

Anthropology in Morocco since the 1960s: A Personal Odyssey¹

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Abstract: Morocco has been the site of major transformations in the practice and understanding of social anthropology from the mid-1960s to the present. The author, who first arrived in Morocco in November 1968 by way of Baghdad, has remained involved with Morocco and Moroccan academic life from that arrival to the present. The understanding of Morocco, by Moroccans and others, has in some respects followed trends elsewhere, but also shows significant differences. An earlier generation of British social anthropology – and French social thought – focused on so-called “elementary” societies. This trend seemingly encouraged the marginalization of Morocco as a primary locus for anthropological thought. In practice, Morocco propelled anthropologists to think beyond received earlier wisdom and to practice an anthropology open to complementary disciplines. In addition, the feisty nature of Moroccan public life encouraged anthropologists – both Moroccan and others – to communicate regularly with wide audiences in Morocco itself, as well as elsewhere. This essay traces the trajectory of the discipline in Morocco over the last half century.

Keywords: Anthropology, Islam, Baghdad, Boujad, Education, Morocco, Social Sciences.

The subtitle indicates the scope of this essay. Many articles exist that sum up the changing field of anthropology and related disciplines as they have been practiced in Morocco, and I am responsible for some of them.²

This essay takes a more personal approach. It explains how my interests developed in anthropology in general, and Morocco in particular. I suggest the interplay between one’s intentions in undertaking anthropology and the often-unanticipated turns of possibility and circumstance that shape how one acts. In recent decades, I’ve also been particularly interested in encouraging younger Moroccans and others to consider anthropology and sociology as

1. Earlier versions of several passages appeared in Dale F. Eickelman, “Clifford Geertz and Islam,” in *Clifford Geertz by His Colleagues*, eds. Richard A. Shweder and Byron Good, 63-75 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Dale F. Eickelman, “Zaman’s Guest: “Morocco’s Traditional Political Structure Can Accommodate Modernity: Interviewed by Ghassan al-Kechouri,” *Zamane*, June (2020): 26-33.

2. Dale F. Eickelman, “New Directions in Interpreting North African Society,” in *Connaissances du Maghreb: Sciences sociales et colonization*, ed. Jean-Claude Vatin (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1984), 279-89; Dale F. Eickelman, “Morocco,” in *Oxford Bibliographies in African Studies*, ed. Thomas Spear (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

academic fields, or as a bridge to thinking about societies in general, including one's own. There are only limited university posts in academic anthropology and sociology in Morocco, and for that matter in my own country, but the field can have a wider influence beyond its specifically academic applications.

In the eyes of some, my encounters with Morocco may also have historical value because they now span over half a century. *Zamane*, the Moroccan monthly that seeks to popularize history, recently interviewed me.³ The interviewer, Ghassan el Kechouri, introduced me by saying that I was one of the few "Anglo-Saxon" anthropologists working in Morocco in the 1960s who had not yet "traveled on" (*rawāḥu*), a subtle way of saying – together with the *safarū* used by friends from Boujad – that I am still among the living.

Anthropology Meets Islam

Two experiences contributed to my growing interest in the Middle East and in anthropology as an undergraduate. Neither experience came from the classroom. First was an opportunity to participate in Operation Crossroads Africa in summer 1961, for which I had to raise my own funds. I ended up helping build a school in Maymisham, a remote village in Ethiopia's northern Tigre province. There were about a dozen Americans, equally divided between women and men from historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the American south, with the rest of us from northern schools. We were joined by an equal number of students, all male, from Haile Selassie University in Addis Ababa, at the time the only university in Ethiopia. Our Ethiopian counterparts were drawn from various places in Ethiopia, and about a quarter were Muslim.

The U.S. Peace Corps had just come into existence, but had not yet sent anyone overseas. Thus, our program was all the more unique. Living together in close quarters for two months gave us an opportunity to know, and on occasion to misunderstand, one another. With a borrowed typewriter I kept a collective diary of our experiences and reflections, my first practical experience in learning how to think about societies far removed from my own and to make sense of them through writing. The "journal" was distributed via mimeograph, courtesy of the US. Consulate in Asmara.

A second decisive experience was in Fall 1962. Dartmouth had very few African or African American students at the time. I indicated to a dean of students that I would like to share a dormitory room with an incoming African student. Thus, I was paired with Aḥmad Osman, a Sudanese student

3. Eickelman, "Zaman's Guest."

who transferred from the University of Khartoum as a sophomore, and who remains to this day a good friend. Aḥmad was a strictly observant Muslim. I knew nothing about Islam at the time, so he gave me an English copy of Muḥammad Ḥamidullah's *Introduction to Islam*.⁴ Weeks later, Aḥmad – a Salafi in the original sense of the term, as I later learned – added that if I did not now become Muslim, I would go to hell. I became fascinated by how someone could hold such strong beliefs, and soon sought out courses on the Middle East and Islam. Aḥmad got interested in the Black Muslim movement and played an instrumental role in persuading Malcolm X (el-Ḥajj Malik el-Shabazz) to break away from the Elijah Muḥammad's Nation of Islam and move closer to the teachings of Sunni Islam. Ahmad gave the funeral address after Malcolm X's assassination in New York on 21 February 1965.

There were only a few opportunities in the 1960s to learn more about Islam or Middle Eastern anthropology at Dartmouth. I was accepted to graduate school in anthropology at a major East Coast institution, but was appalled by the authoritarian nature of the department chair. When I suggested that perhaps I could combine studies in anthropology with learning about Islam and Arabic, he replied "Here at ***** we'll tell *you* what to do." That same day I took a bus to Montréal and talked my way into a modest fellowship at McGill's Institute for Islamic Studies. Its founder, Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1916-2000) had left McGill for Harvard just a few months before my arrival in August 1964, but his strong influence continued to shape Islamic studies at McGill.

