly as it had been written. The statement was a response to a perceived “attack” from media in the period following the bombings in Casablanca the previous

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3 Sabir, H. 3 May 2004. Notalib bi ta3zeez al-madah wal hifath 3ala majzoo2atha (We ask for the appreciation of the subject and the preservation of its components). Al-Tajdeed. P. 1
year. He urged teachers to focus on teaching the value of toleration and to protect students from religious extremism.

Another response came from Khalid Samadi, President of the Moroccan Center for Research and Studies on Islamic Education. Samadi wrote an editorial titled “The Centrality of Islamic Education in the King’s Speech” for al-Tajdeed newspaper on May 5th, 2004.4 The article begins by saying how every time the parents heard the king mentioned the possibility of eliminating Islamic education from high schools they gasped, suggesting that just as there are those who fear Islamic education contributing to extremist belief there are those who fear its absence. It’s not clear what Samadi is referencing, since the King’s speech does not call for removing Islamic education from the public schools. Samadi views the elimination of Islamic education as the empowerment of extremists and “putting hands in hands with terrorists...” Islamic education “protects the youth from slipping into terrorism which requires religious ignorance to thrive.” Meanwhile those who disagree with Samadi go so far as to ask for teachers to be fired or tried because they are promoting extremism. Samadi argues that the subject needs to be modernized and made more relevant to modern society, to draw connections with human rights, health, environmentalism, media and communications and family, society, economic and financial values and also relating to the issues of the youth and their concerns. “Developing Islamic concepts for them in a gradual and healthy way.”

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4 Samadi, Khalid. 5 May 2004. “The Centrality of Islamic Education to the King’s Speech.” Al-Tajdeed. P.12
Three weeks later, on May 24th, 2004 the newspaper published an editorial supportive of the king and his instructions and skeptical of the intentions of the Ministry of Education in implementing the king’s directives and respecting the significance of Islamic education. According to the article the king acknowledges, “that Islamic Education is the safety valve of emerging Morocco from intellectual, doctrinal, and behavioral missteps.” Apparently, the Ministry hoped to reduce the number of hours of Islamic education taught weekly from two hours to one hour. The newspaper questioned the intention of this policy, asking “Is it sufficient for rationalization, modernization and unification of Islamic Education so that it performs its job in preserving Maghreb identity as specified by his Majesty?”

The reforms to Islamic education, underway after 2003, were given an added dimension when Latifa El Amrani, a concerned mother, wrote a letter to Habib al-Malki, the Minister of Education on 22 October 2004, complaining that the manual for the first year of Islamic Education was inappropriate. She asked, «Comment se fait-il que dans un manuel (il en existe plusieurs) d’éducation islamique de la 1re année du primaire, on ne trouve que des filles voilées et dans des situations de la vie courante?» (Bentak, 2004). At first, it appeared that the ministry stood behind the books. In a response to the letter, the minister explained «le voile n’est pas une problématique au Maroc. Ce sont les valeurs et principes enseignés qu’il faut préserver contre tout dérapage» (ibid). Then, in a second response, the ministry appeared to be passing the buck, claiming that parents were buying unauthorized textbooks by mistake. The minister made public

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statements encouraging parents to confirm that the textbook employed by the student was the approved one. Parents were reminded to check each book, before purchasing it, for the authorization of the minister on the cover (ibid). It is not clear if the use of unauthorized textbooks was actually problematic, or if it was merely a stalling strategy. A petition was circulated on the internet regarding the image of girls in the book.

As a result of her complaints, another commission was formed by the Minister of Education to conduct a review of textbooks. The committee found that women were overwhelmingly pictured in domestic situations, when pictured at all, and were nearly universally veiled. In January 2005, an American human rights organization, Human Rights Education Associates, completed a similar study on Moroccan textbooks with special attention to the role of human rights and gender equality. Their review included fifty textbooks in multiple subjects including Arabic, French, Islamic Education, history and geography (ibid.). The committee to review the books included education inspectors, teachers, parents, and members of feminist associations. The study found that men were pictured seven times more frequently in textbooks than women. The study also confirmed the findings of the 2004 study that women pictured tended to be in the home and veiled. It was not just the Casablanca bombings that brought attention to the need to reform the Islamic education curriculum. It is important to note these varied causes because they likely impacted the spirit of the changes made to the curriculum.

The Process of Writing a New Islamic Education Curriculum

The Ministry of Education oversees the process of writing new curricula and textbooks for the Moroccan public schools. Recent reforms dramatically changed the role of the Ministry in this process. Before the reforms of 2000, the minister picked the people who would serve on a committee and the committee itself would write the new
textbooks. At times, the minister would pick only one editor and he or she would have complete control of the content and style of the textbook (Markaz..., 2009). After the reforms of 2000, however, the process is very different: the minister writes the guidelines for the book, which are then forwarded by the ministry to a set of publishers. This arrangement encourages competition and innovation since publishers will want their books to be selected because government approval will greatly expand their ability to sell books (Markaz..., 2009). After receiving the guidelines, the publishers contact possible authors and provide them with the guidelines. Once the authors submit a book to the publisher, the publisher turns the book into the Ministry. The ministry itself does not determine if the textbook is appropriate for use in Moroccan public schools. Rather, it appoints members of civil society to a committee that then review the suitability of the text. The process is scheduled to be repeated every three years to provide for constant revision and improvement of the texts (Markaz..., 2009).

The composition and structure of the committee that selects the textbooks is indicative of the increasing democratization of the curriculum writing process. The ministry selects people to serve on the committee based on their qualifications. Interviews with past committee members have confirmed that every member of this committee was an Islamic education teacher, inspector or university professor. No politicians or political appointees were selected. On the committee, all members are of equal status, although the members themselves chose one from among them to be the coordinator who has administrative duties. In interviews, past committee members themselves insisted that the committee was independent of the Ministry of Education and not influenced by it. They also highlighted that multiple ideologies were represented
on the committee. When differences arise on the committee they are discussed until the committee comes to unanimous agreement. They do not vote. When asked about the nature of disagreements on the committee, respondents described differences dealing with values, didactic matters, relations between teacher and student, language and sources were most common. Questions may also arise about whether a source used in a textbook is from the Maliki school, which is the school of Islamic law used in Moroccan courts.

Between two and three committee members read each book. They are given between two and three months to review the books. Then the committee meets to deliberate. At a meeting of the committee, each member gives their opinion of the book, and the books are discussed until there is unanimous agreement about whether a book should be approved or not. Their recommendations are then forwarded to the minister. It should also be noted that the process is anonymous. The members of the committee do not know who the authors of the books are. After reviewing the recommendations, the minister then gives his recommendation to the authors, who revise their books according to the suggestions. Revised books are returned to the minister. The committee then reviews the books a second time focusing on language, pictures and values, with particular interest in the presentation of human rights. If the book receives no suggested edits at this level, the minister approves the book.

During this process, there are several points where the monarchy has the opportunity to have significant influence in the content of the new curriculum. Most importantly, the monarchy selects the Prime Minister and has influence over who is chosen as the Minister of Education. The Minister of Education is responsible for writing
the guidelines that authors are given to write textbooks. This is the point at which the monarchy has the best opportunity to influence the curriculum. The minister is not free to write whatever guidelines he wants though, because in the end the books produced based on the guidelines will be reviewed by the committee and therefore assessed by leading experts in the field of Islamic education. The minister also selects members of the committee, so he theoretically has the ability to include members he expects will be sensitive to the monarchy’s interests. There is some evidence to suggest that members of the committee are not concerned with political interests.

Prior to 2002, the IE curriculum contained a lesson explaining the Moroccan king’s role as Commander of the Faithful. From the years 2002-2008, the lesson was removed from the curriculum. When questioned, a member of the committee and an authority on Islamic education explained that during this period, from 2002-2008, the curriculum was arranged around three levels: one’s relationship with God, one’s relationship with self, and one’s relationship with others. The lesson on the Commander of the Faithful did not fit into any of these three levels. From a pedagogical perspective, it made no sense to include the lesson. The respondent explained that from a political perspective, it of course made sense to include the lesson, so it was reinserted into the curriculum in 2008. The Ministry of Education did not call for this change. One interviewee believes the lessons’ reintroduction was suggested by the *Majlis al’Aam*, an oulama council. Regardless of who is responsible for reinstating the lesson, what is important for the purposes of this chapter is the fact that a lesson that was beneficial politically for the monarchy was removed from textbooks for a significant period of time, suggesting that committee members were not concerned with the political implications.
of their curriculum. At the same time, the fact that the lesson was reintroduced suggests that curriculum continues to be politicized, and the assertion by an interviewee that the Ministry of Education had to implement the lesson also suggests that the ministry is not completely independent from political elites.

