

LIGHTS:

THE MESSA JOURNAL

Spring 2015
Volume 4, Issue 2

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From Mirror to Open Window: Reflections on Forugh Farrokhzad's Poetics

by Annie Webster

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References to mirrors pervade Forugh Farrokhzad's poetry. Leila Rahimi Bahmany highlights the importance of mirrors in Farrokhzad's poems and Farzaneh Milani refers to Farrokhzad's use of mirror imagery to argue that the poetry performs a self-reflective function for the author.¹ The prominence of mirrors, particularly within her early poetry, has thus been cited as evidence of its introspective nature.² In this paper I develop critical attention to mirror imagery as a confessional poetic technique in Farrokhzad's early poetry and highlight the significance of another image that becomes prominent in her later writing: an open window. In so doing, I argue that Farrokhzad's use of an open window as a motif indicates her poetic development and transition from a confessional poetic to poetry that is increasingly socially engaged. First, I dissect the centrality of mirror imagery in one of Farrokhzad's early poems, 'The Lost One,' from her second collection *Divar (The Wall)* (1956). I then identify the open window as a significant image in Farrokhzad's later writing and analyse its use in two poems, 'The Conquest of the Garden' and 'O Bejewelled Land,' both from Farrokhzad's fourth collection *Tavallodi Digar (Another Birth)* (1964).

A critically neglected poem, 'The Lost One' offers a lament in which the poetic persona reflects upon the inherent inconsistencies of identity and self-perception. It is representative of Farrokhzad's early poetry in its introspective use of mirror imagery. A striking example of this occurs in the second stanza:

Melancholy, interrogating the mirror,
What do you think of me now, what?
But in the mirror I see...oh god
Nothing I was, not even the shadow of that³

Here the mirror becomes central to a process of self-reflection as the speaker strives to perceive a coherent identity. The persona directs its question to the mirror. The ellipses imply a moment of reflection. In the progression of the poem the mirror is not directly referenced again, yet further

¹ Leila Rahimi Bahmany, 'Bewildered Mirror: Mirror, Self and World in the Poems of Forugh Farrokhzad,' in *Forugh Farrokhzad, Poet of Modern Iran*, ed. Dominic Parviz Brookshaw and Nasrin Rahimieh (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2010), 69-82; Farzaneh Milani, *Veils and Words: The Emerging Voices of Iranian Women Writers* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 127.

² Michael C. Hillmann highlights the confessional nature of Farrokhzad's poetry in 'An Autobiographical Voice: Forugh Farrokhzad,' in *Women's Autobiographies in Contemporary Iran*, ed. Afsaneh Najmabadi (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1990), 33-54.

³ Forugh Farrokhzad, 'The Lost One,' in *Farrokhzad: Bride of Acacias*, ed. Jascha Kessler and Amin Banani (Delmar, New York: Caravan Books, 1982), 129.

questions about the self are posed and ellipses are repeatedly used to create moments of reflection through the grammar of the text. This arrangement implies a dialogue between the speaker and the reflection perceived in the mirror.

The speaker's questions culminate in the final stanza of the poem:

Ah...yes...it's me...but useless now
"She" who was my self...now...is gone...gone
Crazily muttering over and over
"She" who was myself...which was she...which one?⁴

Here a rhetorical question and reflective ellipses are compounded with confusion between third and first person narration, reinforcing the speaker's inability to perceive, or construct, a consistent identity. The disconnect between the poetic persona and its reflection is therefore extended as the narrative perspective becomes fragmented and confused. Bahmany suggests that Farrokhzad employed mirror imagery as a tool for self-realization in poems where the poetic persona closely resembles Farrokhzad herself.⁵ Indeed, much of Farrokhzad's early poetry is understood to be closely linked to her own personal life, if not autobiographical.⁶ The intimacy implied by the confessional tone in 'The Lost One' might encourage such a reading. The poem thus articulates a process in which Farrokhzad as poet, and perhaps also as persona, relies upon the image of a mirror as a rhetorical device for self-realization.

In her discussion of mirrors in Farrokhzad's poetry, Bahmany alludes to the mirror imagery present in classical Persian literary traditions.⁷ Building upon this observation, Farrokhzad's attempts in 'The Lost One' to identify a poetic persona, particularly one so closely aligned with herself, though the image of a mirror could be read as an attempt by Farrokhzad to perceive herself in relation to historic Persian poetic traditions. Although Farrokhzad's use of mirror imagery is distinctive, it is also a traditional poetic trope through which she is able to negotiate her position as a young female poet working within an established patriarchal literary tradition.

Having demonstrated the centrality of mirror imagery in a poem representative of Farrokhzad's early work, I now turn to the image of an open window as an important motif in Farrokhzad's later poetry. This is most immediately demonstrated by Farrokhzad's own words during an interview in 1964, the same year that *Tavallodi Digar* was published. She stated:

Poetry for me is like a window that opens up by itself whenever I turn to it. I sit there, I look, I sing, I shout, I cry, I mix with the images of the trees, and I know that on the other side of the window there is a space, and someone hears.⁸

⁴ Farrokhzad, 'The Lost One,' 130.

⁵ Bahmany, 'Bewildered Mirror,' 70.

⁶ See Hillmann's discussion of an autobiographical voice in Farrokhzad's poetry, 'An Autobiographical Voice,' 45.

⁷ Bahmany, 'Bewildered Mirror,' 71.

⁸ Amin Banani, 'Introduction,' in *Bride of Acacias: Selected Poems of Forugh Farrokhzad*, ed. Jascha Kessler and Amin Banani (Delmar, New York: Caravan Books, 1982), 7.

Just as critics have characterised Farrokhzad's poetry as a mirror in its introspective nature, here Farrokhzad characterises her own poetry as an open window in its communicative function by acknowledging interaction with an outside world. Farrokhzad's statement thus suggests a transition away from confessional poetics prominent in her earlier poetry. Hillmann argues that Farrokhzad's later poetry articulates an increased concern with Iranian society and shifts away from a reductive focus upon the individual.⁹ The image of an open window in her later work seems indicative of this poetic progression.

Although window imagery is prominent in Farrokhzad's later poetry, the motif has received relatively little critical attention.¹⁰ For example, Bahmany acknowledges Farrokhzad's "oscillation between the mirror and the window" as poetic motifs, yet does not analyse the image of the window as an important signifier.¹¹ The poem 'Window,' from Farrokhzad's final collection *Iman Biavarim be Aghaze Fasle Sard (Let Us Believe in the Beginning of the Cold Season)* (1974), is perhaps the most explicit example of window imagery in her poetry. Here she describes, "A window for seeing/ A window for hearing," depicting social engagement with an outside world through the motif as the poem progresses.¹² Yet it is in Farrokhzad's fourth collection, *Tavallodi Digar*, that her use of window imagery is most pervasive. It is this collection that many identify as a critical moment signifying Farrokhzad's new poetic maturity, to the extent that her work is often divided and considered in two distinct phases: before and after *Tavallodi Digar*.¹³

The most well known example of window imagery within *Tavallodi Digar* is in 'The Conquest of the Garden.' In its discussion of contemporary Iranian society and assertive narratorial voice, many critics, such as Milani, cite the text as evidence of Farrokhzad's poetic evolution.¹⁴ In the fifth stanza the narratorial voice pronounces:

The talk is not of a fearful whisper in the dark
The talk is of day and open windows
and fresh air,
[...]
of a land sown with a different seed
of birth, evolution, and pride¹⁵

The commandingly coherent narrative voice contrasts with that of 'The Lost One.' Here "The talk," perhaps indicating Farrokhzad's poetry itself, is not confessional and her rejection of "a

⁹ Michael C. Hillmann, *A Lonely Woman: Forugh Farrokhzad and her Poetry*, (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers), 99.

¹⁰ For example see Farrokhzad, 'Those Days', 'Passing', 'On The Earth' and 'Another Birth' in Forugh Farrokhzad, *Another Birth: Selected Poems of Forugh Farrokhzad*, trans. Hasan Javadi and Susan Sallee, (Emeryville, California: Albany Press, 1981), 26, 30, 34, 62.

¹¹ See Bahmany, 'Bewildered Mirror,' 75.

¹² Farrokhzad, 'Window,' in *Bride of Acacias*, 105.

¹³ See Marta Simidchieva's discussion of this division in 'Men and Women Together: Love, Marriage and Gender in Forugh Farrokhzad's *Asir*,' in *Forugh Farrokhzad, Poet of Modern Iran*, ed. Dominic Parviz Brookshaw and Nasrin Rahimieh, (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2010), 20.

¹⁴ Milani, *Veils and Words*, 148.

¹⁵ Farrokhzad, 'The Conquest of the Garden,' *Another Birth*, 53.

fearful whisper” reads as a dismissal of hesitantly introspective persona evident in her earlier poetry. Most importantly Farrokhzad’s reference to an open window participates in a distinctly social discussion that constructs an, “elegant and engaging reappraisal of some of the deeply held norms of [Iranian] society.”¹⁶ This reappraisal is framed by her reference to window imagery at various other moments in the poem. For example, in the second stanza she states:

Everyone knows
That you and I saw the garden
From that tiny window, cold and stern¹⁷

Here the window is depicted as a point of access to the garden, an outside world indicative of Iranian society. In the final stanza Farrokhzad goes on to describe curtains “filled with a hidden gloom”.¹⁸ The curtains, threatening to block the view of the outside world and in turn the opportunity to participate in an idyllic exterior environment, are depicted as an oppressive barricade that might restrict the speaker to the domestic sphere.¹⁹ The window is constructed as an image of social liberation, contrasting with the restrictive introspection induced by mirror imagery in poems such as ‘The Lost One.’

Whereas the poetic persona in ‘The Lost One’ introspectively contemplates the self through the reflection in a mirror, in ‘The Conquest of the Garden’ the speaker regards society through the viewpoint of an open window. Farrokhzad thereby constructs a more outward-looking poetic perspective. As ‘The Lost One’ performs the self-reflective function of a mirror, ‘The Conquest of the Garden’ offers the extrospective function of an open window. This shift in Farrokhzad’s poetic perspective indicates a transition in narrative voice from an inward focus upon the self to engagement with others and a progression from confessional to socially engaged poetics.

A further striking example of the window imagery in *Tavallodi Digar* is provided in ‘O Bejewelled Land.’ In contrast with ‘The Lost One,’ this poem presents a victorious celebration of a fixed identity. The poem begins:

I did it
I got myself registered
dressed myself up in an ID card with a name
and my existence was distinguished by a number
So long live 678, issued from precinct 5,
resident of Tehran
Now my mind is completely at ease
[...]
With utmost joy

¹⁶ Milani, *Veils and Words*, 148.

¹⁷ Farrokhzad, ‘The Conquest of the Garden,’ 52.

¹⁸ Farrokhzad, ‘The Conquest of the Garden,’ 53.

¹⁹ Dominic Parviz Brookshaw notes the restrictive nature of features such as curtains or shutters often placed in front of windows in Farrokhzad’s poetry. See ‘Places of Confinement, Liberation, and Decay: The Home and the Garden in the Poetry of Forugh Farrokhzad,’ in *Forugh Farrokhzad, Poet of Modern Iran*, ed. Dominic Parviz Brookshaw and Nasrin Rahimieh, (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2010), 36.

I walked to the window and fervently, six-hundred
seventy-eight times, drew into my breast
air grown thick
with the dust of dung and the stench of garbage and urine
And at the bottom of six-hundred seventy-eight IOU's,
atop six-hundred seventy-eight applications, I've written
Forugh Farrokhzad.²⁰

Here the speaker is self-confident in its pronounced first person narration. The statement “I got myself registered/ dressed myself up” articulates a cohesive self-certainty that contrasts with the fragmented persona in ‘The Lost One.’ Significantly, this speaker is secure in an identity that has been bestowed by “precinct 5” rather than the reflective process of self-realization offered by a mirror. The speaker’s identity has been confirmed as a “resident of Tehran,” thus implicated in the public sphere and structures of Iranian society. Furthermore, this identity is indicated by the number “678,” emphasising the speaker’s identity as one of many. It reduces the focus upon the individual and implies a collective sense of identity. The poetic persona is at ease with this identity, and the window in this scene offers a moment of self-congratulatory celebration. Through the window the speaker breathes in the air of the outside world. In this instance the exterior world does not offer idyllic scenery as in ‘The Conquest of the Garden,’ yet the “dust of dung and the stench of garbage and urine” provide the speaker with a further opportunity to engage with social realities. The IOU’s and the applications that the speaker signs are additional indicators of social engagement, both means of textual communication with other social actors that promise to implicate the individual further into Iranian social systems.

Brookshaw argues that by the 1960s Farrokhzad was “primarily concerned with broader, human issues which affected all members of her society and with the life of the Iranian nation as a whole.”²¹ Yet ‘O Bejewelled Land’ is a poem intimately connected to Farrokhzad’s personal identity and experiences, a connection that is made explicit when she refers to her own name in the text. In so doing the poem locates Farrokhzad’s sense of self within the wider context of Iranian society and reaffirms a shift in her poetics from a restrictively confessional mode to an increasingly social discourse of the self. In an introduction to a collection of her poems Hasan Javadi and Susan Sallee offer a nuanced reading of Farrokhzad’s poetic development. They argue that her later poetry provides “a broader view where self-exploration is conducted through the simultaneous examination of the surrounding world [...] an understanding of self through the perception and confrontation of larger realities.”²² The image of an open window that becomes prominent in Farrokhzad’s later poetry introduces an outward-looking perspective that allows the poet to consider conceptions of the self as part of a broader social framework. Thus the open window stands as the threshold between the individual and Iranian society.

This paper has demonstrated the centrality of mirror imagery and the open window in selected poems indicative of different moments in Farrokhzad’s writing career. I have argued

²⁰ Farrokhzad, ‘O Bejewelled Land,’ *Another Birth*, 56.

²¹ Brookshaw, ‘Places of Confinement,’ 52.

²² Hasan Javadi and Susan Sallee, ‘Introduction,’ in Forugh Farrokhzad, *Another Birth: Selected Poems of Forugh Farrokhzad*, trans. Hasan Javadi and Susan Sallee (Emeryville, California: Albany Press, 1981), 7.

that in the movement from mirror imagery to the motif of an open window it is possible to trace her poetic development and shift from introspection to an extrospective and socially engaged poetry. Yet I have also suggested that this transition does not signify a complete rejection of self-contemplation, rather it offers a reappraisal of the self in conjunction with contemporary Iranian society. In so doing, I have demonstrated that considering these motifs illuminates wider critical discussion of Farrokhzad's poetic development.

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*Iron Fists and Inked Fingers: Authoritarianism, Democracy, and
Social Science Definitions in the Middle East*
by Brian Watts

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It is no secret that social scientists have sought to emphasize the differences between democratic and authoritarian modes of rule. However, simply creating a distinction does not solve the problem. In some cases, the attempts to discern between democratic and authoritarian regimes have only confused the topic and have had little positive impact on our understanding of the issue. Conversely, this same difference has yielded some insight into the inner-workings and logic behind authoritarian and democratic systems. In this paper, I will attempt to show several differences in various attempts to define democracy, authoritarianism and democratization. As such, I will show where social science has helped and where it has fallen short in analyzing such systems of rule. I will also explain how authoritarianism has impacted the Middle East in the decades preceding the Arab uprisings. Attention will be given to Egypt, particularly how authoritarianism has influenced the government and the extent to which it has survived.

Social scientists have been enthralled with comparing and contrasting democratic and authoritarian elements. In addition to their interest in the differences between democracy and authoritarianism, scholars have been captivated by the way in which once autocratic states have changed into democratic ones. This phenomenon has occurred in three “waves” since the nineteenth century. The third wave of democratization began in the 1970s and its results seemed to affirm the claim that democracy, though once viewed as an “extremist” idea, presents the best model for political decision making.¹

Brynen et al. argue that decolonization and other post-World War II efforts that shaped the second wave of democratization ended up being beneficial to authoritarian systems. They also stress the fact that the third wave of democratization did not occur on a global scale. The third wave’s impact was especially weak in Asia and Africa. Regardless, during this period the old authoritarian regimes rebranded and altered themselves into a semi-democratic mold; this reaped a new hybrid regime type that fused pluralism and electoral advancements with previous authoritarian notions, particularly the notion that those who were in power were deeply entrenched and untouchable from the general citizenry. However, this main form of political change that is seen vis-à-vis the third wave went largely unnoticed in the Middle East.²

¹ Charles W. Kegley Jr., *World Politics: Trend and Transformation*, 12th ed., (Belmont: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009), 80.

