STATE ISLAM IN THE BATTLE AGAINST EXTREMISM

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Emerging Trends in Morocco & Tunisia

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

IN LATE JANUARY 2016, several hundred Muslim religious scholars gathered in Marrakesh to discuss the deteriorating treatment of religious minorities in Muslim-majority countries. Against a regional backdrop of murderous campaigns targeting minorities by the Islamic State (IS) and al-Qaeda affiliates, the resulting "Marrakesh Declaration on the Rights of Religious Minorities in Predominantly Muslim Majority Communities" affirmed that "cooperation among all religious groups...must go beyond mutual tolerance and respect, to providing full protection for the rights and liberties to all religious groups in a civilized manner that eschews coercion, bias, and arrogance." Invoking the seventh-century Pact of Medina,[1] the Marrakesh Declaration called upon Muslim religious scholars to "develop a jurisprudence of the concept of 'citizenship'" compatible with Islamic principles embodied in the Medina Pact and modern international norms enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and related documents. In a sense, the religious figures gathered in Marrakesh were reaching back to move forward.

The scholars assembled in Marrakesh were a diverse group, as discussed later, but most can be classed as representatives of *state Islam* insofar as their home institutions are legally, administratively, and fiscally tied to the states governing their respective countries. In contrast to the United States, where the Constitution prohibits state establishment of religion, most Arab countries emerging from

colonial rule in the twentieth century incorporated Islam into their state- and nation-building projects, reflected in constitutional stipulations that Islam was "the religion of the state." State sponsorship of religion in these countries has translated into policies that would be unfamiliar and possibly anathema to most Americans, accustomed as they are to a stricter separation between religion and state. (Religion and politics are another matter...) For example, Arab public school curricula routinely incorporate religious instruction, and religious functionaries across the region often receive a state salary.

Institutions of state Islam are to be distinguished from movements like the Muslim Brotherhood, derivative Islamist groups, and Salafi (ultraconservative) movements lacking any formal connection to the state at their inception. Indeed, a central challenge confronting Arab states in the postcolonial period was the presence of nonstate movements threatening the states' pretension to a monopoly on religious interpretation and practice and, in some cases, seeking to alter the relationship between religion and state more generally. Over the years, the states took different approaches to these entities, sometimes banning them outright, other times blurring the lines between state and nonstate Islam by inviting some to participate in the political process or to otherwise work for state-linked religious institutions, and in still other instances allowing religiously oriented groups to operate in society so long as they refrained from political activity, thereby maintaining the state/nonstate dichotomy. To varying degrees, the recent uprisings disrupted the equilibria between state Islam and nonstate religious movements in the affected states. The Tunisian uprising, for example, produced a situation in which a formerly banned Islamist movement now commands a third of the parliament and occupies certain positions of state power, ostensibly altering the nature of state Islam in the birthplace of the so-called Arab Spring. Notwithstanding such shifts, this study is principally concerned with the activities of state-linked religious institutions.

In the policy debates over the causes, consequences, and potential cures for Islamist extremism, the institutions of state Islam have featured only marginally. Individuals associated with these institutions have occasionally garnered attention, as in September

2014 when a group of theologians, many affiliated with state-run religious institutions, publicly refuted a number of IS's scriptural justifications for practices like excommunication, slavery, and torture.[2] In early 2015, Egyptian president Abdul Fattah al-Sisi made international headlines after publicly urging the scholars of Al-Azhar, the Sunni world's preeminent institution of religious learning, based in Cairo, to lead a "revolution in religious discourse" aimed at countering the spread of extremist ideologies threatening the world's Muslims and the world writ large.[3] The *New York Times* and other Western media outlets took note of the recent Marrakesh Declaration,[4] and Washington DC think tanks have occasionally published articles on the latest effort of this or that state-linked religious institution to combat extremism.[5] But by and large, the scholars and institutions of state Islam have not attracted systematic examination in the search for alternatives to the extremist thought of groups like al-Qaeda and IS.

Several plausible explanations exist for the limited attention paid to institutions of state Islam in U.S. policy debates over violent extremism. First is the matter of its limited bandwidth. In the decade and a half following the 9/11 attacks, policy discussions concerning violent Islamist ideologies focused, understandably, on ways to counter anti-Americanism in the world's Muslim communities through innovations in U.S. public diplomacy. Important ideas emerged from these discussions, but insofar as the emphasis remained on bolstering assistance primarily to secular actors and organizations that could challenge the ideologies of religiously oriented extremist groups, institutions and elites associated with state Islam remained peripheral to such discussions.[6]

The lack of a sustained consideration of state Islam in these policy discussions probably also reflects the U.S. government's traditional, and again understandable, ambivalence toward interfering with religious institutions at home and abroad, given the U.S. Constitution's prohibition against formal state support for religion. The 2002 establishment of a Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, the more recent creation of an Office of Religion and Global Affairs within the State Department (S/RGA), and the accompanying formulation of a "U.S. Strategy on Religious Leader and Faith

Community Engagement" suggest this resistance may be softening. S/RGA's mandate, for example, calls for engaging religious leaders in efforts ranging from the advancement of human rights, pluralism, and tolerance to initiatives aimed at mitigating violent conflict, so long as this outreach remains "consistent with the U.S. Constitution and other laws; sensitive to local culture and beliefs; inclusive of a wide range of religious and non-religious actors; and mindful of the independence and credibility of the counterparts we engage."[7]

This last stipulation—on the need to remain "mindful of the independence and credibility of the counterparts we engage"—highlights a third likely reason state Islam has remained underexplored, and even dismissed outright, in the search for alternatives to religiously motivated extremist thought. There is a perception, both in the region and in some U.S. academic and policy circles, that institutions of state Islam cannot offer sustainable alternatives to violent religious extremism because their own credibility has been compromised by the longstanding association with autocratic political regimes. A Tunisian staffer at the U.S. embassy in Tunis articulated it this way in February 2015: "In the Muslim world today, there is state Islam and there is credible Islam." Several months later, a high-ranking official in the S/RGA echoed the sentiment, decrying to this author the "zero credibility" enjoyed by Egypt's Al-Azhar. The perception is sufficiently widespread to warrant closer analysis.

In most of the formerly Ottoman territories—and in some, like Morocco, that remained largely independent of Ottoman control but could not escape European imperialism—the trajectory of state-religion relations has been marked by increasing state control over religious institutions that traditionally enjoyed autonomy or near autonomy from political authorities. In the Arab world, as venerated institutions of religious learning such as the Qarawiyyin mosque-university in Morocco, the Zaytuna Grand Mosque in Tunisia, and Al-Azhar in Egypt came under their respective states' oversight, their credibility diminished in some circles to the extent they came to be perceived as tools of increasingly authoritarian, illegitimate political regimes seeking religious "cover." The emergence of Islamist movements, and especially Salafi groups, further challenged the pretension of establishment religious scholars, or *ulama*, to sole

guardianship of the religious realm. For some, state Islam has been too tarnished, too bankrupted to matter anymore.

Still, the presumed dichotomy between "credible" and state Islam has been overstated. Even if we acknowledge the anecdotal evidence that the credibility of state Islam has been dented, affiliated institutions matter to large numbers of citizens throughout Muslim-majority states. Available polling data reveals high levels of support for these institutions and a widespread conviction that the state should play an assertive role in the religious realm. A December 2011 Gallup survey, for example, found that 95 percent of Egyptians had confidence in Al-Azhar.[8] A 2015 survey conducted by the United Arab Emirates–based Tabah Foundation, in partnership with Zogby Research Services, found that majorities of millennials in Morocco, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, and the UAE believe the state should regulate Friday sermons, public religious lectures, and religious TV shows; and strong majorities (e.g., 89% in Morocco and 90% in Egypt) believe the state should "ensure that religious discourse is not used to promote violence, incitement and hatred."[9] If social media are any indication, an average of 688,000 Egyptians visit Al-Azhar's website every month, and the former Grand Mufti of Egypt Ali Gomaa has earned over 1.1 million "likes" on his Facebook page.[10] In Morocco, 85 percent of citizens who regularly watch religious channels tune in to al-Sadisa, a state-run Islamic television station created partly to counter religious extremism.[11] All this suggests we should at least pause before dismissing institutions of state Islam on the grounds of limited credibility.

Furthermore, setting aside the ideological sway state Islam may or may not carry in the general population, the affiliated institutions continue to educate large numbers of citizens. By the early 1990s, some 750,000 Moroccan children were enrolled in Quranic preschools, and a decade later the state was reporting that 22,000 Moroccan primary and secondary school–age children were studying full time in the country's 388 state-run religious schools.[12] By 2011, an estimated 2 million Egyptian youths ages five to nineteen were studying in Al-Azhar's network of primary and secondary schools (*al-maahad al-azhariyah*), and roughly half a million Egyptian students were enrolled in Al-Azhar University and its affiliated

branches.[13] Such figures suggest the *potential* impact of such institutions remains considerable, and therefore so should our interest in determining the extent to which they are confronting and countering violent Islamist thought across the region.

A final reason to grant institutions of state Islam serious consideration concerns the diversity of scholars included in that group. It is true that the lowest common denominator among them remains an ostensible conservatism vis-à-vis state power—though even on this point, institutions like Al-Azhar contain factions sympathetic to state challengers like the Muslim Brotherhood.[14] One is unlikely to find scholars at the state-affiliated Mohammedia League of Moroccan Ulama denouncing the king's status as "commander of the faithful," a foundational principle upon which the Moroccan regime has built its legitimacy. But support for maintaining basic state structures need not, and indeed does not, dictate a monolithic religious establishment when it comes to matters of religious reform and countering extremism. If anything, the limited ability of institutions like the League of Moroccan Ulama to promote progressive interpretations of the faith does not reflect a religious establishment unified in its opposition to reform so much as the diluted effect of various factions competing for supremacy within that religious establishment. From a policy standpoint, acknowledging and understanding this diversity can help explain the constraints on reformism thus far and, more important, highlight possible opportunities for future partnership. True, dismissing these institutions outright would eliminate the trouble of dealing with members of Morocco's regional councils of *ulama* who have denounced Muslim women's efforts to gain greater visibility and influence in the religious realm. But ignoring state-run religious institutions would also lead to overlooking the efforts of women serving on Morocco's High Council of Ulama to frame the regional councils' agendas. Similarly missed would be progressive thinkers like Asma Lamrabet, who runs the Center for the Study of Women in Islam, a research center under the auspices of Morocco's Mohammedia League of Moroccan Ulama and the first state-run institute of its kind in the Arab world.

Rather than write off state Islam entirely, then, a more fruitful set of questions would include: In the ongoing quest for antidotes to the

extremist ideas of groups like IS and al-Qaeda, to what extent can institutions of state Islam offer plausible, sustainable alternatives? Where do the constraints on such alternatives lie? Where are the most promising opportunities? And insofar as institutions of state Islam are already involved in challenging violent Islamist ideologies throughout the region, what are the implications of this involvement for U.S. policymakers seeking constructive engagement with Arab and Muslim-majority allies? It is to these lines of inquiry that the present study speaks.

TWO STATES, TWO MODELS

In tackling these questions, the study examines the involvement of Moroccan and Tunisian institutions of state Islam in confronting and countering violent Islamist ideologies. Because this paper principally concerns the battle of ideas—as opposed to the equally necessary security-related initiatives aimed at dismantling terrorist networks and defeating groups like IS militarily—it focuses on policies implicating institutions that disseminate religious education and frame public religious discourse in these countries, namely: mosques, schools, and institutes of higher Islamic learning.

Key similarities and differences between Morocco and Tunisia make the countries ripe for a comparative examination that can potentially serve as a fruitful starting point for further research into the evolving tenor of state Islam in the Levant and the Gulf. First, Morocco and Tunisia are home to the Sunni Muslim world's oldest centers of religious learning, so any discussion of Sunni religious institutions that omits them would miss an important part of the story. Tunisia's Qayrawan and Zaytuna mosques (opened in 670 and 703 CE, respectively) and Morocco's Qarawiyyin mosque (established in 859 CE) have gone through varying periods of influence and decline, but in both countries the inherited legacies of these institutions weigh on current efforts to reform religious discourse.

Second, the different religion-state dynamics in Morocco and Tunisia enable tentative conclusions about the potential impact of such dynamics on countering extremist thought. While both states

in the postcolonial period adopted constitutions declaring Islam the "religion of the state," there was considerable variation in how this establishment of religion translated into policies regulating religious institutions. This study highlights how such variation helps account for different reform prospects in each country. For example, the fact that Morocco's head of state has for decades been the country's supreme religious authority—a configuration not found in Tunisia—grants the king greater flexibility in enlisting Moroccan Islam to counter extremism. Likewise, Tunisia's decision to shut down or let languish many traditional centers of religious learning at independence—in contrast to Morocco's decision to allow many of these centers to continue functioning—has more recently deprived the state of tools to offer robust, credible intellectual alternatives to extremist ideologies.

Third, the selected countries have experienced different political trajectories since the 2011 uprisings. Whereas Morocco adopted a gradualist model of reform under the monarchical framework, Tunisia has more forcefully democratized. These countries' emerging political landscapes have carried implications for Moroccan and Tunisian religious institutions generally, and for their participation in state-led efforts to counter extremist religious ideas specifically. In Tunisia, for instance, the Jasmine Revolution ultimately enhanced the state's legitimacy by allowing for previously excluded Islamist movements to participate in politics, raising the possibility that state-linked religious institutions like the Zaytuna or the Ministry of Religious Affairs will now enjoy greater credibility in their efforts to counter extremism. Yet the democratic transition also bred instabilities that have hampered the state's ability to pursue deeper reforms in religious education and in its religious realm more generally. In Morocco, meanwhile, the post-Spring political landscape reinforced the monarchy's grip on religious institutions, permitting the regime to continue reforming the content and structures of religious instruction. In both countries, understanding the position of state Islam requires familiarity with the political backdrop against which the dominant religious institutions are evolving.

The focus on these two North African countries is not meant to diminish the importance of state Islam in other Arab or Muslim-

majority countries. Rather, the hope is that in elucidating certain dynamics unfolding in two relatively stable Arab states today, researchers and policy analysts will consider how these dynamics are unfolding elsewhere in the region and think strategically about what such dynamics might mean for U.S. efforts to partner with regional allies on countering violent Islamism. Egypt's institutions of state Islam are primed for examination, and Gulf countries such as the United Arab Emirates face their own challenges in enlisting religious institutions to counter extremism. Beginning the conversation with a comparative look at Morocco and Tunisia should be seen as that—a beginning.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURES OF STATE ISLAM

The case studies that follow offer empirical support for two general arguments about the role of state-run religious institutions in countering violent Islamist ideologies. The first relates to content, and the second concerns structure.

CONTENT. A review of the discourse emanating in recent years from institutions of state Islam reveals a mix of positive and negative trends. Two positive developments are noteworthy. First, state Islam has sought to demonstrate compatibility between adherents' religious identities as Muslims and their national identities as citizens. The backdrop of failing states and transnational extremist movements sweeping the region makes these efforts to reinforce the nation-state all the more necessary and laudable. Second, institutions of state Islam have sought to demonstrate compatibility between religious principles and notions of pluralism, tolerance, and minority rights (albeit with important caveats)—notions that groups like IS and al-Qaeda have sought to portray as foreign to Islam. To the extent that institutions of state Islam are pushing back against that portrayal, they are making an important contribution to the broader ideological debates under way in the Muslim world.

