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Paper Title: **REEXAMINING MOROCCAN KAFALA: AN ANALYSIS OF ITS ROOTS, REFORMS, AND FUTURE**

Abstract: Kafala is the Moroccan legal vehicle for placing abandoned children with caring families. Because kafala often involves physical custody, it may look to an outsider like adoption, but it is not adoption. Adoption, in fact, is prohibited by Moroccan law as it is in all other Islamic countries (excepting Tunisia), a prohibition that is rooted in the Quran. Whereas traditional Islamic methods of creating familial bonds have proven inadequate, kafala allows the modern Moroccan state to satisfy the desires of its citizens to raise a nonbiological child as their own while at the same time providing a nurturing environment for the child.

As Moroccan society changes, so has kafala. Recent changes have oriented the practice closer to Western adoption, with an emphasis on integrating the child into the kafeel family and securing the child's inheritance rights. Such integration is important in a country in which children born to single women are considered "bastards" and reviled. As each new legal innovation – as well as the extensive administrative placement procedures – is premised on the best interests of the child, future reforms may cut further against Islam's absolute prohibition on adoption.