² Rex Brynen et al., *Beyond the Arab Spring: Authoritarianism & Democratization in the Arab World*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2012), 4.

Initially, Brynen et al.'s notion seems outlandish, claiming that authoritarian regimes in the Middle East did not use the means of the newly formed hybrid regimes to increase their levels of supposed democracy. But Brynen et al. backtrack and claim that the essential political processes of the region did in fact change. What is more is that they eventually support the claim that the persistence of authoritarianism in the Middle East can be attributed to what Heydemann calls "authoritarian upgrading."³

Heydemann asserts that regimes have implemented modifications to their system of governance as a result of demands for economic liberalization and the desire to incorporate Middle Eastern markets into the global economy. Specifically, authoritarian Arab regimes have recently increased the public's access to the Internet and new communication technologies that had previously been censored and heavily regulated by the state.⁴ It seems that, in doing so, it confuses the role of authoritarianism in the Middle East; the regime is merely attempting to avoid any civil unrest that may jeopardize its power. This idea is underscored by Van Inwegen, who claims that revolution is most likely to occur when the state is exclusive, repressive, patrimonial and dependent on foreign benevolence. He asserts that revolution is very improbable when a state is strong, inclusive, embodies liberal democratic characteristics and is bureaucratic.⁵ As a result, it seems like the Arab regimes began making new technologies available to their publics in an effort to reduce citizen disenfranchisement, thus strengthening the regime. Conversely, if a democratic system starts restricting its citizens' liberties, it runs the risk of becoming an "illiberal democracy." This is particularly plausible in the era of "post-Islamism."⁶

Heydemann also argues that authoritarian upgrading requires a transmogrification of authoritarian power in such a way that allows for the regime to both accommodate and control the social, economic, and political milieu.⁷ Heydemann specifically refers to five key facets of authoritarian upgrading, which include: containing civil societies, managing political disputes, reaping the gains made by enacting economic reforms, regulating technologies used in communication, and expanding international relationships and links.⁸ He also underscores the fact that repression at the hand of an authoritarian regime will come at a cost. Mainly, it will open up the regime, and perhaps the larger region, to international scrutiny and criticism. In echoing Van Inwegen, repression will also only further disillusion and alienate the population. It will also increase the influence and activity of the international community. All of these factors can potentially play a role in creating an environment conducive to revolutionary activity.⁹

Heydemann delves further into his notion of authoritarian upgrading by stating that the upgrading is informed by "authoritarian learning." According to the idea of "authoritarian learning," autocratic governments learn from each other because of their

³ Ibid.

⁴ Steven Heydemann, "Upgrading Authoritarianism in the Arab World," Brookings Analysis Paper, no. 13, October 2007, 1.

⁵ Patrick Van Inwegen, *Understanding Revolution*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2011), 55.

⁶ Asef Bayat, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*, 2nd ed., (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 311.

⁷ Heydemann, "Upgrading Authoritarianism in the Arab World." Brookings Analysis Paper, 1.

⁸ Ibid., 5.

⁹ Van Inwegen, *Understanding Revolution*, 50; 55.

tendency to have similar or shared experiences. He further claims that the Middle East largely sidestepped the so-called third wave due to its periphery status.¹⁰ I believe that Heydemann's argument for "authoritarian learning" is valid and illuminates the democracy-authoritarian literature and delineations.

Nevertheless, during the third wave, the Middle East seemed to play an important role in U.S. foreign policy, specifically regarding the growth of neoliberalism. For example, the Iranian Revolution and subsequent hostage crisis took place in 1979 to 1981; the same year, 1981, Anwar Sadat of Egypt was assassinated by Ayman al-Zawahiri's group, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, which propelled militant Islamism to the fore as a realistic vehicle of opposition to the Western-influenced and "non-Islamic" states within the Middle East. Thus, Heydemann's statement that the third wave bypassed the Middle East because the Arab regimes were outliers has not been fully qualified.

Nevertheless, the tendency for Middle Eastern regimes to engage in authoritarian upgrading and authoritarian learning, which has resulted in the hybrid form of authoritarian frameworks with allusions to democratization and freedom, has placed the Arab dictatorships at the forefront of global trends and foreign policies for more than a decade.¹¹ The hybrid-authoritarian systems that have emerged in the Middle East use traditional methods known to authoritarian systems, such as coercion, surveillance, corruption and nepotism. It then combines these authoritarian indicators with the results of autocratic rulers reacting to the increasing significance of democratization and a global, open economy.¹²

Blaydes and Lo offer a newer analysis of authoritarianism and democracy in the Middle East. They grapple with discovering under what conditions would the Arab uprisings transform into a fully-formed "fourth wave" of democratization. Further, they posit that in order for authoritarian regimes to make a complete transition to democracy, two conditions need to be in place. First, there needs to be uncertainty and ambiguity concerning the preferences of the landed elite. Second, the regime needs to have engaged in repressive activities, placing it above the baseline for determining state repression.¹³

The Arab uprisings have shown the crucial role the citizenry can play in inciting political change. Blaydes and Lo extend Przeworski's influential model. Przeworski created a paradigm that examines the relations between two actors, the "mobilizers" within a civil society and the "liberalizers" within the government framework. The liberalizers are the most pertinent in terms of authoritarianism. Their goal is to alleviate social tensions while buttressing their position of power within the regime. This model is extended when the liberalizers make the initial move. Doing so gives them the ability to decide whether to establish an open or closed system of government and political activity.¹⁴

Furthermore, democracy can transpire when regime liberalizers who favor democracy ensure that such democratic principles are then practiced and used effectively.

¹⁰ Ibid., 2.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 3.

¹³ Lisa Blaydes and James Lo, "One man, one vote, one time? A model of democratization in the Middle East," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 24, no. 1 (2012): 110.

¹⁴ Ibid., 116-17.

According to Blaydes' and Lo's extension of Przeworski's model, democracy is theoretically possible anywhere, it just needs to have the support of the liberalizers in the regime who will in turn apply it to their given political atmosphere.¹⁵ Indeed they are right that if the pieces fell into place correctly, it could be felicitous for liberalization and the growth of democracy. I believe that if Blaydes and Lo were able to provide more examples in their case study, it would give their theory more traction. On the other hand, their theory extension is still young and future case studies may further illuminate the issue. Nevertheless, Przeworski, Blaydes, and Lo do make the point that democracy is theoretically feasible within any government, even authoritarian ones.

Achcar provides additional insight to democracy in the Middle East. According to him, Middle Eastern democracy is measured on a scale of patrimonialism and neopatrimonialism. Patrimonialism occurs when an absolute, authoritarian power is able to function in concert with familial and primordial ties. As a result, the patrimonial networks co-opt the state institutions. The military becomes the rulers' own "Praetorian Guard," who is loyal only to the rulers, not the state. Similarly, the economy and bureaucracy come under direct control of the rulers and the patrimonial networks.¹⁶ Neopatrimonialism is different in that it is "an institutionalized form of republican authoritarian power – in the sense that the exercise of power under neopatrimonial conditions has, in Weberian terms, a significant 'rational-legal' bureaucratic dimension."¹⁷ This provides the rulers with even more control of the state's institutions and, not surprisingly, results in a greater level of corruption than a patrimonial system. It is quite easy for neopatrimonial systems to become rentier states, where the desire to include one's cronies is accentuated even further.¹⁸ The patrimonial-neopatrimonial scale in the Middle East will need to be reassessed once more by scholars in the coming years. Such examinations may shape the democratic argument as it relates to the Middle East.

I have provided an overview of some of the predominant social science discussions regarding democracy and authoritarianism in the Middle East. In doing so, I have attempted to provide my own analysis of the scholars and their particular arguments. I will now illustrate, on a broader scale, several ways in which the distinctions between democracy and authoritarianism both help and confuse the debate.

In terms of helping advance the debate, it seems that from the perspective of the West, that the distinctions between democracy and authoritarianism indicates which states need to be watched more carefully and potentially altered. In other words, defining democracy and authoritarianism helps the international community (namely the West) assess which states are in need of attention. This attention could range from foreign aid to peacekeeping efforts, to election monitoring, to helping citizens organize in an attempt to increase their rights and freedoms.

¹⁵ Ibid., 134.

¹⁶ Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, 2 vols., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), in Gilbert Achcar, *The People Want: A Radical Exploration of the Arab Uprising*, trans. G. M. Goshgarian, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 58.

¹⁷ Achcar, *The People Want: A Radical Exploration of the Arab Uprising*, 58.

¹⁸ Ibid., 59.

Conversely, and in a more macabre fashion, the distinctions help the dictators and other Middle Eastern authoritarian regimes have a sense of identity and commonality with one another. The Middle Eastern dictators are all in similar situations in terms of governance and how the West treats them and, sometimes, antagonizes them. Yet, the West, in all its “democratic glory,” has a tendency to prop up dictatorships if it is in their best interests; this can be interpreted by states acting as states and not individuals.¹⁹

The distinction between democracy and authoritarianism also has obfuscated the debate. As mentioned above, distinctions can blur the role and stance of the U.S. and other Western states. Sadly, this is a global phenomenon that has taken place in numerous other states and is not unique to the Middle East. Another confusing factor of defining democracy and authoritarianism occurs when authoritarian states hold elections. As history has shown time and time again in various countries, incumbent dictators have a tendency to win in landslides, usually amassing well over ninety percent of the votes. How then is the West to respond? The autocratic states seem to be utilizing democratic functions in holding elections. On the other hand, these “elections” are an offense to true democratic elections. This is a hard pill to swallow and there may not be a “cut and dried” answer. However, it is nonetheless significant that authoritarian regimes have used such attempts as rigged elections to seem democratic. This reflects the notion that the dictators must think that appearing democratic and attempting to appease the West is in their best interests.

Authoritarianism is no stranger to Egyptian history; yet through the Arab uprisings it has been questioned by Egyptians. Military figures have played an important role in Egyptian governance in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Jamal ‘Abd al-Nasir and Anwar Sadat were two rulers who were former military officers, who attempted to promote nationalism and non-alignment policies within Egypt from the 1950s to the early 1980s.²⁰ However, they were heavily influenced by the West and incorporated neoliberal economic policies. This connection with Western economics resulted in the growth of the Egyptian elite class while widening the gap between the poor. Such Western influence led the militant Islamist group, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, to believe that Sadat was not Muslim and should be replaced with an Islamic leader who would rule Egypt accordingly. Sadat was assassinated in 1981.²¹

Following the death of Sadat, Hosni Mubarak, who also had a military background, came to power and entrenched himself in authoritarian rule. His government lasted three decades and came to an end in 2011.²² Mubarak’s approach was more conciliatory as compared to Sadat, whose suppression of the Islamists resulted in their demonization of his rule. Yet, throughout Mubarak’s tenure, Islamist groups continued to be active and campaign. After Mubarak’s rise to power, Islamists began targeting tourists and resort areas.²³

¹⁹ The main cases I am considering here were the longstanding agreements between Mubarak’s Egypt and Yemen, both under Salih and Hadi, in terms of aid, military support, and drone use.

²⁰ BBC News, “Egypt Profile,” last modified February 17, 2015, accessed May 13, 2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13313370>.

²¹ *The Power of Nightmares: The Rise of the Politics of Fear*, DVD, directed by Adam Curtis (2004; United Kingdom: British Broadcasting Corporation, 2007).

²² BBC News, “Egypt Profile.”

²³ Ibid.

The potential civil unrest caused by the Islamist groups reached a turning point in 1993. Not only did Mubarak face guerilla violence at the hands of the country's Islamists, but also strife among political opponents who called for democratic reforms; for Egypt, the last true expression of democratic political selection was in 1950.²⁴ Mubarak waged a campaign to repress the Islamists. Although they were unsuccessful, Islamists attempted to assassinate Mubarak in 1995, likely because of his crackdown; this mirrors Sadat's situation in the 1980s.

In an attempt to appear more democratic than Mubarak's regime actually was, a multicandidate election was held in 2005, a first in Egypt's political process. However, the result was less than democratic as the dictator and incumbent, Mubarak, won in an election that was known more for low turnout and accusations of irregularities, than true democracy.

Despite the regime's attempts to liquidate the Islamist groups, they still posed a threat; this threat compounded by the regime's disenfranchisement of the citizenry via repression, and the result of Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution, led to mass protests.²⁵ Despite attempts to retain power, Mubarak resigned on February 11, 2011 and handed political power over to Egypt's Supreme Council of the Armed Forces.²⁶

After a series of semi-democratic processes, the Muslim Brotherhood, in a surprising move, flexed its political muscle and its candidate, Muhammad Morsi, who did not have a military background, was elected as Egypt's new president in 2012. Unfortunately, Egypt's dream of becoming a democratic country crumbled as Morsi's government began to display authoritarian traits. He dismissed the defense minister and chief of staff and deprived the military of its voice in composing a new constitution. Additionally, Morsi decided to strip the judiciary of its ability to act as a check on his presidential decisions. These authoritarian moves, combined with mounting civil unrest and militant attacks, increased the stress on Morsi's government.²⁷

Unrest boiled over and in the summer of 2013, Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood were forcefully removed from office by the military. Despite an interim presidency, the real hero post-Morsi was Egyptian military and army General 'Abd al-Fatah al-Sisi.²⁸ Al-Sisi quickly rose in popularity and he retired from the army. On May 29, 2014 he won a landslide victory becoming Egypt's new president, the third out of the last four who were former military members.²⁹

Throughout Egypt's modern history, authoritarianism has remained seemingly constant. Although nationalism became a dominant theme in the 1950s, the regime maintained its vast power. Sadat and Mubarak both attempted to brutally repress the

²⁴ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "Hosni Mubarak," accessed May 16, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com.proxy.uchicago.edu/EBchecked/topic/395776/Hosni-Mubarak>.

²⁵ "BBC News, "Egypt Profile.," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "Hosni Mubarak."

²⁶ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "Hosni Mubarak."

²⁷ BBC News, "Egypt Profile."

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ BBC News, "Egypt election: Sisi secures landslide win," last modified May 29, 2014, accessed May 13, 2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-27614776>.

Islamists; this resulted in Sadat's death and the near death of Mubarak. However, Mubarak was able to preserve his position of power and thus further entrench himself in authoritarianism. Mubarak was very much a dictator and his sense of democracy was nothing more than a façade.

The Jasmine Revolution and the growing civil unrest created an environment ripe for revolution. The citizenry was suppressed and alienated and the regime was exclusivist and repressive. However, hope for freedom and democracy came crashing down as Morsi started to position himself as a new autocrat. Given the fact that al-Sisi was only recently an active duty army general and is in command of the country's government, I am leery of Egypt's future.

Although I want to be optimistic and hopeful, I believe that regimes and states act as such and do not act as individuals. I think that authoritarianism in Egypt will continue to linger and thrive. Thus, though it may seem to be a negative view, I believe that Egypt's government will remain an authoritarian regime. It has been such for many decades and, given the way the citizens and military acted toward Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood, I do not believe that Egypt is ready for a democratic government. However the current situation in Egypt remains extremely fluid and only time will tell how al-Sisi will shape the country and its future, or if his power will even last.

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Drug Policy Reform Failure in Morocco

by Hannah Ridge

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Cannabis, one of the main crops in Morocco's impoverished Rif region, has great economic potential for Morocco. That potential, however, is limited by it being illegal domestically and internationally. The Moroccan parliament is considering reforms to the cannabis restrictions. Under the proposed system, farmers could legally produce cannabis for sale to a government entity at a fixed and taxed price. The government would sell the cannabis to medicinal and industrial manufacturers. However, the proposed reforms will not reduce the economic disparity promoted by the cannabis market structure or end the illegal cannabis trade because they do not allow for international drug trade or match the economic return of the illegal market. Alternative reforms that better address the Moroccan situation are possible, but they are politically more challenging. This paper will consider the European-Moroccan drug market, address the problems with the proposed reform, and suggest alternative reforms that would decrease the illegal trade and combat the poverty of the Rif.