Alongside such positive developments, however, two additional trends deserve mention. First, although scholars affiliated with institutions of state Islam have rejected many violent interpretations of religious scripture touted and implemented by groups like IS, they have not yet offered a robust alternative to the interpretive enterprise IS and its peers have adopted. Statements and teachings coming out of institutions like Tunisia's Ministry of Religious Affairs and Morocco's High Council of Ulama have tended to depict IS's interpretations of religious scripture as "false," "wrong," contrary to "true Islam," or damaging to "moderate Islam" without advancing more forceful or sophisticated explanations thereof. Likewise, initiatives like Morocco's new international imam-training program are often conceived on the assumption that nefarious interpretations of religious scripture reflect a lack of familiarity with that scripture. Ignorance of text (and context!) undoubtedly contributes to radicalization in some instances, but often enough ignorance is not the culprit. The problem with someone like Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the self-proclaimed caliph of IS, is not that he is unfamiliar with the Quran or the accepted corpus of hadith. The problem is that he knows the Quran by heart and can cite the hadith extensively—facts that lend legitimacy to his self-identified status as a caliph. Western governments looking for a new hermeneutics of religion—to say nothing of Muslim youths seeking to make their faith relevant to modern life—will likely be disappointed if they pin their hopes on state Islam in the Arab world.[15]

A second, more worrisome development ironically stems from the effort to push back against extremist rhetoric. In many cases, state-linked religious scholars have concluded that the way to cleanse religious discourse of extremist strains is to homogenize that discourse. Laudable as the end goal may be, the drive to unify the teachings of state-linked religious institutions can sometimes lead to the very intolerance these institutions are ostensibly condemning. For example, state Islam's commendable condemnation of terrorism and Sunni extremism—reflected in statements lambasting groups like IS and even the occasional public critique of Wahhabism—is often matched by an equally harsh rhetorical

treatment of Shiism. The anti-Shiite sentiment occasionally flowing through the discourse of state Islam reflects and reinforces a sectarianism plaguing the region, and it undermines accompanying rhetoric on the need to respect the rights of minorities and uphold religious liberty in Muslim-majority states. In this vein, it was telling that the recent Marrakesh summit on protecting minorities left off the agenda any consideration of minority sects *within* Islam.[16]

STRUCTURE. The involvement of state Islam in countering extremist thought has been, and will likely remain, dictated partly by the structural configurations governing the relevant institutions in a given country. Three configurations are especially salient: (1) the decisionmaking structures within these institutions, (2) the legal/administrative rules governing the relationship between these institutions (e.g., between Morocco's High Council of Ulama and the country's Ministry of Pious Endowments and Islamic Affairs), and (3) the legal/administrative rules governing the relationship between these institutions and the leading institutions of political authority (e.g., between the League of Moroccan Ulama and the monarchy, or between Tunisia's Zaytuna Grand Mosque and the elected government).

Structural considerations are also useful in explaining the degree of state Islam's involvement in reform efforts because, in many instances, a religious institution's ability to engage in ideological debates stems from its situational placement within the broader religious realm and from its legal mandate to function within that realm. To cite a specific example, it matters much that the only Moroccan body permitted to issue religious guidelines, or fatawa, is housed within a larger council of scholars presided over by the king and competing with more progressive-leaning bureaus within the Ministry of Pious Endowments and Islamic Affairs and the League of Moroccan Ulama, both of which are also under the king's direct purview. Or consider the Tunisian case, where decisions about regulating religious institutions and practice now fall to democratically elected officials who hail from religious and secular parties alike and may disagree about the state's

proper role in religion. The checks and balances implied by such structural configurations have shaped the resulting involvement of the relevant religious institutions in both countries' efforts to counter extremism.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Each case study offers specific recommendations for policymakers working on U.S.-Morocco and U.S.-Tunisia relations, but here two overarching recommendations can guide U.S. government officials as they engage with Arab allies to push back against extremist Islamist ideas.

First, policymakers looking to develop relationships with local partners should include state-sponsored religious institutions, and scholars affiliated with state-linked religious associations, among those potential partners. The principal framework for U.S. engagement with religious leaders abroad is the earlier-mentioned "U.S. Strategy on Religious Leader and Faith Community Engagement," which calls for "more robust engagement with religious and faith communities, as part of a broader effort to reach out to a diverse set of civil society actors" in the pursuit of three overarching policy goals: (1) to "promote sustainable development and more effective humanitarian assistance"; (2) to "advance pluralism and human rights, including the protection of religious freedom"; and (3) to "prevent, mitigate, and resolve violent conflict and contribute to local and regional stability and security." The language of the strategy implies that religious leaders and institutions abroad constitute "civil society actors"—that is, that they remain autonomous from the states in which they operate. However, as explained above, most religious institutions in Arab and Muslim-majority states bear some connection to state authority, and some of these institutions are already pursuing policy goals that overlap with the policy goals outlined in the U.S. strategy, so to ignore them as potential partners would be a mistake. In many cases, the regional entities promoting "respect for human rights of members of minority and marginalized groups, pluralism, tolerance, and sensitivity to and respect for the beliefs and traditions of others" are state-linked religious institutions. Similarly,

the strategy calls on U.S. policymakers to "work with religious leaders to address both religious and non-religious causes of violence and support their ongoing initiatives to build peaceful societies." Indeed, U.S. officials will find that many of those religious leaders are affiliated with state-run religious institutions. Why rule them out as partners?

Second, policymakers devising and dispensing educational assistance should include institutions of religious education when considering potential beneficiaries. To varying degrees, states in the region have concluded that religious institutions—and especially institutions of religious instruction—must be at the forefront of efforts to fight extremist religious ideas. To the extent that the United States identifies interests in this area, U.S. policymakers should consider supporting local educational initiatives aimed at reforming religious instruction with a view to countering extremist teachings. A goal of this study is to bring such initiatives to light.

To be sure, state Islam is not a panacea for the scourge of radicalism. Rather, U.S. policymakers would do well to think of state Islam as one component in a drug cocktail aimed at eradicating, or at least reducing the symptoms of, a multifaceted disease. To keep the medical analogy going, state Islam merits attention for its potential effectiveness in inoculating individuals from future radicalization, not as a cure for advanced metastasis. The students at Morocco's imam-training academy who will return to their West African (and, increasingly, European) homes to teach in mosques and schools cannot be expected to have much impact on individuals who have decided to join a local al-Qaeda affiliate. But insofar as they can lay a sound foundation for individuals unschooled in Islamic instruction, these future imams have an important role to play in the broader fight. The key is in recognizing the population in a given country for whom the teachings and activities of state-linked religious institutions resonate, and finding ways to lend support where welcomed.

STATE ISLAM IN MOROCCO & THE PARADOX OF REFORM

AT A MEETING OF HIS COUNCIL of Ministers on February 6, 2016, Morocco's King Mohammed VI instructed the government to reform the country's religious education curricula and textbooks with a view to "emphasizing in this education the values of tolerant Islam, in the framework of the Sunni Maliki rite, which advances moderation, tolerance, and coexistence with different cultures and civilizations."[17] This is not the first time the king has urged such measures. Observers of Morocco's religious realm often point to the 2003 Casablanca terrorist attacks, in which thirty-three individuals were killed and more than one hundred injured, as the trigger for such efforts.[18] In fact, the bombings only added urgency to a reform process under way since the mid-1990s, when the state had begun revising religious education curricula to incorporate discourse on human rights and stress compatibility between Islamic norms and ethics on the one hand, and notions of pluralism, tolerance, and citizenship on the other. Indeed, the current law governing the country's network of religious schools dates to a year before the Casablanca bombings, when Morocco's Ministry of Education issued a series of guidelines calling for "the values of Islam, the values of a modern identity and its ethical and cultural principles, the values of citizenship, and the values of human rights and associated principles" to inform all future public school curricula.[19]

Since the mid-2000s, Morocco has sought to position itself as a regional leader in the fight against religious extremism, offering what it refers to as a model of a "tolerant" Islam that other Mus-

lim countries should emulate in taking on violent Islamist ideologies. A central paradox of the Moroccan case, however, is that while the specificities of its religious realm have enabled the state to pursue wide-ranging religious reforms unmatched, but not unnoticed, throughout the Arab world, those same peculiarities may ultimately limit the transferability of Morocco's reforms to other contexts. Still, the kingdom's religious authorities are proceeding in the hope that they have found a workable model, the underlying principles of which—if not the specific institutions—ought to prove exportable beyond Morocco's borders.

To outline the contours of state Islam in Morocco, and to evaluate its role in countering extremism, this section begins with a brief excursion into the modern history of the country's religious realm. It then describes and analyzes the recent reforms aimed at restructuring the institutions of state Islam, revising the content of religious education, and regulating the training of imams and religion instructors.[20] A concluding segment considers implications for U.S. policymakers keen to engage constructively with Morocco in countering violent extremism.

STATE AND RELIGION IN POST-INDEPENDENCE MOROCCO

An exhaustive look at the modern history of state-religion relations in Morocco exceeds the scope of this study, but two elements of that history are worth highlighting because they pertain to the kingdom's current reform agenda.[21] The first is the religious basis of the monarchy's legitimacy, embodied in the Alaouite dynasty's claim of descent from the Prophet Muhammad and the king's designation as the country's leading religious authority, or commander of the faithful. The second is the relative continuity in the functioning of traditional religious institutions since independence from the French in 1956. The paper addresses each of these in turn.

The Alaouite sultans have touted their descent from the Prophet Muhammad since the seventeenth century, when they established

dominance over large swaths of Moroccan territory. Still, the prophetic lineage of the ruling dynasty—what is usually referred to as Sharifism or Sharifianism[22]—did not immunize the Alaouites from continued challenges to their political and religious authority. On the contrary, for centuries much of the territory in what later became unified Morocco remained under the control of local tribal confederations, and the Alaouites continued to compete with learned religious elites (*ulama*) and Sufi orders for hegemony over the religious realm, especially in areas beyond central state control.[23] In the early twentieth century, a new source of competition came in the form of prospective European penetration, prompting the Alaouites to once again invoke their religious bona fides to justify their leadership. In this vein, a 1908 project for a Moroccan constitution cited the state's Muslim nature and the eminence accorded the sultan, who was designated as the defender of religion, supreme commander of the armed forces, and chief of domestic and international policy. The blending of the sultan's religious and political functions was short-lived, as the French authorities ultimately made a clear distinction between the sultan as religious leader and the colonial, elite-led government as the secular, sovereign power of the state.[24]

The Alaouites sought to revive this blend of religious and political leadership after independence, coupling the Sharifian identity with the notion that the sultan, renamed king in 1957, was also Amir al-Mouminin, or commander of the faithful. The religious basis of the monarchy's claim to rule has been enshrined in Morocco's constitutions since 1962, when the first foundational text adopted after independence declared Islam "the religion of the state" and described the king as "the Commander of the Faithful, [who] symbolizes the unity of the nation, guarantees the perennial nature and continuity of the State, and enforces Islam as well as the constitution." The 1962 constitution likewise declared that the king was "sacred and inviolable" and identified the country's motto as "God, Homeland, King." Identical language appeared in amended constitutions of 1970, 1972, 1992, and 1996, all of which referred to Morocco as a "sovereign Muslim State" in which the king, as commander of the faithful, was "sacred and inviolable." In the most recent constitution, adopted in 2011 following the Arab

Spring, the king is no longer referred to as "sacred," but he retains his commander of the faithful status.[25]

The religious underpinnings of the monarchy's claim to rule partly account for the regime's decision to allow traditional institutions of religious learning to continue functioning after independence. In contrast to states like Egypt or Tunisia, where the postcolonial regimes pursued more aggressively secularizing policies that brought traditional institutions of Islamic learning under state control or eliminated them altogether, the post-independence Alaouite monarchs largely left alone the thousands of traditional Quranic schools dotting the Moroccan landscape. Similarly, the state initially took a hands-off approach to traditional institutes of higher Islamic learning like Qarawiyyin in Fes, though the latter did come under a degree of state regulation in the mid-1960s. In the ensuing decades, Hassan II, the current monarch's father, encouraged a proliferation of Quranic schools (known as *msid* in Moroccan dialect), created new state-run institutes of higher Islamic education like the Rabat-based Dar al-Hadith al-Hassania, and promoted a growth in the number of private schools and associations dedicated to Islamic learning. The latter often had names like *Dar al-Quran* (House of Quran) and *Dar al-Hadith* (House of Hadith), and they were especially prevalent in the southern area around Marrakesh and to the north around Tetouan. Scholars have estimated that Quranic schools for all age levels more than doubled from 30,000 in the late 1960s to nearly 70,000 by 1980. At the preschool level alone, the Moroccan Ministry of Education was reporting in the 1990s that more than 750,000 children were being educated in nearly 37,000 Quranic preschools.[26]

Throughout most of Hassan's reign (1961–1999), the expansion in the number and type of religious learning institutions proceeded without much in the way of state regulation. There were occasional efforts to strengthen the bureaucratic mechanisms responsible for managing the religious realm, as in 1981 when Hassan created a Supreme Council of Ulama under his supervision, and a host of affiliated regional councils tasked with carrying out the Supreme Council's policies. Likewise, in 1993 Hassan reorganized

the Ministry of Pious Endowments and Islamic Affairs to include a new directorate charged with "training of mid- and upper-level religious functionaries, as well as preachers," ostensibly to gain some measure of control over the relevant institutions.[27] But such ad hoc gestures were no match for the proliferation of unregulated mosques and other loci of religious instruction that continued throughout Hassan's reign.

The regime's encouragement of autonomous religious institutions throughout the 1970s and 1980s—a policy largely aimed at undercutting leftist opposition movements—eventually came back to haunt the Alaouites. This was because the lack of government oversight of Quranic schools and religious associations created a space for religiously inspired opposition movements that ultimately posed a threat to the monarchy. Many of the *dour al-Quran*, as the term is known in the plural, that cropped up in the 1970s and 1980s, for example, were financed by Saudi patrons seeking to spread Wahhabi doctrine. Lessons at these schools often challenged the unity and hegemony of the Maliki rite that had persisted in Morocco for centuries, and rejected the commandership of the faithful, urging that the Amir al-Mouminin be replaced by an Islamic caliphate (*khalifa islamiyah*).[28]

Even Dar al-Hadith al-Hassania, the king's prized creation, was not immune from antimonarchist discourses. Since its inception, the institution had recruited teachers from Syria and Egypt, principally to fill a teacher shortage. Many of these instructors sympathized with the Muslim Brotherhood and related movements, and consequently Islamist ideologies that had little patience for hereditary monarchy trickled into the classrooms.[29] By the 1990s, emerging groups with names like al-Salafiyah al-Jihadiyah were claiming inspiration from Sayyid Qutb and other Muslim Brotherhood ideologues, labeling Moroccans who supported the king as apostates, and urging the restoration of the Caliphate. It was this relatively unregulated religious realm that Mohammed VI inherited upon ascending the throne in 1999. The Casablanca bombings in 2003 brought the risks of an unmanaged religious sphere into sharp relief for the monarchy, prompting the new king to announce a series of comprehensive reforms affecting the kingdom's religious institu-

tions. Those reforms were well under way when massive protests broke out in early 2011.

THE MOROCCAN SPRING

Morocco's comparatively tame variant of an Arab Spring began February 20, 2011, when protestors poured into streets across the kingdom demanding an end to corruption, greater limits on the king's power, and more government attention to poverty and unemployment. Like its counterparts throughout the region, Morocco's youth-dominated February 20 Movement remained largely leaderless and attracted a broad swath of the population. But unlike its peers in Tunisia, Egypt, and elsewhere, Morocco's protest movement ultimately retained a firm commitment to the regime, allowing the monarchy to avoid the crisis of legitimacy that accompanied other Arab uprisings.

On March 9, the king announced his intention to amend the constitution with a view to strengthening parliament and responding to protestors' demands. A blue-ribbon commission was appointed to work out the details, and a new constitution was approved in a nationwide referendum three months later. At the time, the changes attracting most attention included the formal recognition of Tamazight, the language of the Berber community—which constitutes roughly 40 percent of the Moroccan population—institutional mechanisms to ensure an independent judiciary, and a requirement that the king appoint the prime minister, now designated the "head of government," from the party holding the most seats in parliament. Indeed, since the parliamentary elections of November 2011, Morocco has had a prime minister from the country's leading Islamist party, the Justice and Development Party (PJD).