On the whole though, the process through which Islamic education curriculum was rewritten in the years following the Casablanca bombings was marked by a number of democratic qualities. The mere existence of a committee that selects textbooks independent of the ministry is itself an important consideration, which is strengthened by the evidence that suggests committee members are selected on merit rather than anticipated or past loyalty to the regime. The absence of political appointees such as party members or even religious scholars is further evidence of democratic procedure. Finally, the equality of members on the committee, the anonymity of books being considered for approval, and the conflict resolution approach on the committee based on unanimous consent and deliberation further suggests a high level of internal democratic quality.

It is also worth noting that several factors that led to the curriculum reforms were rooted in government responsiveness to media and citizen demands. While the original report on textbooks published in the French newsweekly was not reprinted in the Moroccan press, and this is itself indicative of the lack of freedom despite increased liberalization in recent years, the fact that the Ministry responded to the criticism with an internal review is itself evidence of responsiveness. It is well known that the Moroccan press exercises a high degree of self-censorship in addition to the monarchy’s arbitrary use of the judiciary to harass journalists and publishers, but once the information had
been made public by a non-Moroccan media outlet, the accusations were investigated. The ministry’s response to the concerned mother is even more instructive. While there was initial hesitation and defensiveness on the part of the Minister, with enough pressure the Ministry did undertake a complete review of the photos used in Islamic education textbooks, and welcomed an American human rights organization to conduct a similar review. These are not actions typically associated with authoritarian regimes.

**Reforms to Secondary School Curriculum**

Despite the fairly democratic process that has developed for the reform of curriculum, the actual change to content appears to have been highly political. In line with the king’s speech given in the aftermath of the 2003 Casablanca bombings, the stated goals of the reform to the secondary school curricula were to facilitate the creation of “independent, open, and balanced” students (al-Markaz..., 2009:266). The regime claimed that the curriculum reform was guided by four sets of values: “Islamic values,” “values of modern identity,” “Nationalist values,” and “human rights values” (al-Markaz..., 2009:266-267). This section discusses how the reforms, which took place from 2007-2008, were also motivated by an unstated goal, that of removing Islamic content from the curriculum. To make this argument, I reference changes made to the secondary school curriculum for three classes: Islamic education, Arabic language and literature and philosophy. The political goals of the reform co-exist with the democratic process of selecting school textbooks because the Minister still provides the guidelines that writers follow to craft school textbooks, even if the committees that eventually select individual books for use are composed of members of civil society.
Islamic Education

The reform to the secondary school Islamic education curricula watered down the “Islamic” content in favor of references to universalist values like tolerance or forgiveness (Markaz..., 2009). Discussions of Islamic practices such as prayers were removed and replaced by new topics such as communication or health education (Markaz..., 2009). Because the number of hours was not able to be reduced, the curriculum itself has been redirected at distinctly benign topics such as Islamic finance (Markaz..., 2009) or inheritance. Although the students are studying “Islamic education” for the same number of hours as before, they are thus taking in a significantly reduced and general ethics-type curriculum rather than one reflective of traditionally accepted Islamic education methods or goals such as the memorization of texts. Interviews with Islamic education teachers in the secondary schools confirm this account. The number of references to Quranic and Hadith verses has itself been reduced, and are now used only as illustrations rather than as the center of lessons (Markaz..., 2009). Finally, the amount of time committed to Quranic memorization has been reduced.

Many Islamic education teachers celebrate the introduction of lessons on tolerance. One high school teacher commented, “We should teach children to love others... We should not teach a clash of civilizations but tolerance and communication. We should respect others just because they are human beings... The new books are better because they teach people to communicate with others.” When observing this same teacher in his classroom, he exhibited a concern for the same subject. In one

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6 Observed by the author in Islamic education classrooms in Morocco in 2011.

7 Interviews with Islamic education teachers at high schools in Fez, Morocco in 2011.
class he discouraged his students from seeing themselves as superior to others, “Kul-na ‘andna al-haqq.” Or “We all have the truth,” he said. In addition to believing that the change in curriculum has been a good thing, teachers of Islamic education believe that the change in curriculum will make Islam more accessible for the students themselves, preventing them from seeking Islamic education from less reliable sources. The change in curriculum from one of memorization to one of understanding makes the religion more relevant to students, one prominent teacher argued. He continued, “If we do not define Islam in the classroom, students will look elsewhere for its definition, to people who do not know Islam. We can teach a merciful and true Islam.”

The textbook from the first year of middle school contains one of the lessons added to the curriculum in the wake of the 2003 Casablanca bombings. The lesson is on four subjects: tolerance, acceptance of the other, meekness and acting justly. The text defines tolerance as “one of the branches of faith which lifts the behavior of different people from the level of bigotry to the level of compromise” (Hadrati et al., 2010:35). It defines acceptance of the other as “when each one of the two different people grants recognition to the other and gives the other the right to speak in turn and present his opinions in a manner that is true to himself and that does not deny his convictions unless there’s a reason to do so. Neither one of them looks down on the other and neither mocks him nor disparages his abilities or ideas. Acceptance of the other deepens understanding between the two people conducting a discussion and strengthens the spirit of solidarity between the two sides” (Hadrati et al., 2010:35). Meekness “is one of the branches of faith and a quality that prevents the Muslim from being misled by his own opinion and protects him from feelings of superiority and drives
away from him insolence and feelings of greatness and this is what gives difference its importance and its role in enriching intellectual diversity” (Hadrati et al., 2010:35).

Finally, acting justly is “the ability to recognize a mistake and possess the courage to concur with the other if it becomes clear that he’s right and when people possess this quality they can proclaim the truth and establish justice and their differences become a factor for progress and growth” (Hadrati et al., 2010:35).

In order to assess student understanding of these concepts, the text is followed by a series of discussion questions. Some questions include: “Of these two people, which one is tolerant? The one who renounces his belief and his values in managing difference or the one who adheres to his belief and values and accepts difference.” Presumably, the answer is the latter. Another question asks students to assess the following statements: “accepting the other only happens when you efface yourself” or “the way to accept the other is to submit to him.” These questions challenge students to correct statements. The pedagogical style of the questioning is in line with the stated goals of the National Charter to encourage the development of critical thinking rather than to base instruction on memorization of texts.

Arabic Language

A similar de-Salafization campaign has taken place in the study of the Arabic language. First, Quranic texts have been removed from Arabic language classes. Prior to the reform, the texts composed 2.5 percent of the language curriculum in the form of texts and poems, whereas now they are no longer present (Markaz..., 2009). In Moroccan high schools, students must major in the literature track or the science track.

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8 This section, on the changes made to the Arabic language curriculum, are based on an article published by Mustapha Bnan in 2008 in the publication Furqan, cited in Markaz... (2009).
Above I discussed how the Minister of Education during the period of *alternance* attempted to reduce the number of hours of Islamic education for students on the science track but was stopped by intervention from those with an interest in Islamic education. After the reforms of 2007-2008, texts that actually flip interpretations of Quranic stories have been used. For example, one poem by Amal Danqal, tells the story of Noah and the ark, but presents those who did not board the boat as being heroic (Markaz..., 2009). It not only retells the Quranic story in a different way, but it could be argued that the curriculum connects to nationalist ends by suggesting that those who do not immigrate to Spain are the brave ones. Thus, not only is Islamic content being removed, but it is also being subordinated to the goal of building nationalist values, in contradiction to the stated goals of the curriculum, discussed above, which place Islamic values first and nationalist values third. Interestingly, a number of texts included in the curriculum also suggest the value of obedience. For example, in the section of the curriculum that teaches free verse, or a form of poetry that does not follow standard rules of Arabic classical poetry, poems which denounce violent governments or call for revolutions are presented as examples of negative values. Additionally, these poems in past curricula were related to the Palestinian cause, but in the new curriculum there is not one poem on Palestine. When taken in comparison with the process of Arabization and Salafization that occupied Moroccan school curriculum reform for nearly three decades, the reduction in the Islamic content of the Arabic language curriculum suggests a striking change of policy away from using the Arabic language to build a conception of a unified Moroccan nation.
Philosophy

The teaching of Philosophy has also seen a reduction in the amount of Islamic content in the school curriculum for secondary students. In general, texts which present Islamic political thought have been completely reduced, from 48 percent of the curriculum to 11 percent (Markaz..., 2009). In place of the Islamic material, Western political thought now dominates the curriculum (Markaz..., 2009). For example, in the Science track, out of eight lessons on philosophy, none of them address Islamic thought (Markaz..., 2009). Out of 72 texts employed, only eight address classical Islamic thought or modern Arab thought (Markaz..., 2009). In the literature track there are twelve lessons on philosophy, none of which are on Islamic thought (Markaz..., 2009). Of the 111 texts employed, only eight make reference to classical Islamic thought or modern Arab thought (Markaz..., 2009).