Two years in Montréal gave me training in Islamic history and Arabic, and left me the freedom to combine what I was learning with the social sciences. About half the Institute's students were Muslim, mostly from Pakistan and India. The rest were mostly North American, including one Mexican, several Canadians, and a few Europeans. At McGill, I read all of Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddima* with a tutor from al-Azhar, as well ethnographies in Arabic. The first year I was at McGill, the Institute was still housed in a former mansion isolated from the main campus. The isolation meant that we students had ample opportunity to learn from one another, including outside the classroom. Soon after I finished the M.A., I revised it for publication as "Musaylima: An Approach to the Social Anthropology of Seventh Century Arabia."⁵ This brought closure to my decision to combine Islamic studies and the study of Arabic with anthropology instead of Islamic history.

4. Muhammad Hamidullah, *Introduction to Islam* (Paris: Centre Culturel Islamique, 1959).

5. Dale F. Eickelman, "Musaylima: An Approach to the Social Anthropology of Seventh Century Arabia," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 10 (1967): 17-54.

Chicago in the 1960s

When I entered the University of Chicago's Department of Anthropology in Fall 1966, Bernard Cohn and Clifford Geertz taught the obligatory introductory graduate courses. Their complementary courses were ideal. Cohn's course offered the double vision of a professional historian, which he was, and an anthropologist. With Cohn, the excerpted readings from different texts became more than an assemblage of "found" objects in the style of Marcel Duchamp or a collation of predecessor texts carefully chosen carefully chosen to persuade students of the inevitability of the lecturer's views – a form of pedagogical authority familiar to generations of graduate students.⁶

Sartre aphoristically calls history "the deliberate resumption of the past by the present."⁷ This phrase perfectly conveys the consciousness of the historical imagination integral to Cohn's sense of "doing" history. At a measured pace Cohn did more than convey a sense of anthropology's past. From Cohn, I learned that anthropologists, just like historians, describe societies at certain times and in particular institutional settings. Some historians are more conscious than others of their intermediary role in interpreting the past for a different generation. Cohn invited us to pay equal attention to what anthropologists saw, experienced, and heard, and to which audiences they wrote and talked. His views helped shape how I saw the writings of my anthropological and historical predecessors in understanding Morocco.

Clifford Geertz's winter 1967 lectures differed significantly from Cohn's. Geertz spoke so quickly that I worked with three other students to take notes in relays. The size of our group was limited by the number of copies we could make using ball-point pens and carbon paper. Geertz's rapid-fire lectures traced the notion of culture from nineteenth-century figures such as Johann Herder, Wilhelm Dilthey, and Matthew Arnold to the 1960s. The names and texts flew hard and fast, but we sensed that we caught Geertz in the act of trying to break out of the "iron cage" of received social thought. With his many verbal asides and often mumbled additions to prepared lecture notes, Geertz made us acutely aware of the rough edges of anthropology as received tradition and practice. As our readings caught up with excitement for the

6. Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1977).

7. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Literary and Philosophic Essays* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 206.

discipline, and as Geertz himself acknowledged, his sense of the emergence of a “theory” of culture was heavily filtered through the sieve of Harvard’s Department of Social Relations, the site of his own anthropological initiation beginning in 1950.⁸

In addition to formal lectures, students learned from informal seminars and from one another. For those of us interested in Islam and the Middle East, Clifford and Hildred Geertz conducted a weekly informal seminar at their home, in which student and faculty participants took turns presenting a paper or talk. The peer learning was even more informal, and the various styles of learning encouraged all of us to become *bricoleurs* in Lévi-Strauss’ sense of the term. One of my Chicago classmates was the Egyptian anthropologist Abdul Hamid el-Zein (1934-1979),⁹ initially trained in Alexandria by the noted Egyptian anthropologist Ahmed Abu Zaid. We argued about everything, and the result was to link our more general understandings of social anthropology with writings specific to Islam and the Middle East. El Zein entered doctoral studies as a structural-functionalist, to use a now-ancient term, and left an advocate of structuralism as understood by Lévi-Strauss.

From where does “new” thinking come in anthropology? The Hungarian composer György Ligeti (Lecture, Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, 13 February 2001) said of composing music that originality grows at the margins of the incessant repetition of the familiar. The same might be said of anthropology. Geertz’s early arguments, for instance in “Ritual and Social Change,”¹⁰ which I first read when assigned by Bernard Cohn, reassuringly used elements of the social theory we were then learning, but also showed how to move beyond the conventional ideas of the day. In this early article, Geertz linked the dynamics of social change, however tentatively, to the idea of culture. He showed how the modification of an existing anthropological approach could improve the questions asked and the answers given, moving beyond existing social science, but not so far as to become unrecognizable.

From Baghdad to Boujad

I originally prepared to do field research in southern Iraq, and by the Spring of 1968 the Ministry of Education of the pre-Ba’th government granted

8. Clifford Geertz, “Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power.” In *Culture and Its Creators: Essays in Honor of Edward Shils*, eds. Joseph Ben-David and Terry N. Clark, 150-71 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

9. Dale F. Eickelman, “A Search for the Anthropology of Islam: Abdel Hamid el-Zein,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 13, 3 (1981): 361-65.