The constitutional referendum and the PJD's ascension had one very important, if indirect, effect on the prospects of religious reform and state-led initiatives to counter Islamist extremism. By deftly getting out in front of the protests, and agreeing to follow the letter of the new law in appointing an Islamist prime minister, Mohammed VI secured the PJD's commitment to refrain from interfering

with the religious realm, and he undercut the more radical, antimon-
archy Islamists of *al-Adl wal-Ihsan* (Justice and Benevolence), many
of whom had participated in the February 20 Movement but chose
to boycott the constitutional referendum and ensuing elections.[30]
With the PJD content to operate in its clearly demarcated policy
arenas, and al-Adl sidelined, the monarchy could proceed with
reforms to the religious realm virtually unobstructed. In this regard,
a series of constitutional innovations dealing with the High Coun-
cil of Ulama were key. Created in the early 1980s, the High Council
had undergone a restructuring in 2004 (discussed later), but 2011
marked the first time the institution became constitutionally man-
dated as the sole legitimate issuer of *fatawa*. Moreover, the new con-
stitution for the first time stipulated that the High Council would
issue these guidelines based on "the tolerant principles, rules and
aims of Islam."[31] Thus, Morocco's "spring" afforded the monarchy an
opportunity to solidify its hold on the religious realm and continue
a reform process aimed at moderating public religious discourse, a
process the next section examines in greater depth.

REVITALIZING MOROCCAN ISLAM

Since Mohammed VI's ascension, the monarchy has undertaken a
sweeping overhaul of the kingdom's religious realm. Frequently framed
as efforts to "revitalize Moroccan Islam," the reforms have rested on
three conceptual pillars: insistence on the Maliki legal school,[32] adher-
ence to the Ashari theological doctrine,[33] and promotion of Sufism,
or Islamic mysticism. These orientations stem from several consider-
ations. All three have historical roots in the country (e.g., Malikism
has long been the dominant legal school, or *madhab*, across North
Africa), so the notion that they represent Moroccan Islam likely reso-
nates with many citizens. The insistence on a unity of legal rite and
theological creed flows from a desire to undermine strands of Islamic
thought and practice that may identify with non-Maliki schools, such
as the Hanbali school, to which many ultraconservatives, or Salafists,
adhere, and from an admittedly debatable assumption that standard-
izing the system of religious jurisprudence will ensure greater social

cohesion. Additionally, there are specific attributes of these orientations that state officials believe offer bulwarks against extremism. Malikism, for example, relies not only on the Quran and the *sunna* (the sayings and behaviors attributed to the Prophet) as foundations for deriving Islamic law but also on the accepted cultural norms of the people living in Medina around the time of the revelation, implying that evolving customs must be considered when interpreting the religious law. The preference for the theological doctrine of Asharism stems partly from its promotion of human reason, and from the belief that it most closely adheres to the theological outlooks of the Prophet's companions—recall the Alaouites' prophetic lineage—while providing a check against both Wahhabism and Shiism. Lastly, state officials have been promoting Sufism for its emphasis on the individual's relationship with God and its historical opposition to Salafism and politicized forms of the religion.[34]

Under the framework of these three orientations, the state has pursued reforms that can be classed into three broad categories: (1) structural innovations consolidating the institutions of state Islam under the monarchy's control, (2) changes in the content of religious education, and (3) new regulations for imams and other individuals entrusted to teach religion.

RESTRUCTURING THE RELIGIOUS REALM. Based on reforms implemented in the early to mid-2000s, responsibility for religious instruction throughout the country now falls on three principal institutions operating under the king's direct control: the Ministry of Pious Endowments and Islamic Affairs, the High Council of Ulama, and the Mohammedia League of Moroccan Ulama (see Figure 1). In 2002, Mohammed VI appointed Dr. Ahmed Tawfiq as minister of pious endowments and Islamic affairs. Tawfiq, a history professor at the University of Rabat, replaced Abdelkebir Alaoui Mdaghri, whom some had accused of sympathizing with Salafist and even Wahhabist strains appearing in the kingdom. Tawfiq, by contrast, belongs to one of Morocco's leading Sufi orders, the Boutchichiyah, and his Sufi background, coupled with his lack of formal theological training, has informed many of the initiatives launched during his tenure.
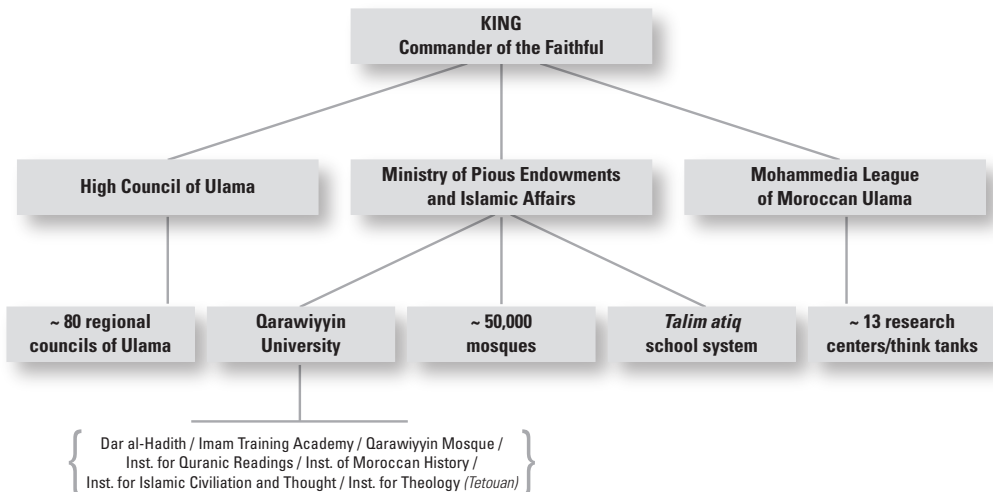
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                    ┌──────────────────────────┐
                    │          KING            │
                    │ Commander of the Faithful│
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High Council of Ulama	Ministry of Pious Endowments and Islamic Affairs	Mohammedia League of Moroccan Ulama

~ 80 regional councils of Ulama	Qarawiyyin University	~ 50,000 mosques	*Talim atiq* school system	~ 13 research centers/think tanks

{ Dar al-Hadith / Imam Training Academy / Qarawiyyin Mosque /
Inst. for Quranic Readings / Inst. of Moroccan History /
Inst. for Islamic Civiliation and Thought / Inst. for Theology *(Tetouan)* }

Figure 1. **INSTITUTIONS OF STATE ISLAM IN MOROCCO**

In 2003, Tawfiq oversaw a massive reorganization of the Ministry of Pious Endowments and Islamic Affairs, which included the creation of a new Directorate of Traditional Education (*al-Talim al-Atiq*) to oversee the system of traditional schools, alongside revamped bureaus centralizing control over the country's institutes of higher Islamic learning and more closely monitoring the country's 50,000 mosques.[35] The Endowments Ministry has always been among the country's "sovereign" bureaucracies, falling under the king's purview—that is, out of the government's hands—and even physically housed on the palace grounds in Rabat. Since 2003, the ministry's budget has more than doubled, reflecting the monarchy's sense that reforming the religious realm demanded serious investment and the king's trust in Tawfiq to take a leading role in carrying out those reforms.[36]

A year after the ministry's reorganization, the king issued a decree restructuring the High Council of Ulama and its affiliated regional councils.[37] The 2004 law replaced the original fourteen regional councils with thirty regional councils of between eight and sixteen members, and it created an additional layer of three-member local

councils attached to each regional council. The regional councils report to the High Council, a forty-seven-member body presided over by the king that now includes two women. According to the 2004 law, the High Council is tasked with coordinating relations among the local councils, the royal cabinet, and the Endowments Ministry. In the last decade, the number of regional councils has grown to around eighty, each comprising individuals appointed by the king. By 2009, thirty-six women were serving on the regional councils, and in 2015 the king announced his intention to increase this number.[38] In the last decade, the councils of ulama have been principally engaged in responding to religious queries, overseeing local religious activities, leading literacy campaigns in rural areas, monitoring mosques and traditional religious schools, and upgrading religious education textbooks and curricula to meet the king's decrees (an initiative discussed shortly).

However, reflecting checks on more reformist thinking, the High Council and its regional affiliates remain bastions of conservative thinking. The head of the High Council, Mohammed Yessef, recently opposed calls to grant legal licenses to Shiite and Christian associations in Morocco, arguing that permitting such groups would sow discord and threaten stability in the kingdom.[39] Officials at the Endowments Ministry and civil society activists routinely express frustration with the obstructionism of the High Council and its local affiliates. One high-level ministry official estimated that 90 percent of the regional councils are directed by individuals opposed to the reforms, "so while there are steps in the right direction, we are far from a moderate Islam."[40] Civil society activists working with the regional ulama council in Sidi Moumen, the impoverished Casablanca neighborhood that produced several of the 2003 bombers, have similarly expressed concerns that council members remain reluctant to counter extremist religious teachings circulating among vulnerable youth.[41]

Counteracting the conservatism of the High Council and its regional affiliates is the more progressive Mohammedia League of Moroccan Ulama, the third principal institution engaged in disseminating religious knowledge throughout the kingdom. The league was originally formed in 1960 out of a meeting of three hun-

dred religious scholars in Rabat. Eight years later, the organization published its charter, defining its goals as "the renewal of Islamic values, the revitalization of the Prophetic Sunna, and the combat against *bida* [unwanted innovation], namely secularism, atheism, and licentiousness," and stipulating that education in Morocco should be "submitted to religion."[42] Throughout Hassan's reign, the league remained independent of regime control, and its alliance with the urban-based *Istiqlal* (Independence) Party caused headaches for the monarchy.

In 2006, Mohammed VI issued a decree transforming the league into a state-run advisory body to which the king may turn for consultation on religious matters. The league is principally engaged in promoting research and cultural events related to Islamic studies, and in 2006 the king appointed Dr. Ahmed Abbadi, a professor of comparative religion and Islamic thought at Cadi Ayyad University in Marrakesh, to serve as the league's secretary-general.[43] Since then, the league has grown to comprise roughly thirteen research centers and think tanks, including a Center for the Study of Women and Islam opened in 2010—the first state-run religious institution in the Arab world dedicated to questions surrounding gender and Islam. There, scholars like Asma Lamrabet are authoring works, hosting colloquia, and participating in international dialogues challenging traditionally male-oriented frames dominating the interpretation of religious law. An annual conference scheduled for November 2016 will address questions surrounding women's leadership in Islam.[44] Such initiatives are pushing the boundaries of acceptable religious discourse, and their occurrence in a conservative society speaks to the reformist potential (some) institutions of state Islam hold. In this way, the structural changes of the last decade and a half have created a space for progressive intellectuals like Lamrabet to emerge.

A final observation about the structural changes of the past decade-plus: the monarchy's increasingly tight grip on the religious realm, coupled with the fact that this realm remains beyond partisan politics,[45] has likely shielded the country from a certain amount of unwanted chaos, an undeniable advantage when juxtaposed against the unregulated realms jihadists have exploited. The benefits of a centralized hierarchy of religious institutions

were on display following the November 2015 terrorist attack in Paris, when the High Council of Ulama issued a fatwa clarifying that Islamic law only allows for armed jihad as a last resort, and then only upon the express invocation of "the ruler." In parallel, Mohammed VI called on the Endowments Ministry to distribute guidelines to imams clarifying that "violence and coercion of every kind are alien to the [Muslim] faith and *dawa* [mission]."[46] The structure of Morocco's religious realm has generally facilitated a high degree of coordination between the relevant religious institutions, in this case enabling a swift response to acts of violence perpetrated in the name of Islam.

REFORMING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION. The state first began tinkering with the content of religious education in the mid-1990s, when the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Human Rights jointly issued new guidelines calling for the incorporation of lessons on human rights and other ostensibly liberal principles into all public school curricula. A National Charter on Education and Training adopted in 1999, which was to serve as the blueprint for comprehensive education reform in the ensuing decade, stipulated the following:

> The education system of the Kingdom of Morocco is based on the principles and values of Islam. It seeks to create citizens of virtue, models of rectitude, of moderation and of toleration, who are open to science and knowledge…The education system…respects and reflects the ancestral identity of the Nation. It reflects the Nation's sacred and intangible values: belief in God, love of the homeland, and attachment to the Constitutional Monarchy.[47]

On the basis of such principles, curricular innovations soon followed. In 2004, for example, the Education Ministry issued new directives for middle school Islamic studies textbooks requiring that they encourage sustainable development (by, e.g., offering lessons on respect for the environment), promote principles of equality, reject violence, conform to the Maliki legal school of Islam,

endorse the recently revised personal status law (*mudawanna*),[48] comply with all international treaties to which Morocco was a signatory, and reinforce respect for individual and social rights. Two years later, a series of Education Ministry directives required that high school Islamic studies textbooks respect the reformed *mudawanna*, encourage individual and social rights, comply with all international treaties to which Morocco was a signatory, and promote openness, coexistence, respect for differences, and "the value of tolerance contained in true Islam."[49] By the mid-2000s, sectorial committees had revised nearly 120 public school textbooks, including those used in Islamic studies courses. To cite one example, passages discussing the need to cut off the hand of a thief, in accordance with some interpretations of Islamic law, were removed.[50]

The public school system was not the only target of such reforms. In 2002, the state set out to reform the system of traditional schools (*talim atiq*) that had paralleled the public school system since independence. For decades, the Moroccan state had lent rhetorical and occasional material support to traditional religious education, but until the first decade of this century, the state had never felt compelled to actually define that education. This changed with the promulgation of Law 13.01, which defined traditional religious education as "aiming to enable students...to know the Quran by heart, to study the sciences of sharia, to acquire the principles of modern science, to develop their knowledge in the domain of Islamic culture, and to open themselves to other sciences and cultures, respecting the principles and values of tolerance contained in Islam."[51] Henceforth, traditional religious education would be dispensed in *atiq* preschools, *atiq* primary and secondary schools, and the Qarawiyyin University, all of which would be required to teach foreign languages and devote two-thirds of their curricular hours to subjects drawn from the national public school curricula if they wanted to qualify for state subsidies. The matching curricula would permit bridges between the two systems so that students could transfer from one to the other.

Since Law 13.01 went into effect, the state has gradually gained greater control over the *atiq* schools, and the curricula have been increasingly standardized. Between 2006 and 2014, for example, the

number of traditional religious schools, at all levels, using textbooks revised at the Endowments Ministry to reflect the requirements of Law 13.01 rose from 114 to 291, affecting some 21,500 students enrolled in these establishments.[52] Today, out of approximately 480 traditional schools, 300 (63%) are following the state-mandated curriculum.[53]

REGULATING RELIGION INSTRUCTORS. In the 2000s, the state embarked on a series of comprehensive reforms upgrading and standardizing the training and licensing of teachers in the atiq system, injecting social sciences into the curricula of Dar al-Hadith al-Hassania—which trains many future religion professors—creating new institutions of higher Islamic learning to accommodate graduates of the atiq system wishing to become educators, and developing new training programs for imams and imam supervisors.