Resistance to the Reforms

These changes have been met with resistance. In August 2008 in the southern city of Tanalit, about four hours south of Agadir in the Sus, a conference was held on Islamic education titled “Stop the Marginalization.” Tanalit is famous due to its madrasa under cheikh Ghadi. One government representative was in attendance at the conference defending the changes to the curriculum, and trying to reassure the tribal leaders that they will be in charge of the teaching of Islamic education in their community. The teachers were picking apart the new mandate. They were enraged by the fact that they work for the state as functionaries but their actual mandate is with teh

9 This section is based on a study conducted by Foudhil El-Asri in 2007 and discussed in Markaz... (2009).

10 Interview with a Canadian acquaintance who had been living in Morocco for several years who was present at the conference in the south.

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tribal council. They didn’t understand what to do when tribal direction contradicted state policy.

Reforms to Higher Islamic Education

In 2005, Dar al-Hadith al-Hassaniya (DHH) underwent a significant reorganization as a result of dahir or royal decree 1.05.159 as part of the larger renovation of the religious field. The decree called for DHH to “form a generation of religious scholars able to renew and restore the radiant image of moderate Islam” (Etablissement..., nd). Previously overseen by the Ministry of Education, the institution was moved to the Ministry of Islamic Affairs. The move made sense because the university is responsible for the training of ‘ulama and they go on to be employed by the MIA.11 When I asked the Director of the University, Ahmed al-Khamlishi, in an interview in 2011 why the change was made, however, he referred to the increasing politicization of Islamic education in the wake of September 11th. The reorganization also included a renovation of the school’s curriculum. “The strength of DHH is not teaching the Islamic sciences but how we teach them,” explained the school’s Associate Dean, Khalid Saqi in an interview in 2011. “We want people to ask questions; we want to make people think not just memorize texts.” When the institution was founded, King Hassan said the purpose of the institution was to create scholars. “Today,” Saqi explains, “the concept of what that means is changing. Over the next ten years, the goal is to have scholars who both understand their religion and who understand their world.”

The new system is organized around semesters, not years. Undergraduates study for four years, masters students for three years and doctoral candidates study for four to

11 Interview with an employee of DHH in 2011.
five years. The curriculum for undergraduate students has three components. Under the Islamic sciences, students study hadith, fiqh, usul al-fiqh and usul al-deen. In the humanities, students learn sociology, psychology, law, history and logic. In languages, students study Arabic, French, English and Hebrew and may also take Spanish. The master’s program is three years because the usual undergraduate degree in Morocco is three years, but DHH’s undergraduate degree is four years. Therefore, students must take a preparatory year of classes, accounting for the program’s duration of three years instead of the usual two. The preparatory year is tailored to the needs of the student. Those who do not pass the first year are not allowed to continue with the Master’s degree. Anyone who completes a BA from DHH is automatically accepted at the Master’s level. Thus far, all students who have completed Bachelor’s degrees have continued to the Master’s level. Originally, undergraduates were not accepted at the institution, but were added to the school’s mandate during the reconstruction in 2005. They accept students with any disciplinary background including those who studied on the science track in high school, a unique feature of the institution. Although open to any students, entrance requirements are rigorous and selective. Students gain acceptance to the university through application. In 2011, 250 students applied, 150 were accepted and 105 took the entrance exam. The twenty who passed the test were admitted with free tuition and a 1500 dirham stipend (about 175USD) for each semester. Though meager, the stipend is higher than those for other universities where the stipend is 1350 dirhams (about 160 USD). Currently, the institution has 17 doctoral students in either the Quran/Hadith track of the Fiqh/Usul al-Fiqh track.
Interestingly, the model for the doctoral program at DHH was borrowed from American institutions since it includes coursework. The program is also unique in that it includes a study abroad year during the third year of classes. No other Moroccan institution sends students abroad with the exception of business and engineering programs. Students are encouraged to spend six months at an eastern and six months at a western institution, though not all countries are considered equally desirable. “We don’t want our students going to Egypt” commented Saqi. “We’ll probably send our best students to Syria and Tunisia, although we’re now making plans to send students to Malaysia because they speak English and we have studied their curriculum.” There are also plans to set up a formal partnership with Edinborough.

In 2010, King Mohammed VI inaugurated a new facility for DHH in the exclusive neighborhood of Hay Riad in Rabat. The complex covers 13,000 square meters and includes state of the art facilities cloaked in the finest Moroccan craftsmanship. The halls are lined in tile mosaics and plaster work from floor to ceiling (See Figures 7-1 and 7-2). The structures are arranged around blooming courtyards and fountains. The campus includes computer labs, archives, offices, classrooms and larger conference rooms as well as a mosque.

**Sufism as the “Tolerant” Moroccan Islam**

The removal of Islamic content from the school curricula, described above, mirrors Moroccan cultural policy. In the same way that it was impossible to reduce the number of hours of Islamic education, so it was redirected toward lessons on tolerance, communication and forgiveness, so cultural and educational initiatives are taking shape that promote Sufism and discourage adherence to other ideologies. Moroccan religious state policy has become much more subtle since the reform of the religious field began
after the 2003 bombings. The monarchy continues to attempt to shape Moroccan Islam, but through a more subtle approach that emphasizes sufism. After a brief discussion of the wider efforts to support Sufism, this section focuses on state efforts to promote Sufism in education.

Domestic and foreign observers of Moroccan politics frequently invoke Sufism as the “tolerant” branch of Islam. A strong example of this dynamic can be taken from the article “Sufism as Youth Culture in Morocco” by Mokhtar Ghambou from *The Washington Post* (2009). In the article, Ghambou, a Moroccan academic at Yale University, makes a series of simplistic descriptions of Moroccan Islam such as “Morocco owes its image of a modern Muslim nation to Sufism, a spiritual and tolerant Islamic tradition that goes back to the first generations of Muslims and has sustained the religious, social and cultural cohesion of Moroccan society for centuries” (Ghambou, 2009:np). This statement alone implies that it is Sufism that makes Moroccan Islam “modern” and “tolerant” suggesting that other interpretations of Islam lack these qualities. This statement is suspiciously in line with monarchical policy as expressed in public speeches following the Casablanca bombings. The theme of tolerance is repeated throughout the brief article: “Moroccan youth are increasingly drawn to Sufism because of its tolerance... Sufi gatherings inspire young people to engage in interfaith dialogue, highlighting the universal values Islam shares with Christianity and Judaism – such as the pursuit of happiness, love of one’s family, tolerance of racial and religious differences, and the promotion of peace...” (Ghambou, 2009:np). The article also overstates the significance of Sufism in Morocco: “Most Moroccans, young or old, practice one form of Sufism or another.” Such a description is particularly puzzling
coming from a professor of postcolonial studies, a field not known for their generous interpretation of social phenomena as autonomous from structural considerations.

Regardless of the intellectual integrity of the statements, they capture the simplistic formulation of Sufism as “the tolerant Islam,” a position that the Moroccan monarchy has promoted since the rise of Islamist movements in the country in the late 1980s.