The international drug economy is expansive. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the illicit drug market was valued at \$322 billion at the retail level (USD 2003).¹ The largest market segment is cannabis, which has a retail market of \$113 billion (USD 2003).² Despite that fact, drugs are almost universally illegal.³ The fact that cannabis is a controlled substance inescapably influences the cannabis market. Law enforcement influences the localities and opportunities of the market. Thus, illegality drives up the prices through the pressure it places on supply: "the important economic value of drugs can be largely attributed to the simple fact [that] they are illegal."⁴ Were drugs legal, the producers, suppliers and buyers could negotiate prices and supply without the punitive shadow of law enforcement, thereby bringing down prices.

Morocco's domestic relationship with cannabis and its position in the international market make it a good way to evaluate the economic relationship between cannabis consumers, traffickers and producers. Morocco is the world's largest producer and exporter

¹ Costa, Antonio Maria. *World Drug Report 2005*. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. 2005. 17.

² Costa, 17; Pietschmann, Thomas and John Walker. "Estimating Illicit Financial Flows Resulting from Drug Trafficking and Other Transitional Organized Crimes." United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. 2011. 31.

³ Johnson, Bruce D. and Luther Elliott. "The 'Flexible' Response of Cannabis Markets to Enforcement/Interdiction Policy: An International Review of market Transformations and Elasticities." Paper presented at the Second Annual Conference of the International Society for the Study of Drug Policy, Lisbon, Portugal, April 3-4 2008. 2.

⁴ Boekhout van Solinge, Tim. "Drug use and drug trafficking in Europe." *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie*. 89(1) (1998): 100.

of cannabis resin.⁵ Over half of the hashish produced in the world and 80% of the hashish consumed in Europe derives from Morocco, which is where Morocco exports 80% of its cannabis.⁶ Cannabis is “not considered a drug” in northern Morocco, where it is used for heritage and medical reasons.⁷ The government of Morocco does not measure the rate of use, but some estimates suggest that up to 10% of Moroccan adults use cannabis regularly.⁸

Morocco is party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention and the 1961 UN Single Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol, and it has signed cooperative agreements with Spain, France, Portugal, and Italy to combat drug trade.⁹ In accordance with these agreements, Morocco has criminalized growing cannabis. It is punished by one to four months in prison and fines starting at 800 dirhams (approximately \$85).¹⁰ Penalties for possession and trafficking are even steeper. According to a British government travel advisory, “[t]he penalties for possession of even small amounts of drugs are severe – up to 10 years in prison, a heavy fine and confiscation of your vehicle.”¹¹ The maximum punishment is 30 years in prison, plus fines from \$20,000-80,000. Ten to fifteen years is the typical punishment for major drug traffickers in Morocco.¹² These are not idle threats. In the north, 59% of users have been incarcerated for simple usage, and 83% have been victims of police violence.¹³ In this way, international pressure drives harsh punishments against the cultivators, who are poor farmers, as well as the traffickers, who commercialize recreational drugs.

Throughout the Moroccan government’s complicated history with cannabis criminalization, the production communities have not recognized anti-cannabis regulations. The Rif contains extremely poor communities. GDP per capita is 50% of the national average with the country’s highest poverty rates. The people of the Rif live in harsh conditions on rugged terrain with poor soil.¹⁴ As such, the farmers seek to produce what they can, despite international or local law. The Rifians assert that cannabis is the only plant that has regularly grown in that region since the 15th century. At the end of the 19th century, Sultan Moulay Hassan reportedly authorized the cultivation of cannabis in five villages of the Rif region, the “historic” zones of cultivation.¹⁵ The French and Spanish protectorates

⁵ Gamella, Juan Francisco and Maria Luisa Jimenez. “Multinational export–import ventures: Moroccan hashish into Europe through Spain.” *European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction Monographs*. 2008. 261

Leggett, Ted, and Thomas Pietschmann. “Global cannabis cultivation and trafficking.” *European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction Monographs*. 2008. 189.

⁶ Leggett, 191; Gamella, 261; Abijou, Ali. “Cannabis: Rencontre inédite des cultivateurs.” *L’économiste*. 04 April 2014. Most cannabis consumed in Europe is consumed as hashish (Boekhout van Solinge, 101).

⁷ Kozlowski, Nina. “Drogues Maroc, Le Paradis Artificiel.” *Telquel*. 619. 9-15 May 2014.

⁸ Embassy of the United States. “2008 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report for Morocco.” *Key Reports*. 27 February 2009.

⁹ Embassy.

¹⁰ Lemaizi, Salaheddine. “Eradication ou légalisation?” *L’Observateur du Maroc*. 24 April 2014.

¹¹ “Morocco travel advice.” *Morocco. Gov.Uk*. 2014. <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/morocco/local-laws-and-customs>

¹² Embassy.

¹³ Kozlowski, 36

¹⁴ Karam, Souhail. “Morocco’s Marijuana Farms May Become Legal.” *Bloomberg Businessweek*. 01 August 2013. “Morocco seeks legalization of marijuana cultivation and exports.” *RTNews*. 05 December 2013.

¹⁵ These regions produce almost all cannabis in Morocco. In 2005, Chefchaouen produced 56%, Taounate 17%, Al-Hoceima 16%, and Tetouan 11%. (Gamella, 265; Leggett, 201). Larache had no significant

and King Mohammed V reportedly did not criminalize cannabis in those five historic villages for fear of angering the Rifians, whose area of Morocco was notoriously difficult to hold.¹⁶ The government contends that cannabis cultivation and consumption were criminalized after Morocco gained independence in 1954 with the *dahir* of 24 April 1954.¹⁷ Rifians assert that the king verbally exempted the historical zones of cultivation from his decree, which the government denies.¹⁸ Initially, to combat drug use, the government purchased and burned entire crops. This plan, however, was financially untenable and ultimately discontinued.¹⁹ Moroccan agricultural devastation in the 1960s spurred large-scale urbanization and emigration to Europe.²⁰ Farmers, including farmers in the impoverished Rif, relied increasingly on the few profitable crops. Cannabis production exploded in the 1970s and 1980s because of increased demand and liberalized drug laws in Europe.²¹ Domestic interdiction also started in the 1970s.²² In 1992, King Hassan II declared a War on Drugs, including anti-drug production programs, prosecution, and economic development efforts, which ultimately did not produce significant effects.²³ The War on Drugs also did not terminate the connections between Moroccan government officials and the drugs trade, despite the indictment or firing of civilian police officers, military police officers, judiciary members, and national security police.²⁴ The area devoted to drug cultivation increased twenty-fold between the 1980s and the 2000s.²⁵ According to parliamentary statistics, nearly 50,000 hectares of cannabis are in cultivation and more than one million Moroccans live on the proceeds, representing 60% of the villages in the area.²⁶

According to the United Nations Office against Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Moroccan growers send 38,000 tonnes of cannabis herb to mafias per year who resell it on European markets.²⁷ In 2003, Morocco produced 3,080 tonnes of hashish with a retail value of 12 billion Euros on 135,000 ha. The UNODC report, based solely on Moroccan government information, asserted that 760 tonnes were produced in 2011 on 47,500 ha.²⁸

cannabis cultivation due to the eradication campaign in summer 2005 (Gamella, 267). Chefchaouen used ¼ of its arable land for cannabis cultivation. The others used 3-10% of their arable land (Gamella, 267). In sum, they reached 27% of agricultural lands in the five provinces (Legget, 201).

¹⁶ Ravix, Anna. "Le Rif reste accro au kif." *Libération*. 29 April 2014; Chouvy, Pierre-Arnaud and Kenza Afsahi. "Hashish revival in Morocco." *International Journal of Drug Policy*. 25 (2014): 418.

¹⁷ Tchounand, Ristel. "Législation du cannabis au Maroc: L'Istiqlal dépose un projet de loi au parlement." *Ya Biladi*. 24 December 2013. "Morocco Considers Legalizing Cannabis." *TelQuel*. 27 October 2013.

¹⁸ Chouvy, 418.

¹⁹ Amar, Ali. "Comment le Maroc est devenu le royaume du cannabis." *Slate Afrique*. 17 October 2012.

²⁰ Amar.

²¹ Noakes, Greg. "Morocco Declares 'War on Drugs.'" *Maghreb Mirror. Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*. 56. June 1993. Chouvy, 418.

²² "Le kif ne tue pas, la faim si?": dans le Rif, la culture du cannabis reste vitale." *Aufaitmarac.com*. 05 June 2013.

²³ "Malgré l'illégalité, malgré la répression des cultivateurs, malgré toutes les tentatives de développement alternatif" (Ravix).

²⁴ Gamella, 270.

²⁵ Gamella, 265.

²⁶ Embassy; Ravix. 90-100,000 families participate in the cultivation (Gamell, 266-267; "Le kif") earning an average annual income of 20-40,000 dirhams per family (Mdidech; Lemaizi). Mdidech, Jaouad. "Maroc: La légalisation du cannabis de plus en plus probable." *La Vie Eco*. 02 June 2014.

²⁷ Ravix.

²⁸ Chouvy, 416

Based on seizure rates, however, European counter-narcotics police services estimated that 2,000-3,000 tonnes of hashish were produced in 2011,²⁹ suggesting that the Moroccan government's efforts have not crippled cannabis production.

The structure of drug markets disadvantages the supplier countries. The retail value of illegal drugs disguises the producers' income: "Of the total 'value-added' of the illicit drug industry, 76% is generated in the industrialized countries, 19% in developing countries and the rest in transition countries. Total producer income is, on average, 4% of the final retail value."³⁰ Of the billions worth of cannabis product drawn from Morocco each year, the peasant farmers glean only a fraction. For Morocco, the wholesalers account for \$10 billion, the big traffickers earn \$3 billion, and the growers receive about \$230 million.³¹ The farmers sell cannabis to intermediaries at 50-60 dh/kilo. The large dealers then transform the herb into hashish and sell it at 3,000-4,000 dh/kilo.³² The distribution price in Europe varies with location, especially by proximity to entrance points for cannabis. It ranges from, on average, 2.3 Euro/gram in Portugal to 12.5 Euro/gram in Norway.³³ Considering that *kif*, the cannabis variety of the Rif region, produces a 2-4.25% resin yield, the mark up is not inconsiderable. The cannabis hybrids that have been introduced from the Levant and Afghanistan, though, produce resin yields at an average of 5% but can be as high as 7%.³⁴ With those plants, the dealers who convert herb to resin earn a large profit. Estimates suggest farmers could increase their profits by about 66% if they converted the raw plant to resin themselves, instead of selling the raw plant and leaving that profit for the next rung up the ladder.³⁵ However, doing so increases the grower's risk of being reported to the police. As such, two-thirds of farmers sell the plants to middlemen unprocessed.³⁶ Thus, the majority of the illicit money is made by European distributors and intermediaries. Reforming policy to allow Moroccans to grow and sell their own product on an open market would allow them to profit more and keep the money out of the hands of drug trafficking organizations. However, as will be discussed, the currently contemplated reform does not allow such a market nor does it provide the legal funds necessary to combat poverty in the Rif.

The drug market between Morocco and Europe is inherently exploitative, allowing developing world populations to absorb legal risk while concentrating products and profits in Europe. Yes, the drug industry is the "backbone" of the local economy, creating income

²⁹ Chouvy, 419.

³⁰ Costa, 130.

³¹ El Ghissassi, Hakim. "Les nouveaux risques strategiques: Le Maroc, un 'Etat sous influence' de la drogue." *L'economiste*. 05 October 2005. The global market follows the same pattern: "The global market for cannabis resin was estimated at the production level to amount to some EUR 0.6 billion, at the wholesale level to some EUR 10 billion and at the retail level to some EUR 27 billion in 2003." (Leggett, 206).

³² Kabbaj, Marouane. "La nouvelle révolte du kif dans le Rif." *Maroc Hebdo Press*. 01 February 2013.

³³ Gamella, 273 Prices can also be greatly influenced by quality. According to Johnson, low-grade legal cannabis in Netherlands costs 2-3 Euro/gram, whereas high-end costs 10 Euro/gram (13).

³⁴ Chouvy, 421.

³⁵ Gamella, 267. The estimate is by Pascual Moreno, who assumes 3.5% yield with 52 dh/kilo for herb and 2,500 dh/kilo for resin. His number are more in line with other price points, which is why this paper uses his figure. The United Nations Office of Drug and Crime in 2005 estimated that profits would increase by only 13%. However, that report assumes resin yields of 2.82% and 35 dh/kilo for herb and 1,400 dh/kilo for resin, which are lower than other estimates, suggesting the profit estimate is low as well.

³⁶ Gamella, 267.

and employment for thousands who would otherwise not have it.³⁷ However, that fact does not obviate the negative aspects. The growers are working for transnational drug networks headquartered in Europe, mostly in France and Spain.³⁸ Distribution in Europe is usually conducted by European locals or by local networks of expatriates from the supply country.³⁹ In Spain, the primary import point for Moroccan cannabis, most distributors are Spaniards. Moroccan immigrants work in small smuggling and wholesale operations in which the amount of resin is less than 100 kilos. As the smuggled quantity increases, so does the proportion of non-Moroccans. French, Dutch and British nationals were “commonly involved” in smuggling operations moving one to five tonnes of resin. South Americans were “progressively associated” with Spaniards and Moroccans in operations smuggling more than five tonnes of resin.⁴⁰ Money produced by the drug trade is then largely reinvested in Europe, not in the development of the Rif communities.⁴¹ In fact, the exporters have a vested interest in not improving the economic situation of the cultivating communities. The superior economies in Europe give the traffickers an advantage over the cultivators.⁴² The economic situation keeps the sellers needing the foreign buyers on the buyers’ terms. Unlike the Moroccan agricultural market for alternative crops, traffickers can guarantee a price to those willing to supply illegal cannabis.⁴³ Declines in the local economy and local agricultural capacity further feed the drug-production cycle by encouraging growers to look to illegal markets with set prices.⁴⁴ Additionally, the contraband cannabis is 12 to 46 times more profitable than cereal crops, as Europeans will pay more for drugs than Moroccans can pay for foodstuffs. As such, the farmers have an economic incentive to replace food crops and forestland with cannabis,⁴⁵ an incentive that weighs particularly on the impoverished Rifians.

The system is still more exploitative considering the skewed punishment across the market. As mentioned above, cannabis is nominally illegal globally. However, the law is not enforced against the European consumers who created the market: “Regardless, [*sic*] of the laws on the books, most European (and ANZAC) countries have developed enforcement policies that often release cannabis smokers (possessors) at the street level without arrest, or do so soon after arrest.”⁴⁶ Instead, it is the Moroccan suppliers who are at risk. Moroccan police are believed to have warrants for 48,000 Moroccans connected with the drugs trade.⁴⁷

³⁷ Van der Veen, Hans T, “The International Drug Complex - The Intertwined Dynamics of International Crime, Law Enforcement and the Flourishing Drug Economy” *Internationaler Drogenhandel und gesellschaftliche Transformation* Deutscher Universitätsverlag: 2000, 153.

³⁸ Embassy.

³⁹ Allen, 6.

⁴⁰ Gamella, 276, 278. Findings based on smuggling and drug arrests in Spain.

⁴¹ Gamella, 268.

⁴² “The 14km of the Strait of Gibraltar, and the frontier around the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, make up one of the deepest socio-economic and cultural divides on the planet.” (Gamella, 264) In 2013, the GDP per capita in Spain was 9.4 times that of Morocco. France’s was 13.3 times that of Morocco (World Bank). The Netherland’s was 15.3 times that of Morocco. Considering the internally relative poverty in the Rif region - 50% of the average GDP per capita - this contrast is even starker. World Bank, “GDP Per Capita,” *Data*, 2014, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>.

