

### Morocco between terrorism, Islamism and democratisation: a cosmetic approach

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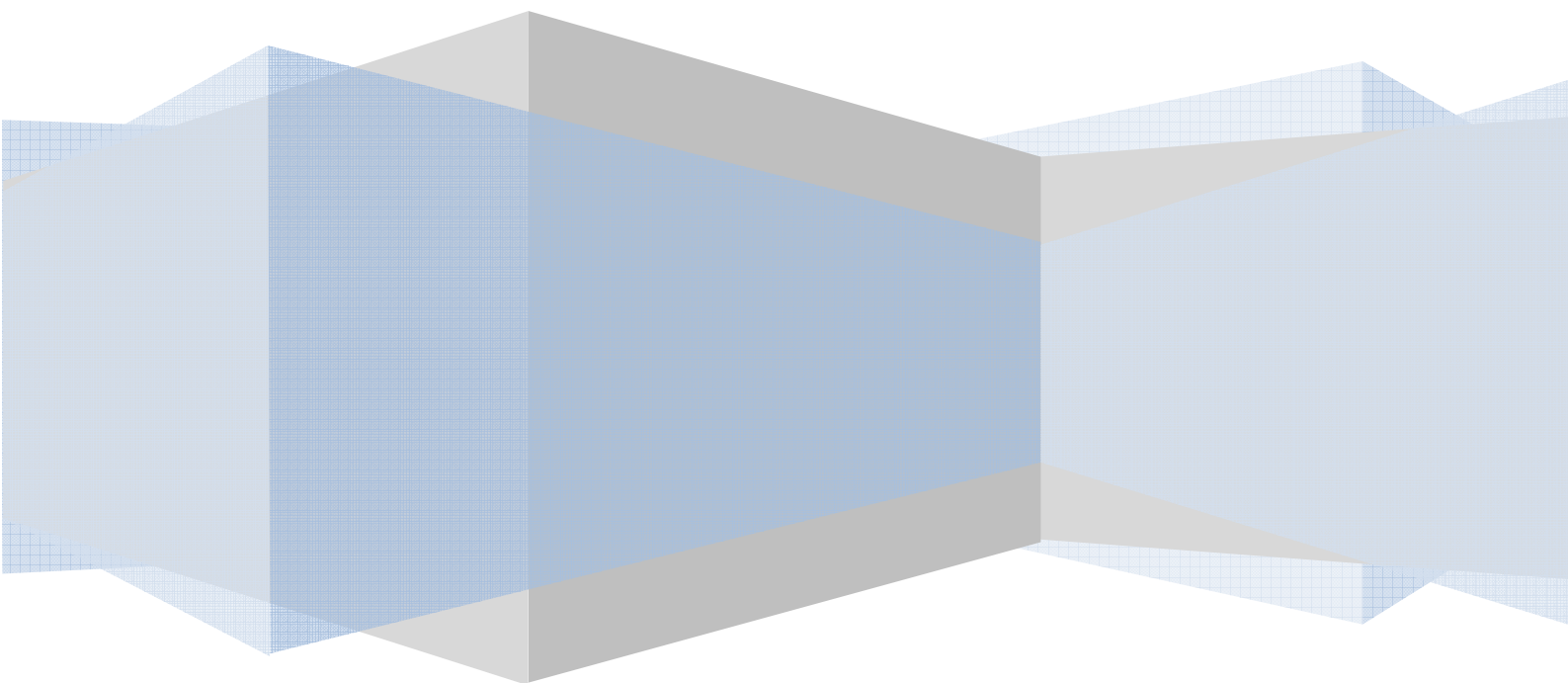
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# **Morocco between Terrorism, Islamism and Democratisation: a Cosmetic Approach**

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## Introduction

### *Geo-political position*

Morocco is situated in a peculiar geo-political position, which makes it a catalyst of Western attention. This position is not only represented by the spatial proximity to Europe and the few kilometres of sea that separate it from Spain. The closeness to Europe and the western world is political and economic. Despite the lack of a vast amount of natural resources<sup>1</sup> as in Algeria, the country has been integrated in the international economy for most of its post-independence existence.

This not only for being favourable to some sort of a market economy<sup>2</sup>, but most of all for its links with the West. In the last years this geostrategic relevance for the American and European interests has been increasing due to the “necessity of reliable partners in a volatile region”<sup>3</sup>. “Morocco is generally well respected by world powers as a stable constitutional monarchy... and an Islamic voice of moderation”<sup>4</sup>. This fundamental characteristic of Morocco, the fact that is an Arab-Islamic country with western pronounced features, makes it a fundamental bridge with the Arab world for the EU and the US<sup>5</sup>.

### *Relations with the West*

The US after having lost credibility with the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, needs now more than ever the support of the Moroccan regime to take part in the dialogue which involves the region, and so they granted Morocco major non-Nato ally status in June 2004<sup>6</sup>.