10. Clifford Geertz, “Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese Example,” *American Anthropologist* 59 (1957): 32-54.

me permission to conduct field research in Najaf, the center of Shi'a shrines and religious learning in southern Iraq. The formal letter said that I was on "detached" service to an archaeological project. However, in June 1968 the "glorious" Ba'th revolution (*al-thawra al-majīda*) intervened, followed by the July "corrective action" (*al-ḥaraka al-taṣḥīhiyya*). After a summer stay in Cairo where the relative of a McGill classmate at the Iraqi Embassy tutored me in Iraqi Arabic – and suggested obliquely (inventing reports on the stomach ulcer of a fictitious relative) about when it would be safe to continue to Iraq. My wife, Christine, and I reached Baghdad in late September and 'Afaq, a village in southern Iraq, but never Najaf. I only reached Najaf in November 2009, forty-one years later, at the invitation of 'Adil 'Abd al-Mahdi, then one of Iraq's two vice-presidents.

After several weeks, it was clear that I could not do anthropological work in Iraq – I was informed that I would have to remain at an archaeological site. A 1940s-era British Admiralty Handbook on North Africa that I found in Baghdad briefly described Boujad as a place of shrines and regional pilgrimage, apparently the right size for a graduate student in anthropology. To keep my grant, it was important to pretend that I could do in Morocco roughly the same project as I had intended for Najaf. Boujad is far from the equivalent of Najaf, but for purposes of retaining my grant, I had to make the case.

We left first for Cairo, and on 19 November 1968, we finally arrived in Fès via train from Alger. Algiers was the closest that one could get to Morocco without flying via Europe, which was impossible on a student budget. We spent five days in Sefrou, where Clifford and Hildred Geertz were still present, as well as Paul Rabinow, just about to leave for Sidi Laḥcen Lyusi. We then took ten days to travel via CTM to various places in Morocco, including Boujad.

Official Morocco and the Social Sciences in the 1960s

As an academic "refugee" in Morocco, I intended to continue my interest in the role of religion in modern society. In the late 1960s, the social sciences throughout the world were filled with "modernization" theory, which for many meant viewing religious beliefs and practices, having played a role in the past development of societies, increasingly played only a marginal public role. The more I learned about Muslim and eventually other societies, however, the more suspect I became of this assumption.

Fortunately, my graduate studies at the University of Chicago included classes with the human geographer Marvin Mikesell (1929-2017), whose initial field work was in the Rif in the tumultuous post-independence years of 1956-1957. Mikesell's lectures were a good complement to Geertz's informal seminars at his home, which in any case only marginally focused on his and Hildred's work then underway in Sefrou. They also introduced me to the excellent recent work then underway by French and French-trained geographers in Morocco.

Being a non-French foreigner and initially unaware of domestic Moroccan politics may have been an advantage in 1968. Another was sheer good luck. Ma'ṭi Jorio was one of the first Moroccan administrators I met. In 1968 he was Secretary-General of the Direction de l'Urbanisme et de l'Habitat in the Ministry of the Interior. In my basic French, I explained what I wanted to do. He then asked whether I had first sought permission from the Moroccan Embassy in Washington before coming to Morocco. No, I said. I came by way of Baghdad.

Without smiling, he said, Monsieur Eickelman, we have no protocol for American students who come to us by way of Baghdad. *Soyez bienvenu*. He then explained that he wasn't certain in which province Boujad was because of a recent *découpage administrative*, so he wrote short notes of introduction to the governors of both Khouribga and Beni-Mellal. The governors, in turn, introduced us formally to their subordinates in the *voie hiérarchique*. Bensaïd Ḥosseïn, then the governor in Khouribga, wrote a short note of introduction to the Qaid Mumtāz in Oued Zem (see Fig. 1), who informed the Qaid in Boujad by telephone that we would soon make ourselves known. With Bensaïd Ḥosseïn's note, all the subordinate officials were cordial and left us on our own. We could not have imagined a better administrative welcome. It may have helped that there were no local police; only a small detachment of the Gendarmerie Royale. We introduced ourselves known to them and once again were left alone.

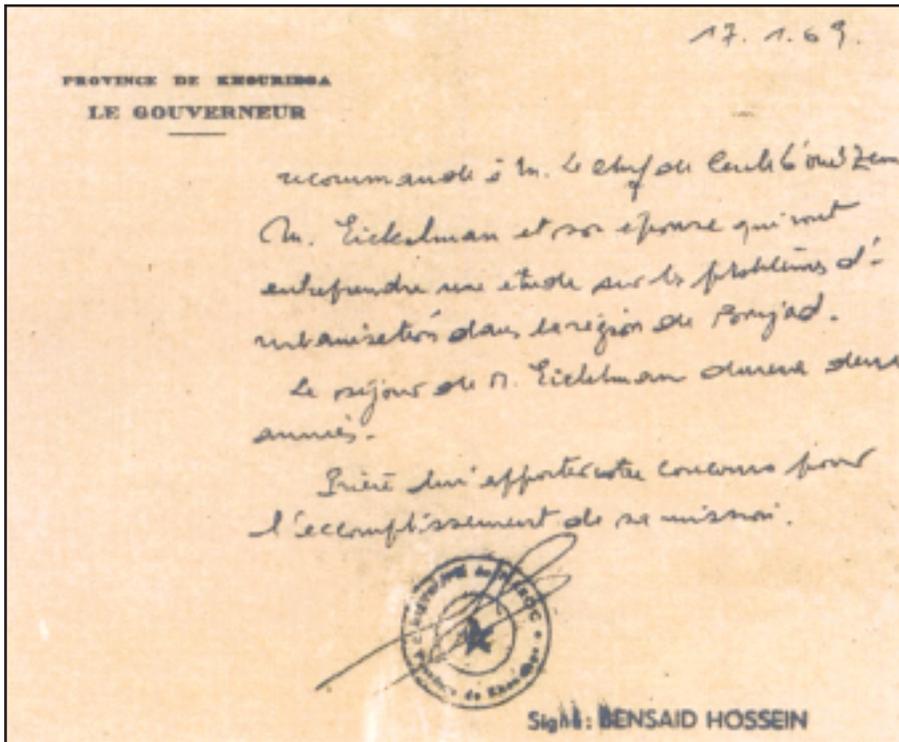


Fig. 1: The short note of introduction written by Bensaïd Hossein, the Governor in Khouribga to the Qaid Mumtāz in Oued Zem