The reforms began with an effort to provide continuing education for teachers in the *atiq* schools through educational workshops for those who had not advanced far in their own formal schooling. These workshops have aimed to impart religious knowledge but also knowledge of modern pedagogy and child psychology. Between 2004 and 2013, the number of teachers and school directors participating in these continuing-education workshops increased from 244 to 3,931.[54] Likewise, in 2006 the Endowments Ministry issued a slew of regulations concerning the training and licensing of those wishing to open or teach in *atiq* schools. Individuals wishing to open traditional primary schools, for example, would have to complete at least six years of secondary schooling and teach in a public, private, or *atiq* school for at least three years to qualify. Those wishing to open traditional middle schools would have to pass the baccalaureate (high school completion) exam or a recognized equivalent and teach in a public, private, or *atiq* school for at least five years. Future directors of *atiq* secondary schools had to have an *ijaza* (bachelor's degree) from a Moroccan university and teach in a school for at least five years. Similar regulations went into effect for individuals wishing to teach at all levels of the *atiq* system.[55]

Dar al-Hadith al-Hassania was also implicated in the reforms of this period. In an effort to make its diplomas equivalent to those conferred in the Islamic studies departments of the public universi-

ties, Law 13.01 introduced undergraduate education at the institution, which until then had only conferred advanced degrees. Then in 2005, the state revised Dar al-Hadith's curricula to place greater emphasis on foreign language study and training in the social sciences, ostensibly to alter the profile of future religion professors by broadening their knowledge base. The religious instruction at Dar al-Hadith has also undergone a shift from its traditional emphasis on hadith (sayings of the Prophet) to a focus on Islamic philosophy and *fiqh* (jurisprudence), reportedly to promote the rational elements of the Islamic intellectual heritage and train jurists who can more easily engage with Western scholars.[56]

Alongside older institutions like Dar al-Hadith and the Qarawiyyin, the state launched programs of higher Islamic learning intended to accommodate students who had come up through the *atiq* system and could ultimately teach in public universities' Islamic studies departments, where demand for courses in Quranic studies had lately exceeded the supply of available professors. In this vein, the Endowments Ministry in 2010 approached al-Akhawayn University in Ifrane, the kingdom's only English-language university, with the idea of developing a new imam-training program. The result was the creation of a two-year Master of Arts in Islamic Studies, introducing students to religious studies through the lens of social science by, for example, requiring courses in comparative religion. Candidates for the English-only program, most of whom have only studied theology in Arabic, are chosen by the Endowments Ministry, which pays their tuition fees. The aim is to place graduates in key positions, such as the regional councils of ulama. The first cohort of fifteen students graduated in 2013.[57]

A year later, the state opened the Mohammed VI Institute for Quranic Readings and Studies (*Maahad Mohammed al-Sadis Lil-Qiraat wal-Dirasat al-Quraniyah*), offering bachelor's and master's degree programs in Quranic readings and Quranic studies. Students in the readings track take courses in the art of Quranic recitation, mastery of which is presumed to shield against erroneous—and extremist—interpretations of the text. The Quranic studies track requires five weekly hours of English instruction and classes in history, humanities, and logic alongside courses in Quranic exegesis

that similarly treat the problem of extremism as fundamentally a problem of ignorance.[58]

Finally, the state has sought to alter the profile of prayer leaders and other mosque-based educators, dividing such personnel into three levels: an imam who leads the daily prayer (excepting Friday); a preacher, or *waiz*, authorized to give lessons in jurisprudence, Muslim theology, or ethics; and an imam entrusted to give the Friday sermon, or *khutbah*. Each level brings with it certain requirements. For example, the daily prayer imams and those assigned to give the Friday *khutbah* must at minimum have memorized the Quran. Likewise, preachers cannot give lessons in a mosque until they go before a committee of scholars, usually members of a regional council of ulama, to demonstrate knowledge of the Maliki school and ensure they are not sympathetic to the Wahhabi or Mutazilite (ultrarationalist) theological doctrines.

The state also developed a new corps of imam educators and supervisors. In 2003, the Directorate of Mosque Affairs within the Endowments Ministry launched a one-year training program for aspiring imam supervisors (*murshidin*). In exchange for receiving a state salary, imams are required to meet with a supervisor twice monthly.[59] Since 2005, the state has trained 250 Moroccan imam supervisors annually, including 100 women (*murshidat*). In 2015, the monarchy injected $20 million into a new training facility in Rabat to accommodate a growing number of foreign students, principally from West Africa but also from Europe.[60] In addition to the 250 Moroccan students, the 2015–2016 cohort includes 100 students from Cote d'Ivoire, 120 from Guinea (among whom 20 *murshidat*), 111 from Mali, 37 from Tunisia (among whom 4 *murshidat*), and 20 from France. While the program remains a one-year course for Moroccans and Tunisians, the West African students follow a two-year course and the Europeans will spend three years in the program, principally to devote additional time to learning Arabic. The foreign students report that they plan to return to their home countries to work as preachers in mosques, schoolteachers, or other religious functionaries of the state.[61]

The classes at the imam-training academy are divided into an Islamic law track, a humanities track (including courses on the his-

tory of Islam, the history of the countries from which the students hail, comparative religion, general philosophy, and Islamic philosophy), and a vocational training track. Reflecting the kingdom's broader reform agenda, the academy's religious studies courses stress Malikism, Asharism, and the Junayd Sufi tradition,[62] and program administrators report that the Islamic law curriculum is informed by the assumption that the extremism seen throughout the region stems from an ignorance and misunderstanding of the relevant texts. As such, courses in sharia focus on the *sunna* as a model of behavior and include lessons debunking *takfir*, the practice popular among jihadist groups of excommunicating fellow Muslims. It bears noting that the religious education curricula at the imam-training academy continue to reinforce traditional gender norms, to the consternation of progressive intellectuals like Asma Lamrabet of the League of Moroccan Ulama.

Indeed, the state itself has sent mixed signals about the *murshidat* program. The initiative was originally intended to grant women greater visibility in the religious domain and entrust female religious guides to counter extremist teachings. Shortly after the program was launched, however, the Endowments Ministry requested a fatwa from the High Council affirming the program's validity. The ensuing legal opinion noted that while women are neither weak nor incapable of leading prayer, Maliki jurisprudence forbids women from leading men in prayer or otherwise performing the traditional functions of imams.[63] To date, the most tangible impact of the *murshidat* program may be the role these women are playing in reducing illiteracy, rather than fundamentally altering gender relations in the public sphere, let alone in the religious one.[64]

More generally, the strengths and limitations of the *murshidat* program highlight another paradox in Morocco: the very structural changes that have enabled progressive figures like Lamrabet to emerge and facilitated highly coordinated responses to terrorism also help explain the constraints on reformist initiatives in Morocco. For, while the multiplicity of institutions falling under the king's control has opened spaces for reformist teachings to emerge, these many voices can sometimes dilute the ultimate effect of those teachings to the extent that institutions like the High

Council, the Endowments Ministry, and the League of Ulama compete with one another for dominance of the religious realm. The framework of a ruling monarch sitting atop, and arbitrating among, competing factions has been a staple of the Moroccan political system since independence, and it partly accounts for the country's relative stability over the years. When it comes to policies affecting the religious realm, that framework has both facilitated and constrained the kingdom's reform agenda.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the trajectory of Morocco's reforms thus far, U.S. policymakers can anticipate that the kingdom will continue to consolidate state control over the religious realm and develop policies aimed at counteracting violent Islamist thought throughout the region. While it is too soon to issue a verdict on the longer-term impact of Morocco's reforms, U.S. policymakers developing initiatives to counter violent extremism, to say nothing of those seeking to strengthen bilateral ties, should note Morocco's efforts and find ways to lend constructive, if quiet, support. What follows are three examples of what such support could look like.

First, policymakers should encourage organizers of and participants in initiatives like the Marrakesh Declaration to follow up such public statements with implementation of specific policies through state-linked religious institutions in the countries concerned. In itself, a public pronouncement by several hundred religious scholars is rhetorically powerful, but often little follows in the way of concrete policy initiatives. Government officials working in the U.S. State Department's new Global Engagement Center (GEC) and the Office of Religion and Global Affairs (S/RGA), among other bureaus, could signal strong support for state Islam's efforts to counter extremism by organizing peer-to-peer gatherings of Muslim religious scholars in the Arab world and the United States. Importantly, the goal of such gatherings would not be to issue more public statements about a "tolerant" or "moderate" Islam, or to produce yet another conference on "Muslim women

and peace building." Rather, the purpose would be to encourage smaller-scale, targeted, and deeper exchanges aimed at developing robust intellectual responses to extremist ideologies and, where possible, devising reforms implicating religious instruction at the local level in the countries represented.

Second, the U.S. government should consider bolstering American diplomats' engagement with religious institutions and actors in Morocco. Policymakers can draw on existing resources in offices like the GEC or S/RGA to facilitate greater coordination between U.S. and Moroccan officials looking to strengthen local-level reformist initiatives. Alternatively, the State Department could consider creating a new position or office within the U.S. embassy in Rabat dedicated to developing partnerships with religious institutions and scholars in Morocco. Consider the example of Jaafar Kansoussi, a member of Minister Tawfiq's cabinet and formerly responsible for overseeing 6,500 mosques in the Marrakesh region. Today, Kansoussi runs a small association dedicated to preserving and promoting Morocco's Sufi heritage through seminars, youth activities, and academic exchanges with scholars of Sufism around the world, including in the United States.[65] Kansoussi's association does receive support from the Moroccan Ministry of Pious Endowments and Islamic Affairs, mostly in the form of physical space to hold its events, but it would benefit from additional assistance. In a similar vein, U.S.-based NGOs like the International Institute of Islamic Thought are already partnering with Moroccan counterparts to assess and reform curricula in the *atiq* schools. Lending support to such initiatives, even if quietly, would not run afoul of U.S. laws, since associations like Kansoussi's and the curricular reforms in the *atiq* schools include topics that are not overtly religious. And such assistance would be in keeping with the mandate of an office like the GEC to "identify and enable international partners with credibility and expertise."[66]

Finally, U.S. policymakers should think creatively about ways to promote private-sector assistance to religious institutions in Morocco. Progressives like Ahmed Abbadi, the head of Morocco's Mohammedia League of Ulama, report that more than financial aid, his organization needs technical expertise to develop online

tools aimed at disseminating materials to young Moroccans and countering extremists' efforts to monopolize religious discourse on the Internet. In existing efforts to enlist Silicon Valley's participation in the broader fight against extremism, the U.S. government should have in mind organizations like Abbadi's League as the target beneficiaries.

STATE ISLAM
IN TUNISIA & THE
DEMOCRATIZATION
OF REFORM

OF ALL THE COUNTRIES to see a regime fall in 2011, Tunisia remains the only one on a recognizable, if tenuous, path to democracy. But alongside its remarkable achievements of the past five years, including a freely elected government, a flourishing civil society, and unprecedented individual freedoms, the small Mediterranean country that sparked a wave of uprisings across the region has earned the unfortunate distinction of providing the largest single contingent of foreign fighters—six thousand, by recent estimates—to jihadist groups in Syria, Iraq, and Libya.[67] For decades, Western observers and many Tunisian elites perceived Tunisia to be a relatively secular, well-educated, progressive country, so the proliferation of extremist religious groups—against a backdrop of political liberalization, no less—has caused much head-scratching in Western capitals and considerable soul-searching within Tunisia.

The perception of a progressive, secular Tunisia was not entirely without merit. On many development indicators prior to 2011, Tunisia did regularly score higher than its Arab peers. And a reformist personal status code implemented in the 1950s did lead to a level of women's education and empowerment unmatched in the region. But Tunisia in the 1990s and 2000s also became a veritable police state, and the crumbling of the regime has spotlighted the unevenness of the economic and social gains many observers had previously assumed to have accrued throughout the country. Part of the explanation behind the large numbers of Tunisians joining the jihad

stems from this unevenness, but only part.[68] An equally important element of the story has to do with the nature of state-religion relations in Tunisia throughout the decades preceding the revolt.

Until the 2011 Jasmine Revolution, post-independence Tunisia had been characterized by near total state control over religious institutions and discourse, policies marginalizing or eliminating many traditional religious institutions, and an authoritarian decisionmaking apparatus responsible for regulating those religious institutions permitted to continue functioning. With the transition away from authoritarianism, decisions concerning religion and state were for the first time brought into the realm of democratic politics, which came to include an Islamist party seeking, alongside certain non-Islamist allies, to fundamentally change the longstanding relationship between religion and state. There was broad consensus, for example, that the state should ease its chokehold on mosques and other religious institutions to allow citizens to more freely practice their faith.

The ultimate easing of such state control, however, had the disastrous consequence of providing a space for radical, often violent voices to emerge. The rise in incitement, two high-profile political assassinations carried out by jihadists, and a series of high-casualty terrorist attacks perpetrated by individuals claiming allegiance to al-Qaeda offshoots and the Islamic State (IS) prompted the government to gradually reassert state control over mosques and private religious associations, largely reverting to the pre-uprising template known by Tunisians. The post-Jasmine state has not had much difficulty arresting problematic imams and shutting down associations with alleged ties to terrorist groups, though in the newly democratic context such decisions are more publicly contested. The deeper challenge has been, and will continue to be, providing intellectual alternatives to the radical ideologies attracting disillusioned youth. The state's relatively aggressive secularization policies in the later twentieth century weakened Tunisia's traditional religious institutions, especially institutions of religious instruction, to the extent that the state now finds itself devoid of resources to combat extremist religious ideas. The four main institutions of state Islam—the Zaytuna University, the Office of the Mufti of the Republic, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and the Higher Islamic Council—have

remained largely unchanged since the uprising, operating according to reforms implemented in the decades prior. In some cases, these institutions are now staffed by members of the main Islamist party, a development that may carry medium- to long-term implications for Tunisian state Islam but that has not yet radically altered the state's management of the religious realm. If anything, the instabilities borne of the democratic transition, coupled with the deteriorating security situation, have forestalled major changes to state Islam in the post-Jasmine period, even as debates continue over the relationship between religion and state more generally.

To explain the stalled position of state Islam in Tunisia today, this section begins by reviewing religion-state dynamics from independence in 1956 to the eve of the uprising in late 2010, with a focus on the state's approach to regulating institutions of religious education. Next, it outlines the key political, economic, and security-related developments of Tunisia's democratic transition, since these have formed the backdrop of recent debates over religion and state. The paper then examines some of those debates and considers their bearing on state Islam's ability to confront and counter violent Islamist thought. It concludes by offering policy recommendations for U.S. government officials eager to assist Tunisia in reducing the impact of violent Islamism within its borders.

STATE AND RELIGION IN POST-INDEPENDENCE TUNISIA

In contrast to Morocco's post-independence monarchs, whose political legitimacy always rested in part on their religious credentials, Tunisia's modern presidents, Habib Bourguiba (1956–1987) and Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali (1987–2011), rarely invoked religion to justify their political power. The Bourguiba and Ben Ali regimes did occasionally instrumentalize religion, whether to promote policies at odds with traditional religious interpretations or to convey that the state was a reflection of Tunisian society. But for both leaders, an ideological aversion to traditional religious practices and the desire to undercut political opposition from religious groups relegated Islam to the margins of their self-legitimating strategies.

Consider the policies enacted under Tunisia's first president. Bourguiba promoted a vision for his country that approximated what the political scientist James C. Scott has called "high-modernist ideology…[popular] among those who wanted to use state power to bring about huge, utopian changes in people's work habits, living patterns, moral conduct, and worldview."[69] The president's high modernism assumed that human reason was a necessary component of social advancement and that this reason was at odds with religion. Central to his political project was the presumption—sometimes implied, sometimes stated—that his forward-looking orientation would restore Tunisians' dignity and help put them on a path to economic and social progress. Progress, in turn, depended on state-led social engineering that would reform Tunisians' "naturally conservative" mentalities and "liberate man from prejudice, ignorance, sickness and misery." But to achieve the individual enlightenment presumed to accompany the technological and scientific advancements that would ripen Tunisians for modernity and instill in them the "political maturity" required of "authentic democracy," citizens would have to shed their retrograde beliefs, superstitions, and passions—including those associated with traditional religious practices.[70]

Bourguiba's ideological aversion to religious traditions, coupled with his desire to eliminate threats to his political hegemony from factions aligned with the traditional religious establishment, had two key effects on religion-state dynamics during his tenure. The first was to extend full state control over nearly all religious institutions, as when the state nationalized lands formerly held as pious endowments and thereby effectively eliminated the centuries-old system of *awqaf*. In the realm of religious education too, the regime eliminated formerly autonomous institutions and consolidated the remainder into the emerging system of public primary, secondary, and higher education. For example, Tunisia's traditional Quranic schools (*katatib*) were closed or limited to preschools attended by children for a year or two before entering the public elementary schools. In a more dramatic development, the Zaytuna Grand Mosque, its annexes, and affiliated lower schools for primary- and secondary-school-age children were closed and reorganized as the

Zaytuna Faculty of Theology and Religious Sciences, a department attached to the new University of Tunis and housed in a building separate from the ancient mosque.