American foreign policy discourse post-9/11 also emphasizes Sufis as tolerant Muslims with whom the US should cooperate against extremists. The Rand Corporation’s 2004 report *The Muslim World After 9/11* epitomizes this discourse. According to the report, “Salafists and Wahhabis are relentless enemies of Sufism, which they consider a deviant corruption of Islam... Their victimization by Salafis and Wahhabis makes Sufis and traditionalists natural allies of the West in the struggle with radicals to define the place of Islam in the modern world” (Rabasa et al., 2004:23). The report further suggests “Funding of educational and cultural activities by secular or moderate Muslim organizations should be a priority” for the United State Government (Rabasa et al., 2004:xxiv). Finally, the report highlights the importance of education: “Education has been one of the main battlefields between secularists and advocates of a religiously based state and society... Many moderate Muslim scholars and political activists believe that the future of political Islam will be decided in the schools” (Rabasa et al., 2004: 61). In one interview, an informant suggested that the Moroccan government’s policies toward Sufism, and particularly their support of cultural festivals, described below, originated in this document. Their reforms of the state’s educational system, however, predate the report.
In the post-2003 period, the regime’s definition of Moroccan Islam expanded to include Sufism. This definition is articulated and codified in a manual for Imams published by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs in 2006. According to the manual, Moroccan Islam is built on three foundations: Ash’ari doctrine, Maliki jurisprudence and Sufism. The manual does not specify a particular brotherhood but rather calls for *muhabba* or “mutual love of Sufis” (Zeghal, 2008:254). Further, the manual instructed the imams to model “open-mindedness” and advocate an approach to religion rooted in “simplicity” (Zeghal, 2008:254). This definition mirrors the reforms made to education during this period that emphasize citizenship values and discourage the acknowledgement of the complexity of Islamic religious doctrine.

State support of Sufism is evident in a number of choices made by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, such as in the selection of Sufis to positions of leadership within the religious bureaucracy as well as official efforts to limit the presence of alternative interpretations of Islam on Moroccan soil. This is true at both high and low levels within the Ministry of Islamic Affairs. Because the MIA is responsible for appointing Imams at individual mosques, they have tremendous influence on the content of Friday *khutba* or sermons. Several interviewees suggested that Sufis are being favored in appointing Imams, a shift from earlier policies favoring the appointment of Salafists to positions of influence within the educational apparatus. The delegate for the Ministry of Islamic Affairs in Fez in 2011, for example, was a Boutshishi (Rddad, 2011). The highest appointment of a Sufi is the current Minister of Islamic Affairs, Ahmed Toufiq, who is a well-known Boutshishi sufi (Maghraoui, 2009). Several interviewees, all of them professors at Moroccan universities, commented, without having been asked, that
Toufiq was appointed in an effort to depoliticize Islam and encourage a tolerant form of Islam. This position is supported by the fact that, besides his involvement with the Boutshishi Sufi brotherhood, Toufiq lacks qualifications to run the Ministry of Islamic Affairs; he has no formal training in the Islamic sciences, though he has published a translation and commentary on the work of Ibn al-Zayyat, who collected hagiographies or biographies of Moroccan saints (Tadili, 2007). A look at Toufiq’s biography suggests the appointment was based in the goal of a spokesperson for a “tolerant” Moroccan Islam, rather than a qualified leader of a religious ministry.

Other state-support of Sufism focuses on cultural policy. The most significant initiative is the Fez Festival of Sufi Culture. This yearly festival, begun in 2007 is an eight-day event that gathers Sufi musicians from across the Islamic world to perform ritual music for an international audience. In addition, the World Sacred Music Fest held in Fez every year also showcases Sufism through its nightly “Sufi Nights” performances. The appointment of Toufiq and the guests invited to perform at these festivals support the findings of interviews that suggest that it is not just Sufism writ large that is receiving state support, but the Boutshishi brotherhood (ar: tariqa) in particular (Rddad, 2011). These festivals frequently highlight the popular French rapper and Boutshishi musicians Abd al Malik. Al-Malik was born in Strasbourg and though a brilliant student, fell into a life of crime and drugs before his conversion to the radical strain of Islam of the Tabligh movement (Sayare, 2012). He spent six years preaching with the movement until he was no longer comfortable with its “simplistic” version of Islam. He converted to Sufism as a member of the sufi brotherhood Qadirriyya Boutshishiyya under the tutelage of Hamza Boudchich the Sufi master of Faouzi Skali, the founder and original director of
the Fez Festival of Sufi Culture (van Eersel, nd). Abd al-Malik performed at the festival in 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2011. Though Abd al-Malik did not perform in 2010, the Boutshishi sufi brotherhood was showcased. They also performed in 2007, 2008, and 2009. A number of educational initiatives to support Sufism also support the assertion that the regime is subsidizing or incentivizing Sufism as the official accepted version of Moroccan Islam. These include the creation of degree programs for the study of Sufism at Moroccan universities. For example, Dar Mehrez University in Fez now offers a masters degree in Moroccan Literature and Sufism.

There are multiple explanations for why the regime promotes Boutshishism above over Sufi brotherhoods. Unlike radical movements like Justice and Charity, the Boutshishi accept the king’s religious legitimacy and position as Commander of the Faithful or highest religious leader in the country. Others suggest it is their lack of interest in politics. One interviewee described the brotherhood as “an apolitical tariqa that is politically apolitical” (Rddad, 2011). This comment is likely in reference to the brotherhoods acceptance of the king’s religious legitimacy. By choosing to accept the status quo, they take a moderate enough line that they can participate in politics, unlike

the more radical movement Justice and Charity. “Sufis are either nonpolitical or members of regular political parties (that is, they are not Islamists)” (Sedgwick, 2004: 128). Other scholars assert that the monarchy encourages Boutshishism as a counter to the Justice and Charity movement of Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine (Monjib, 2011). Because Yassine is a former member of the brotherhood, and because his movement literally can mobilize tens of thousands of members, the regime hopes the presence of Butshishis discredits the Islamists.

In addition to the regime’s promotion of Boutshishism, the organization also has unique tactics for recruiting and maintaining a membership of elites. Mark Sedgwick (2004) identifies these tactics as including: recruitment among Islamic Sciences departments, outreach activities, a journal al-Ishara intended for non-members, the charisma of Sheikh Hamza, the leader of the organization since 1971, a flexible approach to issues of Islamic law, the purity of the organization’s activities in comparison to other Sufi brotherhoods that stress visits to saints’ tombs, repetitive prayer (ar. Dhikr), and finally, the use of pre-existing networks for recruitment. Boutshishis intentionally recruited from universities through sophisticated Islamic education efforts. Sheikh Hamza appointed university professors to leadership positions (Sedgwick, 2004). He also began a summer university in 1976 in Oujda that yearly attracts a number of Sufis from the group to gather together to study the Islamic Sciences; by the year 2000, 1600 men and women attended the institute (Sedgwick, 2004).

Interestingly, ‘Abdasalam Yassine was originally a member of the Boutshishi brotherhood. Rumors suggest that after his master died, he wanted to lead the tariqa in a more political direction. When others refused, he left the organization and started his own, which eventually became Justice and Charity. According to Thorne (2010), Mohamed Darif, a politics professor at Morocco's Mohammedia University, Yassine continues to be a sufi even though he left the brotherhood: “Sheikh Yassine is a Sufi par excellence... but he has politicised Sufism.” This is perhaps the most significant difference between Yassine's Justice and Charity movement and the Boutshishi.
The Boutshishi also host public lectures and performances, discussed below, to attract members (Sedgwick, 2004). The movement was already fairly popular prior to the Casablanca bombings. Sedgwick estimates that prior to the bombings the Boutshishi had 25,000 members, half of which he considered educated (2004). “Many came from the Islamic Studies departments that proliferated in Moroccan universities after 1979” (Sedgwick, 2004:135). The Boutshishi demonstrate how private groups can take advantage of the incentive structures set up by state programs. While the state subsidized Islamic science departments, the brotherhood recruited in the departments. For several decades their presence was a relatively private affair until recent state efforts to encourage the brotherhood’s growth.