Everything is explained much better if we recall the relatively good relationship between Morocco and Israel. Although the natural and genetic brakes in the relations of the two states, as the Moroccan Islamic sensibility first of all, the interaction between Morocco and Israel still continues on a positive binary, promoted by the confluent interest of both. For the Moroccan authorities, a positive attitude towards Israel and the pacific conclusion of its conflict are useful for “bolstering the country’s image in

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<sup>1</sup> Except for poliphosphates 10) p.106

<sup>2</sup> Cavatorta(2005); p.556

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Howe(2001); p.59

<sup>5</sup> www.state.gov

<sup>6</sup> www.fco.gov.uk

*The country's image* the West and bringing in foreign currency”<sup>7</sup>.  
 So we arrive to a crucial point. Morocco owes its importance and its sparkling inclusion in the Western economic market to this image that it has been able to build during its post-independence history.  
 The image of an economic liberal, pro-Western and Islamic-moderate country in a democratizing process makes it attractive not only for tourists, but for the USA, the EU and Israel policymakers as well.

*Purpose of the paper* The problem is the following: in order to maintain this façade, Morocco had and still has to face very strong challenges like terrorism, Islamism and the democratisation issues. This paper aims to analyze how the country is dealing with these issues and how the image that it wants to show for maintaining its international relations influenced its attitude towards those questions.  
 The analysis focuses on how Morocco responded to those three challenges. Exploring these issues, terrorism (par. 2), Islamism (par. 3) and democratisation (par. 4) I will highlight the particular attitude that it took, which I would define the Moroccan cosmetic approach.

#### Terrorism and Islamism

*Lack of Inter-national Links* Terrorism in Morocco has gained the international attention after the two outrages on May 16 2003 and April 2007, both occurred in Casablanca<sup>8</sup>.  
 What is very important to stress, especially in relation to our discourse, is that the terrorist attacks in Morocco are unlikely to be the outcome of a strong presence of trans-national terrorist movements in its territory<sup>9</sup>. In all the attacks “there has been no real evidence of instrumental trans-national links”<sup>10</sup>.

I suppose that we cannot really know if the frightening example of Algeria warned the local society from this kind of extremism, or if the authoritarian presence of the state prevented it, but in Morocco “such extremism has only

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<sup>7</sup> Maddy-Weitzman (1996); p.36

<sup>8</sup> Le Sage(2007); p.1

<sup>9</sup> Pargeter(2005); p.6

<sup>10</sup> Joffè(2007); p.69

been a marginal event”<sup>11</sup>.

The international links of the groups that set up the attacks seem to be a sympathy or inspiration tie, but surely not a command-and-control linkage<sup>12</sup>.

This is correct for the other terrorist cells that the State has discovered and dismantled in the last years<sup>13</sup>.

*The response of the state: an holistic approach* To address the problem, the King adopted an holistic approach. He made a spectacular reform in the religious field<sup>14</sup><sup>15</sup>. He passes an anti-terrorism law<sup>16</sup> which free the hands of the armed forces and which is in some parts stronger than the USA Patriotic Act. The law permitted a strong repression, with the ban of an Islamist party in 2008, with the arrest of more than 3,000 people and with the pretended elimination of 60 terrorist cells<sup>17</sup>.

A disproportionate result, considering the small dimension of the radical Islamism in Morocco and considering that the organizations of the terrorist attacks of 2003 and 2007 are more characterized by a familiar dimension than a tentacular widespread size<sup>18</sup>. In the conviction of an important rule of poverty in the spreading of terrorism, Morocco launched the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH, in the French acronym) and a powerful program to eradicate its cities shantytowns, replacing slums with social housing, a showy operation of makeup of the main urban centres.

It is clear, in my opinion, that such a strong and holistic reaction in front of the onset of the terrorism phenomenon, reveals the fear of the Kingdom in front of a problem that can deeply mine the pillars of the external image of Morocco, not only in a tourist investments perspective.

Morocco’s government has tried several times to tie terrorism to international linkages, in order to contextualize the issue. But “when international linkages were found hard to prove, terrorism started to be more

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Kalpakian(2008); p.4

<sup>13</sup> As the Ansar al-Mahdi Organization in 2006, Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group in 2007 and the Bellijeraï Organization in 2008. Ibid

<sup>14</sup> The Habous(2006)

<sup>15</sup> For instance, after the reform the right to issue a *fatwa* in Morocco is the monopoly of the state body, an opinion issued by rogue clerics are not only unofficial but also illegal.

<sup>16</sup> Law 03.03 of 29/05/2003

<sup>17</sup> The Economist(2008)

<sup>18</sup> Kalpakian(2008); p.3

and more associated with radicalism and the focus on the roots of radicalism soon identified in political Islamism”<sup>19</sup>.