The preference for state control extended to the treatment of imams and other religion instructors, and the Bourguiba regime developed a centralized bureaucracy of religious functionaries on the government payroll much earlier than its Morocco counterpart. In 1962, for example, Bourguiba created the post of Mufti of the Republic, the country's highest religious authority, who would be appointed by the president and whose functions would include issuing certificates of conversion to Islam, answering questions relating to Islam, and advising the government on "schoolbooks and on all documents and studies in connection with the Islamic religion."

Or consider the reforms of 1966, when the state created two new positions, a preacher of the governorate (*waiz al-wilaya*) and a preacher of delegation (*waiz muatamidiyah*). In Tunisia, whereas the term *imam* had traditionally designated the prayer leader, the *waiz* offered a lesson after the prayers to those gathered in the mosque. In the new parlance, the *waiz al-wilaya* was the uppermost religious functionary below the Mufti of the Republic, to whom he reported. The *waiz al-wilaya* was charged with overseeing the activities of the *wuaz muatamidiyah* (preachers of delegation), who in turn supervised religious instruction in the mosques and occasionally served as imams themselves.[71] In 1967, the regime established a Directorate of Religious Affairs within the Office of the Presidency to handle matters "related to the construction, administration, and upkeep of Muslim places of worship as well as problems related to the nomination and compensation of associated employees."[72] A decade later, the state developed a corps of "religious inspectors" to oversee imams. Principally recruited from higher-level preachers, the inspectors reported to the Directorate of Religious Affairs, which in 1970 was transferred from the presidency to the prime minister's office.[73] The religious bureaucracy would continue to expand in the ensuing decades.

The second effect of Bourguiba's ideological orientation and drive for political dominance over traditional religious elites was a series

of reforms that relied on progressive, if controversial, interpretations of religious law such as the 1956 personal status code, which eliminated polygamy and granted women the right to divorce. In the sphere of education, a comprehensive reform in 1958 reduced the amount of religious instruction in the public schools, combined it with civic education to form one course titled "religious and civic education" (*al-tarbiyah al-diniyah wal-wataniya*),[74] and altered the content of that instruction to replace more traditional teachings with lessons promoting Islamic principles in line with the regime's secular political goals. For example, a 1959 secondary school religious education curriculum noted that "[religious] instruction must establish the link, in studying these subjects, between Muslim law and modes of its practical application in the Republic of Tunisia."[75] And in 1968, the Education Ministry elaborated that religious and civic education curricula should foster students' attachment to Islam by "presenting [the religion] in all its purity, liberated from the sclerotic shackles that corrupted the faith throughout centuries of ignorance, decadence, and underdevelopment." The 1968 directive encouraged teachers to impress upon students that religion did not merely consist of beliefs or principles but "reunited belief, science and action that, collectively, constitute elements of efficiency in the life of man."[76]

For Bourguiba's supporters, such policies advanced a broader and worthy goal of demonstrating that Islam contained principles well suited to modern problems and sensibilities. To his detractors, Bourguiba's approach to religion was offensive and masked a desire to marginalize Tunisians' traditional religious identities. In the 1970s and 1980s, the emergence of leftist (secular) opposition did inspire Bourguiba to take a milder approach to religion, reflected in policies increasing the amount of religious instruction in the schools, shifts in curricular content to promote Islamic thinkers at the expense of Western philosophy, and generally a more permissive environment for nascent Islamist movements the regime hoped might counteract the left. However, Bourguiba ultimately grew less tolerant of these policy shifts. In 1981, for example, he rescinded an order by his own prime minister that had outlawed the sale of alcohol during the month of Ramadan and prohibited bars and restau-

rants from remaining open during the daytimes of the holy month. And in early 1987, Bourguiba appointed a new education minister to reverse the Arabization and Islamization of curricula that he himself had allowed to proceed from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s.

Bourguiba's successor, who took power in a bloodless coup on November 7, 1987, similarly lacked any religious affiliation that might have afforded him the kind of legitimacy enjoyed by the Moroccan monarchs. But Ben Ali initially exhibited a more accommodating stance toward religion, rejecting his predecessor's hostility and reassuring Tunisians that the new regime would embody their religious identity and values. If the state under Bourguiba had sought to moralize society, Ben Ali promised an administration that would take its cues from society.[77] In this vein, he oversaw the creation of a Supreme Islamic Council in 1987. The ten-member body, presided over by the Mufti of the Republic and convened at the president's behest, was charged with implementing Article 1 of the Tunisian constitution, which since 1959 had held that Islam was "the religion of the state." The council could issue recommendations to the government on matters related to religious education and the training of imams, but it remained largely an advisory body without legislative mandate.[78]

Other changes were more visible. In his November 7, 1987, declaration, Ben Ali noted that the new regime would "give *Islamic*, Arab, African, and Mediterranean solidarity its due importance," thus prioritizing Tunisians' Islamic identity. (Emphasis added.)[79] Two weeks later, the Interior Ministry announced a "morality campaign" aimed at cleansing cafés, commercial centers, streets, and public transportation of individuals engaged in immoral acts. The new regime introduced the call to prayer on the radio, reopened the Zaytuna Mosque (if only briefly), reorganized the Zaytuna faculty of theology into a larger university merging three institutes of religious learning in Tunis and Qayrawan, created a Presidential Prize to be awarded to those who memorized the Quran, and legalized the student union sympathetic to the country's main Islamist movement, the Islamic Tendency Movement. In contrast to Bourguiba, whose first trip overseas as president had been to the United States, Ben Ali's first overseas trip was a pilgrimage to Islam's holy sites in Saudi Arabia.

Still, when it became clear that creating spaces for religion in the public sphere might offer Islamists a way into the political process, the new president changed course and went from promoting Tunisians' religious identities to presenting the state as an authentic "defender" of Islam. This served to continue Bourguiba's practice of extending state control over the religious realm and—importantly for our purposes—to prevent Islamists from competing for this control. The shift was reflected in a series of structural reforms and in the regime's efforts to alter the content of religious instruction in the public schools and at the Zaytuna University.

In one of his last acts as president, Bourguiba in 1986 had transferred the Directorate of Religious Affairs from the prime minister's office to the Interior Ministry, a move of symbolic importance since the latter had control over the state security apparatuses. A year later, Ben Ali decreed that all religious functionaries had to be approved by the Interior Ministry before coming onto the government payroll.[80] When the Directorate of Religious Affairs became the Ministry of Religious Affairs in 1993, it assumed responsibility for regulating holy sites such as mosques and Sufi shrines, and for overseeing all religious personnel, which now included imams, preachers, muezzins, reciters of the Quran, and teachers in the Quranic preschools, who had become civil servants and begun receiving a monthly government salary in the late 1980s.[81] The new ministry also began monitoring instruction in the Quranic preschools and a host of private Quranic associations that had sprung up in the preceding decades. All personnel in the religious realm now had to be approved by the minister of religious affairs, from imam supervisors on down to a mosque's building guard.[82]

In addition to these centralizing reforms, the state began revising the content of religious instruction in the public schools. Ben Ali's education minister, Mohamed Charfi, oversaw a comprehensive education reform in 1991 that sought to reverse some of the Islamization permitted in the later Bourguiba years. For Charfi, there was a personal aspect to the reforms: in the 1970s, he had been appalled to learn that his own children were using textbooks claiming the pre-Islamic era in Tunisia had been barbaric and arguing that it was a sin for girls to attend school in pants. Likewise,

visiting schools in his capacity as minister, he had been dismayed to discover that many classrooms were segregating male and female students.[83] The preface to Charfi's law noted that Tunisia's education system was based on "the national Tunisian identity *and* adherence to the Arab-Muslim civilization,"[84] suggesting the two were not necessarily synonymous in a rebuke of Islamists' claim to the contrary. (Emphasis added.) Charfi's reform included a reduction in Islamic instruction, the introduction of lessons on Muslim reformist thinkers, the separation of religious from civic education, and greater curricular emphasis on ethical principles in Islam compatible with pluralism, tolerance, democracy, and human rights. One member of Charfi's team at the ministry later explained the curricular reorientation this way:

> [We needed] to maybe rethink the whole religious phenomenon and in particular the whole Muslim heritage so that Islamic education could be given in a different way and a different perspective. In so doing, you are helping to create what might be called 'civil society,' which means a society where religion plays a different role. Instead of playing a theological role, it plays an ethical role.[85]

Charfi's team similarly revamped instruction at the Zaytuna. In 1987, Ben Ali had restructured the theology faculty, merging the High Institute for Theology in Tunis, the High Institute for Islamic Civilization in Tunis, and the Institute for Islamic Studies in Qayrawan into a newly named Zaytuna University. The first two institutions offered four-year bachelor's degree programs in theology and related subjects to Tunisian and foreign students, respectively, while the center in Qayrawan was devoted to training future imams and promoting Islamic culture in Tunisia and throughout Africa. Tellingly, the Grand Mosque was not incorporated into the new university, and the regime placed the Zaytuna University under the administrative and fiscal control of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. In this way, Ben Ali maintained the physical and conceptual separation between Zaytuna the mosque and Zaytuna the educational institution.[86]

State sponsorship of the institution did not necessarily translate into state investment. The 1988 state budget allocated 177,000 Tunisian dinars (roughly $206,000 at the time) to the institution, representing a mere 1.1 percent of that year's higher education budget.[87] Ensuing laws stipulated that the governing councils of the university's institutes include a representative of the prime ministry's Directorate of Religious Affairs, and all nonstate sources of funding for the university had to be submitted to the Ministry of Higher Education for approval.[88]

In 1995, the state revised the Zaytuna's degree programs to emphasize the social sciences, requiring courses in comparative religion, Western philosophy, sociology of religion, and foreign languages. New doctoral programs required studies in human rights law, the history of science in the Muslim context, and foreign languages. Meanwhile, the state began inviting professors from the humanities and social science faculties to teach at the Zaytuna, marking the first time scholars of nonreligious fields were teaching there since independence. Likewise, reforms in 2003 made it possible for non-Zaytuna graduates to be appointed as imams, and to apply for civil service positions as imam supervisors, or "religious inspectors." The inspectors were charged with teaching and supervising imams through weekly, and in some cases daily, mosque visits. The 2003 reforms meant that individuals without any formal religious training could now work as imams and imam supervisors, though they had to demonstrate knowledge of the Quran and *sunna* through written and oral examinations administered by the Ministry of Religious Affairs.[89]

As in Bourguiba's tenure, the reforms of Tunisia's religious realm under Ben Ali elicited mixed reactions. For Rached Ghannouchi's Islamic Tendency Movement (renamed Harakat Ennahda, or the "Renaissance Movement," in 1989), the reforms reflected a secular elite's disdain for religion and the generally repressive environment that came to characterize Ben Ali's Tunisia. For others, Charfi's reforms were much-needed antidotes to the growing clout Islamists had enjoyed in the 1970s and 1980s, when Bourguiba had courted them in an effort to undercut the left. Charfi himself had a falling out with the regime over its authoritarian tactics, even as he continued

to believe the education reforms had been necessary to stem the tide of Islamism in the country.[90] His reforms, along with minor revisions in 2002, remained in place long after his exit from the ministry, but the authoritarian conditions in which those reforms were implemented meant Tunisia's underlying debate over the proper relationship between religion and state remained unresolved when protests broke out in late 2010.

THE JASMINE UPRISING

This past January 14 marked the fifth anniversary of the Tunisian uprising that ousted Ben Ali and sparked revolts across the region. Tunisia's transition has scored important gains on the political front, reflected in a representative parliament, advances in civil liberties, and a robust civil society. At the same time, the country has faced persistent economic woes and security threats. Against this bumpy trajectory, state officials and civil society actors have taken up debates over the relationship between religion and state in the nascent democracy. Before turning to those debates, it is worth briefly reviewing the political, economic, and security contexts in which they unfolded.

Following Ben Ali's departure in 2011, the formerly ruling Democratic Constitutional Rally was dissolved and a series of interim governments culminated in the election of a National Constituent Assembly (NCA) on October 23, 2011. The NCA was charged with drafting a new constitution and preparing the country for the election of a permanent legislature within one year's time. In a development that would set the regional trend, Tunisia's formerly banned Ennahda movement emerged from the October 2011 election in a dominant position, capturing 41 percent of the popular vote and obtaining a plurality of seats in the transitional parliament. The remaining 59 percent of votes went to more than a dozen non-Islamist parties and independents. Ennahda entered into a governing coalition with two secular parties, the Congress for the Republic Party and the Democratic Forum for Labor and Liberties, or Ettakatol, and this "troika" became Tunisia's new government.

The NCA's one-year mandate was unrealistic from the outset, given that the elected body had to assume responsibility for day-to-day legislating alongside its work on the new constitution and electoral law. The troika ended up governing for roughly two and a half years, during which time Tunisians enjoyed a broad expansion in their political rights but the country's economy continued to deteriorate and the security situation worsened. Against heated debates between Ennahda's supporters and opponents over the place of religion in the new foundational law and in Tunisian public life, this period saw increasing violence by radical religious groups, including a September 2012 attack on the U.S. embassy in Tunis. Following the assassinations of two leftist politicians in February and July of 2013, massive protests brought the NCA to a standstill and the Tunisian transition to the brink of collapse.

A National Dialogue organized under the auspices of the Tunisian General Labor Union, the Tunisian Human Rights League, the Tunisian Union of Industry, Commerce, and Crafts (UTICA), and the National Bar Association facilitated a series of negotiations between the political factions throughout fall 2013. That December, Ennahda yielded to public pressure and agreed to step down, ceding power to an interim government of technocrats. In January 2014, the NCA ratified a new constitution enshrining freedoms of speech, association, and press; political equality between men and women; and checks and balances between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The National Dialogue Quartet would go on to win the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize for its role in rescuing the transition.[91]

From January to October 2014, the interim cabinet of Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa governed to broadly positive reviews as the country's precarious security situation stabilized somewhat,[92] and the NCA adopted the long-awaited electoral law to govern future parliamentary and presidential elections. On October 26, 2014, Tunisians went to the polls to elect a new 217-seat legislature, and the results yielded a parliament dominated by five blocs: the secularist Nidaa Tounes (Tunisian Call) Party with 85 seats, the Islamist Ennahda Party with 69 seats, the anti-Islamist Free Patriotic Union (UPL by its French acronym) with 16 seats, the leftist Popular Front coalition with 15 seats, and the neoliberal Afek Tounes (Tunisian Horizons)

Party with 8 seats. The remaining 24 seats went to independents. On December 21, 2014, Tunisians elected as their new president Beji Caid Essebsi, a then eighty-eight-year-old veteran statesman and the leader of Nidaa Tounes. Both elections, widely praised by international and domestic observers, represented significant achievements, all the more so given the growing chaos next door in Libya and the regional upheaval generally.