⁴³ Allen, 8.

⁴⁴ Allen, 8.

⁴⁵ Gamella, 267.

⁴⁶ Johnson, 14.

⁴⁷ Ravix.

In 2008 alone, 28,896 people were arrested for drug related offenses.⁴⁸ The harm to Morocco is compounded by the costs of law enforcement and legal systems that indirectly tax on the law-abiding populations and the law-enforcing state, costs which are not present in the European states that decline to enforce their own laws and international agreements.⁴⁹ Thus, the risk disproportionately applies to the Moroccan suppliers, despite the supposedly global illegality of possession, production, and consumption.

The illicit funds injected into the economic and political systems then wreak further havoc when they are laundered.⁵⁰ Some of the money is concealed by legitimate businesses owned by exporters: “Hashish exporters are involved in large Moroccan firms in agribusiness, fishing, transportation, and import-export operations.”⁵¹ Those businesses then become corrupted by their involvement in the criminal enterprise. The money laundering operations are not confined to Morocco: “For the intermediaries, who make the highest profits per person, there is hardly a doubt that it is through the banking system of rich countries, the United States and Western Europe, that the money is laundered.”⁵² Morocco also has a vast informal sector and a large remittance economy, which facilitates money laundering and moving illegally-acquired funds internationally.⁵³ The informal sector is equivalent to 44% of Morocco’s GDP.⁵⁴ Remittances were valued at more than \$7 billion in 2007, roughly 9% of GDP.⁵⁵ These remittances include illegally-acquired funds. Though European banks remain the most common storage facilitates for criminal funds, Moroccan banks also receive funds from Moroccans engaged in crime abroad, including the diaspora members in the drug trade.⁵⁶ Such large unregulated sectors facilitate illicit cash flows and create opportunities to launder drug money. Upon entering the legal economy, the illegal money skews the trading and investment patterns in the community, manipulating the supply and demand and concentrating capital-intensive ventures and resources with those engaged in the drug trade.⁵⁷ Money laundering promotes the continuation of poor ventures, as the investors are more concerned with avoiding legal detection and sanction than the strength of the business or commodity in which it invests.⁵⁸ The drug money places economic strain on those not in the drug trade by increasing the income expectation of the local market and giving advantage to those willing or able to engage in illegal activity. Moreover, it allows the government to ignore the poverty that is being alleviated by the drug market, permitting

⁴⁸ Embassy. 1,200 people, including 600 foreigners, were arrested for international drug trafficking. One was an American, who was sentenced with two Moroccans accomplices. The others include growers, mules, users, and other network members. NB: These numbers are not restricted to cannabis.

⁴⁹ Khaled, Alasmari, “The Effect of Illicit Trade in Narcotics on Global Economy,” *Annals of Faculty of Economics*, 1(1): 2013, 26.

⁵⁰ This consideration notes and exempts the fact that the drug economy includes “significant ‘re-investment’” in the trafficking system (Pietschmann, 10).

⁵¹ Gamella, 269.

⁵² “Pour les intermédiaires, qui font les profits les plus élevés par personne, il ne fait guère de doute que c’est à travers le système bancaire des pays riches, Etats-Unis et Europe de l’Ouest, que l’argent est blanchi.” (El Ghissassi)

⁵³ Embassy.

⁵⁴ “IMF: Lebanon’s informal economy 30 percent of GDP,” *The Daily Star*, 02 November 2011, 4.

⁵⁵ Embassy.

⁵⁶ Van Duyne, Petrus C. “Crime-money and financial conduct.” *Research Handbook on Money Laundering*. Edited by Brigitte Unger and Daan van der Linde. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013. 247; Pietschmann, 44.

⁵⁷ Khaled, 26

⁵⁸ Pietschmann, 11

the illicit funds to ameliorate the poverty. In the Moroccan case, the illegal drug economy is tied to a lack of government funds. Lacking state financial support, the Rifians turned governmental neglect to economic opportunity by participating in the illegal narcotics trade that would provide some jobs and financing to the impoverished community. These harms could be reduced with effective policy reform; however, the necessary reforms are unlikely to occur. The injection of illicit funds negatively impacts the Moroccan economy, creating ripples of negative by-product from satisfying the European drug demand.

This system is still more insidious because, even if the drugs or drug money were not problematic, the drug market facilitates greater evils. As there is no legal recourse or oversight in illegal enterprises, illegal markets are inherently more violent,⁵⁹ though the need to avoid detection discourages open violence.⁶⁰ Government pressure further increases the risk of violence as networks compete with each other and resist police.⁶¹ Nonetheless, cannabis is a “comparatively low violence” drug.⁶² Participants may attempt financial accommodation, temporary alliances, and other means to avoid violence in the system.⁶³ Assuming that those options control the system’s violence, a greater issue for the cannabis trade remains – the illicit networks in which it participates and what they facilitate. The drug market is easily connected with other crimes: “The creation of networks and mechanisms for supplying weapons, or trading in diamonds, tropical hardwoods or endangered species, can readily be combined with or adapted to trading in drugs. Illicit means of payment, associated with these forms of trade, or with embargo-breaking, fit readily with money-laundering.”⁶⁴ Moroccan cannabis resin trafficking networks are expanding into cocaine and heroin trafficking using the routes developed to move hashish.⁶⁵ Cannabis growers can even trade their product for cocaine or heroin for use or arbitrage.⁶⁶ Cocaine’s higher profitability raises the stakes of trafficking and increases the risk of violence in networks running through Morocco.⁶⁷ The drug barons, in addition to their possible direct violence, can become locally powerful in legitimate governance systems. West African case studies show that populations will support those who create economic development in the region, despite their criminality.⁶⁸ Traffickers could become preferred to or part of the recognized government system of Morocco. These threats expand still further the harms perpetrated by the illegality of cannabis trade. Creating legitimate networks for the sale of cannabis could lessen these harms in averting their adoption by other criminal elements, but the reform currently contemplated by the Moroccan Parliament is unlikely to affect these dangers.

⁵⁹ Friman, H.R. “Drug markets and the selective use of violence.” *Crime, Law and Social Change*. 52 (2009): 286; Andreas, Peter and Joel Wallman, “Illicit Markets and Violence: What is the Relationship?”, *Crime, Law and Social Change*. 52 (2009): 228.

⁶⁰ Williams, Phil, “Illicit markets, weak states and violence: Iraq and Mexico,” *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 52 (2009):324-5.

⁶¹ Friman, 286.

⁶² Andreas, 226.

⁶³ Friman, 286, 288.

⁶⁴ Allen, 8.

⁶⁵ Kozlowski, 31. Gamella, 262, 284; Boekhout van Solinge, 104.

⁶⁶ Kozlowski, 32.

⁶⁷ Snyder, Richard and Angelica Duran-Martinez. “Does illegality breed violence? Drug trafficking and state-sponsored protection rackets.” *Crime, Law and Social Change*. 52 (2009): 265.

⁶⁸ Reno, William. “Illicit markets, violence, warlords, and governance: West African cases.” *Crime, Law and Social Change*. 52 (2009): 316.

The international community allows this situation to continue, free riding on the work done by supplier countries to stop the drug trade. The international system weighs on supplier countries, like Morocco, to oppose the drug trade: “Their [International agencies’] perspective is thus one that tends to subsume all drug production and use under one narrow ‘trafficking’ model; that has low standards of evidence; that is far more concerned with the interests of final consumer countries that [*sic*] those of Africans or African governments; and whose conception of enforcement is akin to that of the American ‘War on Drugs’.”⁶⁹ To impress the foreign drug control agencies, African states must adopt or appear to adopt punitive drug control systems, even though these systems do not disrupt trafficking; they just place harsh punishments on small-time users and growers.⁷⁰ Europe, however, is not held to the same standard of anti-drug enforcement. European states create anti-drug laws that they then decline to enforce, particularly with regards to cannabis: “The ‘bark’ of country’s cannabis laws may not match the ‘bite’ of the actual enforcement of these laws in the streets.”⁷¹ Most Western European laws cite punishments ranging from fines to incarceration, yet most arrests lead only to a fine.⁷² France, for instance, has official punishments ranging from a fine to one year in prison. In practice, in addition to treatment orders, arrestees may be released without charge, prosecuted, or cautioned, which is the most common. The United Kingdom penalties range from a fine to five-year incarceration; however, if the arrestee only possesses enough for individual use, he will typically be fined.⁷³ The Netherlands does not arrest for cases involving less than five grams of cannabis, despite regulations proscribing fines or up to a month in prison.⁷⁴ In May 2002, the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs accused European countries of leniency towards cannabis use and possession.⁷⁵ In contrast, as was noted previously, in northern Morocco, 59% of cannabis users report having been incarcerated for use.⁷⁶ The central notion evidenced in the uneven response to drugs and law enforcement is that the drug trade is perpetuated not by a demand in consumer countries or European drug networks, but by lax or corrupt regimes in supplier countries and their failure to control an entirely domestic problem. Based on this reasoning, European states allow the producer states to absorb the social and economic costs of averting European drug use. Producer states must develop interdiction systems and expend law enforcement and legal resources on suppressing drug production and prosecuting suppliers for an export product to prevent drugs from arriving in communities where drug laws are not enforced. The supplier countries also risk increasing local violence due to interdiction, all in the name of reducing drug use in other countries. These situations combine to create a tax on Moroccans for the benefit of wealthier European countries.

States that fail to absorb those costs can face a reduction in foreign aid.⁷⁷ For instance, the 1983 Rangel-Gilman-Hawkins Amendment allows American presidents to cut off foreign aid to countries whose efforts to eliminate the production and export of illegal

⁶⁹ Allen, 5.

⁷⁰ Allen, 10.

⁷¹ Kilmer, Beau, “Do Cannabis Possession Laws Influence Cannabis Use?”, *Cannabis 2002 Report* (2002), 120.

⁷² Kilmer, 130.

⁷³ Kilmer, 132.

⁷⁴ Kilmer, 131-132.

⁷⁵ Gamella, 284.

⁷⁶ Kozlowski, 36.

⁷⁷ Allen, 9.

drugs do not satisfy the State Department.⁷⁸ European countries, as primary trading partners for Morocco, could also exact economy harm through sanctions. European countries account for Moroccan imports and exports.⁷⁹ Morocco is thus compelled by economic necessity to support international drug policies though they are not otherwise necessarily in Morocco's own interest. The consequence of these practices is that the so-called international War on Drugs reinforces pre-existing inequalities in the global system.

Morocco responded to these pressures by instigating a domestic War on Drugs and creating an expensive but ineffective interdiction system. King Hassan's War on Drugs started as a five-year plan estimated to cost one billion dollars, a large investment considering Morocco's GDP in 1992 was 28.3 billion dollars.⁸⁰ Morocco's plan also suggested that Spain and the Netherlands punish their consumers so that the market would dry up;⁸¹ however, as has been seen, that part did not happen. Under the plan, security forces engaged in slash and burn policies and the Ministry of the Interior attempted to transition the cultivators to alternative crops, such as olives and almonds.⁸² If these policies are evaluated on their capacity to reduce cannabis output and develop an alternative economy in the Rif region, then they have failed.⁸³ Despite that fact, the policies have continued to the detriment of the Rif farming families.

Ultimately, the plan failed because it did not address the economic problems promoting cultivation and because of the unsuccessful interdiction efforts. The Rif region is historically difficult for the central government to control. Its history includes several uprisings and, at one point, an independent state. It also suffers high poverty and unemployment rates, which have previously encouraged emigration. For the Rifians, the cannabis trade alleviates these social pressures. As such, the government has historically allowed the trade to continue when it could not solve those problems. In the words of one Issaguen villager, "Banning it completely, that would be to provoke a revolt. ... So, they close one eye and open the other."⁸⁴ Under the War on Drugs, the crop is targeted through slash and burn campaigns, crop seizures, and crop dusting.⁸⁵ The government has also issued awareness campaigns about the dangers of soil exhaustion, mineral concentrations from excessive use of chemical fertilizers, deforestation.⁸⁶ From 2003 to 2011, the area used to grow cannabis was reduced from 130,000 hectares to 47,000 hectares and 48,000 growers were subject to arrest warrants.⁸⁷ While the government has cut down on the amount of

⁷⁸ Trebach, Arnold S, "The Need for Reform of International Narcotics Laws," *Dealing With Drugs*, Pacific Research Institute, San Francisco (1987).

⁷⁹ Morocco's main export partners are Spain (19.2%), France (17.6%), Belgium (4.5%) and Italy (4.3%). Morocco's main import partners are France (16.1%), Spain (13.5%), Italy (6.5%), Germany (5.6%), and Moldova (5%); "Morocco Trade, Export and Imports." *Economy Watch*. 30 March 2010.

⁸⁰ Noakes.

⁸¹ Noakes.

⁸² Karam.

⁸³ The first metric is based on the standard applied in other writings on drug policy: "[P]olicies targeting marijuana markets must always be evaluated in terms of their projected effects on particular types of submarkets and types of consumers" (Johnson, 12). The second is the standard of this paper and its suggestion of alternative drug policy and reforms for Morocco.

⁸⁴ "L'interdire complètement, ce serait provoquer une révolte. ... Alors on ferme un oeil, on ouvre l'autre." (Ravix).

⁸⁵ Embassy; Allen, 10.

⁸⁶ Embassy.

⁸⁷ Ravix.

cannabis grown, it has not decreased the amount of hashish produced and exported. New plant varieties give 3-5 fold increases in resin yield. With those new plants, output has been stable, despite a 65% decline in cultivation area.⁸⁸ Even more effective interdiction is unlikely to dismantle the Morocco-European cannabis markets:

This ‘elasticity’ across cannabis markets creates an environment in which interdiction policies acting on one national or regional industry are very likely to be accommodated by other industry sectors. [...] As with licit forms of capitalist accumulation, today’s international cannabis industry appears increasingly adaptive in its responses to interdiction efforts and extremely successful at negating the supply- and demand-side effects that have historically been claimed for drug interdiction efforts.⁸⁹

This theory proved true in European markets.⁹⁰ For instance, between the 1970s and the 2000s, despite the War on Drugs and interdiction efforts, the price of one gram of cannabis in Norway has remained roughly 100 NOK.⁹¹ Also, in 2005, during the drought that decreased the cannabis crop, though the price in Morocco increased, the prices in Europe did not rise.⁹² This suggests either that either the middlemen took a decreased profit instead of risking the market while the supply was temporarily diminished or the middlemen found temporary alternative suppliers. Escalating supply-side enforcement cannot raise the distribution price beyond a certain threshold, and increased prices, at least to that point, have limited impact on demand.⁹³ Thus, the current and proposed Moroccan policies are not going to cut global sales or local purchase.⁹⁴ Short of severe and effective interdiction that decreases supply sufficiently to affect the price and demand in European markets, the cannabis networks will find ways to procure cannabis and protect their cash supply. The present interdiction system and the proposed reform are not systems that will create that situation.

While interdiction was failing to destroy the crops, the government was also unable to move the farmers to alternative crops. Since 1961, the UN, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the EU, and the Moroccan government have been supporting alternative cultivation projects. They have attempted to redirect growers to livestock, grains, or arboriculture. However, in the words of Professor Najib Akasbi of Hassan II Agriculture and Veterinary Institute: “[O]ne has not found the miraculous solution that permits them to earn

⁸⁸ Chouvy, 416-417.

⁸⁹ Johnson, 1.

⁹⁰ Johnson notes that aggressive source country efforts against Mexico in the 1970s did not cause long-term decreases in US markets (15).

⁹¹ Sandberg, 1147.

⁹² Leggett, 203.

⁹³ Researchers have attempted to study price sensitivity in cannabis markets. While some price sensitivity has been found, around 2.5% increase in prevalence of use based on 10% decrease in price for regular adult users, studies have not confirmed the effect on quantity or frequency of use. Also, these findings have not been consistent between studies or internationally. Extrapolating from alcohol and tobacco studies suggests that they might also be influenced by price. The failure of the current literature to examine the level of consumption makes it difficult to determine the actual impact of raising prices on the cannabis market. Pacula, Rosalie Liccardo and Russel Lundberg, “Why Changes in Price Matter When Thinking About Marijuana Policy: A Review of the Literature on the Elasticity of Demand,” *Public Health Review*, 35 (2), 2014.

