Institutional Inertia:  
Political Legitimacy in Muslim Iberia

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Abstract:

The ultimate success of the *reconquista* (the reconquering of Muslim lands in the Iberian Peninsula from 718-1492) and the ensuing consolidation of Spain beneath the joint rule of Ferdinand and Isabel helped define the course of western civilization. This paper uses the unique institutional organization of Muslim rulers in Iberia to explain the fall of Muslim power in the Peninsula. Through vast retinues of Slav and Jewish viziers and outlandish claims to the caliphate, rulers in Muslim Iberia sought to find stability and security. By following the development of Iberian Muslim institutions, the paper concludes that the Hispano-Muslim definition of political legitimacy is just as important as Christian military prowess in explaining the ultimate demise of Muslim Iberia.

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1 The Author wishes to thank helpful comments by Paul David and Avner Greif. Any deficiencies that remain are my own.
“Religion and kingship are two brothers, and neither can dispense with the other. Religion is the foundation of kingship, and kingship protects religion. For whatever lacks a foundation must perish, and whatever lacks a protector disappears”

-Ibn Mishawayh (X century)

“The more rebellions and rivalry there are among [the Muslims], the better it is for me!”…[now] it is impossible to destroy its [Al-Andalus] inhabitants and populate it with [Christians]. But the solution is to make them frightened of each other, and to keep taking their money… weaken [their] position over a long period of time, until when [the Muslims] have no money and no men left, we shall take it without any expense of effort”

-Alfonso VI, King of Castile (1100)

The ultimate success of the reconquista (the reconquering of Muslim lands in the Iberian Peninsula from 718-1492) and the ensuing consolidation of Spain beneath the joint rule of Ferdinand and Isabel helped define the course of western civilization. Columbus’s famed 1492 journey is often considered the beginning of a new era. Columbus could not set sail, however, until the reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula had been successfully completed (2 Jan 1492) and Ferdinand and Isabel could shift their focus away from the reconquista. Much reconquista analysis has focused on military successes and defeats, failing to explore the reasons behind the rapid decay and fall of an economically and technologically more advanced Islamic power. At most, historians recognize the great divisions between the Iberian Islamic kingdoms as a pivotal factor in their fall. Beyond mere regional differences, the definition of political legitimacy in Islam, and the consequent institutional structure contributed equally to the fall of Muslim Iberia. It was not only the strength of Christian armies that brought the Iberian Peninsula back under Christian rule.

The unique institutional organization of the Muslim rulers in Iberia can help shed light on their eventual decline. By following the evolution of Iberian-Muslim government
institutions from 711-1100, this paper attempts to explain the fall of Muslim Iberia through the instability created by the Muslim Iberian definition of political legitimacy.

I Political Legitimacy

The ultimate victory of the Christians in Spain is partly due to the failure of Muslim kings to attain a high degree of political legitimacy. To analyze this failure, the concept of political legitimacy must be defined.

In order to thrive, “organizations require…social acceptability and credibility”\(^3\). The social credibility\(^4\) or legitimacy of an organization can be defined as the “generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions”\(^5\). If the organization is political\(^6\) in nature, then a given political organization\(^7\) can be considered legitimate if “by virtue of the doctrines and norms by which it is justified, the power-holder can call upon sufficient other centers of power, as reserves in case of need, to make his power effective.”\(^8\) Consequently, a ruler is considered politically legitimate by a certain group of individuals if and only if the ruler’s “bounded decrees”\(^9\) are observed because of a ruler’s ideological\(^10\) claims, not through coercive means.

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\(^2\) e.g. Harvey, Chejne, Mendez Pidal, Levi Provencal
\(^3\) Scott et al. 2000: 237
\(^4\) i.e. the perception by a group of individuals that an organization is good for society, or has a “right” to be there
\(^5\) Suchman (1995b), 574.
\(^6\) i.e. attempting to govern a set of individuals.
\(^7\) defined here as an organization attempting to govern a group of individuals
\(^8\) Stinchcombe (1968), 60.
\(^9\) “Bounded decrees” are defined as the subset of orders a ruler can give that do not conflict with the ideological claims upon which he bases his rule.
force\textsuperscript{11}. By this definition, a given ruler might be legitimate in some of his domains, and not legitimate in others. In a given population, a ruler can be despised by the majority while maintaining political legitimacy in a small group.

Max Weber was first to formally consider the ideological base that led sizeable groups of individuals to follow a ruler without coercive force. He differentiated between three ideological foundations for political legitimacy: rational, traditional, and charismatic\textsuperscript{12}. Weber posited that the charismatic ideological foundation for political legitimacy would evolve, and legitimacy would change becoming “either traditionalized, or rationalized, or a combination of both”\textsuperscript{13}. Weber stressed that the charismatic foundation for legitimacy is inherently unstable and thus that the “routinization of charisma is, naturally, a striving for security”\textsuperscript{14}.

Sociologist Talcott Parsons recognized the importance of an ideological base that would encourage non-coercive adherence to institutional norms by stating that “the primary motive for obedience to an institutional norm lies in the moral authority it exercises over the individual”\textsuperscript{15}. An individual, in the absence of coercive force, follows norms (or dictates of a ruler) because of his belief in a value standard, not out of expediency.

\textsuperscript{10} The term ideological is left intentionally vague in order to encompass religious, philosophical, personal and other claims that a ruler makes to establish himself as superior, thus rendering his judgments more valid than those of other individuals or groups.
\textsuperscript{11} Coercive force includes credible threats of coercive force.
\textsuperscript{12} In Weber’s view, the rational base rests on the common belief in the legality of rules and the right of those in power to exercise authority. Traditional legitimacy is based on the common belief in it the sanctity of existing traditions. Finally, charismatic legitimacy is founded on an uncommon devotion to the sanctity, heroism, or otherwise impressive character of an individual.
\textsuperscript{13} Weber, 37.
\textsuperscript{14} Weber, 44.
\textsuperscript{15} Parsons (1934) 1990: 327.
If a ruler can not claim political legitimacy over a certain group of individuals, it follows from our definition that the ruler must resort to coercion to enforce his orders. The question of coercive enforcement has been touched on by economists who have noted that in contract enforcement\(^{16}\) “ultimately a third party must always involve the state as a source of coercion …that political structure provides a framework of effective enforcement”\(^{17}\). Contracts, with little ideology binding the two actors, require coercion or threat of coercion. Likewise, a lack of political legitimacy increases enforcement costs of the ruler’s dictates, since no ideology binds the subjects to obey.

The problem of effective enforcement led Scott (2000) to examine the way in which organizations and institutions become legitimate and to conclude that:

“although power certainly matters in supporting legitimacy processes, as in other social activities, power is not the absolute arbiter. Entrenched power is, in the long run, helpless against the onslaught of opposing power allied with more persuasive ideas [ideological bases for obedience]”\(^{18}\).

Scott suggests a process whereby an illegitimate entity can “create its own legitimacy.” While held in power by coercive force, an organization can advance an ideological basis for its rule. The evidence in Muslim Iberia suggests that after advancing an ideological claim for its rule if a ruler provides political stability\(^{19}\), coercive force can cease to be necessary. Through this process, a ruler can attain political legitimacy.

This paper will attempt to establish the ideological base through which Iberian Muslim rulers lay claim to political legitimacy. After a brief historical overview and

\(^{17}\) North 1990, 64
outline of governmental organization in Muslim Spain, chapter I establishes the formation of political legitimacy in Islam. Chapter II follows the progression of Iberian Islamic governmental organizations to define Islamic political legitimacy and to illustrate the difference between higher and lower political legitimacy in Muslim Spain, helping to explain how the Umayyad dynasty attained legitimacy. Finally, chapter III suggests how the attainment of higher legitimacy and its subsequent loss can help us understand the eventual fall of Muslim Spain.

II Historical-Institutional overview of Muslim Spain

When the Muslim general Ibn Musa defeated Rodrigo at the battle of Guadalete in 711, the Iberian Peninsula became part of an empire that stretched from the Punjab to the Atlantic. Following the initial conquest, Muslim rulers used coercive force to sustain their rule. During the first 40 years of Muslim rule in the Peninsula, nine out of twenty-two rulers were elected by the military. While in theory a province of the Umayyad caliphate, the Caliphs in Damascus had little interest in the Iberian Peninsula. Even when Damascus sent governors, they rarely held power for long periods of time. Such volatility did not allow leaders to establish a strong central administration. Indeed many leaders...

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18 Scott, 2001, 60
19 i.e. lack of revolts, unrest, invasions etc.
20 For a comprehensive overview of the history of Islamic Spain, see Chejne: History and Culture of al-Andalus.
21 The last Visigoth King
22 Chejne, 10
23 Best evidenced by Umar II (the Umayyad Caliph in Damascus) desire in 718 to withdraw all Muslim forces from the Peninsula
24 A maximum of 2-3 years, Chejne, 12
parts of the Iberian Peninsula did not see any sign of central authority until the arrival of Abd al-Rahman I in 753.

Abd al-Rahman I survived the Abbasid massacre of the Umayyad caliphs in Damascus (750). After fleeing through North Africa he found support in Spain and declared the Umayyad Emirate. Although a direct descendant of the Umayyad caliphs in the East, Abd al-Rahman did not claim the caliphate. He did strengthen central authority, however, and the Umayyad Emirate governed the Peninsula through 929. In 929 Abd-al-Rahman III declared the Umayyad Caliphate of Cordoba. From 929 to 1009, the Peninsula did not witness any large scale rebellions, and Muslim rule governed most of the Iberian Peninsula and parts of Morocco as well. Abd al-Rahman III and his successor al-Hakam brought Al-Andalus unprecedented wealth and prosperity. Towards the end of the tenth century, however, al-Hakam declared his 10 year-old son Hisham II successor and his vizier Ibn Abi al-Amir regent. Soon after al-Hakam’s death, Ibn Abi al-Amir monopolized all power, confining Hisham II to his palace while ruling in his name. Ibn Abi al Amir imported an entire army of Berbers to enforce his decrees, and established a dynasty of chamberlains (hajib).

Soon a power struggle ensued, resulting in the disintegration of the caliphate. As central authority weakened, a large number of party kings, or taifa kings, emerged. These taifa kings reigned over local territories many times no bigger than a city, their court structure imitating the fallen Cordovan Caliphate. During this first Taifa period (1031-1090), many of the kingdoms appointed Jewish and Christian viziers. This first Taifa period is considered the “Golden Age” of Hispano-Muslim science, with the Jewish and

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25 The lack of desire of the central authority to govern parts of Iberia is witnessed by large land grants to
Christian population playing an ever larger role in the scientific and political life of the Peninsula.

Infighting between the highly fragmented but economically prosperous taifa and their extravagant spending eventually gave the three main Christian kingdoms the upper hand. After decades of extorting tremendous sums of money for peace, these Christian kingdoms began to re-conquer Muslim Spain, penetrating deep enough into Muslim territory to cause the party king of Seville to call the North African Murabitun (Almoravids) for help. The ensuing 100 years saw the fall of the Almoravid Empire (1056-1147) and the rise of the North African Muwahhidun (Almohade) Empire (1121-1269). Following the battle of Navas de la Tolosa (1212), in which the Muwahhidun were defeated by a coalition of Christian states, most of Spain was re-conquered. The Nasrid kingdom (1232-1492, a small Muslim kingdom in the south of Spain) was spared until the fall of Granada in 1492.

I Middle Eastern Antecedents

I Ideological Basis for Islamic legitimacy

The fall of the Nasrid kingdom in 1492, indeed the entire collapse of Muslim Iberia, can be partly explained by the definition of Islamic political legitimacy. This legitimacy traced its roots back to pre-Islamic tribal society. The manner of establishing "leadership in traditional Arab society was both hereditary and elective…among the members of the lineage, power was exercised by the most able and effective". A

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Visigoth nobility such as Artobas who ruled their land in the governor’s stead.

26 Kennedy, 19.
prerequisite for leadership of a tribe was a pure bloodline from that tribe, and a distinguished genealogy. “No one who was not of the Quraysh… could claim to lead the Holy family but among that group leadership lay with the strong and the shrewd, not necessarily with the eldest or the father’s choice” 27. Even in a specific tribe, the leader’s power was not absolute; he was considered as “the first among equals.” Political legitimacy in the pre-Islamic Arab world was based on the principle of consensus. A leader could hope to see his orders carried out if there was enough “public opinion sustaining his verdict and putting pressure on the parties concerned”28. If not, the order was not carried out, and if a leader lost the respect of a sizeable number of the tribe, he was relieved from his position.29

When Muhammad’s religious movement began to form a political state, he used the familiar tribal framework, substituting the ideological base through which followers considered orders legitimate. Muhammad, while maintaining the ideological base of consensus, effectively changed the focus of this consensus from primarily temporal to religious qualifications. Consensus in the Islamic community established Muhammad as the prophet of God, and Muhammad’s followers obeyed his decrees because they believed him to be the prophet of God.