But alongside the political progress embodied in two successful elections and a functioning parliament, Tunisia has struggled to revive a badly damaged economy and contain a growing security threat. The bleakest aspect of the transition has been economic. For too many Tunisians, especially those living in the chronically neglected interior regions, the uprising brought little economic improvement and in some cases made conditions worse. Throughout the governorates where the protests originated, unemployment hovers around 25 percent and has reached 40 percent among young adults. Smuggling across the Libyan and Algerian borders has increased, in part because the state remains reluctant to clamp down for fear of depriving citizens of income—even as these smuggling routes have been used to transport weapons and terrorists alongside goods like oil and food. A 2013 International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan of $1.6 billion expired in December 2015, and the IMF is poised to issue a new loan of $2.9 billion. Likewise, the World Bank recently announced a five-year loan worth $5 billion.

The security threats faced by Tunisia include spillover from the Libyan civil war, routinely uncovered terrorist cells at home, and the prospect of an estimated six thousand radicalized Tunisians returning from Syria and Iraq. In March 2015, three gunmen killed nineteen foreign tourists and two Tunisian citizens at the Bardo National Museum, an attack the Tunisian government blamed on a local offshoot of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. Three months later, a Tunisian proclaiming allegiance to IS gunned down thirty-eight mostly British tourists on a beach in Sousse. The Sousse attack prompted President Essebsi to impose a state of emergency, and over the next several months the government appeared to gain a better handle on the security situation. But the calm was shattered on November 24, 2015, when a convoy of Presidential Guard offi-

cers was blown up in downtown Tunis, killing twelve. Once again, IS claimed responsibility, and Essebsi reimposed the state of emergency that had expired a month prior. More recently, on March 6 of this year, fifty-two militants claiming allegiance to IS attacked police, national guard, and military sites in Ben Gardane, a town close to the Libyan border, killing twenty-two law enforcement officials and seven citizens and injuring seventeen others. As of this writing, the country remains in a state of uneasy calm, its fate very much up for grabs.

ISLAM AND THE STATE POST-SPRING

At various points throughout Ben Ali's tenure, secular human rights advocates and Islamists in Tunisia had found common cause in advocating civil liberties and opposing the expanding police state, so it surprised some when disputes over religion and national identity caused this alliance to unravel so precipitously following Ben Ali's departure. That questions of religion and state should have quickly dominated the public discourse was probably inevitable, given the transitional authorities' decision to prioritize drafting a new constitution, a document that would require consensus on the source of laws and the basic orientation of the state, and the fact that a religiously oriented political party was participating in that drafting process alongside secular parties. The details of the constitution-drafting process and the controversies therein have been well documented, and need not be revisited here.[93] Rather, some observations are in order on how that process reflected and fueled disputes over the state's regulation of religious institutions and discourse, disputes that have carried important implications for the role of state Islam in countering extremism.

Throughout the constitution-drafting process, two of the fiercest debates concerned a proposal by some within Ennahda to make sharia "a" or "the" source of laws—as most Arab constitutions do—and the question of how to define the state's role in the religious realm more generally. On the matter of sharia, Ennahda

ultimately dropped its insistence on inserting references to Islamic law into the text, content to retain the language of Article 1 from the 1959 constitution that declared Islam the religion of the state. Delineating the state's role in the religious sphere turned out to be more complicated, for while there was broad support for a close relationship between religion and state, deep disagreements surfaced between those wanting the state to control the religious realm, thereby reproducing the template of the post-independence era, and those wanting the state to govern in accordance with religious rules and precepts.[94] The resulting compromise was enshrined in Article 6, committing the state to a robust role in regulating the religious realm while also granting citizens a degree of freedom within—and, importantly, from—that realm. Article 6 reads as follows:

> The state is the custodian of religion. It guarantees freedom of belief, freedom of conscience, and freedom of religious worship; it protects the neutrality of mosques and other places of worship from partisan exploitation. The state commits itself to spreading values of moderation and tolerance, protecting sacred [things] and protecting attacks against them, just as it commits itself to prohibiting accusations of apostasy (takfir) and incitement to hate and violence, and to confronting them.

Significant as this compromise was, the language of Article 6 did nothing to resolve two central tensions coursing through religion-state dynamics since the Jasmine uprising. The first pits the state's mandate to protect freedom of thought ("conscience"), which presumably includes the freedom to reject religion, against the state's opposition to "attacks against" sacred things, which theoretically leaves the door open to criminalizing blasphemy. This is not merely an academic debate. In June 2012, a group of Salafists broke into an art gallery outside Tunis and defaced an art exhibit they deemed insulting to Islam. The next day, riots erupted in the capital as protestors angered by the exhibit clashed with police, leading to the arrest of more than a hundred individuals and the imposition of a curfew. Ennahda, some of whose members had been among those calling for protests, formally

denounced the exhibit as a provocation and an insult against religion, while also calling for calm and nonviolence.[95]

The second tension in Article 6 lies between the state's mandate to ensure freedom of religious thought and expression on the one hand (e.g., by protecting mosques and other places of worship from outside interference), and the state's commitment to regulating that expression on the other (e.g., by "spreading values of moderation and tolerance" and "prohibiting accusations of apostasy"). This tension has been evident in the state's evolving approach to problematic imams preaching in mosques and giving lessons in private religious associations. Under the troika government, the state took a largely hands-off approach to the religious realm, eager to allow a greater degree of freedom for Tunisians to practice their faith. (Some critics of Ennahda saw a more sinister intent in the lax environment that permitted radical voices to thrive.) But when it became clear that an unregulated religious realm was providing spaces for extremists to operate, successor governments changed course and began reasserting control over the mosques. The fate of the Zaytuna Grand Mosque, efforts to evict self-proclaimed preachers from other mosques, and the closure of private religious associations have exemplified the policy shift.

Shortly after the uprising, a group of Tunisian citizens filed a lawsuit calling on the state to reopen the administrative offices, or scientific committee (*haya ilmiyah*), of the Zaytuna Grand Mosque after decades of inactivity. The Court of First Instance in Tunis granted the claimants' demand, and in March 2012 the doors to the Zaytuna's offices were unsealed for the first time since 1958, when then president Habib Bourguiba had largely dismantled a centuries-old system of education centered in the mosque and its annexes. In May 2012, the ministers of education, higher education, and religious affairs jointly signed a document affirming the institution's independence from state regulation and formally calling for the reestablishment of the Zaytunian education system, to consist of a four-year course of study for graduates of primary schools and a high school diploma for those wishing to go on to higher Islamic studies.[96]

The Zaytuna's immunity from state interference enabled a man named Hussein al-Abidi to install himself as sheikh of the Grand

Mosque in spring 2012. Abidi's religious training was dubious, at best, and over the next year his rhetoric became increasingly inflammatory. In June, Abidi was among those calling for the death of the two artists whose allegedly blasphemous works were being displayed in a gallery outside Tunis. When the Ministry of Religious Affairs attempted to change the Zaytuna locks with the aim of booting Abidi, a local court ruled that effort illegal, and Abidi filed a criminal complaint against the ministry for alleged "intimidation." Over the next three years, the state repeatedly failed to evict him, largely hamstrung by its own commitment to enshrining the institution's independence. Abidi's case highlights the dilemma facing Tunisian policymakers eager to ease the Ben Ali–era restrictions on religious expression but wary of providing a platform to extremists.[97]

Ultimately, the rise in incitement and religiously motivated violence throughout 2012 and 2013 prompted the post-troika government of Mehdi Jomaa to begin reasserting state control over mosques and religious associations. In the context of a broader campaign to reverse the deteriorating security situation, Jomaa's government ultimately shut down 149 mosques implicated in spreading nefarious discourse. At the same time, the Ministry of Religious Affairs began encouraging imams to refrain from endorsing political parties or candidates, ostensibly to enforce the constitution's prohibition against partisan instrumentalization of places of worship. Statements coming out of the ministry indicated that imams retained full discretion in the subject matter of their sermons, so long as they displayed a commitment to "realism, wisdom, moderation, and party neutrality."[98] Jomaa's religious affairs minister, Munir Tlili, also stressed that the Maliki *madhab* should form the basis of all *fatawa* issued in the country, though the state refrained from centralizing the authority to issue such religious guidelines to the extent seen in Morocco.[99]

Private religious associations similarly came under greater scrutiny after the troika ceded power to Jomaa's government. Between 2011 and 2013, the state had legalized nearly four hundred associations engaged in religious instruction and outreach (*dawa*), and scholars estimate that around two hundred were linked to Ansar al-Sharia, a terrorist group.[100] In July 2014, the Jomaa government announced it was suspending the activities of 157 such associa-

tions for "alleged links to terrorism."[101] At the same time, Religious Affairs Minister Tlili expressed the view that countering extremism necessitated a deeper reform of the country's religious institutions rooted in greater state support for Islamic education in the public schools and institutions like the Zaytuna. In this vein, he looked favorably on Morocco's system of traditional education (*al-talim al-atiq*) as a model for his country to emulate.[102]

Upon assuming the religious affairs portfolio, Tlili undertook a comprehensive evaluation of Tunisia's religious realm. An interministerial committee composed of representatives from the Religious Affairs, Culture, Interior, and Justice Ministries spent most of 2014 interviewing imams and other religious figures around the country, assessing the condition of the country's main religious institutions, and issuing recommendations to strengthen these institutions and reform the content of religious instruction more broadly. In early 2015, Tlili presented the confidential report to the incoming government of Prime Minister Habib Essid, but the recommendations languished.[103] The disruptions caused by the government turnover, coupled with a series of large-scale terrorist attacks, led the first Essid government to prioritize clamping down on mosques over deeper, longer-term reforms. By March 2015, approximately 187 of the country's 5,500 mosques remained outside state control, and after the July 2015 terrorist attack in Sousse, Essid announced the state's intention to close an additional eighty mosques alleged to be spreading "takfirist" ideology.[104] Similarly, the Essid governments have continued to close associations suspected of laundering money or otherwise financing terrorist networks.

One result of the democratization process is that such decisions no longer proceed uncontested. When Ennahda assumed power under the troika government, nearly 1,300 imams were reportedly replaced, provoking an uproar from the country's leading imam syndicate. Several years and governments later, it was Ennahda's turn to protest when Othman Batikh, Essid's first religious affairs minister, began firing imams for alleged incitement. In early 2016, the minister of women, children, and the elderly announced that the government would be shutting down all Quranic preschools

that failed to obtain a license and abide by Education Ministry–approved curricula. Since 2011, several dozen such schools had appeared, and some were found to be teaching extremist ideas. The January 2016 announcement prompted fierce criticism by the head of Ennahda's parliamentary bloc, who argued that such measures would prevent instruction of the Quran, thereby violating the constitution's prohibition against religious freedom.[105] The tension between preserving freedom of religious expression and reducing the spaces in which extremism can flourish will likely continue to characterize Tunisia's religious realm in the near term.

In the meantime, there are signs of potentially deeper reforms in the offing. The state recently launched a one-year campaign to combat religious extremism among Tunisian youth. The initiative, dubbed "Ghodwa Khir" (Tomorrow Will Be Better), will reportedly include the development of television, radio, and Internet programs aimed at disseminating a "moderate, Zaytunian" Islam; a help line for youth seeking answers to questions of a religious nature, staffed by state-approved imams; and various workshops for youth aimed at debunking takfirist trends and dissuading young citizens from the path of radicalization and terrorism.[106] Meanwhile, a lively media debate has focused on whether and how religion should be taught in the public schools, questions that will ultimately demand policy responses since the 2014 constitution commits the state to imparting through its education system an Arab, Islamic identity (*al-hawiyah al-islamiyah*) to Tunisian youth.[107] These developments remain in their infancy, but the state's involvement in discrediting religious extremism may now stand a greater chance of success given the legitimacy boost afforded to the Tunisian state itself by the democratic transition since 2011.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the past three years, it has become commonplace to hear Tunisian policymakers and their supporters in Washington claim that the threat of religiously motivated violence will diminish once the Libya crisis is resolved. To be sure, Tunisia's neighbor-

hood has not helped the country's democratic transition, and a blow to jihadist activities in Libya, no less than in Algeria, would undoubtedly serve Tunisia's interests. But even if the Libyan mess were miraculously cleaned up tomorrow, Tunisia would still face a daunting problem of homegrown extremism. The dozens of militants who struck Ben Gardane in March were Tunisian citizens. And someday, presumably, thousands of radicalized Tunisians will return home from the conflicts in Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere. How Tunisia manages its religious realm in the coming years will be decisive for the country's long-term prospects.

For U.S. policymakers keen to see the Tunisian experiment succeed, continued economic and security assistance will be crucial. But government officials should also consider lending assistance that more directly strengthens the state institutions responsible for imparting religious instruction. Roughly 85 percent of the country's imams lack any formal religious training, and as a result the state has begun sending aspiring imams to Morocco's international imam-training school. One way to help Tunisia build its human capital in the religious realm would be to support larger cohorts of students wishing to study in Moroccan—or American—seminaries that have demonstrated a commitment to rejecting extremist religious teachings. Likewise, the U.S. government could provide forums for U.S.-based Muslim scholars to consult with their counterparts in Tunisia on ways to reform the latter's religious institutions. Establishing these "intellectual lifelines" could go a long way.[108]

Likewise, policymakers should take note of initiatives under way in Tunisian civil society, arguably the brightest spot of the entire transition. Independent associations like Hmida Ennaifer's League for Culture and Plurality, which since 2013 has hosted forums and debates surrounding questions of religious education and Islamic thought, have been offering citizens a platform to discuss possible reforms. Ennaifer himself hails from a family of religious scholars closely identified with the Zaytuna in pre-independence Tunisia and worked for a time on Charfi's education reforms, but his organization is struggling to pay the rent even as demand for its public seminars, lectures, and dialogues has only increased.

Or consider the Ahmed Tlili Foundation, which recently launched a pilot program engaging imams around the country on questions of democracy and religious reform. That project grew out of a concern that the state had been closing private religious associations without offering potentially appealing alternatives for vulnerable youth who might otherwise be inclined toward extremist groups like the Islamic State. These initiatives deserve serious consideration by U.S. policymakers eager to find partners in the region working on countering extremist Islamist thought.

NOTES

1.   The Pact of Medina was a document the Prophet Muhammad is said to have drafted upon his arrival in Medina in 622 CE to govern relations between his followers and the non-Muslim tribes they encountered there.

2.   An English translation of the 2014 "Open Letter to Baghdadi" is available at http://www.lettertobaghdadi.com/.

3.   For Sisi's January 1, 2015, speech, see YouTube video, 18:18, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zu7bJFx9QxE. For examples of Western press accounts of Sisi's endeavor, see Sarah El Deeb and Lee Keath, "From Egypt's Leader, an Ambitious Call for Reform in Islam," Associated Press, January 8, 2015, available at https://www.yahoo.com/news/egypts-leader-ambitious-call-reform-islam-060108959.html; Dana Ford, Salma Abdelaziz, and Ian Lee, "Egypt's President Calls for a 'Religious Revolution,'" CNN, January 6, 2015, http://www.cnn.com/2015/01/06/africa/egypt-president-speech/; and Kathleen Miles, "Egyptian President Sisi: Muslims Need to Reform Their Religious Discourse," *World Post*, January 22, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/22/sisi-muslims-adapt_n_6508808.html.

4.   For coverage of the Marrakesh Declaration, see Aida Alami, "Muslim Conference Calls for Protection of Religious Minorities," *New York Times*, February 2, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/03/world/africa/muslim-conference-calls-for-protection-of-religious-minorities.html?_r=0; and Ayman S. Ibrahim, "History Suggests Marrakesh Declaration No Guarantee of Religious Freedom," *Washington Post*, February 1, 2016, http://washin.st/1TWzGWl.