Having arrived to Morocco via Baghdad, I knew little about local politics. Much later, in 1986, I met Jorio again when he was Morocco's ambassador to Washington. I asked him about his time in the Ministry of the Interior under Mohamed Oufkir. He explained that there was a *cloison parafeu* (firewall) between his part of the Ministry, the Direction de l'Urbanisme et de l'Habitat, and the "other" elements of the Ministry. I learned slowly about *le Maroc politique*, just as I learned incrementally about Islam as locally practiced and understood.

Starting Over in Boujad

If my purpose in settling in Boujad wasn't always clearly understood, we were at least tolerated. Initially we stayed in the hotel, soon to close up forever, at the edge of the administrative quarter. We were its only guests. The establishment survived until 1972 as a bar-restaurant for the younger administrators. When we first arrived in Boujad, I asked at the bus stop whether anyone could show us around town. The only person who said yes was (as I learned much later) a recent immigrant from the countryside, Miloudi bin Hammou (Draoui) from the Beni Bataw, who had become a tailor. My Arabic was that of a schoolteacher. His Arabic was a very local colloquial,

spoken at a pace that made Geertz's lectures easy. But we managed. He showed us the available housing, asking everyone for leads as we walked around. He cautioned that one house in "New Boujad," was occupied by *jnūn*, which we thought would get us off to an inauspicious start even if the *jnūn* left us alone. Another ample, two-storied house in the *madina* had an inner courtyard, but part of the second floor had collapsed ("just walk around the hole in the floor," said the landlord). Our indefatigable guide then knocked on the door of the large house of a former minister and in-law to Hassan II, and a servant told us that there was no apartment within to let.

Quickly word got out that we were looking for a place to live and Boujad's Qāḍī, al-Ḥajj 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Manṣūrī, let it be known that he had a newly-built apartment just across the street from where he lived, and adjoining a garden. Miloudi introduced us, and we took the apartment. Once we settled in, invitations arrived from key Sharqāwa and other notables for lunch. When I indicated that I knew Arabic, some would bring out old papers, including correspondence with prior rulers. With difficulty, I could make out some of the writing. Because such documents often yielded more about extended families, past rivalries, and incidents that my hosts also had difficulty reading, they were then quickly removed from me. It would be much later before I would see them again.

The beginnings of field research are uneven by necessity. My Arabic was basically "schoolteacher" Arabic, correct but initially devoid of Moroccan colloquial usage. As my local Arabic improved, I sometimes was asked in Boujad's rural hinterland to translate from Morocco's mid-day newscasts, then spoken in formal Arabic, into colloquial Moroccan Arabic. By the mid-1980s, when rural youth had more access to elementary and intermediate schooling, I lost this "job." In the first months in Boujad, I travelled a lot to the rural markets around Boujad and also examined the agricultural tax registers to get an idea of economic activity and hinterland ties to the town. I also mapped out the various quarters in Boujad, a slow but rewarding task facilitated by the electric company making for me a copy of their map of the town, based on an aerial photograph taken in the last days of the Protectorate.

At first I was puzzled by the lack of agreement among Boujadis about where urban quarters began and ended, a puzzle described in one of my first professional articles on Morocco.¹¹ The survey also enabled me to meet people from many different backgrounds. I also selected people rural and

11. Dale F. Eickelman, "Is There an Islamic City? The Making of a Quarter in a Moroccan Town," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 5 (1974): 274-94.

urban, young and old, wealthy and at the socioeconomic margins – and created elaborate kinship charts. Such charts, the bread and butter of anthropology, enabled me eventually to go beyond the received wisdom of the meanings of kinship and tribes.

My forays into Boujad's rural hinterland culminated, so to speak, with a country wedding in late February 1969. All the male guests were together in one building in which the animals for the feast were slaughtered and then cut up at one end of the room, cooked, and passed around. We all slept at the opposite end of the room. Two weeks later with a high fever, thinking I had only a passing flu, I saw a doctor in Beni-Mellal – a Haitian trained in Brooklyn – who diagnosed me as having cutaneous anthrax – fortunately the sort from which one can recover. My best guess was that I caught this at the wedding, although later I learned that there was a surge in the number of anthrax infections among animals in the region, plus myself.

Recovery from anthrax meant that for the better part of a month I was confined to our apartment. Nonetheless, people who had been working with me on kinship charts visited after the first week and I transcribed stories and other texts that improved my colloquial Arabic.

Varieties of Educational Experience

Before the 1980s and 1990s, university students in Boujad were few. Even *lycée* students had to board in student dormitories elsewhere, and Khouribga and Casablanca were the destinations for many. In the social sciences, a basic Marxism prevailed and a notion of “modernity” prevailed that had little room for thinking about “tradition.” Thus, some university students whom I met assumed that I was engaged in “folklore” studies in a “fossilized” town that was being passed over by events occurring elsewhere. My interest in the annual *mussem* of Sidi Mḥammad al-Sharqi, which still attracted large numbers of Sma'la tribesmen from the region of Oued Zem, was for them an example of an obsession with “folklore.” However, government efforts politically to pressure the Sma'la as a collectively – much land was still communally owned, indicated that many local religious practices were alive and still relevant to contemporary society even if out of favor among many townspeople and the educated elite.