Perhaps the best evidence for the continuation of tribal structure in early Islamic institutions lies in the declaration of the political successor to the prophet Muhammad. Following the death of the Prophet, a shura (tribal council) was convened in which

27 Idem, 28.
28 Idem, 19.
29 For a detailed description of pre-Islamic tribal structure, see Kennedy (1986)
“the men around him proceeded to render the oath of allegiance (bay’a) to Abu Bakr…this was so by general consensus (ijma’)”

Although the tribal super-structure remained in place, the basis for political legitimacy had changed. The object upon which consensus was based shifted from the leader’s temporal qualifications to a mixture of religious and secular strengths. Thus, when Ibn Ishaq (768) recounted Umar’s support of Abu Bakr’s assumption of the Caliphate in 632 he stressed that “God has placed your affairs in the hands of the best one among you… so rise and swear fealty to him.” The ideological basis for fealty (obedience without coercion), lay in Abu Bakr’s personal righteousness. Abu Bakr was considered the best among the Muslims, and consequently chosen by God to be the successor of the prophet (or caliph from the root kh-l-f: behind, following). He was considered an intermediary between the people and the deceased prophet Muhammad. This is illustrated through the hadiths (sayings attributed to the prophet) collected by al-Khatib al-Tibrizi (1336). One hadith quotes the prophet as saying: “whoever obeys me obeys God, and whoever disobeys me disobeys God. Whoever disobeys the amir (commander) disobeys me.”

The legitimate caliph was consequently considered “a substitute for Muhammad.”

Although political legitimacy moved towards a religious ideological base, consensus was still used to ascertain the divinely appointed ruler, the best of the Muslims in God’s eyes. Thus, the legal scholar Abu Abdallah Muhammad al-Shafi’i (820) stressed the principle of collectivity:

30 Ibn Khaldun, 156.
31 Umar was one of the early converts to Islam and its second Caliph.
32 Ibn Ishaq, 62, emphasis added.
‘Whoever holds to what the collectivity of the Muslims holds has ‘cleaved to their collectivity’ … error comes only with separation, but as for the collectivity, there can be no error in it.’

By the end of Muhammad’s life he had changed the ideological base of political legitimacy in the Arab-Islamic community from temporal qualifications to religious ones. Collectivity was still the base for legitimate rule, only the consensus had to form around the divine ordination of a given leader.

While Muhammad’s divine ordination was not questioned by the sincerely converted, he named no successor. He ordered the community to guide themselves by means of “his book by which he guided his apostle, and if you hold fast to that, God will guide you as He guided him.” The ambiguity surrounding the procedure of finding an Islamic successor led to rifts immediately following the prophet’s death. The rifts were partly a product of the ideology of consensus upon which political legitimacy was based. Just as some of the community chose to follow Abu Bakr, others advocated “letting us [another group] have one ruler and you another, O Quraysh.” As the community grew in size, consensus around a leader became harder to obtain.

Thus Abu Bakr won legitimacy within a group of Muslims following his succession to the prophet, while others arose in revolt. In the communities where Abu

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33 Khatib al-Tibrizi, 65
34 Khaldun, 154
35 Ijma’, from the legal treatise Abu ‘Abdallah Muhammad al-Shafi’i. cf. Lambton, 34
36 Ibn Ishaq, 62
37 such as the Ansar
38 Ibn Ishaq, 62
39 i.e. the Ridda or so called apostasy
Bakr was not considered legitimate, only coercive force could eventually bring these Muslims back into the Islamic state he headed.

Up until now, the politically legitimate Islamic ruler has been defined as he whose “righteous decrees”\(^{40}\) are observed because of the consensus of a given Islamic community that the leader is divinely appointed\(^{41}\). This definition, established through the Qur’an and Muhammad’s teachings, however, was sometimes ignored by the prophet himself. Muhammad, after conquering Mecca in 629 appointed many members of the local population who were educated and experienced in administration, to the highest positions. Upon only nominal conversion to Islam, those who had previously been Muhammad’s staunchest detractors\(^{42}\) held stewardship over those who had been the most faithful converts. The members of the noble families of the Quraysh, in particular those of the commercially oriented Ummayad branch, rose to positions of prominence based on worldly talent, regardless their religious records.

The more educated Umayyad aristocracy had for the most part persecuted Muhammad and Islam until the eleventh hour. They had much to lose from becoming part of a state where “the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the best in conduct”\(^{43}\). The fledgling Islamic state, however, needed the help of the Meccan aristocracy. Muhammad overlooked the Meccans’ sins in exchange for their governmental services. During his lifetime, Muhammad silenced complaints of unfair appointments\(^{44}\), yet

\(^{40}\) i.e. not in conflict with Islamic religious doctrine \\
\(^{41}\) or the most deserving in the community \\
\(^{42}\) i.e. Abu Sufyan, Yazid and Mu’awiya \\
\(^{43}\) Qur’an 49:13 \\
\(^{44}\) “The Ansar…complain[ed] that the Prophet was neglecting them, but they were mollified [by the prophet]”, Kennedy, 44.
continued the process of appointing those with questionable allegiance to Islam\textsuperscript{45} in order to further the political aims of the state. Once Muhammad died, however, there was no longer a legitimating voice to justify the claims of those who had been unrighteous (but more temporally qualified) to positions of power.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to study the entire evolution of the ideology that made a ruler politically legitimate in the Middle East. It is important to note, nonetheless, that there arose early in the Islamic state, two main problems. First, the Islamic definition of political legitimacy originally called for a unanimous consensus of many individuals upon the most worthy, or divinely appointed. As summarized by the jurist Jahiz (776-869)

“To be worthy of the caliphate and deserving of the imamate exceptional merit and accomplishment are needed. This merit must either be manifest and known to all Muslims, so that with one accord they raise up a man to be first among them, and spontaneously appoint their ruler, not being under the threat of the sword of the sway of fear nor, under any apparent constraint or possibility of suspicion; or else it must have come to light as the result of careful discussion, consultation and deliberation on the part of the community”\textsuperscript{46}

Second, the difficulty of universally agreeing upon a successor was exacerbated when rulers attempted to make the Caliphate dynastic, to pass caliphal authority from father to son. The only way for an Islamic leader to obtain political legitimacy was to establish a consensus that he was “the best of the Muslims.” Dynastic succession is not legitimate by this definition, unless the child of a given ruler is also “the best of the Muslims.” Indeed,

\textsuperscript{45} E.g. Abu Sufyan, Yazid and Mu’awiya
when the Umayyads (who assumed power in 661 following Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali (the first 4 Caliphs)) instituted dynastic succession, jurists and clerics were given the difficult task of justifying dynastic succession as legitimate.

The consequences of Islamic Legitimacy

After the death of Muhammad, many of the Arabian tribes that had converted to Islam rose in revolt. Abu Bakr (Muhammad’s successor) had to fight almost his entire caliphate (632-634) in order to subdue the rebels. As Abu Bakr and his successors continued to conquer, these leaders followed Muhammad’s pragmatic example by adopting practices that, while contrary to Islamic doctrine in its purest sense, aided its political development. After Muhammad’s death, writers recognized that “the institutions of the caliphate [had become] both religious and worldly.” Yet, compliance (without coercion) to the decrees of these institutions rested upon the caliph being the “best among the Muslims” and “religion cement(ing) their [the Caliph’s] leadership.”

As these Caliphs adopted more and more non-Islamic royal trappings, and as the Empire moved towards dynastic rule with the Ummayads, large portions of the Islamic community began to question if the caliphs were divinely appointed. Blatantly sinful

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46 Jahiz., cf. Lambton, 60
47 e.g. the installment of dynastic rule (against the precepts of Islam), the adoption of pomp and splendor, and finally the development of a bureaucracy as explained in Khaldun, 121
48 Khaldun, 189
49 Khaldun, 121
50 Especially Khurasan, where the Abassid revolution found its ideological base
51 As defined above, i.e. the most worthy in the eyes of God
caliphs did not help the situation, and as consensus waned, the Umayyads lost their Islamic political legitimacy. Their orders ceased to be obeyed in several provinces and the Abbasids (750-1258) eventually overthrew the government, having convinced many of the un-Islamic nature of Umayyad rule.

Islamic political legitimacy was necessary to maintain unity across an increasingly diverse Islamic Empire. Yet the most able leader needed to form a consensus on his divine ordination in the Islamic community before he could achieve political legitimacy. Even if the leader attained full Islamic political legitimacy, innovation to meet new political situations could mean losing his legitimacy:

“Whoso fails to follow them [the companions of Muhammad], errs and commits innovation. Whoso deviates from the companions of Mohammed in any religious matter is an unbeliever.”

In sum, a leader was hard pressed to obtain political legitimacy as it was defined in Islam from its inception. A ruler was not legitimate without consensus and it was difficult to establish consensus unless one held power. This was exacerbated when leaders with shaky claims to legitimacy were forced to innovate, and to deviate from Muhammad’s established example in order to form an Islamic imperial governmental structure. The consequence of these weak claims to political legitimacy was instability. The average Umayyad ruler in the East held

52 As witnessed in a letter from Hasan al-Basri to the Umayyad Caliph Umar II (717-720). See McNeil, 75
53 Egypt, al-Andalus, North Africa and Khurasan
54 Hadith, Quoted by Von Grunebaum, 127.
55 Perhaps this subject is best described by Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddimah 146-149
56 Stability in this paper will be equated with the tenure of a ruler in power. While in certain cases a dubious proxy for stability, on the whole tenure in power does seem to be correlated with greater stability.
power for only 6 years\textsuperscript{57}, the average Abbasid ruler for a little over 7 years\textsuperscript{58}. The Islamic definition of political legitimacy led to instability (a rising number of revolts\textsuperscript{59} based on claims that the Caliphs were not legitimate), as few rulers obtained the consensus of the community. This instability eventually began to weaken Muslim states. In an attempt to restore stability, jurists and clerics attempted to change the definition of political legitimacy. Thus, one begins to find writings from the late eighth century on urging Muslims not to rebel against leaders who did not obtain community consensus:

“When anyone has a ruler placed over him who is seen doing something which is rebellion against God, he must disapprove of that rebellion, but never withdraw his hand from obedience”\textsuperscript{60}

\section*{II Middle Eastern Consensus}

Although the Islamic definition of political legitimacy implied that “there (was) no (duty of) obedience in sin… do not obey a creature against his creator”\textsuperscript{61}, instability\textsuperscript{62} prompted many jurists, clerics and philosophers to attempt to change the definition of Islamic political legitimacy.

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{57}Clement, 298
\bibitem{58}ibid
\bibitem{59}Primarily in Khurasan
\bibitem{60}Khatib Al-Tibrizi, 66
\bibitem{61}Lambton, 14
\bibitem{62}As evidenced by the growing number of revolts and the average Umayyad ruler holding power, on average, only 6 years.
\end{thebibliography}
As certain Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphs failed to assure the community of their divine appointment because of personal excesses, thinkers and religious officials began to attempt to soften the stringent prerequisites to be considered politically legitimate. Up until now, a leader was legitimate in the Islamic world if his righteous decrees were obeyed by the Islamic community because the consensus in this community held that the leader was divinely ordained. The consensus of the community was the hardest part of the definition to attain, as is evidenced by the fact that the consensus requisite was the first one to be dropped by jurists. Ibn al-Muqaffa’ (death 759) considered a leader legitimate as long as the leader upheld the shari’a (Islamic law as established by the Qur’an and Muhammad’s teachings). Abu Yusuf (731-798) added that the personal character of the Caliph was irrelevant as long the Caliph applied the shari’a. Abu Yusuf advocated tenure of a position power as a sufficient proof of God’s approval of a leader. These thinkers proposed a definition of Islamic legitimacy which no longer required a leader to be established as divinely ordained by popular consensus. But leaders were still constrained by the shari’a— if a given leader “did not remain faithful to the shari’a those who performed the bay’a (oath of fealty, in our terminology recognizing the legitimacy of a leader) were released from their obligations”.

By the dawn of the ninth century, other jurists began to support this “new” definition of Islamic legitimacy, in which any Muslim leader was legitimate if he upheld the shari’a. As one hadith read, “fear God and obey Him; and if a flat-nosed shrunken-headed Abyssinian slave is invested with power over you, hearken to him and obey

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63 Lambton, 14
64 Ibid., 19
This solution was motivated by the perception that “the tyranny of a sultan for a hundred years causes less damage than one year’s tyranny exerted by the subjects against each other” as long as the “tyrant” upheld Muslim law. Thus, the new, less stringent definition of a legitimate leader is he whose decrees are observed without coercion because his decrees do not conflict the shari’a.

By the end of the tenth century, the original definition of political legitimacy, and the less stringent definition were both recognized in the Islamic community. Baqillani (death 1013) states that “in selecting an imam, the umma should look for ‘the most excellent’ (al-afdal), but if there was disagreement (consensus was impossible) over who was the most excellent and danger of civil strife and disturbance, it is lawful to select ‘the less excellent’ (al-mafdul or he who is preferred over) as long as the less excellent upheld the shari’a. In a quest for stability, jurists had established what we will term “lower legitimacy”, in addition to the original definition of political legitimacy which we will call “higher legitimacy.” This dichotomy between lower and higher levels of legitimacy was first recognized by Baqillani (d. 1013) and al-Mawardi (974-1058).