5.   Much of this work has focused on Egypt. See, for example, Tarek Radwan, "Egypt's Ministry of Endowments and the Fight against Extremism," Atlantic Council, July 23, 2015, http://washin.st/1PAZgyh; Hassan Mneimneh, "Reforming Religious Discourse in Egypt," Middle East

Institute, May 14, 2015, http://www.mei.edu/content/at/reforming-religious-discourse-egypt; and Georges Fahmi, "The Egyptian State and the Religious Sphere," Carnegie Middle East Center, September 18, 2014, http://carnegie-mec.org/2014/09/18/egyptian-state-and-religious-sphere/hpac. A deeper study came in the form of Nathan J. Brown's paper on Al-Azhar in the aftermath of the uprising: *Post-Revolutionary Al-Azhar*, Carnegie Papers (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment, 2011), http://carnegieendowment.org/files/al_azhar.pdf.

6.   Important contributions to these discussions have included: Robert Satloff, *The Battle of Ideas in the War on Terror: Essays on U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Middle East* (Washington DC: Washington Institute, 2004), https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/BattleofIdeas.pdf; Douglas J. Feith, William A. Galston, and Abram N. Shulsky, *Organizing for a Strategic Ideas Campaign to Counter Ideological Challenges to U.S. National Security* (Washington DC: Hudson Institute, 2012), http://washin.st/1PAYn8T; and U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, *2014 Comprehensive Annual Report on Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting* (U.S. Department of State, 2014), http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/235159.pdf.

7.   For the U.S. Strategy on Religious Leader and Faith Community Engagement, implementation of which is handled by the Office of Religion and Global Affairs, see http://www.state.gov/s/rga/strategy/.

8.   The poll is cited in H. A. Hellyer, "Egyptians Shifted to Islamist Parties as Elections Neared," Gallup, January 24, 2013, http://www.gallup.com/poll/152168/egyptians-shifted-islamist-parties-elections-neared.aspx. Assuming supporters of Islamist groups like the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and its regional peers are less likely to be swayed by rhetoric emanating from institutions of state Islam, recent polls placing support for the Brotherhood in Egypt at around 30 percent could indicate roughly comparable levels of *opposition* to institutions like Al-Azhar. See, for example, David Pollock, "Egypt's Public Negative on All Regional Players—Except Itself," *Fikra Forum*, October 15, 2015, http://washin.st/1RmozQp. Still, the presumption of an inverse correlation between support for Islamist movements and fealty to state-run institutions like Al-Azhar should be taken with a dose of salt, since even at Al-Azhar, the lines between official Islam and political Islam have blurred and certain Azharite factions are known to sympathize with Islamist groups like the Muslim Brotherhood. For more on the links between Al-Azhar and the Brotherhood, see H. A. Hellyer and Nathan J. Brown, "Authorities in Crisis: Sunni Islamic Institutions," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2015, available at http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Hellyer_and_Brown_Extended_Version.pdf.

9.   *Muslim Millennial Attitudes on Religion and Religious Leadership* (Abu Dhabi: Tabah Foundation, 2016), p. 16, http://mmgsurvey.tabahfoundation.org/.

10. For the website page views, see http://www.similarweb.com/. Ali Gomaa's Facebook page is accessible at https://ar-ar.facebook.com/DrAliGomaa.

11. See "Examining Religious Television Channels in the Middle East," America Abroad Media, available at http://washin.st/1XxRhVF.

12. The figure from 1991 is cited in a report by the Moroccan Ministry of National Education, *Le Mouvement Éducatif au Maroc durant la Période 1990–1991, 1991–1992*, presented at the forty-third session of the International Conference on Education, Geneva, Switzerland, 1994, p. 57, http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE_1994/morocco94.pdf. For the more recent figures, see *Nashrat al-Munjazat 2013* [Bulletin of achievements 2013] (Moroccan Ministry of Pious Endowments and Islamic Affairs, 2014), p. 116. In 2014, the state reported that 6.5 million children were enrolled in primary and secondary school. See "Morocco," Education Policy and Data Center, http://www.epdc.org/sites/default/files/documents/EPDC%20NEP_Morocco.pdf.

13. The primary and secondary school enrollment figures are drawn from Brown, *Post-Revolutionary Al-Azhar*, p. 4, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/al_azhar.pdf. The university figures are cited in Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen, "Egypt's Ulama in the State, in Politics, and in the Islamist Vision," in *The Rule of Law, Islam, and Constitutional Politics in Egypt and Iran*, ed. Nathan J. Brown and Said Amir Arjomand (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press), 284.

14. For more on the links between Al-Azhar and the Brotherhood, see Hellyer and Brown, "Authorities in Crisis," http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Hellyer_and_Brown_Extended_Version.pdf

15. Reformist Muslim intellectuals have been developing and articulating alternative approaches to interpreting religious texts for decades. But, by and large, these individuals—most of whom reside in the West—have been independent of institutions of state Islam. The independence that facilitated the reformism of thinkers like Mohammed Arkoun, Mohamed Talbi, Abdullahi Ahmed An-Naim, Fatima Mernissi, and Amina Wadud has also limited the reach of their ideas given that they lack access to the pulpit of the state.

16. Alami, "Muslim Conference Calls for Protection," http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/03/world/africa/muslim-conference-calls-for-protection-of-religious-minorities.html?_r=0.

17. Moroccan Ministry of Pious Endowments and Islamic Affairs, "King Mohammed VI Presides over a Council of Ministers and Highlights the Revision of Curricula and Textbooks in the Field of Religious Education," February 8, 2016, http://washin.st/1YbqH3k.

18. Four Moroccans were put on trial and sentenced to death for planning the attack. An Islamic ideologue named Miloudi Za-

karia was sentenced to life in prison after publicly condoning the attack, and eighty-one Islamist activists were given prison terms of varying lengths for allegedly planningsimilar actions.

19. The law in question is 13.01. For the proposed curricular reforms, see *Al-wathiqa al-itar al-ikhtiyarat wal-tawjihat al-tarbawiyya* [Document on the framework of educational choices and orientations] (Rabat: Moroccan Ministry of Education, 2002), 3–4.

20. This study focuses on initiatives targeting schools and mosques, but it bears noting that Moroccan authorities have also engaged the media—principally television and radio—in efforts to disseminate religious discourse emphasizing themes like tolerance, nonviolence, and coexistence. For a recent assessment of such efforts, see "Examining Religious Television Channels," America Abroad Media, available at http://washin.st/1XxRhVF.

21. Exemplary works on the subject include: John Ruedy, ed., *Islamism and Secularism in North Africa* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994); Mohsine Elahmadi, *La Monarchie et l'Islam* (Casablanca: Ittissalat Salon, 2006); Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Developments in Morocco and Indonesia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971); Susan Gilson Miller, *A History of Modern Morocco* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Driss Maghraoui, "The Strengths and Limits of Religious Reform in Morocco," *Mediterranean Politics* 14, no. 2 (July 2009): 195–211; Henry Munson Jr., *Religion and Power in Morocco* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Mohamed Tozy, "Islam et Etat au Maghreb," *Maghreb Machrek* 126 (1989): 25–46; John Waterbury, *The Commander of the Faithful: The Moroccan Political Elite; A Study in Segmented Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970); and Malika Zeghal, *Islamism in Morocco: Religion, Authoritarianism, and Electoral Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2008).

22. The Arabic term *sharif* is usually translated as "noble" and, in Sunni communities, has been used to denote one who is descended from the Prophet Muhammad. The terms *Sharifism* and *Sharifianism* are used interchangeably to denote the brand of leadership based on this descent, claimed by the Jordanian and Moroccan monarchies today.

23. Mary-Jane Deeb, "Islam and the State in Algeria and Morocco: A Dialectical Model," in *Islamism and Secularism in North Africa*, ed. John Ruedy (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 277–78.

24. Zeghal, *Islamism in Morocco*, p. xiv. See also Elahmadi, *La Monarchie et l'Islam*, p. 50.

25. See the Preamble, §1, §2, §6, §7, §19, and §23 of Constitution of Morocco, 1962; Constitution of Morocco, 1970; and Constitution of Morocco, 1972. The additional three constitutions adopted by Morocco are dated 1992, 1996, and 2011.

26. See Dale Eickelman, "Madrassas in Morocco: Their Vanishing Public Role," in *Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education*, ed. Robert W. Hefner and Muhammad Qasim Zaman (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 144. For the 1991 data, see Moroccan Ministry of National Education, *Le Mouvement Éducatif*, 57, http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE_1994/morocco94.pdf.

27. The relevant decrees are Decree 1-80-270 of April 8, 1980 (BORM [Bulletin Officiel du Royaume du Maroc] 3575 of May 6, 1981, pp. 231–32), and Decree 1-93-164 of November 8, 1993 (BORM 4279 of November 2, 1994, p. 530). See also Zeghal, *Islamism in Morocco*, p. 170.

28. Abdelwahab Bendaoud (director of traditional education at the Moroccan Ministry of Pious Endowments and Islamic Affairs), interview by author, January 16, 2013; and Jaafar Kansoussi (member of Minister Tawfiq's cabinet), interview by author, January 17, 2013.

29. Zeghal, *Islamism in Morocco*, 50.

30. For more on the split between the PJD and al-Adl wal-Ihsan, see Avi Max Spiegel, *Young Islam: The New Politics of Religion in Morocco and the Arab World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015). For a detailed look at the latter group, see Vish Sakthivel, *Al-Adl wal-Ihsan: Inside Morocco's Islamist Challenge* (Washington DC: Washington Institute, 2014), http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/al-adl-wal-ihsan-inside-moroccos-islamist-challenge.

31. Constitution of 2011, Article 41.

32. Malikism, founded by Malik ibn Anas in the eighth century CE, is one of the four schools of religious law within Sunni Islam.

33. Asharism is a branch of Islamic theology founded in the tenth century. The school positioned itself between the ultra-rationalist *Mu'tazilites* and the more extreme orthodox branches of thought, encouraging the use of human reason in understanding Islamic teachings.

34. For an example of the state's promotion of Asharism, see last year's lecture by Dr. Mohamed al-Amrawi, a former member of the High Council of Ulama who currently heads a local council and teaches Maliki jurisprudence at the Sharia College in Fes, available at the Ministry of Pious Endowments and Islamic Affairs website, http://washin.st/213yIXa. The twin "threats" of Wahhabism and Shiism have been conveyed by religious scholars such as the High Council's Mohammed Yessef in private gatherings but also in author interviews with members of parliament in the palace-friendly Party of Authenticity and Modernity. More generally, the perceived utility of Malikism, Asharism, and Sufism in countering extremist ideologies came through in the author's interviews with Abdelwahab Bendaoud, director of traditional education in the Ministry of Endowments, on January 16, 2013, and February 11, 2015; Ahmed Abbadi, secretary-general of the League of Moroccan Ulama, on

May 8, 2015; Jaafar Kansoussi, a member of Minister Tawfiq's cabinet and former director of mosques in the Marrakesh region, on February 8, 2015; and in numerous exchanges with Nour-Eddine Quouar, a doctoral student in Islamic jurisprudence at the University of Rabat and a former student at Dar al-Hadith al-Hassania.

35.   In June 2015, Royal Decree 1.15.71 further consolidated the ministry's control over religious instruction by placing Dar al-Hadith and the imam-training center under the Qarawiyyin system, which is now out of the Ministry of Education's purview and thus beyond the government's control.

36.   Abdelwahab Bendaoud, interview by author, January 16, 2013. For additional information on the ministry's budget expenditures during this period, see *Ashar sanawat min al-'ahad al-muhammadi al-zahir, 1999-2009: i'adah haykalat al-haql al-dini wa-tatwir al-waqf* [Ten years of the glorious reign, 1999-2009: Reorganization of the religious realm and the development of pious endowments], Rabat, Ministry of Pious Endowments and Islamic Affairs, 2012, pp. 139-140.

37.   The relevant reform is Royal Decree 1-03-300 of April 22, 2004 (BORM 5210 of May 6, 2004, pp. 698–701).

38.   Souad Eddouada, "Morocco's 'Mourchidates' and Contradictions," *Reset Dialogues in Civilizations*, April 17, 2009, http://www.resetdoc.org/story/00000001323. The king's decision to augment the number of women on the local councils appeared on the Ministry of Endowment's website on April 8, 2015. See "Instructions Royales pour Plus de Femmes au Sein de Conseil du Oulémas," *Aujourd'hui*, April 8, 2015, http://washin.st/1TWyZMB.

39.   "Mohammed Yessef," June 19, 2013, available at http://www.hespress.com/baisse/82120.html.

40.   As told to the author on February 11, 2015, by a high-level official at the Ministry's Directorate of Traditional Education.

41.   Abdellatif Tarib (head of the al-Najah Center for Human Development in Casablanca), interview by author, October 6, 2015. The al-Najah Center is spearheading initiatives to reform civic education curricula in Morocco's public schools, and recently began a pilot program engaging local councils of ulama in youth outreach.

42.   Elahmadi, *La Monarchie et l'Islam*, 108.

43.   The relevant reform is Royal Decree 1-05-210 of February 14, 2006 (BORM No. 5418 of May 4, 2006, p. 809).

44.   Asma Lamrabet, interview by author, October 6, 2015. See also http://www.annisae.ma/default.aspx and Lamrabet's website, http://www.asma-lamrabet.com/.

45. The one exception to this rule is the Education Ministry's oversight of a religious-education track within the public schools known as "original education" *(al-talim al-asil)*. In 1957, the government introduced this track to absorb many of the students who had been studying in traditional institutions of religious education during the French protectorate. The *asil* track has since been taught entirely in Arabic and devoted a greater proportion of the curriculum to religious instruction than the standard public school curriculum. In the 2015–2016 academic year, 14,756 students were enrolled in the *asil* track, representing less than 1 percent of the total schoolgoing population.

46. The fatwa is available at the Ministry of Pious Endowments and Islamic Affairs website, http://washin.st/1tcBDCv. For an analysis, see "Morocco's High Council of Ulema in Fatwa Following Paris Attacks: 'Terror Is Forbidden in Islam; Only the Ruler May Declare Jihad," *Special Dispatch* 6225 (Middle East Media Research Institute, November 20, 2015), http://washin.st/1Uurjez.

47. *Charte Nationale d'Éducation et de Formation* (National charter on education and training) (Rabat: Special Commission on Education and Training, 2000), Articles 1, 2.

48. Morocco's personal status code is known as the *mudawanna*. Until 2004, laws governing marriage, divorce, custody, and inheritance stemmed from the 1957 *mudawanna*, which largely drew on Maliki jurisprudence. The 2004 reform, widely praised in the international community and by women's rights groups in Morocco, brought a greater degree of gender equity to the laws governing marriage, divorce, and custody.

49. *Education aux Droits de l'Homme* [Education on human rights] (Rabat: Moroccan Ministry of Education, n.d.), 2–3. For the text of the 2004 and 2006 directives, see *Daftir al-tahamulat al-khassa al-mutaalaq bi-talif wa intaj al-kutub al-madrassiyah: kitab al-talmidh wa dalil al-ustadh* [Specifications for the writing and production of school textbooks: Student's workbook and teacher's manual] (Rabat: Moroccan Ministry of Education, 2004), 2; and *Daftir al-tahamulat al-khassa al-mutaalaq bi-talif wa intaj al-kutub al-madrassiyah* [Specifications for the writing and production of school textbooks] (Rabat: Moroccan Ministry of Education, 2006), p. 9.

50. Mohamed Melouk, interview by author, December 18, 2012. Dr. Melouk is a linguistics professor at Mohammed V University in Rabat and served on the advisory committee charged with reviewing Islamic studies textbooks to ensure the values transmitted therein complied with the Education Ministry's 2002 guidelines.

51. Kingdom of Morocco, Law 13.01 of January 29, 2002 (BORM 4980 of February 21, 2002, pp. 108–12), Article 1.

52. *Ihsaiyyat muassassat al-talim al-atiq, al-mawsim al-dirassi 2013–2014* [Sta-

tistics on institutions of traditional education for the 2013–2014 academic year] (Moroccan Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, 2014), p. 10.