⁹⁴ Johnson, 17 citing Caulkins and Reuter’s article in *Addiction*.

as much as the cannabis.”⁹⁵ Some Moroccan politicians understand the failure of this program, such as Nourreddine Mediane, who admitted, “[Substitution programs] are not real solutions but simply make-work jobs.”⁹⁶ The soil is poor and will support few crops, which means alternative agricultures is not, in and of itself, a sufficient policy to turn farmers away from cannabis cultivation. Until the legal pay compensates for the illicit funds that would be forgone, the policy will not move the Rif’s farmers away from the drug trade. Moreover, no reform effort, including the one presently being proposed, will entirely dismantle the drug trade until it can compete with the earnings offered.

The issue is compounded by another ramification of poor economy and illicit cash flows: drug networks use illicit cash to finance corruption schemes. Past indictments and investigations have implicated civilian police officers, military police officers, judiciary members, and national security police.⁹⁷ There are even rumors that police officers help growers hide from other police services⁹⁸ and that state officials and members of the royal family facilitate the drug trade.⁹⁹ Investing some illicit cash in bribery is necessary to maintain the drug networks in their present profitable state: “In the case of the Moroccan cannabis resin trade, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that involvement or interested acquiescence of law enforcement officials must be widespread, considering the level of cultivation, storage and export in place.”¹⁰⁰ Opposing this situation creates a catch-22 for the state. Currently, Morocco’s cannabis trade, despite spurring widespread corruption, is non-violent, and state-sponsored protection rackets can make illegal markets more peaceful. Dismantling the racket could lead to increased violence in the market between competing drug networks and between police forces and the criminal enterprises.¹⁰¹ Corruption and increasing violence are further societal harms created by the present cannabis illegality, and those consequences could be averted by policy reform.

The interdiction policies have created additional harms by driving cannabis producers to harmful means to overcome the suppression and to earn more money. Farmers started using mineral salt fertilizers instead of manure to maintain crop yields in the face of eradication efforts, leading to soil salinization, reducing its fitness for other crops.¹⁰² The region is also being deforested to make room for more cannabis cultivation.¹⁰³ Scarce water resources are used for inefficient irrigation of cannabis.¹⁰⁴ Monoculture is driving out other produce, such as foodstuffs, that would otherwise be grown. This last is particularly dangerous in the face of interdiction programs and natural disasters that would destroy whole crops, plunging an already impoverished region into greater economic turmoil. As such, the anti-drug policies promote unintended and deleterious consequences that

⁹⁵ “[O]n n’a pas trouvé la solution miracle qui leur permette de gagner autant que le cannabis.” (Ravix).

⁹⁶ “Elles ne sont pas de vraies solutions mais de simples actions de bricolage.” Amourag, Aissa, “Noureddine Mediane, ‘Il faut dépénaliser le cannabis,’” *Maroc Hebdo Press*, 30 November 2012.

⁹⁷ Gamella, 270; Embassy.

⁹⁸ Ravix.

⁹⁹ Boekhout van Solinge, 103.

¹⁰⁰ Gamella, 270.

¹⁰¹ Snyder, 253, 255. Snyder’s work focuses on Burma and Mexico, but the theory may be extrapolated for this case.

¹⁰² Chouvy, 421.

¹⁰³ Gamella, 271.

¹⁰⁴ Chouvy, 421.

jeopardize the region's ability to turn to other crops should the Rif eventually cease to supply Europe's cannabis.

In the face of these failures and based on advocacy pressure, multiple political parties have pushed a new policy reform. The Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM) and the Justice and Development Party (PJD) started working with the Rif Association for Human Rights (ARDH) after it sent a model law to the parliamentarians in 2012. Istiqlal joined the process later.¹⁰⁵ PAM politician Mehdi Bensaid stated, "Security policies aren't solving the problem because it's an economic and social issue so the PAM is trying to find a credible alternative."¹⁰⁶ Theoretically, the new reform would address those social and economic issues. Under the proposed law, cannabis cultivation would be permitted only in Chefchaouen, Taounate, Al-Hoceima, Tetouan, and Ouezzane.¹⁰⁷ The industry would be nationalized for both production and commercialization. A government agency would buy cannabis from the growers at a mandated price.¹⁰⁸ The agency would supervise growers and regulate harvests and growth periods. Sanctions would be applied for production used for other than therapeutic and industrial purposes.¹⁰⁹ This decision is consistent with the United Nations' 1961 Single Convention on Narcotics requiring cannabis, in states where production is legal, be purchased entirely by a state entity.¹¹⁰ In the words of Milouda Hazib, head of PAM's parliamentary delegation, "We are not seeking to legalize the production of drugs, but to search for possible medical and industrial uses of this plant and create an alternative economy in the region."¹¹¹ Supporters suggest that Morocco could boost exports through marijuana-based medicines and textiles.¹¹² The proposed law would tax cultivators at 2% and labs at 5%, supposedly to combat drug addiction, despite the restriction to therapeutic and industrial use.¹¹³ This law does not have a provision for import or export of cannabis products.¹¹⁴ Despite the details of the plan, this reform effort is likely to fail for many reasons.

One reason is the threat of international ramifications for the proposed reform. Cannabis is a controlled substance under several international agreements to which Morocco is a party. There are unconfirmed rumors that the United Nations has warned the Moroccan government against adopting a pro-cannabis law.¹¹⁵ The European Union is not officially for or against the proposed reform. Rupert Joy, E.U. ambassador to Morocco, stated, "It is for each government to decide its policy on the matter. There are arguments for [legalization] and others against. [...] Legalization] could have repercussions. They should reflect well before, and Morocco should decide in a responsible manner."¹¹⁶ Several European states that

¹⁰⁵ Majdi, Yassine and Zakaria Choukrallah, "Pourquoi la legalization du cannabis bloque." *Telquel News*, 25 June 2014.

¹⁰⁶ "Morocco seeks..."

¹⁰⁷ Tchouand ... "Législation."

¹⁰⁸ Lemaizi.

¹⁰⁹ Ravix; Mdidech; Oudrhiri "Législation."

¹¹⁰ Oudrhiri, Kaouthar, "Législation du cannabis: un projet de loi et des critiques," *H24*, 27 June 2014.

¹¹¹ "Morocco seeks..."

¹¹² "Morocco seeks..."

¹¹³ Majdi, Oudrhiri "Législation."

¹¹⁴ "Cannabis: l'Istiqlal dépose une proposition de loi." *H24*, 24 December 2013.

¹¹⁵ Tchouand ... "Législation."

¹¹⁶ "C'est à chaque gouvernement de décider de sa politique en la matière. Il y a des arguments pour (la légalisation) de d'autres contres. [...] (La légalisation) peut avoir des repercussions. Il faut bien réfléchir

receive Moroccan cannabis, though, are primary trade partners that might oppose reforms that legitimize cannabis production. The international risks alone might scuttle reform.

The most likely reason, however, that the reform will fail is the motives of its promoters. According to critics, this reform proposal is not grounded in the desire to protect the Rifians or to resolve the trade deficit but rather winning elections. The Rif represents an important electoral block, especially in the communal elections that will occur in Spring 2015.¹¹⁷ PAM and Istiqlal are accused of proposing the issue only to win the support of cannabis growers. Pro-cannabis and Rifian groups are aware of the political ramifications and oppose the electoral exploitation of the issue. Amazighs Senhaja du Rif, for instance, has petitioned the Royal Cabinet, Head of Government, and Minister of the Interior to bar political parties from using the legalization of cannabis for electoral ends and to supervise campaign funding to make sure drug lords are not funding campaigns.¹¹⁸ That concern is legitimate. Where people are dependent on the jobs and foreign currency from the drug trade, drug interests can infiltrate politics either through the workers voting or the drug entrepreneurs attempting to protect trade by marginalizing and corrupting local government.¹¹⁹ However, that pattern will not likely lead to actual reform, even this one. Once the reform's parliamentary supporters gain or fail to gain the legislative advantage, the bill is unlikely to advance further. The impending failure of this effort is visible in the slowdown that has already occurred. The reform was supposed to be debated in parliament at the end of Ramadan 2014, a date that has come and gone without the reform advancing. This failure is a signal of the future of this iteration of cannabis reform, which is more focused on scoring electoral points than on creating new drug policy or resolving poverty.

Were the reform to advance politically, though, it has a large flaw that would need to be overcome. Cannabis, under this reform, cannot be as profitable for the state of Morocco as it has been for illegal drug networks. Pro-reform discussions describe cannabis cultivation as equivalent to "10 percent" of Morocco's economy based on the estimated ten to twelve billion euros in sales.¹²⁰ This number, however, relates to European sales, not domestic production. Even if production were legalized, the cannabis produced would not bring in that much money. The amount described is tied to the illegality and the ability to export the product: "[T]he hashish trade, like most illegal markets, is a service industry and 'the bulk of total cost of getting the final good to the consumer is not production but compensation to those involved in the distribution of the drug from production point to the final consumer.'"¹²¹ There is a large flaw, then, with the proposed reform on the production side. In light of this situation, production could then follow two paths. In one path, the government buys the product, legally. By rendering production legal, the value-added created by risk will be depleted. The number of producers could increase, as those who feared sanction for engaging in illegal activity could enter the market, and fewer middlemen would be needed, as the government would be the only legal buyer. The amount paid for cannabis would decrease, meaning that the licit funds reaching the farmers would be less

avant, et que le Maroc décide de manière responsable." "Cannabis: l'UE espère une décision 'réfléchie' du Maroc," *H24*, 11 February 2014.

¹¹⁷ Oudrhiri, Kaouthar, "Débat sur le kif: le coup de gueule des cultivateurs," *H24*, 27 June 2014.

¹¹⁸ Oudrhiri ... "Débat."

¹¹⁹ Van der Veen, 157.

¹²⁰ Karam; "Morocco seeks..."

¹²¹ "Morocco seeks..."

than the illicit funds they earn at present. In the other path, people continue to engage in illegal cannabis trade for the increased revenue. In this case, the farmers continue to absorb risk, and they would only see an increase in revenue if enough farmers began selling to the government for therapeutic and industrial uses that the recreational drug supply is threatened. It does not seem likely, however, that the market would suddenly pay sufficiently more than it does now to lift the region out of poverty. Also, the farmers could simply transition from one drug producing plant to another, such as opium poppies, if the government drives down the price of cannabis or enforces a cannabis monopoly. As such, the introduction of government as buyer does not respond to the economic situation promoting the illegal market, which limits the reform's potential impact. The next large flaw in the economics of this reform policy is the distribution effect. Under the proposed reform, the government would be the only buyer and the only legal distributor. Even if the government bought the same amounts or more, it could not sell the cannabis in Europe, where the large market is, because the government cannot openly engage in an illegal market and maintain its international legitimacy. Thus, the government would not be drawing the ten to twelve billion euros cited by reform proponents. Theoretically, the government would legally turn the product towards therapeutic and industrial uses, but without the recreational drug market, it is unlikely to draw the same demand or the same economic return. Thus, the product does not possess the same value to the government that it does to the illegal network. Less money, licit or illicit, reduces the value of the proposed reform. As such, this reform is not the best method of reducing poverty in the Rif region, even if it does legitimize some funds related to the present illegal market.

Better reform would involve legalizing growth and distribution to non-governmental entities. It does not require legalizing use, as most cannabis produced is not used domestically. Doing so would allow producers to transform their own herb into hashish and sell directly to exporters, legalizing and potentially increasing their profit. Once the drugs are possessed by the smugglers, they can be moved to countries that have decriminalized cannabis or neglect to punish use and possession for resale. Whether those countries would be rankled in the face of legalized cannabis being exported to their shores is difficult to gauge, particularly considering their reported neutrality to the current reform proposal. This reform model would be better for Moroccans, both economically, as it facilitates more direct access to the large market around which the reform is framed, and socially, because it reduces the harms of illegality on the community. The illegality of cannabis is not necessary to keep down drug use in the Moroccan supplier communities. The drugs are widely grown there, albeit illegally, indicating that those who wish to use cannabis have the opportunity. This reasoning is consistent with findings in European communities that have ceased to punish use: "Most studies find that relaxing cannabis possession laws does not increase cannabis use and that jurisdictions with more liberal possession laws do not necessarily have higher prevalence rates."¹²² Legalization, on the other hand, would allow taxation, interest mediation, and state market, labor, and product regulations that could benefit the community.¹²³ Considering the greater likelihood of this reform for decreasing poverty in Morocco while legitimizing the cash flow between the Moroccan growers and the transnational drug networks, this reform option is superior to that currently being proposed in the Moroccan parliament. It risks, however, being politically unpalatable, as it could

¹²² Kilmer, 119.

¹²³ Van der Veen, 160.

enflame tensions with European countries that, though soft on drugs domestically, could frown on their being legitimized in any way by a trade partner. As such, though this possibility would benefit Morocco, it is unlikely to be enacted due to political reasons.

There is another option. The European countries could pay the Moroccan farmers to produce other products, using the free market to suppress drug use. With this policy, there would be less cannabis available for export and there would be less poverty in Morocco. This option accords with the Europe's role in promoting Morocco's cannabis production through demand creation. Consider international response to the Netherlands' cannabis: "France, Belgium, and Germany have all reacted critically to the ease with which their citizens can obtain 'soft drugs' in the Netherlands [...] liberal market competition that might ultimately destroy the long-standing Western European importation of Moroccan, Lebanese, and Afghani hashish and (to a lesser extent) African and Southeast Asian herbal cannabis."¹²⁴ Though other crops cannot compete with cannabis in the current market, European countries could turn their anti-drug funds or foreign aid money towards putting a finger on the scale in favor of non-cannabis crops. For instance, grains that are now worth a fraction of what farmers earn from cannabis could replace illegal plants if European countries subsidized production of legal plants to a similar price. The decreased risk of legal plants might even sway farmers who would like to avoid the risk inherent in growing illegal products such that European countries would not need to match the full cannabis price. This plan also resolves the concern about substituting other drug-producing plants, such as poppies, by specifically offering money for non-drug plants. Foodstuffs are produced, poverty is combatted, and drugs are suppressed all at once. This possibility was alluded to during discussion of Morocco's War on Drugs in the 1990s. Moroccan Interior Minister Basri said, "The Europeans incited our people to grow so much of this cannabis, so they should help pay for the crop conversion. [...] If they are serious about stopping their drug problem, a billion-dollar investment is peanuts."¹²⁵ The possibility, though, was never adopted. This option is continually available to European states that are willing to pay to decrease their domestic drug issues without incarcerating their own citizens,¹²⁶ and it has the added advantage of decreasing poverty in some of the most impoverished communities in Morocco.

This paper has sought to demonstrate the potential wealth Morocco loses to Europeans owing to the illegality cannabis. In turn, it demonstrated the means by which this relationship could be transformed to alleviate the poverty in those regions. It has discussed the drug economy between Morocco and Europe and the great harm imposed on Morocco's poorest through the War on Drugs and Morocco's interdiction efforts. It has noted the problematic reform currently considered in the Moroccan parliament that would not eradicate the international drug trade nor resolve poverty in the Rif region. It has also proposed two alternative systems by which the amount of illicit funds flowing through Morocco could be reduced and the impoverishment of the Rifians alleviated. For political reasons, it is unlikely that Morocco will broach cannabis cultivation legalization or international crop subsidies in the near future. What remains, then, is to see if the proposed reform survives the present election cycle, or if Morocco and the international community

¹²⁴ Johnson, 13.

¹²⁵ Noakes.

¹²⁶ Europeans could turn to growing their own cannabis domestically, but, in that case, each state could deal with that matter internally.

can create and accept reforms that not only decrease the illegal activity, but also reduce poverty in the currently impoverished and exploited Rif region.