State efforts to support Sufism are part of a larger effort to control interpretations of Islam present within the country. This effort has also included policies that may be characterized as anti-Shiite or meant to discourage Moroccans from coming into contact with shi‘ism. On 6 March 2009 a statement published by the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Relations announced “The Kingdom of Morocco has decided to break its diplomatic relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran’ because it believed that the Iranian embassy in Rabat was involved in activities that are intended to ‘alter the religious fundamentals of the kingdom’ and constitute a ‘threat’ to the country’s ‘religious security’ and ‘unity’ as a result of the ‘intolerable interference in the internal affairs of the kingdom” (Maghraoui, 2009:195). The overall effort to reduce the impact of shiism in the country also including the closing of an Iraqi high school in Rabat and arresting those presumed to be shite sympathizers (Maghraoui, 2009). Further efforts to defend Moroccan Islam include the regime’s opposition to legalizing groups that defend
homosexuality and expel Christian proselytizers (Maghraoui, 2009). The anti-shi’ite stance of the regime demonstrates that the regime is not only interested in promoting Sufism, it is also actively discouraging alternative interpretations of Islam.

Finally, in addition to supporting Sufism and opposing Shi’ism, the regime has taken a number of steps seen as “Salafist reconciliation” (Saadouni, 2012). In the midst of the so-called “Arab Spring,” on April 14th, 2011, King Mohammed VI pardoned 190 Salafi prisoners imprisoned for their role in the Casablanca bombings in celebration of the prophet’s birthday (Mekhennet, 2011). The pardons freed one in ten of the 2,000 people jailed after the Casablanca bombings (Mekhennet, 2011). The regime justified the pardons as an attempted reconciliation with Salafists. Then Justice Minister Mustafa Ramid commented, “The state is holding out an olive branch... to prisoners who have proven and expressed their willingness to make a positive contribution to public life and shun extremism” (Saadouni, 2012).

The prisons released have had varying responses. Some called for a new investigation into the bombings: “I had nothing to do with these attacks and there are many others in prison for this who don’t either” said one prisoner, Mohamed Fizazi (Mekhennet, 2011). Others, such as Hassan Kettani and Mohamed Abdelouahab Rafiki, also known as Abou Hafs, two preachers convicted of inciting the terrorist attacks in Casablanca in 2003, initially appeared to moderate their public statements. Kettani called for a “comprehensive national reconciliation,” while Rafiki supported the controversial 2010 Libyan Islamic Fighting Group’s denunciation of Al Qaeda’s methods (Saadouni, 2012). After a high profile breakfast with the King, the reconciliation appears
to have lost momentum though, and the sheikhs are increasing the volatility in their 
(public statements (Bennani, 2013).

There are several ways to interpret the mass release of those accused of the 
2003 bombings. Islamists calling for the release of political prisoners marched in 
Morocco’s Arab Spring marches. The release of prisoners can then be seen as 
responding to highly mobilized groups in a period of fear. Another explanation is that the 
regime feels that released prisoners who are committed to preaching moderation may 
actually help to de-politicize religion in the country. A third explanation is that the regime 
learned that if it is too repressive of any particular group it risks allowing their rival to 
dominate the political scene. The mass release of prisoners presumed to have Salafist 
ideological commitments may then be an effort to balance the regime’s support of 
Sufism. A disturbing explanation is that many of those arrested were actually not 
involved, and the regime knew it, and just needed someone to pay so it looked like it 
was responding effectively to complaints. In the words of one New York Times article “In 
2003, anyone with a long beard was likely to be arrested” (Erlanger and Mekhennet, 
2009). This seems unlikely due to the size of the security apparatus in the country, but it 
is possible. Since the regime’s greatest fear is a unified opposition, the most plausible 
explanation is that the regime is attempting to build goodwill with the Salafis to 
discourage their alignment with the left, who was experiencing a minor revival in recent 
years.

Even before the Arab Spring protests spread to Morocco in early 2011, the USFP 
began to experience increased popularity. Their return to the opposition in 2012 was 
seen as a “revitalisation de la gauche” (Boudarham, 2012). The election of Driss
Lachgar to head the USFP through an internally democratic two-round election was equally seen as a “revival” of the left to the political scene (Le réveil de l’USFP..., 2012). Some argue that the Palace created the Party of Authenticity and Modernity (PAM), a new political party that was initially managed by one of the King’s friends and advisors, in order to encourage Moroccans to channel their dissent through “an alternative—formally sanctioned by the palace” (Erlanger and Mekhennet, 2009). The move was seen as an attempt to prevent an Islamist-leftist coalition. Indeed, Lachgar himself has been arguing that the USFP should form a coalition with the PJD in order to push for real democratic reform (Monjib, 2010). Though such a coalition would be uniquely positioned to call for reforms, it seems unlikely that the USFP and the PJD could overcome internal debates over minor issues in order to accomplish such a goal.

**Explaining Moroccan Educational Policy**

The simplest explanation for Moroccan religious educational policy has little to do with training the Moroccan people in the Islamic sciences. The Moroccan king is not using his position as religious leader of the country to encourage devotion or piety or to engage in sincere dialogue about what it means to be a Muslim in the twenty-first century. State-supported Islamic education began as an effort to discourage adherence to leftist ideologies, was modified to discourage Moroccans from becoming Islamists, and is now focused on subsidizing participation in Sufi brotherhoods. While it seems a change in policy to in one decade teach children that Islam is an ideology and in other decades to encourage an apolitical Islam, the actions are unified by the overarching goal to influence the Moroccan people’s religious beliefs in ways that serve the political goals of the ruling elite. By employing religion to influence the significance of ideologies and weaken opposition politics, the regime contributes to its own stability and is able to
reach its influence deeper into the day-to-day lives of the Moroccan people. Although the outward manifestation of religious policy has changed over time, moving from support of Salafism to support of Sufism, and from support of Islamic modernist doctrine to support of more citizenship-oriented religious education and Boutshishi Sufism, the policy has been consistently directed at employing religion to defend the interests of the monarchy. In doing so, the regime toys with the intimate lives of individuals in ways more totalitarian than democratic. By claiming that the policy is part of a larger effort to fight terrorism, the regime is able to gain international prestige while at the same time domesticating opposition figures.
Figure 8-1. Ornate Interior of Dar al-Hadith al-Hassaniyya Covered in the finest Moroccan woodwork, plaster work and *zellij* (Moroccan tile work).
Figure 8-2. Exterior of Dar al-Hadith al-Hassaniyya, including mosque (on right)
I opened the dissertation with an anecdote about an Arabic teacher of mine who was late for class due to a knife fight between Islamists and leftists in the hallway of a university in Fez in the winter of 2010. Violent confrontation between members of various organized political movements remains a fact of life on university campuses in Morocco, though the balance of power between the two has shifted considerably. Today, Islamists dominate university politics and the Moroccan student union. This dissertation discussed some of the educational reforms that contributed to this shift in influence arguing that it was regime policy, and not an organic resurgence of religion, that has resulted in the decline of leftist student movements and the rise of Islamist ones. In this chapter, I summarize the argument made in the dissertation, discuss contemporary relations between leftists and Islamists and present several alternative explanations for the rise of Islamism in Morocco. After discussing why I feel the argument offered in this dissertation is the most compelling of those available, I discuss several other countries where educational reforms appear to have contributed to the fall of leftists and the rise of Islamist political actors during the Cold War. In doing so, I suggest that regimes throughout the Islamic world employed education reform to structure relations between Islamists and leftists, an argument I look forward to exploring in my future scholarship.

**Summary of Argument**

This dissertation highlights the political factors that shaped post-independence Moroccan educational policy. I argue that a divide in the nationalist movement coalesced into a cleavage between Islamists and leftists. Although the actors that
populate these sectors varied, the cleavage remained salient throughout the second half of the twentieth century. The strength of the left and their opposition to the monarchy culminated in the 1965 Casablanca riots. In response, the regime initiated a series of educational policies intended to weaken leftist political actors and support Islamic modernist and Salafist interpretations of Islam. The Salafization policies reached their height in the 1980s and 1990s. The effectiveness of the policies rendered the left incapacitated and opened the door to a variety of Islamist groups to populate Morocco’s political spectrum. In an attempt to reduce the appeal of Islamism, the regime once again employed educational reforms. An initial effort to reduce the amount of Islamic education in the Moroccan public schools in the late nineties was too controversial and faced too much opposition to succeed.