To complement our field research every six weeks or so, Christine and I took the bus to Rabat. At that time, Rabat was still a compact town. Mohammed V university was within convenient walking distance, as were most government ministries, and many faculty members lived within the same area or a short taxi ride away. These brief visits allowed me to contact

researchers and faculty members doing work related to my own. I first visited the Institut de Sociologie in early 1969 on one of these short visits to Rabat. There I met Abdelkebir Khatibi, its director, before the Institut was ordered closed in 1970. The *Makhzen*, having noted the role of sociologists in the French uprisings in 1968, may have assumed that Moroccan sociologists were preparing to take a similar disruptive stance. Khatibi, in turn, directed me to Paul Pascon at the Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II. Independent of any formal organization, I found my way to Mohammed Guessous, in his modest Agdal villa that slowly became overshadowed on all sides by high-rise residences.

Only after leaving Morocco in early 1970 did I meet senior foreign colleagues working on Morocco, such as David Hart, then living in Granada. Likewise, I met Ernest Gellner in London. He and I rarely shared the same point of view on many issues,¹² but we became friends. We were supposed to have co-taught a course at Dartmouth in 1996, a collaboration caught short by his death in 1995. Gellner first visited Morocco in the turbulent first years after Moroccan independence. His *Saints of the Atlas* (1969) did not reach me until my last months in Boujad, but many of his articles – on tribal rebellions and other subjects – appeared earlier. Some were translated into French and avidly read in Morocco.¹³ Gellner was instrumental in seeing that Abdellah Hammoudi's influential critique of his argument on segmentation got translated into English (1980).¹⁴

Clifford Geertz's *Islam Observed* came out in 1968, although a copy did not reach me in Morocco until mid-1969.¹⁵ Both Gellner and Geertz made conceptual arguments that encouraged students and colleagues, Moroccan, European, and American alike, to think about Morocco in fresh ways. They defined the “new wave,” so to speak, of English-language studies on Morocco, acknowledging of course the much earlier and until recently neglected work of Westernmarck on Morocco in the early 20th century.

The French contributions to understanding Morocco were not only legacy studies from the colonial era, and the colonial era itself was so heavily

12. Dale F. Eickelman, “From Here to Modernity: Ernest Gellner on Nationalism and Islamic Fundamentalism,” in *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, ed. John A. Hall, 258-71 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

13. Ernest Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).

14. Abdellah Hammoudi, “Segmentarité, stratification sociale, pouvoir politique et sainteté: Réflexions sur les thèses de Gellner,” *Hespéris-Tamuda* 15 (1974): 147-80; Abdellah Hammoudi, “Segmentarity, Social Stratification, Political Power, and Sainthood: Reflections on Gellner's Theses,” *Economy and Society* 9 (1980): 279-303.

15. Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

influenced by ethnography in the service of domination that Edmund Burke III (2014) called his last book on Morocco *The Ethnographic State*.¹⁶ Rémy Leveau's many writings on Moroccan politics after independence – at first under pseudonyms and subsequently in his own name (especially Leveau 1976) remain highly significant in defining the politics of an era, and the many French studies of the human geography of Morocco remain essential readings.¹⁷

Of “new wave” work, Abdellah Hammoudi's *La victime et ses masques* (1988), among subsequent writings, uses French colonial ethnographies, assessing their implicit assumptions and logic while also moving beyond them to assess various more recent approaches and his own ethnography. Likewise, recent work in Arabic by Abdelrhani Moundib takes us full circle, by comparing Geertz's work to my own in understanding Moroccan society and social history.¹⁸ Moundib's distinctive contribution is to write primarily in Arabic rather than French or English, making the concepts of anthropology and sociology directly available in Arabic for a new generation of Moroccan students. Youness Loukili is another younger Moroccan focused on using Arabic as a language for social science writing in Morocco.

By the 1970s, the social science disciplines and history in Morocco began to change in many ways. In the late 1970s, at the apartment of the historian Germain Ayache, conveniently located on avenue Allal ben Abdallah in Rabat, I met young historians, including Mohammad Aafif, who later became my student in anthropology at New York University and translator of two of my books and several articles. I also met Ahmad Toufiq at Ayache's apartment, or should one say *salon*. Foreseeing the Arabization of university education in the 1970s, Ayache “upgraded” his formal Arabic so that he could lecture in Arabic and play a full formal role in Toufiq's 1979 dissertation defense, the first in Arabic (as opposed to French) for the history faculty. It was held in the largest auditorium at the Université Mohammed V and made headlines in the national press. Beginning in the mid-1970s, I also met regularly with sociologist Mohamed Cherkaoui nearly each time that we were co-present in Morocco. Although Mohamed only began to publish regularly

16. Edmund Burke III, *The Ethnographic State: France and the Invention of Moroccan Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

17. Rémy Leveau, *Le fellah marocaine: défenseur du trône* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1976); See, Eickelman, “Morocco.”

18. Abdelrhani Moundib, “Sidi Mas'ūd ibn Aḥsin, Dukkala,” (Rabat: Université Mohammed V, Doctorat du 3^{ème} cycle, supervised by Rahma Bourqia, 1992); Abdelrhani Moundib, *al-Dīn wa al-mujtama'a: Dirāsa sūsiyūlūjīyya li-l-tadayyun bi-l-maghrib* (Casablanca: Afrique-Orient, 2006).

on Morocco beginning in 2003,¹⁹ he followed events regularly and, like many other members of his extended family, regularly shared his knowledge and interpretations of Moroccan events.