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Future Challenges to Monarchical Rule in Saudi Arabia

by Akhil Shah

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Saudi Arabia, named quite literally after its ruling family the Al Saud, has been the dominant political and religious Sunni Arab nation in the Middle East.¹ Since the founding of oil in the region, the Saudi's have gained political legitimacy, which added to the religious legitimacy derived from their title as 'Guardians' of the Two Holy Mosques. However, in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, political pressure has been increasing on the Gulf monarchs. Across the region there have been increasing calls for political modernization and civic participation, particularly after long-standing autocratic allies, including Mubarak and Ben Ali, all fell within the space of a year. Until now, the vast oil wealth that the Saudi state has accumulated has given them a buffer, which allowed them to bypass calls for democratization. However, with falling oil prices, and increasing political and economic pressure on the government internationally and domestically, the future seems somewhat unclear. This paper will aim to highlight the various threats that the Saudi regime is likely to face in the near future, including the internal family pressures, the economic issues, religion and the problem of ISIS and finally Iran.

The death of King Abdullah has created an element of doubt surrounding the longevity of monarchical rule for the House of Saud. A large part of this stems from the unstable nature of the Saudi appanage system.² When he died in 1953, the founder of the Al Saud dynasty, Abdulaziz ibn Saud, left forty-five sons behind. Due to these sons having a number of sons themselves the royal family has an estimated twenty-five thousand members, split into a number of individual factions or wings. The new King, Salman ibn Abdulaziz, has come to the throne and been incredibly assertive both at home, and through his foreign policy decision-making. However, there are heavily circulating rumors that his health is deteriorating and he may not live for longer than a year. Upon his death, the family will be faced with a situation in which the factionalism King Abdullah worked so hard to prevent may become a reality, causing internal strife and chaos. King Salman's cabinet changes made it evident that he wants power to be kept within his own faction, known as the Sudairi wing of the family (the line of the family whose mother or grandmother was Hassa bint Ahmed al-Sudairi, one of Abdulaziz Ibn Saud's favourite wives).³ His nephew, the

¹ I use this term somewhat begrudgingly. While it is well known today what this refers to, I feel that term does not include North Africa, where several key states of the Arab World lie. However, unfortunately at present there are few better alternatives and, those that may be more accurate are somewhat confusing. In this I include West Asia or even the Nile to Oxus, a term used by famous historian Marshall Hodgson.

² In relation to the context of Saudi Arabia this relates to a system in which rule passes from one brother to the next.

³ This is most visible in the partial family tree The Economist tweeted on the 13th January, 2015. The twitter handle is @EconMEastAfrica and the image can be found here: <https://twitter.com/econmeastafrica/status/555055244896641024>. This faction has produced King Fahd (r. 1982-2005), Former Crown Prince Sultan (2005-2011), Former Crown Prince Nayef (2011-2012 – he is also the father of the current Crown Prince, Mohammad Ibn Nayef) and now King Salman.

former Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed Ibn Nayef was elevated to the position of Crown Prince, while his own son, Mohammed Ibn Salman was named as Deputy Crown Prince. This move can be seen as anything but an attempt to ensure that power is held purely within the line of Ibn Saud and Hassa bint Ahmed Al-Sudairi. Indeed, the new King provided evidence of this considering the fact that, in January, one of the first changes that he instituted was a restructuring of all state ministries. All of them now fall under two brackets of either political/military or social/economic. It is no coincidence that both brackets are now run by the new Crown Prince and the new Deputy Crown Prince. Both these men are from the 'third generation' and after King Salman passes away (his health is in serious doubt), a grandson of Ibn Saud will sit on the throne for the first time. The current system of horizontal succession to the throne will almost certainly become untenable once succession passes to the third generation. With almost two hundred princes, a significant number of whom are independently wealthy and powerful, there is likely to be competition for power and influence. Princes Mishal and Mitab (sons of the Late King Abdullah) are certainly two candidates who may seek to cause trouble, especially as their power has decreased significantly since the inception of the new ruler, and they are not alone. The attempt to restrict succession to a single wing of the family will likely cause division in the short to medium term, especially if the Sudairis maintain their hold on the critical positions of authority in the future, as they are currently. Unless this issue of succession can be resolved and agreed upon by the stronger grandsons of Ibn Saud, there is likely to be constant instability and uncertainty within the Al Saud. Whether this turns violent or not remains to be seen, but in order to maintain stable monarchical rule all issues have to be kept internal. The size and unity of the family has provided a strong buffer against opposition in the past, and will be required to do the same in the future.

Beyond the internal politics of the ruling family, a second challenge comes in the form of oil prices. For the last few months, the Saudi policy has been to artificially lower prices by increasing production, in order to increase their market share. Indeed, they are producing nearly ten million barrels of oil a day, almost a third of the OPEC total.⁴ While the Saudi's are currently able to maintain prices at an artificially low level, they cannot sustain this policy in the long run. The consequences of attempting to do so would be severely detrimental both politically and economically. One manner in which the Saudis (and the other Gulf Monarchs) have maintained their rule is best explained by Rentier State Theory. In the context of the Persian Gulf, this theory states that the significant oil rents accrued by these states are used to pacify any call for political participation. As a norm, this rent is assimilated through a substantial Welfare State, via free or heavily subsidized housing, healthcare and education programs for example. Considering the importance of this policy for the stability of Saudi monarchical rule, the artificial lowering of oil prices (now at below 60 a barrel)⁵ poses a serious threat, not only to monarchical stability, but also to Saudi Arabia's long-term economic growth. Saudi elites have stated that their focus is to update and improve all state infrastructure including roads and railway systems. However, at the same time money is also being pumped into the vast Welfare State that Saudi citizens have grown accustomed to. This was evidenced by King Salman giving all citizens two months bonus, and recently all members of the army a bonus too, in order to ensure political acquiescence. Overall, in the last 4 years, Saudi spending has risen 52%, with the dynasty

⁴ The Economist, *Why the price of oil is failing*, 12/08/2014.

<http://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2014/12/economist-explains-4>.

⁵ Bloomberg Energy and Oil Prices, 05/17/2015 - available at <http://www.bloomberg.com/energy/>

pumping money into the Welfare State in order to ensure social peace.⁶ The extra fiscal pressure this has created means that the oil price required in order for the government to balance its budget has risen to almost \$90 a barrel, and this figure is rising. Last year, the IMF warned Saudi Arabia that as an economic policy this was not sustainable, especially as the Saudi state itself has little diversification in relation to its economy.⁷ The falling price of oil has thus created a situation in which the political costs of the policy of rentierism are increasing, as the costs of pacifying and stifling any political opposition are rising. A continuation of trying to improve market share seems to have therefore hampered efforts for long-term economic growth, at least in the near future. Political and military concerns are the main focus of the Saudi regime, indicated by their involvement in Yemen. While this may be the case, Saudi Arabia must maintain a clear focus in relation to its economy. The current reliance on oil revenue can only be relied upon in the near future. A failure to diversify and create viable alternative prospects for long-term economic growth may create views within the populous regarding governmental change. Failure to diversify economically and maintain the status quo the population now expects is likely to create a scenario in which the Al Saud struggle to dissuade their population from demanding some form of representation.

A purely political analysis is not enough however. One critical source of legitimacy for the Al Saud dynasty is religion, especially their role as the “Guardians of the Two Holy Mosques”. Regardless of political events, the Saudi state has always had religion as a buffer against criticism. However, with the continued strengthening of the Islamic State (IS), Saudi Arabia may be put on the defensive religiously as well, for two diverging reasons. The first issue stems from the fact that the purist Salafi doctrine which underpins the religious outlook of Saudi Arabia also underpins the ideology of IS. Indeed, IS explicitly refer to the teachings of Mohammad Ibn Abdulwahhab to justify its acts of destruction and murder, while thousands of young Saudi nationals have been recruited to the IS ranks. Until now, the Saudi regime shows no signs of altering its strict interpretation of the Qu’ran, the Hadith and the Shar’ia. If they fail to liberalize socially, in at least some regards, their ideological ties to IS may harm them internationally. Furthermore, perhaps a greater threat is posed by the fact that IS is competing directly for the religious legitimacy the Saudi state relies so heavily on. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi proclaimed himself to be the true Caliph and called Saudi Arabia “the head of the snake and the stronghold of disease”.⁸ At its very core, IS seeks a return to the ‘Golden Age’ of Islam.⁹ The Caliphate is seen by many as the political ideal, as well as a source of spiritual authority, because this was the manner in which the Salaf (the companions of the Prophet) were governed. Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi refers to the Al Saud’s as dictators, and has called on supporters of IS to carry out jihad against them. While this is unlikely in of itself to topple the regime, an emboldened IS will likely call into question the

⁶ Martin Dokoupil, *Saudi could see budget deficit next year, risks draining reserves – IMF*, Reuters Online, 09/24/2014 – available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/09/24/imf-saudi-budget-idUSL6N0RP47K20140924>

⁷ Simeon Kerr, *IMF urges Gulf Countries to reduce spending as oil price plunges*, The Financial Times, 01/21/2015 – available at <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/a763aeba-a0b9-11e4-9aee-00144feab7de.html?siteedition=uk#axzz3PYUULjS4>

⁸ Beirut Bureau of Reuters, *Islamic State Leader urges attacks in Saudi Speech*, 11/13/2014 – available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/11/13/us-mideast-crisis-baghdadi-idUSKCN0IX1Y120141113>

⁹ ‘Golden Age’ here is a reference to the period of rule under the Prophet and the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali).

religious legitimacy that has bolstered the Saudi monarchy since its inception. The monarchs' and senior princes' attempt to harness religion in their pursuit of power may be their own undoing. While religion helped the House of Saud to establish and assert their authority, with a new "caliphate" to the north of them, it has now become a serious liability.

Until the failure of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, political Islam was also a significant threat to the Saudi regime, as they too competed for the religious legitimacy the Al Saud use to legitimize their rule. This being said, after the fall of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt political Islam does not seem to pose too much danger in the short-term. The Muslim Brotherhood is a transnational organization that, as of 2015 has relatively little appeal after failing in Egypt. Saudi Arabia has always adapted to the threat of Islamism within the state, using its close ties to Wahhabi clerics in order to cement legitimacy. However, if dynastic issues continue to occur and the ruling family fails to resolve internal issues, political Islam may provide a strong challenge yet, especially considering its success in the wider Arab World, in Tunisia in particular.

A final critical factor that must be mentioned is the role of Iran. With a potential nuclear deal being worked out with the United States and the wider Western world, there is an increasing possibility that Iran may rejoin the international community. This would have serious consequences for the rule of the Al-Saud dynasty because Iran is a significant producer of oil. With their re-introduction into the international community they could sell to a wider consumer base. Because they are not an OPEC member, Iran could potentially undercut the market share attributed to Saudi Arabia. This would create serious consequences as it would undo the work that the Saudis have done to increase their market share.¹⁰ As is discussed earlier in this paper, the costs of following such a policy have been costly to say the least. If Iranian oil flooded the market prices would be kept at a low level. At present, estimates vary between US\$90 and \$105 as to what the Al Saud need oil prices to be at, in order to balance their expenditure.¹¹ If this were to occur, it is likely that Saudi revenues would be impacted, creating a further need for spending on the welfare state (and therefore a spiraling budget deficit) to maintain social peace.

Furthermore, internationally Saudi Arabia has enjoyed a regional hegemony, at least with respect to the rest of the Middle East. If a nuclear deal is reached, and the U.S begins to engage with Iran, the Saudi's dominance over the Arab world may wane. The United States seems eager for a nuclear deal to go through in some form and this may reshape Washington's relationship with the region as a whole. Perhaps this is why two American favourites, according to Western media, are now in positions of true power, namely being next in line to the throne and the new Foreign Minister. Mohammed Ibn Nayef is a firm favourite because he has led the recent efforts for Saudi anti-terrorism measures. The new foreign minister, Adel Al-Jubeir was the Saudi Ambassador to the United States and his new position is likely to have stemmed from the contacts and knowledge he built in his capacity as Ambassador.

¹⁰ The cost of pacifying political opposition and calls for mobilization and participation would likely increase if the Al Saud are unable to maintain the status quo.

¹¹ Anjali Raval and Simeon Kerr, *Saudis Spend like there's no oil price drop*, The Financial Times, 05/13/2015 – available at <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/07432996-f8b7-11e4-8e16-00144feab7de.html#axzz3a3VmKaCw>

There is also a fear in Saudi Arabia about the religious impact Iran may have. In particular they are worried about the potential for a second Islamic revolution, inspired by the Iranian clergy. The Eastern region of Saudi Arabia is home to a significant Shi'a population and, a major oil field. Historically there has been widespread anti-Shi'a resentment from the government, owing to the hardline Wahhabi ideology that embodies the Saudi state. One of the core tenets of Wahhabism is an opposition to any reverence of shrines.¹² Traditionally, Shi'a have venerated the shrines of Ali (the nephew and son-in-law of the Prophet) and his sons, Hasan and Husayn, and for this reason have been labelled as unbelievers (*kufir*). The Saudi state has, as a result harshly persecuted the Eastern provinces, and has done so consistently. There is therefore a fear about a potential Shi'a uprising, financed and sponsored by an Iranian government, intent on weakening the Saudi state internally to develop their own regional hegemony.

In conclusion, a general lack of foresight may bring about the downfall of the Saudi monarchy. Their failure to expand and diversify economically is likely to have significant political consequences, especially as currently there are few plans in place to replace the rent accrued from oil. If the ruling family fails to maintain unity, and there is no unified response to the problems outlined above, the future for Saudi Arabia is uncertain at best. We must conclude that in fifteen years - perhaps less - it is not difficult to imagine a situation in which the King of Saudi Arabia reigns, but does not rule, with power being devolved into an elected Parliament.

¹² Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1789-1939*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, p.37-38

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Islamic Identity and the Ka'ba by Benjamin Priest

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Within Islam, the Ka'ba functions as the *axis mundi* whereupon the practitioner's cosmic communications center, and there exists prevalent material indicating that it was also integral to the creation of an Islamic identity. Some of the ways by which the Ka'ba became part of this identity was through strategically distancing itself from the Arabian Jahālī era and appropriating the symbolic figures and terminology of Judaism and Christianity. The first established Islam as being the maintainer of monotheism by emphasizing the role of the prophets that preceded Muhammad. This brought the monotheistic uses of the Ka'ba to the fore and cast the polytheistic uses as perversions of the structure's original purpose. The second recast those same prophets within the cosmology of Islam and the Jewish and Christian narratives as mutations of the true narrative.

There are roughly one billion Muslims throughout the world; meaning that on any given day there are millions of Muslims praying between once and five times a day in the direction of the Ka'ba. While there are no reliable figures indicating how many Muslims observe daily prayers, we know that a great many do. References to the Ka'ba throughout the Qurān, *ḥadīth* (sayings of the prophet), *tafsīr* (Qurānic exegesis), and *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* (stories of the prophets) establish the significant role it plays in the physical and cosmological orientation of Islam. A study of these references reveals three roles that the Ka'ba plays in the theme of identity building and narrative adaptation. The first is the role of the Ka'ba as a spiritual nexus mirroring the eternal. The second is the role of the Ka'ba as a spiritual tie through all generations. The third is the role of the Ka'ba as a renewal of posterity and connection with God.