Higher political legitimacy required the consensus of the community around the divine ordination of the ruler. Necessary, but not sufficient conditions for a leader to prove himself the “best among the Muslims” included 1) adala (moral probity) 2) ‘ilm (religious learning) 3) ijthad (independent judgment) and 4) descent from the Quraysh tribe.

Lower political legitimacy was obtained if a leader 1) maintained religion according to fixed principles and what had been established by the consensus of the salaf (the early

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65 Kitab al-Kharaj, 9, cf. Goetein (1966), 203-204
66 Nasihat al-muluk, cf. Lambton 131-2
67 Al-Tamhid, 193ff, cf Lambton 133.
68 Al-Ahkam al Sultaniiya, 5-6 cf Lambton, 91
Muslims) 2) executed judgments 3) protected Islamic territory 4) applied the legal penalties 5) equipped the frontiers 6) undertook jihad 7) collected legal alms and 8) oversaw affairs personally.  

Every claim to higher legitimacy involved a claim to the caliphate since virtually every Muslim believed the politically legitimate successor of Muhammad assumed the caliphate. As the definition of lower legitimacy became formalized in juridical writings, there rose various objections to the less stringent requisites of lower legitimacy. Al-Ghazali (1058-1111) defended higher political legitimacy as the only way to establish legitimate Islamic government:

“There are those who hold the imamate (caliphate, higher legitimacy) is dead, lacking as it does the required qualifications (consensus of the community, righteous caliphs). But no substitute can be found for it. What then? Are we to give up obeying the law?...Of those that contend that the caliphate is dead for ever and irreplaceable, we should like to ask: which is preferred, anarchy and the stoppage of social life for lack of a properly constituted authority, or acknowledgement of the existing power, whatever it be?”

Al-Ghazali, after struggling to reconcile lower legitimacy with higher legitimacy, came to the conclusion that a ruler could govern with a claim to lower legitimacy as long as this ruler recognized a caliph who claimed higher legitimacy.

Jurists, philosophers and clerics attempted to change the definition of political legitimacy in the Islamic world in order to attain stability. Although these writers

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69 Lambton, 92
70 Whether Abu Bakr or 'Ali
attempted to introduce a “de facto separation between the spiritual and the temporal” by absolving a given leader from having to prove his divine appointment “there was no ideological separation”. The importance of divine approval to political legitimacy was still strong, as Al-Ghazali’s objections suggest. Consequently, the original definition of political legitimacy as established by Muhammad (higher legitimacy, consensus) and his followers was considered preferable to the lower legitimacy (Muslim, upholder of the shari’a).

Up until now, higher legitimacy has been defined as involving the consensus of the population around a leader. It does not follow from this definition that higher legitimacy can be passed from father to son, even if the father has attained higher legitimacy. Indeed, we have seen how dynastic rule was considered un-Islamic in a religious sense. A dynasty possessing “higher legitimacy” seems somewhat oxymoronic. Yet higher legitimacy could pass through a dynastic line in as much as “leadership must of necessity be inherited from the person who is entitled to it”. Since the father was considered “ordained of God”, he could anoint his son as his successor and since the father was legitimate, the appointment of his son would also be considered such. Thus, although dynastic rule per se was not legitimate the initial holder of higher legitimacy could make legitimacy pass through a dynastic line by naming his successor as his son. This “innovation” was probably made easier by dynastic traditions in Spain and most of the Muslim world that pre-dated the Islamic conquest. Just as Muhammad’s legitimacy

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71 Levy, 306
72 Lambtot, 114
73 Lambtot, XVI
74 Lambtot, XVI
75 Ibn Khaldun, 101
had enabled him to bend the rules, it seems plausible that a leader considered “divinely appointed” could nominate his son his successor, based solely on blood ties.

The evidence from Muslim Iberia suggests that a dynasty could obtain higher legitimacy. In addition, the evidence suggests that the decrees of a leader who claimed lower legitimacy were obeyed less often and in a smaller geographic area than those who obtained higher legitimacy (perhaps because more could claim the qualifications of this lower legitimacy which led to greater competition and civil strife). The political developments in the Peninsula also indicate that it was possible to pass from lower to higher legitimacy under certain circumstances. Understanding this process is instrumental to explaining the fall of Muslim Iberia, and requires an analysis of the evolution of governmental structure in Iberia from the Muslim conquest in 711 until the Almoravide (Murabitun) conquest around 1100.

II Evolution of Muslim-Iberian Legitimacy: 711-1009

I Iberian political legitimacy in 711

Musa and his 18,000 man army established Islamic government in the Iberian Peninsula following their defeat of the Visigoth army in the battle of Guadalete (711). Although the conquerors brought with them the Islamic definition of political legitimacy as previously explained, the local population had its own definition of political
legitimacy. In Visigoth Iberia\textsuperscript{76}, a ruler was considered politically legitimate, if he had been elected by the Hispano Visigoth aristocracy. The independent nature of the Visigoth aristocracy eventually affected the fragmentation of Muslim Iberia, and the Visigoth definition of political legitimacy led to increased independence in the Iberian aristocracy. Once the Visigoth kingdom had been formed, various monarchs\textsuperscript{77} attempted to move the Visigoth kingdom towards a Byzantine model by adopting imperial royal trappings and Catholicism. These attempts failed. Following the death of Recaredo (602) the Visigoth aristocracy again stressed the importance of election, eventually asserting the sanctity of the nobility’s election and the \textit{ordination principis}. The Visigoth definition of political legitimacy encouraged a strong, self-governing aristocracy (because the king’s legitimacy depended on aristocratic approval). This independence allowed the Hispano-Visigoth aristocracy to frequently leave the throne vacant for five months or longer\textsuperscript{78}.

At the time of Muslim conquest, the Iberian-Visigoth definition of political legitimacy supported a weak monarch elected by a strong independent aristocracy. This Hispano-Roman-Visigoth aristocracy ruled its own affairs to a great extent. Attempts to install a centralized system failed, leading many to believe that by 711 Spain was heading towards feudalism with the rest of Europe.

\textsuperscript{76} For a detailed account of concepts of political legitimacy in Visigoth Iberia, see Garcia: La Espana Visigoda, 1998.
\textsuperscript{77} Primarily Leovigildo and his son Recaredo
\textsuperscript{78} Garcia, 72
II The limits of religion: (711-756)\textsuperscript{79}

The first forty years of Islamic central government in the Iberian Peninsula brought little change at the micro level\textsuperscript{80}. The Muslim conquerors, reported to be no more than 18,000\textsuperscript{81}, had neither the manpower nor the desire to micromanage the peninsula. Indeed, so overstretched were Muslim forces that in 718 Umar II seriously considered withdrawing all Umayyad forces from the Peninsula\textsuperscript{82}. Little changed for the local population who while nominally under Muslim rule were directly subject to the Hispano-Roman-Visigoth aristocracy. This initial period of conquest, however, was one of the most volatile\textsuperscript{83} of all of Iberian history. The Muslim conquerors during the first 40 years failed to establish a stable government, not because of popular insurrection, but because of the inability of the conquerors to agree on a leader. The Muslim invaders brought with them the Islamic definition of legitimacy. Far from the center of power (located in Damascus), and in an area where the caliph rarely directly appointed a governor, the invaders many times had to reach a consensus on their own and appoint their own ruler. However, since only those who were appointed by the legitimate authority in Damascus could claim Islamic political legitimacy, few governors could hope to see his orders carried out without coercion. Even when Damascus appointed a governor, some questioned the legitimacy of the Ummayads\textsuperscript{84} (which were overthrown in the Middle East at the end of this period by the Abbasids in 750). Regardless, most of those who governed

\textsuperscript{79} NB, During this period, lower Islamic legitimacy was not possible without independence as the peninsula was under the nominal control of Damascus who claimed higher legitimacy.

\textsuperscript{80} The conquerors left the local aristocracy in place and gave large land grants to Artobas and others who had aided the Muslims in their conquest.

\textsuperscript{81} Al Ghassani, 24

\textsuperscript{82} Dozy, 34

\textsuperscript{83} The average governor was in power for about 2 years.

\textsuperscript{84} As is evidenced by the revolts against Abu al-Khattar (743) and others. Chejne 12-15
the Iberian Peninsula during this initial period had no claim to Islamic political
legitimacy as we have defined it. This is evidenced by instability and 22 governors over
the span of 40 years.

The lack of Islamic political legitimacy of the first governors is demonstrated by
Abd al-Aziz Ibn Musa (first emir of al-Andalus 714-716) and his attempts to stabilize his
rule by appealing to the Visigoth definitions of legitimacy. He married into the Visigoth
nobility, and sat on a throne as the Visigoth kings had, supported by his wife:

“Abd al-Aziz Ibn Musa, after the departure of his father … married a Christian
lady, a daughter of a king of Andalus called Roderic (Rodrigo), whom Tariq
killed… when she came to him, she said, why do I not see the people of thy
kingdom respect thee and bow to thee, as my father’s subjects were wont to
respect him and bow to him”\(^8\)

Regardless of his motives, Abd al-Aziz attempted to gain local support for his rule
through Visigoth political legitimacy. Abd al-Hakem goes on to relate how Abd al-Aziz
Ibn Musa started to adopt other Visigoth royal trappings. By appealing to Visigoth
legitimacy, Abd al-Aziz lost all support of his generals:

\(^8\) Ibn Abd-el-Hakem, 27
“some conjectured that she [Rodrigo’s daughter] had made him [Abd al-Aziz] a Christian. There rebelled against him Habib Ibn Abi Obeida Elfihri, and Zeiyad Ibn En-nabighah Et-temini, and some companions of theirs of the Arab tribes”\textsuperscript{86}.

While the Islamic population of the Peninsula was still very small, it was large enough to ensure that a ruler had to appeal to Islamic legitimacy if he were to establish a stable government. While no leader attained Islamic political legitimacy in the first 40 years of Muslim rule, they could not appeal to Visigoth legitimacy. To do so was to lose the support of the Islamic coercive force that had conquered and kept the ruler in power in Iberia.

Muslim rule during this initial period changed very little on the ground. Visigoth rulers at the local level remained in place, the aristocracy happy with their newfound independence\textsuperscript{87}. The ruling minority, however, was unable to form a stable government. With the central Umayyad government in Damascus more worried about forestalling rebellions in Syria and Iran than in appointing governors in Iberia, the self-appointed Iberian leaders could not claim Islamic political legitimacy\textsuperscript{88}. Consequently, coercive force was the only way to have ones ordered obeyed, and the support of the army was indispensable as evidenced by the fact that nine out of the twenty-two governors in this period were appointed by the military\textsuperscript{89}. The chaos of this initial period allowed the establishment of the Christian kingdom of Asturias (718) in the north of Spain, and by the

\textsuperscript{86} Ibn Abd-el-Hakem, 27
\textsuperscript{87} Land grants to Artobas and others and a complete absence of indigenous rebellions (aside from Pelayo in 718).
\textsuperscript{88} They were in theory governors of a legitimate central authority. For a leader of Muslim Iberia to claim Islamic legitimacy (higher or lower) while it was still nominally a province of the Umayyad Caliphate would have meant succession.
\textsuperscript{89} Chejne, 10
time Abd al-Rahman I crossed the straights of Gibraltar, parts of northern Spain had become independent from Muslim rule.

III The Limits of Lower Legitimacy (756-929)

After years of wandering through North Africa, the Andalusian (Muslim Iberian) Yemenites invited Abd al-Rahman to the Peninsula as an ally in their struggle against the Qaysites. Abd al-Rahman became the sole ruler of al-Andalus in 756, shortly after which he declared himself amir (or prince) of the Umayyad Emirate of al-Andalus. Although Yemenite troops supported Abd al-Rahman I’s rule from the moment he crossed the peninsula, he was not universally hailed as politically legitimate, as is evidenced by the fact that he had to wage war for more than a year to obtain control of the Peninsula. After Abd al-Rahman had established his rule by means of coercive force, he made a claim to what we have called lower legitimacy by choosing to assume the title of amir (along with that of son of the caliph) instead of caliph. As Abd al-Rahman I claimed lower legitimacy, and as this claim was bolstered by descent from the Umayyad caliphs in the Middle East, one would expect the Umayyad dynasty to be more stable, and to have less need for use of coercive force than the governors directly before them.

90 Ibid, 26. Chejne suggests that the fact that Abd al-Rahman I was a descent of the Calphs in orient made the Yemenites rally around him.
91 Chejne, 11
92 It is worth noting that Abd al-Rahman did not claim the title of caliph, which would have represented a claim to higher Islamic legitimacy.
93 The Umayyad Emirs claimed to uphold the Shari’a (Muslim Law)
Indeed, if we define stability as time of a ruler in power, the Umayyad Emirate fared significantly better than the governors did\textsuperscript{94}. Yet, although Abd al-Rahman I temporarily established order and could claim lower Islamic legitimacy, the Iberian provinces still rebelled. Although there were fewer revolts than during the reign of the governors\textsuperscript{95}, every Umayyad ruler up until the Caliph al-Hakem (961-976) faced numerous rebellions\textsuperscript{96} during his tenure. At the beginning of the ninth century, Al-Hakam (796-822) began the practice of surrounding himself with what we will subsequently refer to as “foreign elements”. Foreign elements in a given governmental structure are defined as a group of individuals who are completely alien\textsuperscript{97} to the ideological bases upon which the leader’s political legitimacy is founded. Since the Iberian-Umayyad dynasty’s claim to lower Islamic legitimacy could not ensure loyalty to the amir’s orders across the peninsula, coercive force was needed. In addition to coercive force, foreign elements were introduced to reduce the probability of successfully overthrowing a leader. By decreasing the probability of a revolt killing the ruler and overthrowing the government, foreign elements increased the expected loss from revolt, increasing the effectiveness of the coercive force at hand.