However, several years later, in the environment created by 9/11 and the 2003 Casablanca bombings, reform of the state’s school curriculum was successful. This is likely due to the fact that the reforms to Islamic education focused on taming, framing and containing Islamic education rather than reducing the number of hours of the curriculum. In other subjects however, the Islamic content was greatly reduced so that the overall public school curriculum students receive in the twenty-first century is a remarkably different one than their parents encountered in the 1980s and 1990s. In addition to reducing Islamic content, the interpretation of Islam presented to Moroccan children is focused on citizenship or ethics values rather than providing an education in the Islamic sciences. As part of this emphasis on citizenship or ethics values, the regime is presently encouraging adherence to Sufism as the Moroccan and “tolerant” interpretation of Islam.
Contemporary Morocco: Demise of the Left

Nadia Guessous provided a good summary of the present state of relations between leftists and Islamists in Morocco when she described the "sense of exhaustion that now permeates the leftist tradition in the wake of the Islamic Revival" (2011:210). The left is, for all intents and purposes, exhausted. There are a number of indicators of this turn of events in wider Moroccan society, including: the huge crowds the Islamists supplied against changes to the family code in 2000 and in favor of the Arab Spring protests of 2011¹, the popularity of Abd al Salam Yassine's outlawed Islamist social movement², and the increasing prominence of the veil in Moroccan society (Guessous, 2011).

This general Salafization of society is most evident on university campuses where leftist activists once reigned supreme. Today, UNEM is dominated by Islamists, and specifically members of Yassine's movement.³ Leftist students, and particularly leftist feminists are "disheartened by the fact that the student movement (l'UNEM), which was the political school and training ground for a whole generation of leftists, has been taken over by Islamists, that more and more young people are joining Islamist movements, organizations and political parties, and they do not want their feminist organizations to join that trend" (Guessous, 2011:148). The changing leadership of UNEM is evident of the changing influence of different ideologies on university

¹It was easy to distinguish which groups brought the most members to the protests because they did not march with the February 20th movement. The February 20th movement generally marched in front while the Islamists marched in back. In addition, the Islamist women marched separately from the men, making it easy to identify which protesters were with the February 20th movement, and which were with the Islamists. In one protest I attended, an organizer estimated that there were 12,000 total protesters, 10,000 of whom were affiliated with the Islamists.

²Generally believed to be the most numerous social movement in Moroccan society.

³Interview with Moroccan university professor, 2011.
campuses. When the left controlled the university, it also controlled UNEM. Today, both institutions are Islamist and dominated in particular by members of *al-Adl wa l’Ihsane*, Sheikh Yassine’s movement.⁴ The dominance of the Salafist interpretation of Islam in public discourse is so pervasive that even members of the USFP protested when students ate publicly during Ramadan in 2010 (el Alaoui, 2011). In other words, even the Moroccan left pays deference to the norm of Salafization.

The relationship between activists from these two movements remains hostile. When the left want to criticize Islamists, they claim, “No difference between the moderate or extremist, both are a threat to our security” or “The Islamist regime is as bloody as the experience of the Military regime in Algeria” (Khalfi, 2009:23). When Islamists want to criticize the left, they argue, “Their ultimate target is to eradicate our Islamic values from everyday life” or “The guidelines of Secularists are merely an ideological tool to serve a new project of tyranny” (Khalfi, 2009:23). Both sides exercise hyperbole and conflate the multiple groups that form each movement in their efforts to discredit the opposing ideology. The divide is further exacerbated by the media who exaggerate the degree of difference between the two camps (Khalfi, 2009:21).

Some democracy activists have taken steps to try and bridge the gap between them. The Moroccan chapter of the Middle East Citizens’ Assembly (MECA) along with the Dutch NGO IKV-Pax Christil, hosted a series of dialogues between Islamists and leftists between March 2007 and June 2008 (Monjib, 2009). The dialogues, hosted in Rabat, gathered more than 600 people and were broadcast by local and international media.

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⁴ Yassine and his followers do not accept the legitimacy of the monarchy and argue for democratic reforms and a constitutional monarchy. The group’s existence demonstrates how the assault on the left merely narrowed the ideological spectrum of Morocco’s political landscape without removing threats to the monarchy. Similar tactics are used to harass the group that were used against the left.
media (Monjib, 2009). They brought leading members of significant organizations and political parties face-to-face to discuss their differences. Democracy advocates want to see a balance of power between Islamists and leftists, rather than domination by either group. The debates were significant in that they tried to shift the emphasis from a divide between two ideological factions to a focus on the divide between those who advocate democracy and those who protect privilege and defend the position of the monarchy in society. This is possible because a great number of Morocco’s democracy advocates are Islamists and because the Moroccan left has become less hostile to religion or at least has come to accept that religion is a part of daily life for most Moroccans.

**Implications**

This narrative highlights an authoritarian regime’s manipulation of educational policy to structure opposition politics. By subsidizing different interpretations of Islam over the course of the second half of the twentieth century, the monarchy provided incentives to Moroccan students enrolled in public schools to embrace particular ideologies. At a time when leftist ideologies were popular, the regime supported Salafism. When Moroccan discourse became saturated with Salafist discourse and Salafist political parties became increasingly popular, the regime subsidized Sufism. By encouraging adherence to ideologies that were less popular, the educational reforms helped to maintain a divided opposition that would not threaten the stability of the regime. In the Chapter 4 of the dissertation, I suggest that utilizing education to influence party politics is likely in competitive authoritarian regimes. Because these regimes maintain democratic institutions, they create opportunities for opposition movements to contest the regime. In order to prevent a loss of power, competitive authoritarian regimes try to manipulate ideology subtly through a host of reforms.
including those to education rather than allowing free and fair ideological contestation since competition presents too much of a threat to the regime.

In the Moroccan case, reforms to education were not solely based on incentivizing particular ideologies, but were tied to particular interpretations of Islam presented as ideologies. In particular, state subsidization of Salafism eventually gave way to state-support for Sufism. While the process described in the above paragraph does not have to have a religious foundation, since competitive authoritarian regimes can employ reforms to education to manipulate party politics regardless of whether they are secular or religious, the reforms to Moroccan education are based on various interpretations of Islam convenient to the regime at particular times. The dissertation thus presents an account of how flexible preferences are regarding interpretations of Islam, even under a regime that bases its legitimacy partly on religious lineage and leadership. This flexibility further underscores the point made in Chapter 4 that there is no inherent relationship between a religion and a regime. Even in the case of one regime, the Moroccan monarchy, different interpretations of the same religion have been supported throughout the second half of the twentieth century according to the anticipated gains for state stability. The Moroccan case thus highlights how religion, like public education, is one of many resources available to an authoritarian regime that can be directed toward authoritarian resilience.

**Alternative Explanations**

As a piece of area studies scholarship, the dissertation highlights the connections between the dynamics of the Cold War with the rise of Islamism. In the Moroccan case, the regime encouraged the rise of Islamism in two ways, by removing the institutional sources of leftist ideology and by subsidizing particular interpretations of Islam through
public school curricula. This dissertation thus creates questions such as: is there a relationship between authoritarian stability and the rise of Islamist movements across North Africa? Were dynamics similar to the Moroccan case at work elsewhere? What policies can be identified that encouraged the rise of Islamists? In what ways are regimes themselves responsible for the rise of Islamist opposition movements? In what ways have international factors outside of regime control blended with regime policies to facilitate the growth of Islamist movements? The remainder of this conclusion focuses on evaluating if an assault on the left facilitated the rise of Islamist movements in other countries in the region and if so, whether educational reforms were a significant part of this process. First, however, it is necessary to specify alternative explanations provided by other scholars that may explain the phenomenon discussed in the dissertation.