Integration - Between Paganism and Worship of the One God

Before delving into the role of the Ka'ba in the formation of an Islamic identity, the locality and physical structure of the Ka'ba must be understood. In so addressing these issues, chronological irregularities that frequent the gap between the spiritual and the empirical are encountered. Various sources cite the building of the physical structure Ka'ba over a wide variety of time periods. Based on *ḥadīth* and legends it is difficult to tell when an actual building marking the location of the Ka'ba existed. These same sources indicate that the site itself was sacred and the focal point of devotion to God, Adam having built the original foundations.¹ Abraham (Ibrāhīm) and his son Ishmael (Ismā'īl) uncovered these foundations and built four roof-less walls on them as their Ka'ba. Outside of Islamic traditions there are several mentions of a holy building which could have been the Ka'ba or a proto-Ka'ba.² In the second century AD the Greek geographer Ptolemy recorded that there was a temple in Arabia. He called this temple the Macroba, related to the Ethiopian word *mikrāb* (temple).³ Tubb' As'ad Abū Karib al-Ḥamyarī, a Yemeni Himyarite king that

converted to Judaism in the late fourth century, was supposedly the first to provide the shrine with a *kiswa* (a cloth covering) and a lock for its door.⁴

The Ka‘ba was not the original proper name of the structure, rather it was a reference to its square shape – the Arabic root being k-^c-b, one of the meanings being something cube shaped. All accounts agree that there was a temple in Mecca, which was inhabited by a number of idols. Within henotheistic Arabia litholatry held a special place, and the Ka‘ba was the regional hub of religious and economic activity. During the seventh century A.D., it was a much smaller building than what we see today. One account mentions that the Ka‘ba was accidentally burnt down, and rebuilt thereafter by Muhammad and his followers.⁵ The newly rebuilt building, while larger than its predecessor, would later be damaged, destroyed, and rebuilt and/or renovated many times due to wars, skirmishes, and natural disasters taking place in and around Mecca.⁶

The nature of the building itself was a point of controversy within other religious communities following the death of the Prophet in 632 AD. Saint John of Damascus (645-749 AD), one of the great Grecian theologians of his day, wrote the following in a polemic against Islam,

They ... assert that the [Black Stone] is Abraham’s... This stone that they talk about is a head of that Aphrodite whom they used to worship and whom they called Khabār. Even to the present day, traces of the carving are visible on it to careful observers.⁷

Another such claim was made by the Syrian Christian Bartholemew of Edessa, or the Monk of Edessa (birth and death dates unknown), who claimed that the Arabs were worshippers of a god named *khamar*.⁸ This god has been linked to *al-kubrā*, which is a reference to Aphrodite and the morning star.⁹ While this link between *khamar* and *al-kubrā* is tenuous at best, it is nonetheless a second indicator that other neighboring religions viewed the Ka‘ba as a holdover from Arab paganism. Due to the fact that the Black Stone is now both broken and bound in a band of silver, it is impossible to verify the assertion that it still bears the markings from the pre-Islamic period.

In either case, both sides would agree that Mecca and the holy shrine it contained played very significant roles in pre-Islamic practice. As such, the economic significance of the pilgrimage routes to the sanctuary was a polarizing force among tribes in the Arabian Peninsula for generations prior to the Qurayshī dominion near the beginning of the seventh century.^{10 11}

Nor Canst Thou be a Follower of Their Qibla

Muhammad was the key political figure in establishing a socio-political community in addition to the spiritual interlocutor for God’s will among the umma. In the post-Hijra period, the umma was in a compromised position and depended on the amiability of their Medinan hosts, and this is reflected in the fact that many Medinan suras commanded the umma to make compromises and accommodations. One such accommodation was in the direction of prayer, which both the Muslims and Jews of Medina referred to as the *qibla*. For the first year and a half in Medina, Muslims were commanded to pray facing Jerusalem as

did the Jews of their time, who did so in obedience to Talmudic interpretation.¹² During this time the Muslims prayed three times a day in concurrence with the Jewish prayers of *ṣaḥarīt* (morning prayer), *minḥah* (midday prayer), and *ma'rib* (evening prayer).¹³ There are conflicting reports as to whether there was an established *qibla* prior to the hijra, and as to why the change took place. In any case, we know that many in the Jewish community were critics of Muhammad, and the change in the *qibla* was a source of controversy at the time.¹⁴ ¹⁵ Accompanying this change was the following revelation, “The foolish of the people will say: What hath turned them from the qibla which they formerly observed? Say: Unto God belong the East and the West. He guideth whom He will unto a straight path.”¹⁶

Within Semitic religions, geographically oriented prayer is a feature that far preceded the advent of the Prophet Muhammad. In 1 Kings 8:44, the travelling Hebrew armies were enjoined to pray towards Jerusalem.¹⁷ During that time, the Ark of the Covenant held its place within the Holy of Holies in Solomon’s Temple. This is reflected in the verse itself, “...pray unto the Lord toward the city which Thou has chosen, *and toward the house* that I have built for Thy name,” (emphasis added). The Ark was significant insofar as it was the physical symbol of the covenant between God and His people and it contained the stones upon which the commandments were written by God and delivered Moses.¹⁸

The location of the Ark of the Covenant has been a mystery since the Babylonians sacked Jerusalem. However, the Temple Mount continued to be a cosmically potent location, with or without the presence of a physical Temple. Given the intimate relationship claimed by Islam to the Semitic prophets, it is unsurprising that this attitude would also be present in their own cosmic orientation.

With as much as the umma had in common with their Jewish compatriots, protracted interaction would sooner or later lead to intermixture of traditions beyond those officially condoned by God’s Messenger. This led to the principle of *mukhālafā*, which basically entailed avoiding the appearance of acting like neighboring religions in order to better distinguish the Islamic faith.¹⁹ Instances of *mukhālafā* included banning Sabbath worship, changing the duration of fasts to allow eating and intercourse between sunset and sunrise, and making the call to prayer vocal as opposed to using a ram’s horn as the Jews did or striking a metal board like Christians. The change in the *qibla* was understood as a ‘test’* to see who would follow the Prophet’s lead and who would not.²⁰

In terms of survival and expansion, relations with the Jews were of great importance in order to keep the number of adversarial tribes to a minimum as they lived in the refuge of Medina. However, bids to bring these Jewish Arabs into the umma were unsuccessful, and with that rebuff came an alteration of course. This reorientation played into the existing lines of pilgrimage and was effectively a move to court the Qureyshī tribes without endorsing their idolatry.²¹

Muhammad was eventually able to subdue enemy tribes and assert control over the site entirely. The Sura of Immunity gave the idolaters four months to conclude their business and leave Mecca.²² Between their numbers and their newly established economic and

* *wa in kānat lakabīratan*, the *kabīratan* indicting something unspecified and difficult, which most of the English renditions translate as “a difficult test.”

military hold on the area, the umma had effectively reclaimed their spiritual, political, and economic hold on the city.

Islamization – Edifices, Offices, and Orthopraxis

The post-Hijra occupation of Mecca reinstated the power of the umma as well as their identity as the inheritors of Semitic revelation. Their direction of worship was solidified toward *al-bayt al-ḥarām* (the Sacred House, i.e. the Ka‘ba), which Muhammad had cleared of idols just as Abraham had so many years before. They venerated the same prophets as did the Jews, but turned themselves from the vestiges of the House which once held God’s Covenant. They observed pilgrimage to the Arabian temple which had been returned to giving praise to The One God.

There remained however, many aspects with relation to pagan pilgrimage and Jewish practices that developed as part of the Muslim Ka‘ba. In keeping with tribal traditions practiced by previous keepers of Mecca, Muhammad delegated the responsibilities among the tribesmen for door keeping, providing food for pilgrims, etc. Many of these offices and their respective tribal holders persist to this day.²³ As alluded to in the quote from John of Damascus, there are aspects of Islamic custom that may have been directly lifted from pagan litholatry. A specific example is the continued importance of the Black Stone. However, this respect for holy objects was not solely an attribute of polytheists, as earth and stone also played integral roles in facilitating obedience to and communication with the divine in the Judaism. In the Jewish Temple, the particular composition of altars, implements involved in sacrifice, and the Temple itself were dictated by revelation.²⁴ Some practices, such as kissing the Black Stone, came directly from the Prophet’s actions and it is unknown if there are any precedents for it in pagan practice. Zaid bin Aslam, one of the Prophet’s Companions, is recorded to have said to the Stone, “You are just a stone that does not benefit or harm anyone, and if I had not seen the Prophet kissing you, I would have not done so.”²⁵ Reverence for the Black Stone may have come from a number of places, but its role was clearly one of connecting the worshipper with their sacred heritage.

The Ḥaram, which encompasses the Ka‘ba and its surrounding area, is considered a place of God’s truce. This means that no tribal or personal feuds are allowed to extend within its boundaries. Additionally, within the enclave of the Ka‘ba is a place of refuge wherein fugitives can escape capture or persecution. In its early years, there was purportedly a handle on the Ka‘ba on which such refugees would cling, reminiscent of the horns on the Jewish Temple’s altar.²⁶ The Ḥaram is also supposed to be free of bloodshed, regardless of any religious intent. This is in stark contrast to the Jewish Temple practices of ritual slaughter or pagan offerings of smearing blood on their idols housed within and without the Ka‘ba. This sanctuary was later extended to fixed punishments for those who hunt game in its vicinity, regardless of the intent being unrelated to worship.

The *tawāf* is the counter-clockwise circumambulation of the Ka‘ba, and the Qurān recognizes its practice by those unholy worshippers that preceded Muhammad,

Lo! (the mountains) Al-Safa and Al-Marwa are among the indications of Allah (*šā‘ā’ir allah*). It is therefore no sin for him who is on pilgrimage to the House (of Allah) or visiteth it, to go around them (as

the pagan custom is). And he who doeth good of his own accord, (for him) lo! Allah is Responsive, Aware. (2:158)

This kind of circumambulation of a fixed locale was not unique to Islam, nor even to Semitic religions. Other religions throughout Asia and Europe also had such practices, such as the Hindu *parikrama*, Tibetan Buddhist *korwa* or *pradakṣiṇā*, and certain Christian reliquaries.^{27 28} Before the destruction of the Second Temple, Israelites would circle the altar once in the first six days of the Feast of the Booths and seven times on the seventh. Arabs of the Jahalī period performed similar circumambulations and prostrations before the Ka‘ba, and some would even do so in a state of undress, a sin which in Islamic times would be accounted as being *fahishā* ‘(“a heinous sin”).²⁹

For the believing Muslim, these remnants and mirrored practices are simply the reclamation of God’s religion from those who have changed it for their own purposes. Directly after God gave permission for the *ṭawāf* of the Ka‘ba, the following was revealed,

Lo! Those who hide the proofs (*al-bayyināt*) and the guidance (*al-huda*) which We revealed, after We had made it clear to mankind in the Scripture: such are accursed of Allah and accursed of those who have the power to curse. Except those who repent and amend and make manifest (the truth). These it is toward whom I relent. I am the Relenting, the Merciful. (2:159-160)

Muhammad was sent to reclaim the world from error and idolatry, bringing them back to the message which was delivered by the mouths of prophets dating all the way back to Adam. The stories of the relation between these messengers and the Ka‘ba serve as *ṣā ā’ir* (signs) and *bayyināt* (manifestations) of the prophethood of Muhammad, who himself had a special relationship with the building.[†]

The Prophetic Forefathers & Semitic Monotheistic Heritage – The Stories

Adam and the Ka‘ba, both Temporal and Eternal

Establishing the primacy of any particular narrative within the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’* and *ḥadīth* is not as relevant to our inquiry as is the way in which they incorporate the cosmic connection between prophetic legacies. The first prophet of importance to understanding these legacies is Adam. According to the stories of the prophets, Adam’s stature while in the Garden of Eden was great, and he was able to hear the song of the heavenly hosts surrounding the throne of God. After the fall, his height was shortened and he was cut off from this song.³⁰ After pleading for access to the higher spheres of being, God sent down a tent around which Adam was to perform *ṭawāf*, which mimicked the movement of the angels in Heaven.³¹ According to one narrative,

Adam was gone that day, on his way to Mecca to look around. God said to Adam: “Adam, did you not know that I have a House on this earth?”

[†] The washing and calling of Muhammad as the Prophet began at the Ka‘ba where he was opened up either by angels or by Gabriel and washed clean of all idolatry, doubt, and fault.³³

Adam said: “By God, no.” God said: “I have a House in Mecca, so go to it.” This he did, and was in turn promised that the site would be endowed with a special *karāma* (nobility or favor) and whose *ḥurma* (sanctity) would extend in all directions. It was to be the location of worship for his descendants.³²

The House in Mecca is the physical manifestation of *al-bayt al-ma^cmūr* (the Much-Frequented House), which is represented in each subsequent level of Heaven and Earth. The pinnacle of the House is circumambulated by the angels, of which 70,000 enter every day; however, it is never the same angel twice, as each angel can gain entrance to the House a single time. This is presumably due to the press of other angels seeking entrance.³⁴ Inside this structure is the Throne of God. It is believed that if this Heavenly Ka‘ba to come down out of Heaven to rest on Earth, it would descend directly onto its terrestrial counterpart, making it “the focus of the earth and center of the world,” (*bu‘arat al-arḍ wa markaz al-dunyā*, *بؤرة الارض ومركز الدنيا*).³⁵

The descendants of Adam built a structure on the site where God set up a tent for for Adam when he was made in the Garden. The Black Stone within the Ka‘ba was originally white jacinth from Paradise given to Adam.³⁶ The Black Stone is believed to signify God’s covenant with mankind. On the last days, there is prophetic tradition that indicates the stone will be given a tongue to bear witness against the wickedness of men.³⁷ Some traditions say that within the Black Stone there is a physical document which records all of the actions of mankind as time goes. While it is a record that will only be revealed at judgment day, the fact that it is a record not written by man that is kept within a holy edifice bears a strong parallel to the Commandments, which Moses placed within Ark of the Covenant. The Ark in turn was placed within the Holy of Holies in the Temple.

The first Ka‘ba made by Adam’s children was either washed away in the flood and the Black Stone guarded by the angels in the hill Abū Qubays, or both the building and the Stone were untouched and later circumambulated by Noah’s ark for forty days.³⁸ “The [Ark] ... reached the Sanctuary at Mecca. It did not enter but circled the Sanctuary for a week. Then the House built by Adam was lifted up, lifted out of the water, the Inhabited House (*al-bayt al-ma^cmur*) and the Black Stone, onto Mount Abū Qubays.”³⁹

Abraham & the Ka‘ba

Remember we made the House a place of assembly for men and a place of safety; and take ye the place of Abraham as a place of prayer; and we covenanted (*ahidnā*) with Abraham and Ishmael, that they should sanctify my House for those who compass it round (*al-tā‘ifīn*), or use it as a retreat (*al-ākifīn*), or bow (*al-rikka^c*), or prostrate themselves (*al-sujūd*). (Quran 2:125)

The next prophet with an important relationship to the Ka‘ba is Abraham. Abraham is attributed to have built the structure of the Ka‘ba that demarcated the physical boundaries of the Ḥarām up to the time of Muhammad. His story ties the most directly with Muhammad’s message. In turn, Muhammad is linked to the heritage of all other previous prophets.

Of the three lies that Abraham said in his life, two of them were connected to fulfilling the command of God in attempting to turn away his family and people from false gods.⁴⁰ The first lie that Abraham told was when he feigned illness and snuck into the building in which the idols were stored to destroy all but one with an axe.⁴¹ When asked what happened, he claimed that the remaining idol, upon which was hung the offending axe, was the author of the carnage.

When Abraham made his way to the region of Mecca, he was married to both Sarah and Hagar, the latter having borne him Ishmael. Following the commandment of God, Abraham left Hagar and Ishmael in Mecca for a time. Ibn Abbas narrated that after a preordained amount of time,

Then Abraham stayed away from them for a period as long as Allah wished, and called on them afterwards. He saw Ishmael under a tree near [the] **Zamzam**, sharpening his arrows. When he saw Abraham, he rose up to welcome him (and they greeted each other as a father does with his son or a son does with his father). Abraham said, "O Ishmael! Allah has given me an order." Ishmael said, "Do what your Lord has ordered you to do." **Abraham asked, "Will you help me?" Ishmael said, "I will help you." Abraham said, "God has ordered me to build a house here," pointing to a hillock higher than the land surrounding it.** The Prophet added, "Then they raised the foundations of the House (i.e. the Ka'ba). Ishmael brought the stones and Abraham was building, and when the walls became high, Ishmael brought this stone and put it for Abraham who stood over it and carried on building, while Ishmael was handing him the stones, and both of them were saying, "O our Lord! Accept (this service) from us, Verily, You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing."⁴²

Some stories purport that Abraham was led to the spot where the Ka'ba was to be built in the shadow of the *khujuj*, a wind with two heads like a snake.⁴³ The stones for the building were taken from several holy mountains from various regions of the Middle East, and Gabriel delivered the Black Stone to Abraham after as it had been hidden away from the Flood during Noah's time.