For the security of the leader to be increased, foreign elements had to be virtually incorruptible. Their incentives had to be completely aligned with the leader they were there to protect. This was accomplished, in the case of the Slavs of Abd al-Rahman III by having these foreign elements “bought usually as children… [they] had no roots in al-Andalus itself…their attachment to the ruler provided him with a body of support on

\textsuperscript{94}H_0: Length of rule of Emirate<= Length of rule of Governors. \textbf{Reject Ho at the 0.5\% level.} See appendix for details.
\textsuperscript{95}Chejne, 12-15
\textsuperscript{96}For a detailed account of these, see Chejne pp 15-30
which he could place some considerable degree of reliance\textsuperscript{98}. The foreign elements were well treated, and with no claim to any Islamic legitimating principles on their own\textsuperscript{99}, the foreign elements could do no better with an alternative ruler.\textsuperscript{100} The use of foreign elements was recognized and explained by the fourteenth century historian Ibn Khaldun:

“In order to prevent them [rivals] from seizing power, and in order to keep them away from participation in it, the ruler needs other friends [who can not claim the same legitimacy that the ruler does], not of his own kin, whom he can use against [rivals who can claim the same legitimacy] and who will be his friends in their place. These become closer to him than anyone else… [thus] dynasties eventually resort to employing strangers and accepting them as followers\textsuperscript{101}.

When he used “five thousand slaves who could not speak Arabic and were referred to as mute (khurs)\textsuperscript{102} as his praetorian guard, al-Hakam recognized that he could not claim enough political legitimacy to prevent rebellions\textsuperscript{103}. These 5,000 slaves quickly served their purpose when “cries for unseating the Amir spread in the city\textsuperscript{104}, and an armed mob surrounded the palace… [The Amir was] hopelessly besieged\textsuperscript{105}. The foreign elements ended up thwarting the revolt, and when the Amir (al-Hakam) was

\textsuperscript{97} i.e. have no claim in any way, nor any connection to those (besides the ruler) who might have claim
\textsuperscript{98} Wasserstein, 25
\textsuperscript{99} This is evidenced by the failed attempts of a few of the Slavs to set up governments following the fall of the Caliphate.
\textsuperscript{100} Their expected utility from a regime change even if they kept their posts and perks was lower, because the probability of success was <1.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibn Khaldun, 146-149
\textsuperscript{102} Chejne, 19
\textsuperscript{103} It seems evident that if the threat of revolt were not constant and credible, then there was little need to maintain such a large “pretorian guard”.
\textsuperscript{104} Cordova
\textsuperscript{105} Ibn Khaldun, Ibar, pp 19
firmly in power again “al-Hakam’s guards pursued the rebels and killed more than ten thousand. Some three hundred survivors were crucified one by one”\textsuperscript{106}. The existence of foreign elements surrounding the leader raised the probability of failure\textsuperscript{107} in a rebellion. If the rebellion failed, then those who rebelled had to face gruesome consequences\textsuperscript{108}. Consequently one would expect fewer rebellions if the ruler was surrounded by foreign elements.

This presence of foreign elements, however, failed to extend the amir’s influence and to decrease the number of rebellions. By the time Abd al-Rahman III assumed the throne in 912, the kingdom was “ablaze…the provinces were in a state of convulsion”\textsuperscript{109}. This fact seems to discredit the hypothesis that these “foreign elements” increased the expected costs of rebellion. A possible explanation lies in the fact that, during this period (756-929), the Peninsula saw a drastic increase in the pool of those who had claim to “lower Islamic legitimacy”.

We have seen how lower Islamic legitimacy only required the ruler to be Muslim, and to uphold the shari’a to be legitimate. Lower Islamic legitimacy, however, was not a claim to being the only legitimate Islamic ruler, as was higher legitimacy. In this context of lower legitimacy, it is not surprising that many rebellions espoused the causes of competing dynasties who did claim higher legitimacy, whether Abbasid or Fatimid\textsuperscript{110}. As the local population converted to Islam, there arose, in addition to the Abbasid and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{106} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{107} Because the foreign elements would defend the leader and support him.
\item \textsuperscript{108} Or, an extremely negative payoff. It is intuitively clear that foreign elements raised the expected loss from rebellion.
\item \textsuperscript{109} Ibn al-Khatib A’lam, p.37
\item \textsuperscript{110} A North African dynasty claiming the caliphate.
\end{itemize}
Fatimid threat, a new threat to Umayyad government. The population of muwalladun (Christian converts to Islam), upon conversion theoretically had a claim to lower Islamic legitimacy if they could gain power and uphold the shari’a. Not surprisingly (given their tradition of independence) upon conversion many of the Visigoth aristocracy supported revolts in an attempt to install themselves as the “upholders of the shari’a”. As the Visigoth aristocracy converted to Islam, and as the traditions of the greater Muslim world (hadith and sunna) gave the growing Muslim population higher expectations for their rulers, the muwalladun began to rise in rebellion. A few of the muwalladun revolts even established independent kingdoms. Thus, as the pool of potential rivals (through conversion) increased, one would have expected more revolts, and consequently less stability. It is plausible that the increased number of rivals erased the stabilizing effects of the foreign elements in Umayyad government.

The “multiplication of rivals” was a product of a growing number of Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula. This multiplication of rivals created greater instability. As a given ruler faced an increased number of revolts as the pool of potential rivals grew (in our case by conversion from Islam) the geographical area one could comfortably govern on lower legitimacy alone fell. The Umayyads claimed lower Islamic legitimacy, and surrounded themselves with a large army and foreign elements. This was enough to maintain power over the whole of the peninsula as long as the number of rivals was

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111 e.g. The Banu Qasi, Ibn Marwad al-Jilliqi and Ibn Hafsun
112 The accepted teachings and interpretations of Islam
113 Maria Isabel Fierro: 1991: this is evidenced by the fact that the amirs of al-Andalus after the first revolts began to “follow the customs [Sunna] of the Caliphs with respect to feast, form and arrangement of the civil service”
114 e.g. Ibn Hajjaj, Ibn Hafsun and al-Jilliqi
115 Chejne, 23-30: after 850 almost all the major revolts in al-Andalus are headed by Muwalladun
116 i.e. without having to constantly put down revolts
relatively small\textsuperscript{117}. As the local population converted to Islam, however, the number of rivals rose. These Muwalladun “felt confident (they) could become the sole ruler(s) of al-Andalus”\textsuperscript{118}, and rose in revolt. They claimed that the amir had not upheld the shari’a\textsuperscript{119}: “the sultan (amir) has for a long time treated you harshly, taken away your property... I wish to emancipate you”\textsuperscript{120}.

The Muwalladun had no claim to “higher” legitimacy, yet mobilized large coalitions of Christians\textsuperscript{121} and Muslims into battle to end the “injustice” of Umayyad rule. At the beginning of Abd al-Rahman the third’s reign, any Muslim member of the Iberian-Arab aristocracy\textsuperscript{122} could claim the same lower legitimacy to which the Umayyads lay claim. With so many attempting to establish their own rule, it was becoming more and more difficult to maintain a central authority over the whole of the Peninsula with only a claim to lower legitimacy.

IV The End of all Rebellions (929-1009)

By 912, approximately 2.8 million indigenous Muslims\textsuperscript{123} (out of the approximately five million inhabitants of Muslim Spain) had risen in open revolt. Where the Muwalladun had not revolted Berbers, Yemenites and Qaysites fought for control. Not surprisingly, when Abd-al-Rahman III sent letters asking for the \textit{bay’a} (oath of

\textsuperscript{117}As is evidenced by the initial increase in stability following the establishment of Umayyad rule.\textsuperscript{118}Chejne, 25\textsuperscript{119}By not protecting property, and by mistreatment of the Muwalladun\textsuperscript{120}Ibn Idhari, \textit{Bayan}, vol 2 p. 114\textsuperscript{121}This suggests an element of local Iberian group feeling that transcends religion and might have been an important part of “convivencia”. It also has interesting repercussions for legitimacy which can not be touched on here.\textsuperscript{122}In theory, any Muslim could obtain power. In practice, only the converted Visigoth aristocracy attempted to seize power.\textsuperscript{123}Harvey, 7
allegiance) few outside Cordova bothered to respond. After attempts to unify the peninsula through diplomacy failed, Abd-al-Rahman began a military campaign in which he used coercive force to subdue all those who did not wish to obey his decrees. Remembered in Islamic traditions to this day as one of the greatest Muslim leaders of all time, Abd al-Rahman achieved political unity in Al-Andalus after a fifteen year campaign\textsuperscript{124}.

Abd al-Rahman III, initially only claiming lower Islamic legitimacy, could not assure compliance to his decrees across the Peninsula without the widespread use of coercive force. Yet, eventually Abd al-Rahman III achieved what his predecessors could not do even with coercive force: stability and peace. While undoubtedly an able statesmen – his efforts even included a kind of “affirmative action” program towards the muwalladun\textsuperscript{125} – it was Abd al-Rahman’s claim to higher Islamic legitimacy that enabled the Umayyad dynasty to eventually govern the whole of Muslim Iberia without having to resort to coercive force.

In the midst of an emergent Fatimid threat in North Africa\textsuperscript{126}, and with constant threat of revolt at home, Abd al-Rahman proclaimed himself caliph in 929. Nothing had changed in Abd al-Rahman III’s personal qualifications. Indeed, he had simply subdued the Peninsula by coercive force as had a few other able Umayyad rulers before him\textsuperscript{127}. Yet, in the face of revolt and external competition that claimed higher legitimacy, Abd al-Rahman probably realized that he had little choice but to claim higher legitimacy if he wished to stay in power. This is evidenced in Abd al-Rahman III’s caliphal decree, in

\textsuperscript{124} Chejne, 29
\textsuperscript{125} Chejne, 36.
which he stresses that the Umayyads of Al-Andalus are more deserving than any other pretender to power, they are the ‘most deserving’ to claim it [the caliphate] and the most deserving to complete its fortune and to dress themselves with the generousies with which the high God has dressed them…[God] has elevated our authority to this point.”

Abd al-Rahman III, appealed to higher Islamic legitimacy by claiming, as Umar (the second Caliph after the death of Muhammad) had centuries before, that “he was the best one among you (the Muslim community)”129. The proclamation of the Caliphate continues to list why Abd al-Rahman III is God’s preferred candidate for the Caliphate. The declaration gives proof of God’s satisfaction with the government stating that “our subjects are overjoyed to be protected by our government”130. In declaring the Caliphate and appealing to higher legitimacy, Abd al-Rahman III attempted to “cement (or extend those who would obey his)… leadership (without coercion) with the religious law and its ordinances”131.

No matter how many proofs of higher legitimacy Abd al-Rahman gave, we have seen that the definition of higher legitimacy required consensus around his divine ordination. Following his declaration of the Caliphate, there was not a consensus surrounding Abd al-Rahman’s claim to the caliphate, as demonstrated by his efforts to limit the influence of competing dynasties Abd al-Rahman III

“prevented [his] people from going abroad to fulfill the duty of the pilgrimage.

[He] was afraid they might fall into the hands of the Abbasids. During all their

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126 The Fatimids were a North African Dynasty, they sent missionaries to the Iberian Peninsula to preach their doctrines. The Fatimids claimed higher Islamic legitimacy.
128 Abd al-Rahman III al-Nasir, 153, emphasis Added.
129 Ibn Ishaq, 62. Emphasis Added
130 Abd al-Rahman III al-Nasir, 153
days, none of their people made the pilgrimage. The pilgrimage was again permitted to (Iberians) who belonged to the dynasties in Spain, only after the Ummayad rule had come to an end, and Spain had reverted to control of the party Kings”.  

In addition, Abd al-Rahman III attempted to limit revolts and neutralize the various factions within his realm by increasing the coercive forces at his disposal. In addition to enlarging the army, he raised the number of Slavs of European origin in his court. These Slavs, as previously explained, were “bought usually as children, often castrated… had no roots in al-Andalus itself…their attachment to the ruler provided him with a body of support on which he could place some considerable degree of reliance”.

Yet, even with these coercive elements, if Abd al-Rahman III could not attain higher legitimacy, the history of secular rule in Al-Andalus promised future revolt.

Either Abd-al-Rahman III’s government attained higher legitimacy, or it defied history. After 35 years of stable rule, the Ummayad Dynasty saw the only smooth transition in its entire history. In addition, the average length of rule during the Caliphal period was significantly longer than during the preceding periods. No revolts or palace intrigue accompanied al-Hakam’s assumption of power in 961.