The period from 1976 onward saw increased opportunities for Moroccan and American social scientists to work together. I had a role in establishing an agreement between the Université Mohammed V and New York University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Princeton University. A key clause was that the financing for any activities was a separate matter. Nonetheless, the agreement created a structure. For example, Abdellah Hammoudi replaced me at New York University in 1979-1980 when I had a research leave.

For me at least, a key time for working closely with Moroccan colleagues was in the Spring of 1992, when I led a faculty seminar in Arabic at the Department of History at Mohammed V University, organized largely by Mohamed Aafif. We took turns delivering papers in Arabic. One “takeaway” from this seminar was the challenge of making presentations and discussions in formal Arabic. This was perhaps most challenging for me, but for others, trained in Paris, Manchester, Princeton, and elsewhere, the need to stick closely to notes was evident and I became sensitive to the challenges of working in multiple language traditions. My own presentation, presented also in Fès and elsewhere in Morocco, concerned the complementarity of social anthropology and history, especially in Moroccan studies.²⁰

Alongside the faculty seminar, I hosted an off-campus graduate student seminar, also in Arabic. As this weekly seminar progressed, I got an in-depth understanding of the ideas and coping strategies of Moroccan graduate students in the social sciences. One of the participants, Abdelrhani Moundib, later became a faculty member in the Department of Sociology at Mohammed V University.

From Fieldwork to Print

My first book, *Moroccan Islam* (1976), sought to portray Islam as it was popularly understood and practiced. This included some activities, such as the annual donations by tribal groups or individuals to Sharqāwa “visitors” (*zuwwār-s*), practices that began to diminish in importance by the 1980s,

19. Mohamed Cherkaoui, “Cross-cutting Fields and Social Circles: A Conversation with Mohamed Cherkaoui,” (interviewed by Gianluca Manzo and Peter Hamilton) in *Theories and Social Mechanisms: Essays in Honour of Mohamed Cherkaoui*, vol 2, 407-48 (Oxford: Bardwell Press, 2015), 435-38.

20. Dale F. Eickelman, “al-Anthrubūlūjiyā wa-l-tā’rīkh wa-waḍ’uhumā fī al-majāll al-akādīmī,” [Anthropology and history in their academic contexts], *Majallat kulliyat al-ādāb wa al-’ulūm al-insāniya, Jāmi’at Muḥammed al-Khāmis* (Rabat) [Journal of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Mohammed V University, Rabat] 18 (1993): 117-23.

possibly in relation to the growing pervasiveness of education and migration to both the rural and urban areas, but also because of historical events of which I became more aware only after leaving Morocco in early 1970. My *Knowledge and Power in Morocco* (1985) dealt with “rural” intellectuals and the Salafi movement, which grew by leaps and bounds in Boujad and elsewhere in Morocco beginning in the 1930s.

An unexpected part of my work after 1969 involved local history, especially making sense of letters and correspondence from the 19th and early 20th centuries held by some Sharqāwa and loaned to me. Without assistance, the notarial style of writing was largely beyond my Arabic. I discovered that the Qāḍī, Ḥajj ‘Abd al-Raḥmān – also my neighbor and landlord – was also fascinated by local history. We took to working together, and he patiently explained to me the details of how the tribal countryside was tied to Boujad and the Sharqāwa, past and present. Working with the Qāḍī, I was increasingly amazed at the range of his interests. There weren’t enough court cases in Boujad to warrant a full-time judge, so Ḥajj ‘Abd al-Raḥmān served also as Qāḍī in Oued Zem, Kasba Tadla, and Beni-Mellal. I often was invited to travel with him, and through these visits I became aware of the judges, notaries, and others who shared at least part of his background. Many had attended the Yousufiyya. In addition, Ḥajj ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s older brother, Aḥmad (d. 1975), was still alive. A Qāḍī in Bzu for much of the colonial period and the first years after independence, Ahmad was subsequently appointed to the Constitutional Council (1960) and elected to Morocco’s first parliament (1963). His career and discussions with him gave me a good sense of how the transition was made between the last years of the protectorate and the first years of independence.

I adapted the term “rural” intellectuals, from Antonio Gramsci. In his terms, “rural” intellectuals had “organic” ties with the “peasant” proletariat. In my terms, they were men of learning who anchored religious practice in community life. More than many civil servants, I recognized that judges such as Ḥajj ‘Abd al-Raḥmān in Boujad, and Ḥajj Aḥmad bin ‘Abdesslam al-Bu ‘Ayyachi, chief of the criminal court of Tangier when I met him in the early 1970s (and son of the Minister of Justice of ‘Abd al-Krim al-Khatibi’s short-lived Riffian Republic, 1921-1926), had a finely-tuned understanding of life in rural, tribal Morocco. In the late 1960s, seventy percent of Moroccans were still rural.

Only after leaving Morocco in early 1970 was I able to connect the dots among some of the puzzles about Boujad’s role in Morocco from the late

nineteenth century to the present. One element were the landholdings, or *'azib-s*, owned by the Sharqāwa *zāwiya*s at the time of the death of Sultan Mulay al-Ḥasan I in 1894.²¹ The Sharqāwa were instrumental in getting Mulay al-Ḥasan's body and entourage through hostile tribal territory after his death during his final royal progress throughout his domains.²² The Sharqāwa ceased to act cohesively in the turbulent politics following the death of Mulay al-Ḥasan I, when some tribes linked to the Sharqāwa supported Mulay 'Abd al-'Azīz as Sultan and others supported the rival claimant to the throne, Mulay 'Abd al-Ḥafīd. By 1905 the French began carefully to monitor – and manipulate – the situation.²³ These decisions shaped the Sharqāwa of Boujad and elsewhere for decades to come, and it remains hard for some Sharqāwa to come to terms with the last 120 years of their history.