Some scholars argue that it is not regime policy, but rather the failure of the left to capitalize on their widespread support, that led to the rise of Islamist ideologies. One source, for example, states, “Many of these [Islamist] groups took over the revolutionary niche occupied by leftist movements in the 1960s and early 1970s when the violent paths of the latter manifestly failed to bring about major changes” (Park and Boum, 2006:183-4). The prominent scholar of Islam, Olivier Roy, also has argued for this position. He wrote, “The secular, Marxist, and nationalist revolutionary movements of the Third World were caught off-guard by their victories, and their ideals were corrupted by the practice of power” (1996:5). Roy argues that Islamists and Marxists interacted and learned from one another, but that the latter lost public support through exercise of power. This is not an adequate explanation in the Moroccan case, since the left was already discredited by the time that it took power in 1998.
Some members of the left also support this position. The popular fiction writer, Tahar Ben Jelloun, who was sent to a military camp in 1966 for two years for his participation in the protests of March 1965, also expressed this sentiment, “The left failed because it got lost attempting to reconcile the impossible: to be both inside and out, with and against the government, representatives of popular force and enjoying Makhzanian delights” (2008:np). This comment, however, seems to be implying that the left failed because it participated in alternance. Most observers of Moroccan politics would agree that the left failed long before that. This argument is compelling in that revolutionary leftists have had very little influence despite the widespread popularity of their ideologies. Further, some leftist revolutionaries left leftist organizations and later joined Islamist groups, suggests that the left was unable to bring about any real change so people were drawn to another ideology. My sense is that there were people committed to radical change who were dissatisfied with more moderate methodologies of dissent. They were then committed to radical action more than to leftist or Islamist ideologies. These people were few in number, however, as demonstrated in how few people participated in violent forms of dissent in post-independence Morocco. Further, this position attributes too much autonomy and power to the leftists of the 1960s and 1970s. Under Hassan II, even members of the cabinet had very little power to enact policy. Reformers, even those who could mobilize large numbers of people, were incapacitated by the repressive capabilities of the state, even a state as weak as

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5 He fictionalized his account of these harrowing events in the novel The Last Friend, first published in 2004. For a review of the text see Lalami (2006).

6 The original text: "La gauche a failli parce qu’elle s’est perdue en route à force de vouloir concilier les impossibles : être dedans et dehors, avec et contre le pouvoir, représentante des « forces populaires » et goûtant aux « délices » makhzéniens" (Jelloun, 2008:np).
Morocco in the first decade after independence. Many activists were unable to save their own lives, let alone pressure the state into enacting leftist policies. While I agree that Islamist groups espousing radical goals took over in the wake of weakened leftists and that some advocated the same extremist methodologies as the left, I see too much evidence suggesting the state participated in this shift in influence to accept an argument that it was a simple failure of the left to capitalize on its popularity.

A second alternative explanation is that the secularist tone of the left encouraged a rise in Islamist activism among fervent believers. One source, for example, argues that the forerunner to the political party PJD, the Shabiba, was “created to counter the Marxist leftists” (Park and Boum, 2006:185). This explanation is more plausible than the previous one, since it seems likely that the devoutly religious felt threatened by leftist secularist discourse. At the same time, the government and Islamists had similar objectives in relationship to the left in the late 1960s and 1970s (Park and Boum, 2006), so it would be difficult to parse out if collaboration was unintentional or organized. My sense is that the leaders of Islamist groups were motivated by what they saw as a threat to religion, but their success must in some ways be attributed to the friendly environment for Islamist discourse created by regime policy. While the threat posed by leftist secularism was likely significant in the rise of Islamism, I do not think it was sufficient to alone facilitate widespread Islamist political sympathies.

**State as Religious Actor**

In 1987, Lisa Anderson called political scientists who study the Middle East to contribute more to theoretical debates in the discipline. Those who have made an effort to engage the wider literature, she said, had made “society-centered” analyses that depict the state as “an arena of socially engendered conflict or an instrument of family,
sect, or class domination” (p.1). Anderson called on scholars of the Middle East to make contributions that acknowledged and explored how the state can also function as an actor. In the ensuing years, a number of scholars have taken up the charge. [Insert scholars.] This current work also illustrates how the state can act on society, but it is unique in that it emphasizes how the state can serve as a religious actor.

Scholars of religion, frequently focused on cases in America or Europe, tend to assume that religious actors are located in civil society. Thus, like the scholars of the Middle East who Anderson was addressing, scholars of religion frequently depict the state as an arena of conflict for interest groups associated with a religion. [Insert examples.] This case illustrates how the state has access to institutions, such as public education, that allow it to act on society. In the Moroccan case, this type of influence was possible because of Hassan II’s monopoly over public institutions. To paraphrase the French sun king, he was the state. This is not to say that there were not a host of employees with their own wills and interests, there were. But the atmosphere of fear created by the king allowed him to enact his own will with a minimum amount of negotiation and compromise. His son, Mohammad VI, has been less able and it appears, less interested in such influence. This is compounded by the fact that the Moroccan bureaucratic apparatus has taken on a number of Max Weber’s rational-legal characteristics. The Ministry of Education is now composed of committee meetings, educational experts and merit-based hires. Nevertheless, the state still appears like an actor. Through directives of the Minister of Education, the Islamic education curricula in the public schools has significantly shifted course over the past decade.
Since a number of factors that led to the rise of the left in the Moroccan context, including the significance of pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism and the charismatic leadership of Nasser, were shared across the region, it seems likely that states that undertook anti-leftist policies may have similarly experienced a growing Islamist mobilization. In the following section, I discuss the experiences of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Sudan to suggest that these dynamics were present in part in other contexts. Although Sudan is typically identified in sub-Saharan Africa, I think its inclusion makes sense in light of the Arab cultural identity of many elites in the north of the country.

**Egypt**

Although many countries share some of the dynamics discussed in the Moroccan case, the closest comparison is with the political program of Anwar al-Sadat in Egypt. Sadat was chosen to replace President Nasser following his death in 1970. In consolidating his own influence, Sadat undertook a number of measures to build his own popularity. He appointed a new Minister of the Interior, called for a permanent constitution, released and pardoned many political prisoners and returned properties that had been nationalized under Nasser to their original owners (Lawson, 2004). Most importantly, however, he took several steps to weaken the influence of leftist ideologies in the country by strengthening the Muslim Brotherhood. Nasser had outlawed the Muslim Brotherhood in 1956 after an attempt on his life by some members of the organization (al-Faruqi, 2004). Sadat revived the movement through various tactics including “carefully choreographed displays of his own religiosity in the mass media” and “tolerating the spread of Islamist political groups on university campuses” (Lawson,
In doing so, Sadat used his position of authority to tacitly encourage participation in Islamist movements.

In general, the public school curriculum under Nasser had encouraged support of the regime. Students were taught to recite sections of Nasser's speeches and revolutionary slogans (Starrett, 1998). Islamic education under Nasser emphasized the aspects of Islam compatible with socialism. This is not to suggest that the books were socialist; socialism is presented only as a natural expression of Islamic principles (Carré, 1974). For example, the principle of giving alms to the poor, (ar: zakat), was treated as a “communitarian and egalitarian’ Islamic economic ethic” (Carré, 1974:3). Some books did take strong stands about the relationship between Islam and socialism. The preface of a ninth grade textbook from 1958, for example, reads “Religious instruction is one of the most powerful factors in the preparation of a virtuous youth, who believes in his Lord and in his country, even as he works for the benefit of his society on the bases of socialism, democracy, and cooperation, all things called for and affirmed by religion” (quoted in Starrett, 1998:84-5). In general, however, the books from early in Nasser’s rule were focused on religious instruction and were not highly politicized (Carré, 1974). By the end of his rule, however, “the curriculum consistently socialized its presentation of religion, highlighting the importance of the individual’s cooperation in programs to raise the national standard of living, and instilling ‘the faith that reward and punishment are founded upon justice” (Starrett, 1998:79).

In contradiction with Sadat’s public relations campaign to strengthen Islamism in Egyptian society, the amount of Islamic education that students received on a daily

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basis was actually reduced. In 1963, 10.6 percent of a child’s school day was dedicated to Islamic education while by 1981 that number had been reduced to 8 percent (Starrett, 1998:83). At the same time, however, the number of years religious education is taught beyond primary school was increased, so students did not actually receive less religious instruction over the course of their educational careers (Starrett, 1998). The system of Azhari primary schools associated with al-Azhar University were also strengthened, with enrollment increasing by 70 percent between the 1976-77 school year and the 1980-81 school year (Starrett, 1998:80). As the number of students attending these schools increased, the need for teachers trained at al-Azhar also increased, creating a self-reinforcing system. It is not clear what role Sadat’s policies played in the increase in enrollment, though Starrett (1998) comments that he had a “political interest in strengthening al-Azhar” (p.80). Interestingly, Sadat increased the importance of Islamic education for all Egyptian students by requiring religious education in the public schools through changes to the Egyptian Constitution in 1971 (Starrett, 1998).