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131 Ibn Khaldun, 121
132 Ibn Khaldun, 237. This is, admittedly, a difficult passage to reconcile with the ideological base of higher legitimacy. Any explanation is speculative. Maria Isabel Fiero (1991) has documented how the Iberian muftis proclaimed fatwas during the Umayyad period permitting the drinking of wine. The relative religious laxity of the Iberian Peninsula, coupled with its distance from Mecca, probably meant that most of the Iberian population would not have made the pilgrimage even had it been permitted. After all, in the Magrib during the same period, we know that the title Hajj carried with it great prestige (as documented by Maria Isabel Fiero), suggesting that not many performed the pilgrimage.
133 See one of the poems addresseed to Tarub in Ibn al-Abbar, Hullah pp.114-115 cf. Chejne, 33.
134 Wasserstein, 25
135 Reject H_o Caliphate=<Emirate at the 1% significance level. See appendix for details.
Up until now, this section has attempted to explain the evolution of political legitimacy in Muslim Iberia through governmental structures. The governors did not have any claim to political legitimacy because their length of rule was extremely short, and they were overly dependent on the military. The Emirate did claim lower legitimacy, as evidenced by their increased tenure in power (with respect to the governors) and lesser dependence on military strength. Yet, as the number of Muslims in the Peninsula grew, lower legitimacy became insufficient to maintain order without large coercive force. This is evidenced by the introduction of foreign elements into governmental structure, and the steady decrease of central control. Finally, the caliphate did claim higher legitimacy which gave rise to an unprecedented level of stability.

V Too High?

Although the attainment of higher Islamic legitimacy would imply stability, the distinction between higher and lower legitimacy up until now has been strictly theoretical. Indeed, we have seen countless examples of what has been dubbed lower legitimacy since the death of Muhammad, and very few successful claims to higher legitimacy. This was because following the death of Muhammad, consensus was extremely difficult to obtain. Thus, the claim that the Umayyad dynasty suddenly obtained higher legitimacy seems somewhat far-fetched. Tenure in power, after all, does not necessarily mean a claim to greater legitimacy. But the evidence supports a change in the Umayyad claim to legitimacy between 912 and 1009. Before 912, central authority was regarded as illegitimate by most who attempted to break from the center, and the
Muwlladun other revolts attempted to disassociate themselves from the Umayyad regime. This behavior stands in stark contrast to the conditions following the collapse of central authority at the start of 1009. The emerging factions took care not to dishonor the theoretical supremacy of the central authority. While exercising complete independence on the ground, the rebels almost universally declared themselves *hajib* (chamberlain), *du al-waziratain* (viziers) or *du al-ri’asatayn* (Court Master)\(^{136}\) to the Cordovan Caliph to “win popular support”\(^{137}\). The following section suggests how Abd al-Rahman III established a consensus in Muslim Iberia that he was divinely appointed\(^{138}\), and moved the Umayyad dynasty from lower to higher legitimacy.

Caliphal claims and descent from the prophet, while necessary for higher legitimacy were not sufficient. One had to establish a consensus in order to attain higher legitimacy. As previously stated, the jurist Jahiz (776-869) summarized this point:

“To be worthy of the caliphate and deserving of the imamate exceptional merit and accomplishment are needed. This merit must either be manifest and known to all Muslims, so that with one accord they raise up a man to be first among them, and spontaneously appoint their ruler, not being under the threat of the sword of the sway of fear nor, under any apparent constraint or possibility of suspicion; or else it must have come to light as the result of careful discussion, consultation and deliberation on the part of the community”\(^{139}\).

Thus, the bar to attain higher legitimacy was set impossibly high, unless one was visibly appointed by God, or performed an act that proved one’s merit to all. In Abd al-Rahman

\(^{136}\) Taifas, 61  
\(^{137}\) Tibyan, 47  
\(^{138}\) or the most deserving in the community
III’s case, his merit-proving acts were done from his position as amir. Because Abd al-Rahman III provided stability and prosperity for Muslim Iberia, his claim to higher Islamic legitimacy eventually become consensus.

To fully understand the process by which Abd al-Rahman III attained higher Islamic legitimacy requires the concept of positive feedback\textsuperscript{140}. A process exhibits positive feedback at time $t$ if a set of characteristics of the process at time $t-1$ produce conditions at time $t$ that result in the amplification of the characteristics exhibited at time $t-1$. The Polya urn model is probably the most used example of positive feedback. Explained by Paul David (1986): “In a simple scheme of that kind, an urn containing balls of various colors is sampled with replacement and every drawing of a ball of a specified color results in a second ball of the same color being returned to the urn; the probabilities that balls of specified colors will be added are therefore increasing (linear) functions of the proportions in which the respective colors are represented within the urn… when generalized forms of such processes are extended indefinitely… the proportional share of one of the colors will, with probability one, converge to unity”\textsuperscript{141}. When the proportional share of one of the colors converges to unity, the system displays what David and Arthur have dubbed lock-in. Lock-in, in our setting, simply designates difficulty (or impossibility) in changing, due to exorbitantly high costs, a given quality that has emerged, and is supported by, a process of positive feedback.

Abd al-Rahman III enabled a process of positive feedback by uniting the Peninsula and establishing a degree of stability before he proclaimed himself the “most

\textsuperscript{139} Jahiz, 60
\textsuperscript{140} For a more extensive discussion on path dependence and positive feedback, see David (1986), Arthur(1990).
deserving to claim it [the caliphate]. After unifying the Peninsula, his military and political prowess was respected by all in the Peninsula even if his claim to the caliphate was not. Only after establishing himself firmly in the government and providing stability did Abd al-Rahman III claim the caliphate. In Muslim Iberia, the order in which one claimed higher legitimacy was important. Since higher legitimacy was solely obtainable through the consensus of the community, claiming higher legitimacy before having firmly established oneself in power was little better than simply claiming lower legitimacy. This point is best evidenced by the Hammudite claim to the caliphate. Following the fall of the Umayyad caliphate, descendents of Muhammad’s nephew Ali attempted to install themselves as caliphs in the Iberian Peninsula. Although some Hammudite candidates were described in the sources as able politicians, the Hammudites failed in their attempt to mobilize Iberians around their claim to higher legitimacy. If caliphal blood, political savvy and descent from Muhammad were sufficient to lay claim to “higher Islamic” legitimacy, the Hammudites should have been able to mobilize sizeable numbers of the Iberian population. They did claim the caliphate, and reigned over a small kingdom in Malaga until their conquest by Granada in 1058.

Higher legitimacy took more than a strong ideological claim and merit. It required “merit known to all.” Abd al-Rahman III established his merit, partly through obtaining power before he declared the caliphate, but also through the peace and prosperity that this hold of power eventually made possible. The Hammudites, by claiming higher legitimacy

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141 David, 1986, pp 11.
143 Chejne, 33 he had, after all, recently defeated every major rebel in the whole of the Iberian Peninsula
144 As demonstrated in the previous section by the necessity to prohibit the pilgrimage, and to surround himself with foreign elements.
145 Chejne, 33.
before having attained power, subsequently brought civil war to the Peninsula and by bringing strife to Muslim Iberia, disproved their claim to higher legitimacy. The Hammudites did not establish their merit because the populace became “disillusioned with the rule of the Hammudites… [they] could not give them the much needed peace and stability”\textsuperscript{147}. Abd al-Rahman III, on the other hand, before claiming higher legitimacy, surrounded himself with foreign elements and a large army in order to establish relative stability and prosperity while holding power with lower legitimacy. Although the populace continued to revolt, the stability provided by Abd al-Rahman’s impressive statesmanship was sufficient to enable a process of positive feedback to emerge once he claimed the caliphate.

Positive feedback could not emerge in Muslim Spain until a ruler claimed higher legitimacy through a claim to the caliphate. Abd-al-Rahman III claimed higher legitimacy in 929:

“Therefore, we have more right than those who have received their right, and we are more deserving than those who have received their whole part… therefore, it appears right that, in the future, we be called Prince of the Believers … we are convinced that to follow for more time without using the title appropriate to us would be tantamount to losing an acquired right. Therefore, order the preachers of your locality to use this title in prayer from this moment on”\textsuperscript{148}

Ibn ‘Idhari goes on to explain how all correspondence from that moment on was to carry the title of Prince of the Believers (Amir al Mu’iminin) in the following form: “the

\textsuperscript{146} Viguera Molinas, 44.
\textsuperscript{147} Chejne, 48.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibn ’Idhari, vol. 2, 198-199.
servant of the Prince of the Believers –God save him.”149 Moreover, his name was to be read in every prayer with the Caliphal laqab150 (title) of al-Nasir li-Din Allah (victor for Allah’s religion) and Amir al-Mu’imminin. Following this declaration, Cordoba began to mint gold dinars for the first time in its history.151 These coins all bore the title “amir al-mu’imminin” (Commander of the Faithful).

Following the declaration of the Caliphate, it would have been difficult to go a day without seeing the Caliph’s name next to his titles. When Abd al-Rahman III claimed the Caliphate, he claimed that he was the “best among Muslims” and that his government was “an institution of the Muslim religious law152”. As the caliphate was an institution of Muslim religious law, and Abd al-Rahman III was an able leader, it is likely that a sector of the population immediately believed his claims of higher legitimacy on a strictly ideological basis.153

*The model for positive feedback*

As peace and prosperity reigned, the population -inheritors of Islamic tradition- must have seen the signs of prosperity as divine approbation of their leader154. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the populace was happy to sustain the divine nature of the caliph as long as his government provided the promised effects of a ruler ordained by God: order

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149 Ibid.
150 A given caliph, upon assumption of the caliphate, took a surname or laqab that usually expressed his divine ordination or strength.
151 Monedas Hispano-Musulmanas.
152 Ibn Khaldun, 190.
153 His Umayyad blood, for example, made Abd al-Rahman III’s claim to the Caliphate ideologically similar to the Hammudites. Although we have seen that the Hammudites failed in their endeavor, a number of Iberians followed their rule on strictly ideological claims, as evidenced by their establishment of the kingdom of Malaga.
154 As advocated by the jurists Jahiz, Ibn Muqaffa and Abu Yusuf in the Middle East.
and prosperity. The following anecdote, reported by Muyhi l-din Ibn al-`Arabi, lends supports to this hypothesis. The caliph was approached by a worried advisor:

   -“Oh Commander of the Faithful! Distractions have made you lose interest in the affairs of your Muslim subjects…The Caliph (Abd al-Rahman III) responded:

   - Are the roads safe?
   - Yes
   - Does your Qadi judge correctly?
   - Yes
   - Are you enemies subdued?
   - Yes
   - Then what else do you want me to do?155

If stability and prosperity did convince the population of the validity of the Umayyad claim to higher legitimacy, the more of the population that believed the less likely they were to support a competing ideology and less probable revolt became. In this sense, the popular legitimacy of Abd al-Rahman III resembles the aforementioned polya urn process. The rise of Abd al-Rahman III was stochastic156, and in 912 Abd al-Rahman faced a kingdom “hopelessly divided from within and threatened by powerful foes from without”157. After establishing his authority by coercive force, Abd al-Rahman III claimed higher legitimacy in 929. An initial group of individuals, $N_o$, believed the claim

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156 The previous Emir had nominated his son Muhammad, but events ended up giving Abd al-Rahman the Emirate
157 Chejne, 31
to Abd al-Rahman III’s higher legitimacy in 929 (time=t). The fact that these individuals believed the initial claim to Abd al-Rahman III’s higher legitimacy, meant, by the definition of higher legitimacy that these individuals would obey Abd al-Rahman’s orders without the use of coercive force, they would not rebel. Moreover, these individuals would attempt to forestall any rebellions against Abd al-Rahman III. Thus, in time t+1, the pool of potential rebels falls because of the actions of the No and consequently the probability of rebellion falls. Stability increases, convincing more individuals of the divine nature of Abd al-Rahman III’s government. Thus at time t+1 the number of individuals believing in Abd al-Rahman III’s divine ordination =N1=No+n, where n is the number of individuals convinced by the stability in time t+1 of Abd al-Rahman III’s divine ordination. And so forth. It is clear that, if uninterrupted, this process will eventually converge to the whole population believing in the divine ordination of Abd al-Rahman III. This is what Paul David and others have termed “lock in”. In our situation, the lock in of the Umayyad dynasty simply implies that so many of the local population believe in the legitimacy of the dynasty that to change to another ideological base would require an exorbitant amount of effort. The cost of changing people’s beliefs would be prohibitively high, or even impossible.