As God intended, the actions of Abraham and Ishmael would have resounding impact on those believers that would follow them. The Quran states,

And when We made the House (at Mecca) a resort for mankind and sanctuary, (saying): Take as your place of worship the place where Abraham stood (to pray). And We imposed a duty upon (*ahidnā illa*) Abraham and Ishmael, (saying): Purify My House for those who go around (*al-tā'ifin*) and those who meditate therein and those who bow down and prostrate themselves (in worship). (2:125)

To this day, when pilgrims reach the Maqām Ibrāhīm (place of Abraham) they are to perform two *ra'kas* (prayers with prostration) in the manner of that great prophet. While

Islam hails to Ishmael and Judaism and Christianity to Isaac as heir to the promises of Abraham, they all hail to Abraham. When the religion of Abraham is mentioned within the Qurān, it specifically identifies him as not being of being a Jew (*yahūdiyyan*) or a Christian (*naṣrāniyan*), but calls him a pure submitter or upright man (*ḥanīfan musliman*).⁴⁴ This holiness was one of the reasons that it is Abraham that consistently guides those who are brought to the seventh level of Heaven. During the Night Journey, the Prophet saw Abraham resting against *al-bayt al-maʿmūr*.⁴⁵ †

Regardless of the irregularities in certain aspects of Abraham’s story, the main points hold an important place in the supporting metanarrative of Islam as the continuation of revealed religion. Multiple prophets prior to Abraham were commanded to perform the *tawāf* of the Kaʿba, and Abraham, who held a place of importance even among certain pagan considerations.[§]

From Abraham to the Jesus – a shift in focus

Between generations of prophets there are a few mentions of the Kaʿba but none that are very significant. In general, the stories of the prophets follow in tandem with the Torah and the Bible, but there are points of difference that highlight the Islamic nature of their prophetic calling. One prophet with a clear reference to the Kaʿba is Dhū al-Kifl, frequently identified with the biblical counterpart Ezekiel. In the Islamic tradition, Dhū ‘l-Kifl converted the king and people in Mecca and “dressed the Kaʿba,” presumably with a *kiswa* (a special veil that covers much of the building).⁴⁶

The spiritual nexus for these generations between Abraham and Muhammad was the First and Second Temples. The first Temple housed the Ark of the Covenant within the Holy of Holies, and the second had a raised portion of ground as a placeholder for the missing relic. Far from dispelling the importance of these buildings, Islamic writings treat them in their context with reverence and use similar terminology in describing them as they do the Kaʿba. In the Qurān, the Kaʿba is referred to as the Kaʿba, the House** (*al-bayt*), the Sacred House (*al-bayt al-ḥarām*), or ‘the Ancient House’ (*al-bayt al-ʿatīq*).^{48 49} These names all bear an immense similarity to the terminology used to describe the Hebrew Temple in the Torah. The terms used in the Torah include “House of the Lord,”⁵⁰ “House of prayer,”⁵¹ and “My House,”⁵²., all of which use iterations of the Hebrew word *bet*, sharing the same Semitic roots as the Arabic *bayt*. The language used in the Qurān and by those who narrated

† “Gabriel then ascended with me to the seventh heaven and requested that it be opened. It was said: ‘Who are you?’ He responded: ‘Gabriel’. It was then said: ‘Who is with you?’ He responded: ‘Muhammad’. It was then said: ‘Has revelation been sent to him?’ He responded: ‘Revelation has been sent to him’. It was then opened for us and there I was with Abraham who was leaning against the *bayt al-maʿmur* into which enter seventy thousand angels each day never to return.”

§ “Narrated Ibn ʿAbbās: “When the Prophet saw pictures in the Kaʿba, he did not enter it till he ordered them to be erased. When he saw the pictures of Abraham and Ishmael carrying the arrows of divination, he said, ‘May Allah curse them (i.e. the Quraysh, [who had thought to include these pictures inside of their most sacred sanctuary])! By Allah, neither Abraham nor Ishmael practiced divination by arrows.’”⁴⁷ (bracketed information added)

** While the Arabic script lacks the dichotomy of upper and lower case letters to distinguish noun classes, these specific references to *al-bayt* can be understood as having this kind of distinction in meaning.

the stories of the prophets to describe the Ka‘ba and the Temple carry potent cosmological conceptions of physical space. By connection, all those who come into contact with these views were affected by it. This cosmologically potent language was a way to communicate familiar spiritual cores and assert that those spiritual cores were Islam’s own. This served as an important proselytizing force used by Islam among Jews and Christians within the Arabian tribes.

The Hebrew Temple in the Qurān – Semiotics

The Islamic story of Zechariah (Zakariyā) is narrated in the Qurān in Sūrat Marīam. The beginning of the sura is devoted to narrating the stories of Zechariah, his son John, Mary mother of Jesus, and the affirmation of Jesus’ role as a prophet. Of the individuals mentioned in the Qurān most are also featured prominently in the New Testament. However, some connections are made that don’t exist within Christian tradition. Examples of this are Zechariah’s guardianship of Mary, who was born with the express purpose of serving God:

And her Lord accepted [Mary, mother of Jesus] with full acceptance and vouchsafed to her a goodly growth; and made Zachariah her guardian. Whenever Zachariah went into the sanctuary (*al-mihrāb*, i.e. the Hebrew Temple) where she was, he found that she had food. He said: O Mary! Whence cometh unto thee this (food)? She answered: It is from Allah. Allah giveth without stint to whom He will. (3:36-37)

Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth were old and without children, much akin to their forbearers, Abraham and Sarah. While Zechariah was in the temple praying to God for an heir, he was approached by an angel who informed him that his wife would indeed conceive, and that the boy’s name was to be Yaḥyā (John). Despite the miraculous answer to his prayer and being reminded that God created Zechariah and all mankind when they were nothing, Zechariah was incredulous and asked for a miracle. As a sign of this miracle, he was commanded not to speak for three days and nights.

While the superstructure of this story is undoubtedly familiar to both Christians and Muslims alike, there is one specific part of this narrative that gives it special place in our approach to the spiritual heritage of Islam. The place where this interchange took place was inside of the Second Temple, which was constructed around 516 BC and destroyed in 70 AD. The specific functions of the Jewish temple had many ritual components that were laid out at length in much of the Pentateuch. Zechariah, a descendant of Hārūn (Aaron, brother of Moses), was a priest and exercised his responsibilities adjacent to the Holy of Holies, the inner sanctum of the temple wherein none were allowed to go.

The words used in the Qurān for this situation differ from those in other contexts; the Qurānic story tells that Zechariah exited to his people *min al-mihrāb* (from the *mihrāb*), which was the same place that Marīam occupied while under his care.⁵³ The *mihrāb* in a *masjid* or *jāmi‘* (a small or large mosque, respectively) is an alcove built into the wall that indicates the *qibla*, or direction in which one must pray in order to face Mecca. During times of led prayer, the imam will face the congregants and guide them through the prayers. While it would be inappropriate for someone else to be inside the *mihrāb* (and therefore behind the

imam, which literally means ‘up front’) during the prayers, there are no other inhibitions that exist with respect to physical proximity.

The meaning of *miḥrāb* almost exclusively means this prayer niche, and similarly the term for Holy of Holies is *quds al-āqdās*. The various interpretations of the Qurān into English have *miḥrāb* meaning “the Chamber,” “the sanctuary,” “place of worship,” or simply as “*al-miḥrāb*.”⁵⁴ From existing sources, the word is the Arabic derivation with the root being ḥ-r-b, indicating some kind of struggle (for greater explication, see “Miḥrāb”).⁵⁵ In pre-Islamic literature, which context most readily lent itself to the Prophet’s words, the word would have indicated something between ‘a small throne-recess,’ ‘palace,’ ‘between two columns,’ or ‘a burial place.’ The practice of building *miḥrābs* is connected to Christian churches, Jewish synagogues post-200 AD, and Semitic polytheistic practices. In the first mosque, the *minbar* upon which the Prophet would sit was situated next to the *qibla*, and when he died, he was buried in the room adjoining the *qibla*. While Islamic architecture did not use such standardized terminologies until the patronage of the Umayyad dynasty and beyond, it is nonetheless significant that more precise architectural and spiritual terminology was not used; namely, the place where Gabriel visited Zechariah in the Temple was the Holy of Holies, *quds al-aqdās*. This location has a very specific purpose in Jewish Temple worship, and using this term would have placed him in that context. However, by placing Zechariah at the *miḥrāb*, which almost exclusively refers to a prayer niche, Zechariah is not explicitly presented as a Jew performing Jewish ordinances, but rather a *hanīfan musliman*, like Abraham.

In addition to the usage of *al-miḥrāb*, there is the matter of the Temple itself. During the Prophet’s Night Journey on *laylat al-qadr*, he was brought from the Masjid al-Ḥarām in Mecca to the furthest mosque (*al-aqṣā*), which is generally believed to be in Jerusalem. There he was shown signs of God’s power, including the promises of destruction given to the Jews were they to continue rejecting His messengers. One of these signs was the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans. At that time, neither the Masjid al-Ḥarām nor Masjid al-Aqṣā were home to physical mosques, but were still holy places, and the Masjid al-Ḥarām is mentioned many times in both Meccan and Medinan Sūras. In Mecca, it is regarded as home to the Ka’ba, the Maqām Ibrāhīm, and the Zamzam. While in Jerusalem it is home to the Temple Mount. Concerning the Temple’s destruction, the Qurān reads, “...when the second promise came, (we permitted your enemies) to disfigure your faces and to enter your temple (*al-masjid*) as they entered it the first time, and to lay waste all that they conquered with an utter wasting.”⁵⁶ Generally speaking, there are three words that are used to denote ‘temple’ or ‘place of worship’ in Arabic – the first is *mu’bad*, an Arabic word with the root ^c-b-d having to do with servitude. The second is *haykl* (*hekhal* in Hebrew), which is a much older word borrowed from Sumerian.⁵⁷ The third, which only appeared as late as the fifth century, is *masjid*, which is from the Arabic root s-j-d (which in turn was borrowed from Aramaic), having to do with prostration, and *masjid* literally meaning ‘place of (worshipful) prostration.’⁵⁸ Its usage encompassed structures of all known sects in the Meccan era and even carried over into the literature of subsequent generations of scholarship.

Akin to the *miḥrāb*, the full extent of the *masjid* in Islamic culture had yet to fully cement itself as the Islamic faith and architectural achievements progressed through the centuries. Its usage in the context of the Hebrew Temple as well as the reference to the

Temple Mount as Masjid al-Aqṣā, are both means of coopting the Jewish spiritual meaning and bond to the structure. It is fully consistent with the message of recapturing the message that was corrupted and recalling the promises that were broken.^{††}

The most crucial points of the Prophet's ministry was to demonstrate that his call was the same that came from God to Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. Additionally, that the traditions of the Jews and the Christians were in fact erroneous outgrowths of what was originally provided in the scriptures given through those prophets that preceded Muhammad. Even the terms for these scriptures, the Torah and the Christian Gospels, are only infrequently referred to as the Torah (*al-tūrāa*) and the Gospel (*al-injīl*), and more often as *al-kitāb*, which is usually a reference to The Book, meaning the Qurān. When Mary was told of what Jesus would be taught, the angel Gabriel said, "And He (God) will teach him The Book, the Wisdom, the Law (the Torah), and the Gospel," (*wa yu^callimuh al-kitāb wa al-ḥikma wa al-tūrāa wa al-injīl*, وَيُعَلِّمُهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ).⁵⁹ Other references to previous scripture include "the word of God" (*kalām allah*),⁶⁰ "what was sent down" (*mā unzila*),⁶¹ and other words that don't make direct reference to official Jewish or Christian canon.

CONCLUSION - What's ours is ours, and what's yours is ours

Lo! the first Sanctuary appointed for mankind was that at Becca (Mecca), a blessed place, a guidance to the peoples; Wherein are plain memorials (of Allah's guidance); the place where Abraham stood up to pray; and whosoever entereth it is safe. And pilgrimage to the House is a duty unto Allah for mankind, for him who can find a way thither. As for him who disbelieveth, (let him know that) lo! Allah is Independent of (all) creatures.

Say: O People of the Scripture! Why disbelieve ye in the revelations of Allah, when Allah (Himself) is Witness of what ye do?

Say: O People of the Scripture! Why drive ye back believers from the way of Allah, seeking to make it crooked, when ye are witnesses (to Allah's guidance)? Allah is not unaware of what ye do.

O ye who believe! If ye obey a party of those who have received the Scripture they will make you disbelievers after your belief. (3:97-100)

As we have seen in stories of the prophets starting with Adam, the Ka'ba, whether in its physical manifestation or as a spiritual placeholder for its celestial counterpart, *al-bayt al-ma mūr*, is the cosmically significant House of God in the Islamic conception of space. Unlike the Hebrew Temples, it has no need of priests as the expiatory functions can be

^{††} "These were the men to whom We gave the Book, and wisdom (*al-ḥ ukm*), and prophecy (*al-nubūa*): if these (their descendants) reject them, Behold! We shall entrust their charge to a new people who reject them not.

"No just estimate of Allah do they make when they say: "Nothing doth Allah send down to man (by way of revelation)" Say: "Who then sent down the Book which Moses brought?- a light and guidance to man: But ye make it into (separate) sheets for show, while ye conceal much (of its contents): therein were ye taught that which ye knew not- neither ye nor your fathers." Say: "Allah (sent it down)": Then leave them to plunge in vain discourse and trifling." 6:89-90.

carried out by individual practitioners. The *tawāf* and accompanying actions and prayers are the ceremony, and the Ka‘ba is its locus, and is a proxy for the Throne of God through the seven worlds and seven heavens. It is in effect God’s *khalīfa* (deputy) on Earth, *khalīfa* being the exegetically potent term also applied to the relationship of those leaders who led the umma after the passing of Muhammad.⁶² This term serves to reinforce the concept of fulfilling required roles that belong to another person or place that must be reallocated due to replacement of or separation from the original.⁶³

The ultimate importance of Abraham being a *ḥanīfan musliman* rather than a Jew or a Christian,^{‡‡} Zechariah coming from the *miḥrāb* and not *quds al-āqdās*, and that the Temple was *masjid* and not *haykl*, is in essence the rebranding, or ‘brand-retrieval’ as the case may be, of actors and an edifice given sacred meaning to Judaism and Christianity. For a time the significance of the sanctuary that kept the Ark of the Covenant held precedence and guided the believers through their worship. However, it was not the first, nor the permanent *axis mundi* upon which God wished His believers to center themselves. The First Temple was built by Solomon and the Second was authorized by the Persian Emperor Cyrus, but the Ka‘ba is “the ancient house” that God commanded to be built by the prophet Abraham.⁶⁴ By establishing the Ka‘ba as the primordial center of worship, integrating it into the story of the prophets, and then changing the *qibla* from the Temple in Jerusalem to the Ka‘ba, worship was symbolically restored from the axis observed by the prophets from Moses to Jesus – which had eventually become corrupted – back to the pure source of Adam and Abraham, highlighting the great importance that Muhammad played on the cosmic stage.

^{‡‡} “Or say ye that Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes were Jews or Christians? Say: Do ye know best, or doth Allah? And who is more unjust than he who hideth a testimony which he hath received from Allah? Allah is not unaware of what ye do.
“Those are a people who have passed away; theirs is that which they earned and yours that which ye earn. And ye will not be asked of what they used to do.” 2:140-141.

Notes

1. The Holy Quran 2:127, tanzil.net.
2. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs (Brill Online, 2014), s.v. “Ka‘ba,” accessed September 21, 2014, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ka/ba/COM_0401.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibn Kathir, *The Life of the Prophet Muhammad: Al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, trans. Trevor Le Grassick, vol. 1, (Reading: Garner Publishing Limited, 1998), accessed November 12, 2014, http://archive.org/stream/AlSiraAlNabawiyya4VolumeSet/Al-Sira%20al-Nabawiyya%20Vol%201_djvu.txt.
5. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., “Ka‘ba.”
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