Working with Ḥajj 'Abd al-Raḥmān was the upper end of local history. The other element was changing local religious practices. Boujad is ringed by shrines of the descendants of Sidi Mḥammad al-Sharqī, and in the late 1960s, some of them had attendants who, on request, recited the stories connected with the Sharqāwa. I recorded many of these accounts on cassettes, and over time had them transcribed and transliterated. Bouzekri Draiouiy, son of Miloudi bin Ḥammou (Draiouiy), eventually got a *license* (B.A.) in linguistics and English from Muhammad V. We published one set of these myths (*khaṣalāt al-ṣāliḥīn*).²⁴ The field cassettes were digitally restored in the 1990s. Our original idea was to place the accounts on a website connected with Boujad, but some aspects of past “maraboutic” practices remain sensitive so the project remains “on hold.” Today people in Boujad and many other locales are more likely to foreground the chanting of poetry in praise of the Prophet (*al-amdāḥ al-nabawiya*), which bring together imams, barbers, carpenters, civil servants, and others who enjoy the competition and camaraderie – and the robust competition between towns and regions.

Politics in the Periphery

In 1968-1970, I became more aware of domestic politics in Morocco. People active in politics spoke only about the past – especially the struggle

21. Dale F. Eickelman, “Quelques aspects de l'organisation politique et économique d'une *zawya* marocaine au XIX^e siècle,” *Bulletin de la Société d'Histoire du Maroc* 4-5 (1972-1973): 37-54. Translated into Arabic by Abderrahman Lakhasssi in *al-Mashrū'* (Casablanca) 6 (1986): 89-105.

22. Dale F. Eickelman, *Knowledge and Power in Morocco: The Education of a Twentieth-Century Notable* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

23. Dale F. Eickelman, *Moroccan Islam: Tradition and Society in a Pilgrimage Center* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976), 239-54.

24. Dale F. Eickelman, and Bouzekri Draiouiy, “Islamic Myths from Western Morocco: Three Texts.” *Hespéris-Tamuda* 14 (1973): 195-225; Dale F. Eickelman, “Form and Composition in Islamic Myths: Four Texts from Western Morocco,” *Anthropos* 72 (1977): 447-64.

for independence. It was perhaps too dangerous to speak openly about the present. There were student strikes in 1969, which Boujad's Qaid broke up by going to the secondary school with a whip to "educate" student demonstrators by ordering the bastinado (*falaqa*) applied publicly to the soles of the feet of the teenage student leaders. Adults engaged in politics sometimes disappeared for days at a time or longer while in police custody. On later return visits beginning in 1976 to Boujad, I attended some political rallies, as I also did in Rabat, and during the 1977 and 1984 election campaigns, I travelled with some candidates to Boujad's rural areas. In 1977, the pre-mobile, pre-internet news of what the government was doing with the elections was communicated through networks of taxi drivers and truckers. In 1977, the local audiences in rural areas would be largely silent in front of candidates. The candidate spoke in what I sometimes call a "teacher's" Arabic, and this may have been part of the problem. By 1984, listeners, especially younger ones, spoke back to the candidate: "If we vote for you, will we ever see you here again?" was one memorable phrase. Education had permeated much of the countryside by 1984, and the countryside could talk back.

The parties wanted votes, but not all parties had the technical skills or resources to get out the vote or use the media. This involved a long-term learning process, but it had begun. Participation in Morocco's communal and parliamentary elections was fascinating to me. In 1969, for example, large black rectangles, 14 as I recall, were painted on the side of walls throughout Boujad, but they were not filled with posters or information. On election day, I saw people who tried to vote in one polling place told to go away because, said a government clerk, "We've taken care of your vote." Several years later, I saw the voter register for the 1969 elections, with page after page of women called "Fatima" with no family name. By 1976, however, the main political parties, mainly the Istiqlal and the USFP in Boujad, could openly campaign and hold local officials more to account.²⁵ And people could talk back. Women in one quarter, disappointed with one candidate for office, chanted a caustic rhyme against the candidate – "O [. . .], O mule, where's the [piped] water and sewers that you promised us? You have a day and a half left [before the elections, then you go to [the state mental hospital]]." The chant drove the candidate away from his scheduled talk.

In the long term, the political parties – and the government – learned step by step how to take local political action. Gerrymandering, for example, is a

25. Dale F. Eickelman, "Royal Authority and Religious Legitimacy: Morocco's Elections, 1960-1984," in *The Frailty of Authority*, ed. Myron J. Aronoff (New Brunswick NJ: Transaction Books, 1986), 181-205.

complex but effective way to shape election outcomes, as I learned from my youth in Chicago. It was also something that political parties and states learn to either denounce or use to their advantage.

The significance of rural areas and tribes in religion and politics is easy to underestimate. After 2001, some young Moroccans from rural areas, including Boujad, found their way to Afghanistan. Some joined al-Qa'ida or hoped to do so, and others subsequently did the same for ISIS. In Amsterdam in 2000, a Moroccan-born member of the Dutch parliament took me to visit a Saudi-financed cultural center that contained large numbers of Riffians with clothing and beard styles imitating the Taliban, and no facilities to teach the attendees Dutch or for that matter Arabic. No region, urban or rural, in Morocco or elsewhere, is immune from religious – or for that matter non-religious – extremism.