VI The evidence supporting a process of positive feedback during the Umayyad Caliphate
If, in fact, positive feedback and lock-in enabled Abd al-Rahman III to obtain higher legitimacy for the Umayyad dynasty, our model and definition of political legitimacy and positive feedback predict the following:

1. Decreasing instability (increased average time as ruler) after the declaration of the Caliphate in 929.

2. Smooth succession from father to the appointed son.

3. Few, if any, revolts once the dynasty obtained higher legitimacy.

4. A decrease or elimination of the need for foreign elements.

During the first three years following the declaration of the caliphate, Badajoz and other strongholds (929-930), Toledo (931) and Zaragoza (932) all rebelled\(^\text{158}\). After 932, however, the sources do not speak of any rebellions in Muslim Iberia for the rest of Abd al-Rahman III’s dynasty. Al-Hakam (961-976) succeeded Abd al-Rahman III without opposition in 961. During Al-Hakam’s fifteen year reign, al-Andalus did not witness a single revolt. Following Al-Hakam’s death, the leaders of al-Andalus traveled to Cordoba to swear allegiance to Al-Hakam’s appointed successor, his ten year old son Hisham II. Soon, however, the vizier Ibn Abi al-Amir\(^\text{159}\) attempted to increase his personal influence. The Slavs, wary of Ibn-Abi-al-Amir’s increased power, attempted to place another Umayyad\(^\text{160}\) on the throne. Ibn-Abi-al-Amir defeated the Slavs in a complicated game of palace intrigue and as his grip on political power became more secure, he disbanded the Slav foreign elements in 977.

\(^{158}\) Chejne, 33
\(^{159}\) appointed by Al-Hakam to govern in Hisham II’s stead until Hisham reached maturity
\(^{160}\) Al Mughira, brother of Abd al-Rahman III. Ibn Idhari, Bayan , vol 2, p 251
If the Umayyad dynasty simply had attained lower legitimacy, one would have expected the dynasty to collapse at this point. With no foreign elements or coercive force\textsuperscript{161} to protect the government, Ibn Abi al-Amir could have claimed power for himself and claimed lower legitimacy by upholding the shari’a. This did not happen, and furthermore, Ibn Abi al-Amir continued to govern in Hisham II’s name. Ibn Abi al-Amir could not depose the Caliph, nor claim central authority. Since Ibn Abi al-Amir went to great extents to prove his piety\textsuperscript{162}, and was from an aristocratic heritage\textsuperscript{163}, he did have a claim to lower Islamic legitimacy. Yet he could not depose the central authority. There was an obvious asymmetry between the legitimacy of a Caliph (Hisham II) who was “a weakling, contemptible, and preoccupied with pastime and amusement with boys and girls”\textsuperscript{164}, and an impressive statesman in Ibn Abi al-Amir. The asymmetry was in Hisham II’s favor. Although Almanzor (Ibn-Abi al-Amir) could assume absolute power in practice, he had to do so in the name of the ruler who was considered divinely appointed because his father, who was politically legitimate, had made him his heir.

Ibn Abi al-Amir (976-1002) demonstrated remarkable political and military ability. During his viziership, al-Andalus reached unprecedented military and economic pinnacles. As his power increased, Ibn Abi al-Amir took on many Umayyad royal trappings. He took a caliphal title (al-Mansur (Almanzor)), included his name on coins and had his viziers kiss his hand. Although rapidly earning the “admiration of the people and the army”\textsuperscript{165}, Almanzor (Ibn Abi al-Amir) took care to make sure his name was mentioned in the Friday prayer after the Caliph’s. Almanzor’s charisma and personal

\textsuperscript{161} Ibn Abi al-Amir had imported his own army of Berbers from North Africa\textsuperscript{162}, such as copying the Qur’an by hand.\textsuperscript{163} From a Yemenese tribe\textsuperscript{164} Ibn al-Khatib, \textit{A’lam}, p. 58
accomplishments could not substitute for higher legitimacy. By the time Almanzor
usurped central power, the Umayyad dynasty had achieved higher legitimacy. If the
Umayyad dynasty had not, Almanzor could have deposed the leader and governed on his
own, as usurpers had previously attempted to do and successfully done. Time and
stability had convinced the Andalusian (Muslim Iberian) population that the Umayyad
dynasty was divinely appointed.

Almanzor consequently could not effect a dynasty change. The ideological basis
of higher Islamic legitimacy which made the caliphate “political (institution) with a
religious basis” meant that if the population believed a leader to be “a substitute for
Muhammad” the population would support the leader with religious zeal. As recognized
by Dozy:

"Reverence for the principle of (higher) legitimacy was firmly rooted in every
heart, but it flourished in even greater vigor among the commonalty than among
the nobles. The latter, for the most part of Arab origin, could perhaps convince
themselves that a change of dynasty from time to time might be useful, or even
necessary but no such ideas entered the minds of the people, who were of Spanish
stock. Side by side with religious sentiments, love for the (Umayyad) dynasty was
ingrained in their hearts. Although Almanzor (Ibn Abi al-Amir) had brought the
country glory and prosperity hitherto undreamed of, the people could not forgive
him for making the Khalifa (Caliph), to all intents, a State prisoner, and they were

165 Chejne, 40
166 In the Umayyad Emirate and Governors period an example being Hisham and Sulayman following the
death of Abd al-Rahman I.
167 Ibn Khaldun, 154
ready to break out into general insurrection if the Minister (Almanzor) dared to make any attempt to place himself upon the throne.” 168

The evidence suggests that the Umayyad dynasty achieved higher legitimacy. It also appears that the process by which Abd al-Rahman III gained this higher legitimacy involved positive feedback which eventually led to the lock in of the Umayyad dynasty. The final chapter of the paper gives further proof for the lock in of the Umayyad dynasty and uses this evidence for lock in to explain the eventual fall of Muslim Spain.

III Institutional Inertia

By the time Almanzor assumed his regency, the Umayyad dynasty had attained “higher” Islamic legitimacy. Although the last Umayyad ruler169 is described in the sources as “a weakling, contemptible, and preoccupied with pastime and amusement with boys and girls”170, his rule was held “side by side with religious sentiments… ingrained in their (the populace’s) hearts.”171 While Hisham (the last Umayyad ruler) had no claim to the valor and religious fortitude that religious thinkers had associated with deserving the caliphate, he was the designated heir of the Umayyad dynasty. This dynasty’s claim to higher Islamic legitimacy meant that deposing Hisham would cause the populace to

168 Dozy, 512
169 The last Umayyad ruler that was considered legitimate by the entire Peninsula.
170 Ibn al-Khatib, A’lam, p. 58
171 Dozy, 512
“break out into general insurrection”. Only orders in Hisham the second’s name would be obeyed without coercion across the whole peninsula. Being the universal ruler of Muslim Iberia had come to mean being Umayyad.

I Back to Lower Legitimacy

After the death of Almanzor, his son and successor as chamberlain attempted to have Hisham II appoint him caliph. Following this attempt to depose Hisham II in 1009, civil war broke out in the Peninsula, ending in the abolishment of the Caliphate in 1031. Once consensus had been lost on which leader was legitimate (Hisham II had been designated by his father al-Hakam who had been designated by Abd al-Rahman III), it was difficult to reinstate. Governing the entire Peninsula without higher legitimacy however, had become virtually impossible, as is evidenced by the peninsular situation before Abd al-Rahman’s ascension to the throne. Consequently, when the caliphate was abolished in 1031, local rulers took control. Towns and cities across the Peninsula “decided to take as leader a member of the city who could, by the [lower] authority which he already enjoyed, reestablish the union”174. There arose multiple small kingdoms (which will subsequently be called taifa kingdoms), none of which could claim higher Islamic legitimacy. As Clement (1997) has noted: “the taifa kings could claim personal elements of legitimacy (lower Islamic legitimacy), certainly insufficient to claim

172 Dozy, 512
173 Abd al-Rahman Sanchol
174 Abd-al-Wahib, 80
legitimate succession to the Umayyads (higher Islamic legitimacy), but largely sufficient to claim local sovereignty.\textsuperscript{175}

If the taifa kings did claim lower legitimacy, our definition of legitimacy coupled with our model of positive feedback would predict the following:

1. Increasing instability (decreased average time as ruler) after the fall of the Caliphate in 1031.
2. An increasing need for foreign elements.
3. Greater number of rivals
4. Smaller kingdom size (because of the multiplication of rivals effect)
5. Persistence of the belief that members of the Umayyad dynasty were the only legitimate pan-Iberian rulers.

Following the fall of the caliphate (1031), “every one grasped for power, and the local lords of Al-Andalus became the absolute masters of the territory”\textsuperscript{176}. In our model, this multiplication of rivals would encourage the presence of foreign elements in their governments, and lower stability (as measured in mean time of each ruler in power). The taifa period did witness more instability (roughly equal to that of the Emirate\textsuperscript{177}, in which rulers also claimed lower legitimacy) and foreign elements regained importance. The foreign elements in the taifa courts were no longer Slavs and Berbers, but Jews and Christians\textsuperscript{178}. As previously explained, the taifa kings filled their courts with individuals

\textsuperscript{175} Clement, 305
\textsuperscript{176} Ibn al-Khatib, cf. Viguera Molinas, 83
\textsuperscript{177} \textbf{Cannot reject H$_0$, Taifa=Emirate at the 20\% level}. See appendix for statistical justification.
\textsuperscript{178} Perhaps the shift was due to the fact that Slavs and Berbers had established their own kingdoms following the disintegration of the caliphate. Another reason might lie in the rising cost of Slavs in the Peninsula as documented by Levi Provencal.
who were not Muslim, because these foreign elements had no claim to the ideological
basis of lower legitimacy (Muslim male, and upholder of the shar‘ia), and would have
little to gain from supporting a rival\textsuperscript{179}. The last taifa king of Granada wrote a history of
his kingdom from exile following the Murabitun\textsuperscript{180} conquest (1090), in which he
confirms our hypothesis when detailing the reason for appointing Abu Ibrahim, a Jewish
vizier:

“from that day Abu Ibrahim was attached to the service of Badis, who in most of
his deliberations sought his advice concerning his kinsmen... Badis therefore
employed Abu Ibrahim because of his utter lack of confidence in anyone else and
the hostility of his kinsmen. Moreover, Abu Ibrahim was a Jewish dhimmi who
would not lust after power.”\textsuperscript{181}

The taifa kings appointed foreign elements in order to discourage revolt by
competing factions (who could also claim lower Islamic legitimacy). These foreign
elements, as in the Umayyad period, could be trusted to remain loyal. The available
evidence points to Christian and Jewish viziers in the courts of Seville\textsuperscript{182}, Granada\textsuperscript{183},
Zaragoza\textsuperscript{184} and Almeria\textsuperscript{185}. In Toledo, “affluent Jews began appearing among those
close to the king and as various officials in the court.”\textsuperscript{186} The documented presence of
Jews and Christians in the courts of these 5 kingdoms (which occupied roughly 80% of

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{179} The best these foreign elements could do would be to maintain their positions, as explained in chapter II.
\textsuperscript{180} Or Almoravide, a North African Dynasty (1056-1269)
\textsuperscript{181} Abd Allah Bin Bullugin, 54-57 Emphasis added
\textsuperscript{182} Ashtor, 197. Granada was known to have 3 Jewish Viziers in its 60 year history: Abraham, and the 2 Nagids. Almeria: Jew was “the vizier of the Lord of Almeria at that time” (Ibn Amirah, 332-333). Zaragoza: dhu al-wizaratayn: The Christian Ibn Gundisvaldo, Abu al-Fadl bin Yusuf Ibn Hasday. Sevilla saw Jews and Christians holding high government positions. By 1080, Valencia and Denia were ruled by taifas that had foreign elements.
\textsuperscript{183} Taifas, 209
\textsuperscript{184} Ashtor, 211.
\textsuperscript{185} Al Dabbi, 332-333
\end{flushright}
Hispano-Islamic territory by 1085), confirms that these foreign elements fulfilled a function that the majority of the Muslim population could not. Indeed, this widespread practice of appointing foreign elements led Ibn Hazm (1012-1067) to complain how the taifa kings “accorded the Jews and Christians exorbitant privileges”\(^\text{187}\). Poets even jested at how the rulers surrounded themselves with non-Muslims: the XI century poet Khalaf bin Faraj remarked that “one day it is a Jew, another day a Christian… it will next be some fire-worshipper (majus) that he (the king of Granada) will take as vizier.”\(^\text{188}\)

It was under these conditions of local or “lower” legitimacy that more than twenty taifa kingdoms emerged. While “lower” Islamic legitimacy was sufficient to establish local legitimacy, the more ambitious leaders soon found that their lack of claim to “higher” Islamic legitimacy made universal rule impossible. If true, we would expect the more ambitious of the taifa kings to model their governments as much as possible in the Umayyad model in order to extend their rule over a greater geographical area. The “inertia” or lock-in of the populace’s belief in Umayyad higher legitimacy assured that while the local leaders could claim lower legitimacy, any pan-Islamic leader had to be Umayyad.

\(^{186}\) Idem, 225
\(^{187}\) Ibn Hazm, Fisal, IV p. 175
\(^{188}\) Abu al Rabi al-Matuni cf Abd Allah Bin Bullugin , 222
II Evidence for lock in

If Abd al-Rahman the third’s claim to Caliphal rule produced positive feedback and lock-in, we would expect to see rulers after the fall of the caliphate, who could only claim lower legitimacy, attempting to legitimate their rule by claiming Umayyad legitimacy\textsuperscript{189}. If Muslim Spain’s belief in the legitimacy of the Umayyad regime was non-ergodic\textsuperscript{190}, we would expect to see hysterisis, or a resistance to change in the belief that Umayyad rule was legitimate\textsuperscript{191}. The people of Muslim Iberia would have considered the Umayyad dynasty legitimate for a certain period of time even after it disappeared. In

\textsuperscript{189} If for no other reason but to reduce enforcement costs as explained by North (1991)
\textsuperscript{190} Or, dependent on past events and beliefs
\textsuperscript{191} If a taifa could credibly claim Umayyad legitimacy, yet did not provide greater peace and prosperity, negative feedback would emerge and eventually only a select few would believe the divine nature of a claim to Umayyad rule since the mechanism that encouraged positive feedback (the correlation of stability and prosperity with Umayyad rule) would have disappeared.
response to this lingering belief in the legitimacy of Umayyad leaders, we would expect non-Umayyad leaders to attempt to appeal to Umayyad legitimacy, at least initially, in order to increase the number of inhabitants that would follow their decrees in the absence of coercive force.