**Saudi Arabia**

According to Stéphane Lacroix (2011), the Saudi regime created a field of intellectuals (ar: muthaqqa’), to legitimize the regime as “clerics of modernity” similar to how the ‘ulama served as “clerics of tradition” (p.15). These intellectuals were drawn from a class of people who had largely been educated outside of the kingdom and particularly in Egypt, Lebanon and Iraq beginning during the Second World War. The original intention of educating these individuals using recently garnered oil money was the creation of a class of effective bureaucrats. However, many of these students developed leftist ideological leanings, leading the Saudi state to discourage study in Middle Eastern universities and encourage study in American and European ones.
Lacroix comments, “this did not perceptibly modify the situation” (2011:15). At the same time, those who did not leave Saudi Arabia but who worked in the oil industry are believed to have had access to leftist publications in the library of the American oil company, Aramco, active in the kingdom (Lacroix, 2011). Similar to the Moroccan case, those with leftist ideological commitments were significant in orchestrating strikes in the mid-1950s and failed coup attempts in 1955 and 1969. The Saudi regime also responded to the dissidents similarly to Hassan II, including arresting large numbers of suspected leftists in 1955, 1962 and 1969 (Lacroix, 2011). “In the early 1960s there were also purges of the press and the universities” (Lacroix, 2011:16). However, the major difference with the Moroccan case was that activists were co-opted by being incorporated into the state bureaucracy in exchange for loyalty to the region. Although Lacroix does not specify the impact on educational curricula, he does provide sufficient evidence to suggest that leftist students were involved in creating unrest in the kingdom and were met with significant resistance by the regime. Rather than discourage adherence to leftist ideologies, however, the Saudi regime provided leftists with significant positions of authority such as top positions in the ministries of industry, education, finance, agriculture, trade and interior. It appears then that regime efforts were more focused on the traditional strategies of cooptation rather than cultural change through education.

The result of these policies was the significant weakening of the left, a fact Lacroix attributes to both regime policy and the 1973 oil boom that transformed the kingdom into a rentier state. As expected in the case of such dynamics, “the socioeconomic component inherent in the discourse of all the Saudi opposition groups
disappeared almost completely” (Lacroix, 2011:17). Thus, while there are some useful comparisons between the Moroccan and Saudi case, dynamics particular to the two kingdoms resulted in different approaches to and results of the rise of leftist political ideologies. Significantly, though, in both cases the suppression of the left has resulted in an opportunity for Islamist ideologies to monopolize political discourse. In the Saudi case, this included the rise of a class of Islamist intellectuals in the mid-1980s (Lacroix, 2011). It thus suggests that a theory on the use of education to discourage adherence to leftist ideologies might need to be limited to states without oil wealth since access to natural resources may make it less necessary to engage in other ways of influencing ideology because dissidents can sometimes be bought.

**Sudan**

Sudan makes an interesting parallel with the Moroccan case because the socialist-Islamist conflict and transition happened largely under the leadership of one man, Muhammad Ja’far Numayri. Numayri was an admirer of Nasser’s Arab nationalism and 1952 coup, a view likely developed during military training in Egypt (Collins, 2004). After participating in a series of failed coups, Numayri came to power in Sudan in a coup on 25 May 1969 and installed a Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) modeled after Nasser’s RCC (Collins, 2004). Numayri was challenged on both the right and the left, by a spiritual group the Ansar (or Mahdists) and the Communist Party, though he subdued both through military action (Collins, 2004).

Beginning in the late 1970s, however, Numayri increasingly encouraged the Salafization of Sudanese society. In September 1983, Numayri introduced *shari‘a* leading to widespread dissent (Collins, 2004). As a result of these and other Salafization policies, he was eventually deposed in a bloodless coup while on a visit to the United
States (Collins, 2004). Interestingly, the riots that led to the coup began when students opposed to the increasing influence of the Islamists collaborated to take control of the Khartoum University Student Union (Abbas, 1991) suggesting the centrality of university politics to wider political dynamics.

Similar to the Moroccan case, control of the Sudanese student union was an important marker of political influence. Numayri’s change of heart is reminiscent of Hassan II’s move from secular politics to support of Salafization during the first decade of his rule. The Sudanese case also demonstrates how regimes are aware of the significance of university politics and attempt to influence them. Prior to his removal from office, for example, Numayri gave the Islamists liberty to control secondary and university institutions. In fact, Numayri’s security apparatus collaborated with members of the National Islamic Front (NIF), a Sudanese branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, to discourage dissent on university campuses through violent repression (Abbas, 1991). Together, the two groups prevented other opposition groups from gaining momentum. The NIF controlled the Khartoum University Student Union between the years 1978 and 1984 (Abbas, 1991). It was not until those groups who opposed the NIF’s dominance of the union united that they were able to overturn NIF’s dominance and pause the general Salafization of society. However, the NIF once again became significant after Omar al-Bashir took power in a NIF-supported coup on 30 June 1989. On that very day, al-Bashir made all associations illegal with the exception of those associations dominated by the NIF: religious and student associations, thus assuring NIF’s continued significance in the day-to-day political life of the country (Abbas, 1991). This was paired with a removal of all non-NIF members from positions of influence (Kramer, et al.,
2013). He also put members of the NIF in positions of leadership over educational institutions. Ibrahim Ahmad ‘Umar, a long-time NIF member, was appointed chair of the National Council of Higher Education and was later made Minister of Education (Abbas, 1991). In addition, those with unsavory political views were removed from their posts at universities across the country in 1990 (Abbas, 1991). Further, beginning in 1989, higher education under al-Bashir was Arabized (Abbas, 1991). Interestingly, none of the usual pedagogical reasons for the Arabization of education were offered (Abbas, 1991). Instead, the emphasis was on the importance of education expressing the culture of Sudan as defined by the NIF (Abbas, 1991). This reflects the larger dynamic that educational reform in Sudan is more concerned with supporting the dominance of the NIF rather than meeting the needs of students.

A preliminary assessment of the dynamics of the Sudanese case suggest that Islamist dominance in Sudanese society has been supported by higher education policies of both omission and commission, though there is less evidence on whether or not state-support for Islamism was paired with anti-leftist educational policies. Regardless, the Sudanese case demonstrates that competition for control of the political institutions of universities reflected larger political conflicts and in some cases had significant affects on national political trajectories.

In Egypt, it is clear that Sadat supported Islamists as part of a larger effort to discourage adherence to leftist ideologies and to consolidate his own authority. In Sudan, the transition from state support of leftism to state support of Islamism occurred under the same ruler, but in both cases the country’s educational apparatus was harnessed to the ideological project. In Saudi Arabia, the state’s cooptation of leftist
intellectuals created an opportunity for the rise of Islamist intellectuals though it is not clear what role the state’s education policies played in this shift. In all three cases, however, influencing the ideology of the country’s universities or university population was a significant means of influencing wider electoral politics. Further, in all three cases, the decline of the left and the rise of Islamist actors appear to be related though the importance of education in each context varies.

**Final Remarks**

The rise of Islamist ideologies in the Moroccan context was not an organic phenomenon or a “response to modernity” but the result of a coherent set of educational policies intended to prevent meaningful ideological contestation or unified opposition movements. The Moroccan monarchy views its role as “Commander of Faithful” as one of encouraging people to adhere to interpretations of Islam that are conducive to long-term regime stability. Its continued reliance on this method through the promotion of Sufism as “tolerant” and “apolitical” suggests that the regime is attempting to depoliticize Islam for the Moroccan masses while continuing to rely on religion as a resource. The reform however, may inadvertently create conflict between two different interpretations of Islam, Sufism and Salafism. Further, since these policies are leading to large divergences between different generations, the policy will likely lead to increased social conflict and instability. The project demonstrates the need for shrewd democracy activists to ignore the cleavages the crown creates for the Makhzan’s political advantage and build consensus among opposition movements in order to force the devolution of powers to elected institutions.


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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ann Marie Wainscott holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science and a certificate in African Studies from the University of Florida. Her intellectual interests include Islamist-Leftist conflict, Moroccan politics, the politics of education in authoritarian systems, and state-led projects of cultural change. She is also concerned about the training of graduate students, social science research design and increasing the inclusivity of the academy. Her research languages are Arabic, French and Spanish.