53. Abdelwahab Bendaoud, interview by author, February 11, 2015. In addition to the traditional elementary, middle, and secondary schools, the state has come to supervise instruction at roughly 13,000 strictly Quranic schools, or *katatib*, most often located within mosques, where students otherwise enrolled in the public or *atiq* system come for lessons in Quran memorization. See *Ihsaiyyat muassassat al-talim al-atiq*, p. 7.

54. See *Ashar sanawat*, p. 137, and *Nashrat al-Munjazat 2013*, p. 122.

55. For example, individuals wishing to teach in *atiq* preschools—with the exception of those already working as imams in mosques and who therefore fell under a different set of regulations—had to have a certificate in Quranic memorization issued by a local council of ulama. Likewise, those who wished to teach in higher institutions of Islamic learning would now have to obtain a doctorate from al-Qarawiyyin or from Dar al-Hadith al-Hassania. See Kingdom of Morocco, Ministerial Decision 877.06 of May 3, 2006 (BORM 5449 of August 21, 2006, pp. 2086–2087), Articles 2–12.

56. Brahim Machrouh (assistant director of Dar al-Hadith al-Hassania), interview by author, October 7, 2015. The relevant regulations here are in Law 13.01 (2002), Article 2; see also Law 13.01 (2002), Articles 4 and 17, and Kingdom of Morocco, Royal Decree 1-05-159 of August 24, 2005 (BORM 5352 of September 15, 2005, pp. 643–47), Article 20. Students at Dar al-Hadith report that political Islam is off-limits as a topic of study.

57. Nizar Messari (dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, al-Akhawayn University), interview by author, January 10, 2013.

58. The relevant decree is 1.13.50 of May 2, 2013. Khalid Saqi (director of the Mohammed VI Institute for Quranic Readings and Studies), interview by author, October 6, 2015.

59. Abdelwahab Bendaoud, interview by author, January 16, 2013; and Mohammed Boutarboush (head of the Salé Regional Council of Ulama), interview by author, on January 3, 2013.

60. The budgetary figure is cited in Abdelmalek Alaoui, "Why Morocco Wants to Become a Major Islamic Training Hub," *Forbes*, March 31, 2015, http://washin.st/1WCcblO.

61. As recounted to author in a visit to the academy in October 2015.

62. Junayd al-Baghdadi was a ninth-century Sufi ascetic credited with developing one of the more orthodox schools of Islamic mysticism. His proximity to the earliest generation of Muslims has endeared him even to Salafists, who generally exhibit disdain for Sufi scholars and prac-

tices that emerged later. See, for example, "The History of Sufism / The Life of Junaid Baghdadi," YouTube video, 48:17, posted by "SFAvfx," August 18, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YakXuCAlC0Y.

63.   The text of the fatwa is available at "Fatwa al-majlis al-'ilmi al-a'li bi'l-maghreb fi hukm imamat al-mar'a" [Fatwa of Morocco's high council of ulama on the rules governing women's leadership in prayer] http://www.ahlalhdeeth.com/vb/showthread.php?t=83309. Such legal guidelines notwithstanding, women do occasionally appear on the state-run religious channel, al-Sadisa, instructing men on the proper ways to recite the Quran.

64.   Asma Lamrabet, interview by author, October 6, 2015.

65.   Kansoussi's initiative, and the prospects of Sufism serving as an antidote to extremism more generally, is covered in Sarah Feuer, "Sufism: An Alternative to Extremism," Tony Blair Faith Foundation, March 11, 2015, http://washin.st/1VImZhg.

66.   See U.S. Department of State, "A New Center for Global Engagement," January 8, 2016, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/01/251066.htm.

67.   See Richard Barrett et al., *Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq* (New York: Soufan Group, 2015), http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_Foreign-FightersUpdate3.pdf.

68.   For an excellent treatment of the complexities surrounding Tunisia's foreign-fighter phenomenon, see George Packer, "Exporting Jihad," *The New Yorker*, March 28, 2016, http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/03/28/tunisia-and-the-fall-after-the-arab-spring.

69.   James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 5.

70.   For these specific phrases, see Habib Bourguiba's speech before the Union of Industrial Workers in December 1963; the editorial in *l'Action* of January 19, 1969, cited in Michel Camau, "Le Discours Politique de Légitimité des Élites Tunisiennes" [The political discourse of legitimacy among Tunisian elites], *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord* 10 (1971): p. 43; and Bourguiba, "The Conditions of an Authentic Democracy," speech to the Central Committee of the Destourian Socialist Party (Parti Socialiste Déstourien; PSD), April 26, 1966. For variations on the theme, see also Bourguiba's speech at the Neo-Destour Annual Convention in 1964; PSD political platform (Tunis, 1964), reprinted in *l'Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord* 3 (1964): 133; Bourguiba's speech before the PSD subcommittee on education, January 31, 1967; Minister of Defense Bahi Ladgham's speech to University Branches of the PSD, February 1969; Ladgham's speech to the Conference of Sahel Executives, February 18, 1969; and PSD manifesto, October 19, 1969.

71.   Republic of Tunisia, Decree 66-151 of April 8, 1966 (JORT [Journal Officiel de la République Tunisienne] 17 of April 8–12, 1966, pp. 602–4).

72.   Republic of Tunisia, Decree 67-345 of October 5, 1967 (JORT 43 of October 6–10, 1967, pp. 1252 – 1253).

73.   Republic of Tunisia, Decree 77-938 of November 17, 1977 (JORT 77 of November 22–25, 1977, pp. 3224–25).

74.   In the last year of high school, the religious and civic education course was replaced by a course on "Philosophy and Islamic Thought" (*al-falsafa wal-tafkir al-islami*). See Malika Zeghal, "Public Institutions of Religious Education in Egypt and Tunisia: Contrasting the Post-Colonial Reforms of Al-Azhar and the Zaytuna," in *Trajectories of Education in the Arab World: Legacies and Challenges*, ed. Osama Abi-Mershed (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), 115.

75.   *Programmes Officiels de l'Enseignement Secondaire Fascicule VI: Instruction Civique et Religieuse* [Official secondary school curricula, Part VI: Civic and religious instruction] (Tunis: Tunisian Ministry of Education, 1959), p. 11; Noureddine Sraieb, *Colonisation, Décolonisation et Enseignement: l'Exemple Tunisien* [Colonization, decolonization, and education: the Tunisian case] (Tunis: Publications de l'Institut National des Sciences de l'Education de Tunis, 1974), 119.

76.   *Al-ahdaf al-ama lil-tarbiyah al-islamiyah* [General goals of Islamic education] (Tunis: Tunisian Ministry of Education, 1968), p. 508; cited in Michel Lelong, "Le Patrimoine Musulman dans l'Enseignement Tunisien Après l'Indépendance" [The Muslim Heritage in Tunisian Education after Independence] (PhD diss., Université de Provence I, 1971), 249.

77.   Asma Larif-Béatrix, "Changement dans la Symbolique du Pouvoir en Tunisie" [Change in the Symbolism of Power in Tunisia], *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord* 28 (1989): 141–42.

78.   Republic of Tunisia, Decree 87-663 of April 22, 1987 (JORT 31 of April 28–May 1, 1987, pp. 574–75).

79.   The full text of Ben Ali's November 7, 1987 declaration is available at http://washin.st/1Ua8yl0.

80.   Republic of Tunisia, Decree 86-532 of May 6, 1986 (JORT 30 of May 9, 1986, p. 580), and Decree 87-664 of April 22, 1987 (JORT 31 of April 28–May 1, 1987, pp. 575–76).

81.   Republic of Tunisia, Decree 89-1690 of November 8, 1989 (JORT 77 of November 17–21, 1989, pp. 1805–6).

82.   See, for example, Republic of Tunisia, Decree 93-1952 of August 31, 1993 (JORT 74 of October 1, 1993, pp. 1645–47); Decree 94-558 of March 17, 1994 (JORT 23 of March 25, 1994, pp. 494–95); Decree 95-993 of June 5, 1995 (JORT 46 of June 9, 1995, pp. 1264–65); and Decree 2003-2411 of November 17, 2003 (JORT 96 of December 2, 2003, p. 3489).

83. As recounted to the author by Faouzia Charfi, the widow of Mohamed Charfi, on September 17, 2012.

84. Republic of Tunisia, Law 91-65 of July 29, 1991 (JORT 55 of August 6, 1991, p. 1398), Section II, Article 8, and Section I, Article 1.

85. Moncef Benabdeljelil (member of Charfi's staff), interview by author, October 23, 2012.

86. The regulations establishing the new Zaytuna University were: Republic of Tunisia, Law 87-83 of December 31, 1987 (JORT 91 of December 29–31, 1987, p. 1637), Article 96. See also Decree 95-865 of May 8, 1995, on the missions of Zaytuna University (JORT 40 of May 19, 1995, pp. 1136–37). In 1988, the regime did reopen the Grand Mosque and even permitted the creation of a Scientific Council of Zaytuna to oversee lessons on preaching and guidance there, lessons that attracted considerable public interest. Within two years, however, the project was aborted and the scientific council was dissolved. For more on this, see Asma Nouira, "Al-muasassat al-islamiyah al-rasmiyah fi tunis min 1956 ila al-yawm" [Institutions of official Islam in Tunisia from 1956 to the present] (PhD diss., University of Tunis, 2008), p. 96.

87. Republic of Tunisia, Law 87-83 of December 31, 1987, Annex A (JORT 91 of December 29–31, 1987, pp. 1660–61).

88. Republic of Tunisia, Decree 90-578 of March 30, 1990 (JORT 26 of April 17, 1990, pp. 515–17), especially Articles 6 and 10.

89. Republic of Tunisia, Ministerial Order of November 3, 1995 (JORT 92 of November 17, 1995, pp. 2150–54); Republic of Tunisia, Ministerial Order of February 6, 1996 (JORT 13 of February 13, 1996, pp. 331–34); Republic of Tunisia, Decree 2003-2082 of October 14, 2003 (JORT 84 of October 21, 2003, pp. 3146–50); Republic of Tunisia, Decree 2003-2082 of October 14, 2003 (JORT 84 of October 21, 2003, pp. 3146–50); and Decree 2008-3542 of November 22, 2008 (JORT 96 of November 28, 2008, pp. 4001–2). For the reforms regulating imams and imam supervisors, see also Nouira, "Al-muasassat al-islamiyah al-rasmiyah fi tunis," pp. 171, 174–75.

90. For more on the thinking behind Charfi's reforms, see Mohamed Charfi and Hamadi Redissi, "Teaching Tolerance and Open-Minded Approaches to Understanding Sacred Texts," in *International Perspectives on the Goals of Universal Basic and Secondary Education*, ed. Joel E. Cohen and Martin E. Malin (New York: Routledge, 2010).

91. For more on the Nobel win, see Sarah Feuer, "The Most Important Nobel You've Never Heard Of," *Politico*, October 13, 2015, http://wash-in.st/1XxUSTE.

92. An October 2014 poll conducted by the International Republican Institute found that 67 percent of Tunisians believed the security situation had improved under the Jomaa government. See "IRI Poll:

Tunisia's Democratic Transition at a Crossroads," August 19, 2014, http://www.iri.org/resource/iri-poll-tunisia%E2%80%99s-democratic-transition-crossroads. Indeed, an October 2014 International Crisis Group (ICG) report noted that the Jomaa government had "practically eradicated" Ansar al-Sharia from the country, although violent confrontations between jihadist groups and security forces continued along the border with Algeria. See "Update Briefing," *Middle East and North Africa Briefing* 41 (Tunis/Brussels: ICG, 2014): 2, http://washin.st/1sup4Sk.

93.   See, for example, Sarah Feuer, *Islam and Democracy in Practice: Tunisia's Ennahda Nine Months In*, Middle East Brief 66 (Waltham, MA: Crown Center for Middle East Studies, 2012), http://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/meb/meb66.html; Monica Marks, *Convince, Coerce, or Compromise? Ennahda's Approach to Tunisia's Constitution* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 2014), http://washin.st/1XxUGnA; and Malika Zeghal, "Constitutionalizing a Democratic Muslim State without Sharia: The Religious Establishment in the Tunisian 2014 Constitution," in *Sharia Law and Modern Muslim Ethics*, ed. Robert Hefner (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), pp. 188–231.

94.   Zeghal, "Constitutionalizing a Democratic Muslim State without Sharia," 189.

95.   Ennahda's involvement in the riots was reported in Reuters, "Scores Arrested after Art Riots," Al Jazeera, June 12, 2012, http://www.al-jazeera.com/news/africa/2012/06/2012612101946542727.html.

96.   The document, titled "Document on the Resumption of Traditional Zaytounian Education," was signed by Minister of Religious Affairs Nourredine Khadmi, Minister of Education Abdellatif Abid, and Minister of Higher Education Moncef Ben Salem on May 12, 2012. Malika Zeghal later noted that courses were to be segregated between boys and girls, but whether the planned courses were implemented remains uncertain. For Zeghal's account, see "Teaching Again at the Zaytuna Mosque in Tunisia," *On Islam & Politics*, May 17, 2012, https://onislamandpolitics.wordpress.com/2012/05/17/teaching-again-at-the-zaytuna-mosque-in-tunisia/.

97.   For an example of Abidi's incendiary rhetoric, see "Sheykh of the Zaytuna Hussein al-Abidi condemns the enemies of religion," YouTube video, 1:55, posted by "Tounssi soixante six," June 15, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_IwR3ztJon8. The court case against him is referenced in "Imam of the Zaytuna Grand Mosque Accuses the Tunisian Ministry of Religious Affairs of Restricting his Activity," *Echorouk Online*, May 6, 2013, http://www.echoroukonline.com/ara/articles/163876.html.

98.   See, for example, the comments of Sadiq al-Arfaoui, an advisor to the religious affairs minister, on February 3, 2015: "Tunisia's Ministry of

Endowments [sic] Denies Intention to Unify Friday Sermons," *al-Sharq*, http://www.al-sharq.com/news/details/207917.

99. For Tlili's statement on fatwa unification, see "Ministry of Religious Affairs: 90 Preachers Selected to Accompany Pilgrims on Hajj," al-Sabah, August 26, 2014, http://washin.st/1YboHrV.

100. Dr. Alaya Allani (scholar of Tunisian Islamism), interview by author, February 6, 2016.

101. Ibid. See also Haim Malka, "Tunisia: Confronting Extremism," in *Religious Radicalism after the Arab Uprisings* (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2014), p. 109.

102. Munir Tlili, interview by author, February 5, 2016.

103. Ibid.

104. Essid's plans were reported in Aymen Gharbi, "Tunisie: Mosquées Hors de Contrôle, Radicalisation en Prison et Port du Niqab: Les Mesures de Othman Batikh contre le Terrorisme," HuffPost Tunisie, March 31, 2015, http://washin.st/1UuqR03; and Sonia Bahi, "Attaque de Sousse: Les Dix Mesures Prises par le Gouvernement," Webdo.Tn, June 27, 2015, http://www.webdo.tn/2015/06/27/tunisie-attaque-de-sousse-les-mesures-prises-par-le-gouvernment/.

105. As reported in Frida Dahmani, "Tunisie: Fermeture des Écoles Coraniques ne Bénéficiant pas d'Autorisation," *Jeune Afrique*, February 2, 2016, http://www.jeuneafrique.com/298922/politique/tunisie-fermeture-ecoles-coraniques-ne-beneficiant-dautorisation/.

106. For more on the initiative, see http://washin.st/1Uwecdk.

107. 2014 constitution, Article 39.

108. The term is borrowed from Paul Salem's excellent article "The Rise and Fall of Secularism in the Arab World," *Middle East Policy* 4, no. 3 (March 1996).

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