Ibn Khaldun noted how the taifa kings appealed to Umayyad legitimacy:

“the same happened to the Umayyad dynasty in Spain. When its Arab group feeling was destroyed (higher legitimacy), small princes (taifa kings) seized power and divided the territory among themselves…they [the small princes] imitated the way the Umayyad dynasty had tried to maintain its power”\(^\text{192}\).

Soon after the fall of the Caliphate (1031), many taifa kings realized that lower legitimacy did not enable rule far beyond their home bases\(^\text{193}\). In an effort to attain wider support many taifa kings attempted to appoint pseudo Umayyad caliphs. Muyahid (the king of Denia) “raised to the Caliphate in Denia... an obscure Umayyad prince named ‘Abd Allah al-Muyati… (Muyahid), presented himself as the hajib (chamberlain) and holder of the two vizier-ships [of this Caliph]\(^\text{194}\). Soon after this move, Muyahid mobilized sufficient forces to conquer the Balearic Islands and to sail onward to Sardinia. Abd-Allah-Bullugin (eleventh century king of Granada), saw leaders attempt to gain “universal” legitimacy in the same way. He recounts how “the territories…put at their head a man called al-Murtada, alleging that he was a descendant of Quraysh (Umayyad), so that by assuming the office of caliph they might win \textbf{popular} support and have

\(\text{192}\) Ibn Khaldun, 124-125
\(\text{193}\) Failed attempts by Muyahid of Denia to expand, the Mut’amid of Seville and the Banu Hud of Zaragoza before claiming some form of Umayyad legitimacy.
\(\text{194}\) Viguera Molinas, 89
command.” Muhammad of Seville united a large segment of Al-Andalus by claiming to have found the deposed caliph Hisham II. Muhammad declared himself chamberlain to the “caliph” in an attempt to claim loyalty from a greater number of Muslims without the use of coercive force. Muhammad attempted to gain control of the Peninsula through the Ummayad legacy, and established the largest taifa in Iberia.

III Umayyad Works

In addition to appointing Umayyad puppets, the taifa kings attempted to strengthen their claims to legitimacy through “pomp and circumstance”. The Umayyad caliphate brought tremendous glory and riches to Muslim Iberia. These riches and grandeur undoubtedly became associated with the higher legitimacy of the Umayyad dynasty, as recognized by Ibn Khaldun, “the monuments of a given dynasty are proportionate to its power… another monument is the way it handled weddings and banquets.” Abd al-Rahman III had set a high standard for “legitimate” levels of pomp and building:

“He (Abd al-Rahman III) not only unified al-Andalus, but he brought it great prosperity. Cordova was the most prosperous city in Europe… The best talents of al-Andalus and the east, gathered in his court and were amply rewarded. Many diplomatic delegations converged at Cordova from inside and outside the Peninsula… These delegates were dazzled by the luxury and prosperity of Cordova and by the splendor of ‘Abd al-Rahman’s court… An enthusiastic builder, Abd al-Rahman assigned one-

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195 Abd Allah bin Bullugin, 47. Emphasis added
196 And received the allegiance of Toledo, Zaragoza and Badajoz to the pseudo-Hisham II
197 Khaldun, 143-144
third of the state budget, more than six million dinars to canals, irrigation systems, and other projects. He enlarged the mosque of Cordova… he began the construction of the famous al-Zahra, a government city which housed the Caliphal family, 3,500 youths, and 6,750 women, among others.\textsuperscript{198}

Following Abd al-Rahman III’s death, al-Hakam II enlarged the state library until it contained an estimated 400,000 volumes. Almanzor (Ibn Abi al-Amir) continued this tradition by building his own palatial complex (Al-Zahirah), enlarging the mosque in Cordoba and by embarking on various public works\textsuperscript{199}.

As the Umayyad dynasty started to generate positive feedback it built palaces, sponsored poets and developed the infrastructure of the Peninsula. It is probable that the public works and royal grandeur of the Umayyads encouraged positive feedback (as signs to the populace of the grandeur and prosperity that only “legitimate”\textsuperscript{200} rule could bring). By the time the Umayyad Dynasty “locked in”, it seems plausible that it locked in with these characteristics. If this holds true, and “Caliphal pomp” had come to be equated with legitimate rule in the eyes of the populace, one would expect the taifa kings to emulate the royal trappings that had so distinguished the Umayyad caliphate from the emirate. In the words of Ibn Khaldun: “customs that have developed [would] prevent him [the taifa

\textsuperscript{198} Ibn al-Khatib, A’lam, p. 37,38 paraphrased in Chejne, 35
\textsuperscript{199}Ibn Idhari, Bayan, Vol 2, p. 251
\textsuperscript{200}There is, admittedly, a contradiction here to what the first followers of Muhammad advocated. Riches, grandeur and pomp were to be shunned. It is hard to imagine, though, how the average population of Al-Andalus was not awed by the grandeur displayed by the Umayyads.
kings from] repairing it [excessive pomp and circumstance]. Customs are like a second
nature. 201

IV Luxurious Legitimacy?

“They (the party kings) took regions in fief; divided the great cities among
themselves; exacted taxes on districts and cities; built armies; appointed judges; and
adopted sumames. Distinguished authors wrote about them, and poets praised them. They
registered their poetical collections. Testaments giving them the right to rule were made.
Scholars stood at their doors; and the learned sought their favor. 202

The taifa kings built courts, sponsored poets and lived in opulence. They
attempted to recreate the splendor of the caliphate in miniature by taking caliphal titles,
minting coins and building sumptuous palatial complexes 203 . While a possible
explanation for the institutional organization of the taifa states lies in the attempt of taifa
kings to appeal to the legitimacy of locked in Umayyad legitimacy, it is possible that the
taifa kings were not worried about legitimacy and were simply “living the good life.” The
remainder of this paper will attempt to finalize the case for positive feedback and lock-in,
while at the same time demonstrating that the taifa kings could only claim lower
legitimacy through the analysis of the evolution of the 3 largest taifa kingdoms.

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201 Ibn Khaldun, 245
202 Ibn al-Khatib, A’lam, p.144
203 For a detailed description of the Taifa kingdoms, see Wasserstein
Seville

During the chaos that surrounded the fall of the Caliphate, Seville “decided to take as leader a member of the city who could, by the authority which he already enjoyed, reestablish the union”\(^\text{204}\). The population decided that the local qadi (judge) Isma’il Ibn ‘Abbad, would have the best chance at ‘reestablishing the union’. Ibn ‘Abbad thus assented to govern with the faqih (religious scholar) Abd Allah al-Zubaydi and ‘Abd Allah Ibn Maryam in triumvirate. Isma’il Ibn ‘Abbad’s son Muhammad took his place as qadi and member of the triumvirate. In the face of Hammudite\(^\text{205}\) (1016-1023) attempts to conquer Seville, Muhammad Ibn ‘Abbad dissolved the triumvirate and proclaimed to find the psuedo-Caliph Hisham II\(^\text{206}\) to whom he declared himself minister. This declaration roused considerable support, especially in Cordova where the ‘enthusiasm towards the ‘reappearance’ of Hisham II was enormous’\(^\text{207}\). Following these events, Muhammad and his son al-Mu’tadid, “built palaces such as the Qasr al-Mubarak, acquired fine horses and luxurious vestments, and lived in the style of a great potentate”\(^\text{208}\). Al-Mu’tadid, in addition, “encouraged learning, held literary sessions once a week, and established a house of poets (dar al-shu’ara), which was headed by a chief poet (ra’is al-shu’ara’)”\(^\text{209}\). By the reign of al-Mu’tadid’s son al-Mu’tamid, the king had a large court, complete with advisors, servants and at least 3 viziers\(^\text{210}\).

\(^{204}\) Abd-al-Wahib, 80 
\(^{205}\) Explained previously as those who claimed the Caliphate after the fall of Hisham II in 1009 
\(^{206}\) Ibn ‘Abbad claimed to have found the last universally hailed legitimate (higher) Umayyad ruler (Hisham was designated by Hakam who was designated by Abd al-Rahman III). 
\(^{207}\) Vigeura Molinas, 137 
\(^{208}\) Chejne, 60 
\(^{209}\) Chejne, 60 
\(^{210}\) Probably more than 5. Ibn Zaydun, Ibn Khaldun and Ibn ‘Ammar. Vigeura Molinas, 139.
**Toledo**

As in Seville, the local community appointed a group of nobles to govern the city. The people of Toledo opened the doors of the city (1035) to Isma’il al-Zafir Di l-Nun who promptly dissolved the local government and laid the base for his kingdom, appointing Abu Bakr ibn al-Hadidi his vizier. His son Yahya al-Ma’mun (1043-1075), in the face of constant Christian and Muslim attacks: “gave brilliance to his court, surrounding himself with wise men that came to his court from every corner, attracted by his generosity.” Al-Ma’mun also concerned himself in the building of Toledo: he built the majlis al-mukarram (generous court) and the bustan al-na’ura (garden of the waterwheels). In addition, al-Ma’mun surrounded himself with poets such as Ibn Saraf, Ibn Khalifa the Egyptian and Ibn Zaki from Lisbon until Toledo was reconquered by Alfonso VI in 1085.

**Zaragoza**

In Zaragoza, a local aristocratic family assumed power following the collapse of caliphal authority. The Tuyibies rapidly established a court in the image of Cordova. “Mundir received those fleeing from Cordova, among these the poet Ibn Darray that sang the leader’s praise, comparing the building achievements of the Zaragozan king with Arab palaces.” The Zaragozan kings attempted to dazzle their Christian neighbors. Mundir “tried to maintain good relations with Castilians and Catalonians, and thus

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211 Led by the qadi Abu Bakr Ya’ish bin Muhammad
212 Viguera Molinas, 55
213 Ibid., 55
214 Ibid., 55
215 Local aristocratic family in Zaragoza of Arab descent
received with festivities the Castilian and Catalonia delegations and hosted the marriage between Berenguer Ramon y Sancha, daughter of Sancho Garcia. Later in the Taifa’s history, Ahmad al-Muqtadir built a large palace know today as the Aljaferia. Almuqtadir was also “renowned for his many public works and buildings, among the the palace Dar al-surur… [he] challenged al-Mu’tamid of Seville by giving refuge to the poet Ibn Ammar, the former boon-companion of al-Mu’tamid.

In the rest of the taifa kingdoms, we have further evidence for the continuation of caliphal institutions. Roughly half the taifa kings claimed caliphal titles and minted coins as well. As for those that did not mint coins: “we add that the list of taifas that refused to mint local coins almost completely coincides with the ‘Abbadite conquests’ : they were conquered by those who did. The following is a sample of a few taifa kings, and the correlation between caliphal title and emission of coins:

216 Viguera Molinas, 61
217 Ibid, 61
218 Chejne, 62
219 Clement, 267
220 Ibid, 267
The organizational structures of the three largest taifa states all resembled the institutional structure of the caliphate. Furthermore, the available evidence suggests that the strongest taifa kingdoms “looked Umayyad”. The taifa kings—faced with small dominions and ever-growing military pressures from surrounding kingdoms—chose universally to emulate the institutional structure of the caliphate. This structure, at first glance, seems to have been inefficient. The reconquista of Toledo (1085) and the ascendancy of the Christian kingdoms in the North coupled with the greater economic
capacity\textsuperscript{221} of Muslim Iberia lead one to think that the Iberian taifa kings could have adopted a better form of organization. The Christian kingdoms to the North\textsuperscript{222} were as geographically fragmented as their Muslim counterparts, yet by the end of the taifa period, the small Christian kingdoms gained the upper hand. It is plausible that the institutional arrangements of the taifa kings, while not single handedly assuring the demise of Muslim Spain, greatly aided its downfall.

Did the taifa kings adopt Umayyad governmental structure because it was the best structure for their needs? One answer, that the taifas adopted caliphal structure because it was the “only one available” can be discarded. We have seen how Toledo and Seville did not begin with caliphal institutions. Another explanation, advanced by contemporary sources\textsuperscript{223}, involves the reckless nature of the taifa kings; their desire to “live the good life”, and their irresponsible government. Even assuming a 0.9 probability of “bad blood” emerging in a dynasty, the probability that all 20 taifa kingdoms would end up with lavish and irresponsible leaders is equal to 0.12 (assuming independence between kingdoms). While heuristic, this calculation illustrates the improbability of random convergence to an inefficient institutional arrangement.