Vestiges of the “modernization” theory of the mid-twentieth century are sometimes invoked to explain Moroccan politics. “Traditions” are sustained only if they adapt to the present. In the more than half-century that I’ve known Morocco first-hand, I’ve seen many changes for the better, and also episodes that reveal the fault lines of wider society and the challenges of governance. Today the government can offer more to its citizens, and on some matters is highly trusted. For example, on 24 August 1994, for example, I was in Tangier when there was a terrorist attack on the hotel Atlas-Asni in Marrakesh, reportedly involving Algerians, that killed two Spanish tourists. The next day, a merchant in the Tangier *madina* who was *amīn* of the jewelers among other public roles, missed a prearranged meeting with me. He showed up hours late and apologized, saying that he was at the police station. Thinking that he had been implicated in some way with the attacks, I showed concern. He replied: “It was a national matter, not a political one” – for him a crucial distinction. He had voluntarily provided information on large cash transactions involving Algerians. The distinction between “national” and “political” can have many interpretations, of course. An effective political party will do its best to make its political objectives national ones, and so will the state. To adapt a useful term from Oxford philosopher Walter Gallie, the concepts of “nation” and “politics,” and likewise terms like social and economic justice, and development, are “essentially contested.”²⁶ One can agree that the concepts are important but not agree on their meaning.

26. Walter B. Gallie, *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968).

Anthropology After COVID-19

Focusing not on anthropological theory but the messy world of experience and practice facilitates thinking about how Morocco and for that matter all of us will respond to the current situation. The full range of how Covid-19 will change our societies is yet unknown. Here is one possibility for Morocco: Covid-19 is significantly disrupting the existing long supply chains on which many international businesses depend. For example, the average wage of most Chinese workers is now higher than that of most Moroccans. The Moroccan workforce, and its technical capacity, is significantly better than it was a decade ago. Nothing will happen overnight, but parts of Morocco's infrastructure has improved by leaps and bounds. It's conceivable that Morocco will have an opportunity to emerge as more competitive on a global scale.

Anthropology cannot predict what will work, but it can offer critical insights into how the different parts of a society, both those so taken for granted that we hardly notice them, and the "top-down" social engineering preferred by some states, bankers, and industrialists. Anthropology offers an opportunity to combine bottom-up approaches, engaging in continuing dialogue with actors in and observers of society.

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الأنثروبولوجيا في المغرب منذ ستينيات القرن الماضي: ملحة شخصية

ملخص: كان المغرب موقعاً لتحويلات أساسية في ممارسة الأنثروبولوجيا الاجتماعية وفهمها من منتصف سنوات الستين من القرن الماضي حتى الوقت الحاضر. وقد ظل المؤلف، الذي وصل إلى المغرب لأول مرة في نونبر 1968 عن طريق بغداد، منخرطاً في الحياة الأكاديمية المغربية والمغاربية منذ ذلك الحين وحتى الوقت الحاضر. اتبع فهم المغرب من قبل المغاربة وغيرهم، في بعض النواحي، الاتجاهات في أماكن أخرى، لكنه يظهر أيضاً اختلافات كبيرة. وركز جيل سابق من الأنثروبولوجيا الاجتماعية البريطانية - والفكر الاجتماعي الفرنسي - على ما يسمى بالمجتمعات "الأولية". ويبدو أن هذا الاتجاه شجع على تهميش المغرب كمركز أساسي للفكر الأنثروبولوجي. وفي الممارسة العملية، دفع المغرب علماء الأنثروبولوجيا إلى التفكير فيما وراء الحكمة السابقة وممارسة الأنثروبولوجيا المنفتحة على التخصصات التكميلية. فضلاً عن ذلك، شجعت الطبيعة المشاكسة للحياة العامة المغربية علماء الأنثروبولوجيا - المغاربة وغيرهم - على التواصل بانتظام مع جماهير واسعة في المغرب نفسه، وكذلك في أماكن أخرى. ويتتبع هذا المقال مسار الأنثروبولوجيا وتطورها كتخصص علمي في المغرب خلال منتصف القرن الماضي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأنثروبولوجيا، الإسلام، بغداد، أبي الجعد، التربية، المغرب، العلوم الاجتماعية.

L'anthropologie au Maroc depuis les années 1960: Une odyssee personnelle

Résumé: Le Maroc a été le théâtre de transformations majeures dans la pratique et la compréhension de l'anthropologie sociale du milieu des années 1960 à nos jours. L'auteur, arrivé au Maroc pour la première fois en novembre 1968 par Bagdad, est resté impliqué dans la vie académique marocaine et marocaine de cette arrivée à nos jours. La compréhension du Maroc, par les Marocains et d'autres, a suivi à certains égards des tendances ailleurs, mais montre également des différences significatives. Une génération antérieure d'anthropologie sociale britannique - et de pensée sociale française - se concentrait sur les sociétés dites "élémentaires." Cette tendance a apparemment encouragé la marginalisation du Maroc en tant que lieu principal de la pensée anthropologique. Dans la pratique, le Maroc a poussé les anthropologues à penser au-delà de la sagesse antérieure et à pratiquer une anthropologie ouverte à des disciplines complémentaires. En outre, le caractère fougueux de la vie publique marocaine a encouragé les anthropologues - marocains et autres - à communiquer régulièrement avec un large public au Maroc même, ainsi qu'ailleurs. Cet essai retrace la trajectoire de la discipline au Maroc au cours du dernier demi-siècle.

Mots-clés: Anthropologie, Islam, Bagdad, Boujad, éducation, Maroc, sciences sociales.