Although Seville and Toledo began with a non-caliphal institutional structure, the evidence suggests that the desire to gain wider support pushed these kingdoms to “look Umayyad”. Seville adopted a caliph to ward off Hammudite aspirations and to conquer the surrounding kingdoms. In Toledo, the people abolished the triumvirate by opening the door to Di l-Nun. This leader adopted Umayyad institutions and established a relatively

\textsuperscript{221} As evidenced by the ability of the Taifa kings to pay large sums of tribute to their Christain neighbors and still function.

\textsuperscript{222} Namely: Castilla y Leon, Navarra, Aragon and Catalunya
stable dynasty. After 30 years, almost all of Muslim Iberia had converged to the caliphal “standard”\textsuperscript{224}.

With the given sources, it is impossible to establish 900 years post facto if Umayyad governmental structure was inefficient for the small geographical area of the taifa kingdoms. The available evidence, and common sense, seems to support the inefficiency argument. Indeed, it seems unlikely that increasingly large courts and lavish spending on public works was the correct response to a growing Christian military danger. The key to understanding the ultimate success of the \textit{reconquista}, however, does not lie in the efficient or inefficient nature of the taifa organizational structure (although this probably played a role), but in the implications of this structure for the legitimacy to which these rulers lay hold. When we consider taifa governmental organization within the framework developed during the previous pages, one gets the impression that the taifa kings imitated Umayyad ruling structures in an attempt to greater legitimate their rule. The taifa kings could only claim lower legitimacy. We have seen how lower legitimacy produced a “multiplier of rivals” effect. By imitating Umayyad governmental structures, and surrounding themselves with foreign elements, the taifa kings attempted to decrease the number of individuals that could also claim their ideological basis to rule. It is this attempt to increase the number of individuals that would obey the taifa kings decrees without the use of coercive force through which one can understand the ultimate demise of Muslim Spain. This governmental structure was a testament to their lack of higher

\textsuperscript{223} Ibn Hazn, Ibn Arabi
\textsuperscript{224} As we have seen, the 4 largest kingdoms controlled more than 80\% of Iberian Muslim territory. 3 of them have been analyzed here. The fourth, Badajoz, is poorly documented but the scant evidence available points to a similar pattern.
Islamic legitimacy. Ultimately, it was the “multiplier of rivals” effect created by their claim to lower legitimacy that greatly aided the Christian effort.

**IV Conclusion**

The ultimate reconquest of Muslim Iberia by Christian forces can be attributed, in part, to the lack of claim to higher legitimacy by any of the successors to the Umayyad Caliphate. This paper has established, through the framework of positive feedback, the difficulty of attaining and maintaining higher Islamic legitimacy. The implication of this fact is that most rulers in Muslim Iberia could only claim lower legitimacy. The inability of the taifa kings to claim higher legitimacy produced a “multiplication of rivals” effect. This multiplication of rivals gave the Christian states (inferior economically and scientifically) a decisive advantage.

The strategy of the Christian leaders to re-conquer the Iberian Peninsula exploited the multiplier of rivals effect. Christian leaders supported every rival and rebellion against the taifa leader in power. In words attributed to the king of Castile, Alfonso VI:

> “The more rebellions and rivalry there are among them [the Muslims], the better it is for me!”…[now] it is impossible to destroy its [Al-Andalus] inhabitants and populate it with people of my faith [Christianity]. But the solution is to make them frightened of each other, and to keep taking their money…[and] weaken [their] position over a long period of time, until when [the Muslims] have no money and no men left, we shall take it without any expense of effort”\(^\text{225}\).

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\(^{225}\) 'Abd Allah al-Ziri, 73 (1100). Emphasis added.
Subsequent policy of the Christian kingdoms of Castile and Aragon were in keeping with Alfonso’s words. The Christian kingdoms, for the most part, let the Muslims feud among themselves before attacking. The Christian kingdoms of Spain pursued this strategy throughout the middle ages until the union of Castile and Aragon in 1479. The final campaign (1482-1492) of what would become the military juggernaut of Europe and America against the small Muslim enclave in Granada, saw little fighting between Christians and Muslims. The Muslims of the Nasrid kingdom were too busy fighting among themselves.

Political legitimacy in the Muslim kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula assured that, unless a leader could claim higher legitimacy, he would face an unusually large number of rivals. This was a product of the original definition of political legitimacy formed during Muhammad’s lifetime. Consensus of the entire community, necessary for higher legitimacy, was difficult to obtain.

If one claimed higher legitimacy, however, one was claimed to be “the best among Muslims” and a “successor to the prophet.” This claim to divine sanction was thought to bring with it, if true, God’s blessings for the regime. If one claimed higher legitimacy before being in a position to live up to these expectations, there was a significantly smaller chance one would actually attain power. Thus, a claim to higher legitimacy could mean the end of a dynasty. Even higher legitimacy eventually could have negative consequences. If a dynasty did obtain higher legitimacy, the dynasty could not be gotten rid of overnight. Once the “locked in” Umayyad dynasty fell, the taifa kings were forced to imitate the Umayyad dynasty to strengthen their claims to legitimacy. It is

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226 Aside from the battles of Zallaqa and Navas de Tolosa in which the Almoravides and Almohades presented a real threat to Christian territory
possible that this “institutional inertia” exacerbated the taifa kings plight, forcing these kings to divert expenditure away from military spending in order to maintain their legitimacy. The Ibero-Muslim population had become accustomed to and expected a “higher level” of legitimacy.

The population, it seems, wanted a divinely appointed ruler. In the absence of this universal ruler, they were willing to support any Muslim rebel who would claim to uphold the shari’a and would promised them more (in a monetary, privilege or any other way) than the actual ruler gave them. This ensuing infighting and divisions were used by the Christian kings to slowly conquer Muslim lands, sometimes by force but more often than not through bribes and intrigue. Al-Andalus was not primarily conquered in the battlefield; fighting was often inconclusive. Major conquest could only really be made when the Muslims were so busy fighting among themselves that they could not present a united front. This held true through the end. Boabdil (the last king of Granada, 1480-1492) was unable to fight Castile, because he was too busy suffocating rebellions in his own kingdom. The reported lines of Boabdil’s mother immediately following the fall of Granada are telling. As Boabdil left into exile he shed a tear, at which his mother remarked: “llora como mujer lo que no supiste defender como hombre.”

After Thought
As a final note, I would like to express some ideas I have had during the year that I have researched political legitimacy in Muslim Iberia that are perhaps outside the scope of the paper. All along, I have written this paper from the premise that somehow the evolution of Islamic government was inferior or different to the Western experience. That the connection between religion and political authority from Islam’s inception had positive effects in the short run, but negative effects in the long run that it still feels today. I have struggled to fit this model to Muslim Iberia and, while writing this conclusion have given up. There are obviously differences between the histories of Islam and of Western civilization, but I believe that in the end, they both teach us the same lesson. After a year of thinking about political legitimacy, I realize that very few ideologies have achieved compliance to their dictates in practice, at least initially, without the use (or threat of use) of coercive force. Moreover, the hysteresis and lock in demonstrated by the Umayyad dynasty in Spain is applicable the world over. Ideological claims, while necessary, are not sufficient to obtain political legitimacy as we have defined it. Consensus is needed to obtain political legitimacy in a community, consensus around the desirable nature of a given mode of government. And, while a philosophical base is important, if the philosophy can not provide prosperity in practice, it is eventually disregarded by the majority.

I think you'd be hard pressed to look at the law codes of western countries and affirm that the law code has not “locked in”. We consider it legitimate, in general, because it works and others before us considered it legitimate and taught us to do the same. Our parents consider it legitimate because those around them did. And the first people who came up with it eventually considered it legitimate because it worked, it
effectively managed and created a world empire. In Islam, the shari’a and the Caliphate brought the Islamic world amazing glory and incredible success. It is hard to deny that it “worked” a lot better than anything we had in the West for a long time. I think that this is one of the reasons that Islam is so prevalent in governments in the Middle East today: Islamic government locked in to popular belief. What I do not believe any more, is that this prevalence of Islam in government circles is any different than the prevalence of Cicero in our legal code, or of protestant Christians in our oval office.

Political legitimacy is not static in the extreme long run, it does slowly respond to incentives. Although it is hard to alter, we have seen how Abd al-Rahman III altered his claim in a generation. I think that people are worried about their own utility, yet as a human being I think that everyone also is worried about where they come from and who they are. In the long run, however, if shown that democracy and capitalism works for them, I believe that Islam will embrace them in their own way. People are not willing, in general, to forsake who they are and what they believe in for a buck. But, in the long run they can adapt their beliefs to what gives them the best life. That is, after all, what “legitimate” government is all about. And this, I believe, is an important part of the dialectic between non-ergodicity and ergodicity, between Islam and democracy.

Appendix

Although there is a difference in the means of the lengths of reigns in each of our four periods, there is a chance with such small sample sizes that these differences are simply random. To strengthen the claim that the caliphate was more stable than the Emirate, and the Emirate more stable than the governor period, and the Taifa period was roughly as stable as the Emirate I run 3 t-tests.

Our test statistic is:

If the variance is the same in both populations:

\[ t = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{s_p \sqrt{\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}}} \]

where \( s_p \) is the pooled sample variance, \( n_1 \) is the sample size of the first group, and \( n_2 \) is the sample size of the second group.

\[ s_p^2 = \frac{(n_1 - 1)s_1^2 + (n_2 - 1)s_2^2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2} \]

Caliphate, Emirate, Governors and Taifas
\[ t = \frac{E(X_1) - E(X_2)}{(S_p(1/n_1 + 1/n_2)^{.5})} \]

where \( S_p^2 = \frac{(n-1)S_1^2 + (n_2-1)S_2^2}{(n_1+n_2-2)} \)

our test statistic will have \( n_1+n_2-2 \) degrees of freedom.

If we assume that the length of rule for Governors, Emirate, Caliphate and Taifas rulers are all distributed normally, then we can calculate the distributions of length of rule over each of the periods. \( N(a,b) \) is defined as Normal with \( a = \text{mean}, b = s^2 \). Governors ~ \( N(2,7.72) \) \( n=21 \), Emirate ~ \( N(15.6, 59.5) \) \( n=10 \), Caliphate (before civil war)~\( N(32.33, 111.24) \) \( n=3 \), Taifas (total of all rulers in all kingdoms) ~\( N(12.175, 141.9) \) \( n=103 \)

1) First, we compare the Caliphate with the Emirate. Ho: \( E(\text{cal}) \leq E(\text{emir}) \) H1: \( E(\text{cal}) > E(\text{emir}) \) where cal is the length of rule in the Caliphate period, and emir is the length of rule in the Emirate. First, we need to test for equality of variances.

\[ \frac{(S(\text{cal}))^2}{(S(\text{emir}))^2} \sim F(3,10) \]
\[ F(3,10) = 4.10 \text{ at the } 5\% \text{ significance level} \]

\[ 1.869 < 4.10 \]. So can t reject the null hypothesis that the variances are equal.

Now, we calculate our test statistic. \( \frac{(32.33-15.6)}{2.513} = 3.062 \) With 11 degrees of freedom the t statistic at the 1% significance level is 2.76. So \textbf{we can reject Ho at the 1% significance level}.

2) We compare the Emirate with the Governors period. Ho \( E(\text{emir}) \leq E(\text{gov}) \) H1: \( E(\text{emir}) > E(\text{gov}) \) where gov is the length of rule in the Governors period and emir is defined as above. Testing for equality of variances:

\[ \frac{(S(\text{emir}))^2}{(S(\text{cal}))^2} \sim F(10,21) \]
\[ F(10,21) = 2.35 \text{ at the } 5\% \text{ significance level} \]

\[ 7.707 > 2.35 \) so reject the null hypothesis that the variances are equal. Thus we are forced to use a slightly modified version of the t statistic used above:

\[ t = \frac{(E(X_1) - E(X_2))}{(S_1^2/n_1 + S_2^2/n_2)^{.5}} \]

this test statistic is distributed with a slightly modified number of degrees of freedom.

Now, we calculate the test statistic \( \frac{(15.6-2)}{2.513} = 5.411 \) which is distributed with 10 degrees of freedom. At 10 degrees of freedom the t statistic at the 0.5% significance level is 3.17. So \textbf{we can reject the Ho at the 0.5% significance level}.

3) We compare the Taifas with the Emirate period. Ho \( E(\text{emir}) = E(\text{taifas}) \) H1: \( E(\text{emir}) \) not equal \( E(\text{taifas}) \) where taifas is the length of rule in the Taifas period and emir is defined as above. Testing for equality of variances:

\[ \frac{(S(\text{taifas}))^2}{(S(\text{emir}))^2} \sim F(103,10) \]
F(103,10)=2.54 at the 5% significance level
2.38<2.54 So can’t reject the null hypothesis that the variances are equal.

Now, we calculate our test statistic. \( \frac{(15.6 \cdot 12.175)}{(3.8516)} = 0.88 \)
With 102 degrees of freedom the t statistic at the 20% significance level for this two tailed test is 1.28. **So we can’t reject Ho at any reasonable significance level.**

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**References**

*NB: any errors in translation from Arabic, French and Spanish are my own.*