*Shifting  
attention  
to  
political  
Islamism*

So the problem shifted to the way to deal with the Islamist movements present in Morocco.

A particular way has been promoted by the US, that adopted the view that some handy Islamist groups should not only be included in the democratic process, but also incentivised as the last remedy against violent radicalism: “The PJD can act as a buffer against Al-Qaeda inspired groups that seeks to mobilize the poorest and most marginalize. That is what the US seems to think”<sup>20</sup>. According to some: “increased political participation by moderate Islamist groups is the best way to curb the growth of extremism in Morocco”<sup>21</sup>.

So King Mohamed VI adopted an ambiguous attitude towards the Islamist movements, swinging from repression, quite traditional and usual during his father’s reign, to co-option, particularly fomented by the US.

After the attacks of May 2003, the US continued to support PJD whereas the Moroccan political leaders where calling for its dismantlement<sup>22</sup> and the temptation of banning it was extremely high<sup>23</sup>; the American Ambassador Margaret Tutweiler intervened with the support of the US administration to prevent this to happen<sup>24</sup>. The interest of the US for the PJD was too high, as a tool to “show that it has no problem with Islam. So it is encouraging the PJD model as a moderate Islamist model for other Arab and Muslim”<sup>25</sup>.

Thus, on one hand the Civilized Alternative Party, which was between the three Islamist parties allowed to operate legally, has been banned last year for an alleged link between its leader and the Bellijari terrorist network<sup>26</sup>; on the other hand, the PJD had to be completely co-opted by the King, as we will see more in detail.

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<sup>19</sup> Bartolucci(2008); p.13

<sup>20</sup> Kristianasen(2008)

<sup>21</sup> Pingree-Abend(2005)

<sup>22</sup> Boubekeur-Amghar(2006); p.24

<sup>23</sup> The Economist(2008)

<sup>24</sup> Pingree-Abend(2005)

<sup>25</sup> Kristianasen(2008)

<sup>26</sup> The Economist(2008)

## ISLAMISM

*Peculiarity of Morocco: political and religious legitimation of the King* To understand why the in the Moroccan history Islamist movements are so moderate or marginal, radicalised and repressed, in comparison with the Algerian and other experiences, we have to analyze the structural peculiarity of the Moroccan State.

Remembering that it is the only monarchy in Africa, the political institutions of Morocco emerged almost unscathed from the colonial period. France has always shown a great respect for the political internal structure and this assured its preservation until the independence in 1956. The Moroccan sultanate astutely realized that its interests were going hand in hand with the interests of the Istqlal, the nationalist movement, nowadays the leading political party. As a result, the monarchy came out from the colonial era as the dominant of the political scene.

The Sultan was also traditionally the leader of its Muslim community, with the supreme title of Commander of the believers, *amir al-mu'minin*. Given the legacy of its past as Caliphate, the King has still religious supremacy<sup>27</sup> and he is considered direct descendant of the Prophet<sup>28</sup>.

All this demonstrates the monolithic monarchic power that the king enjoys, based on the double legitimation in the religious and the political field.

The supremacy and the incredible prestige of the King, recognized and bestowed by the Moroccan people to its leader, is a possible factor that prevented the country from experiences like the “Islamist derive” of its neighbour Algeria. This is a possible factor of the marginalization of the Islamic activism, that could and can move only in the narrow space left by the monarchy.

*Narrow space left to Islamism* This space spreads between two poles represented by one side a moderate and quiescent approach, fated to the co-option; on the other side its opposite, a radicalization, with possible terrorist outcomes but inevitable short life, which goes against the regime that always immediately nips every dissent in the bud. That explains also the dualistic approach of the Kingdom towards

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<sup>27</sup> Joffè(2007); p.67

<sup>28</sup> Bartolucci(2008);p.14



Islamism: co-optation or repression<sup>29</sup>.

*Reasons of possible spread of Islamism* This does not imply that Morocco is not sensible to the appeal of Islamism for many reasons. The favourable international climate, given the spread of the feeling of a “failure of ideologies imported from the west combined with perceived great Islamic victories”<sup>30</sup>; the increasing impatience towards the Western mistakes made in Islamic countries as Iraq and Afghanistan; specifically in Morocco, the unbridled neo-liberal economic policies that the country carries out which require inevitable economic and social costs; the “consequent emergence of a small *nouveaux riches* class, while the vast majority of the population struggles to survive”<sup>31</sup>. The wish to attract foreign incomes, mostly but not only in the tourist sector, attracts as well the contradictions that the western values produce in their contact with the Islamic ones. The massive influence of the western standards brought in the country by the economy creates a particular and ambiguous relation with the Islamic tradition.

With a capitalization of the negative consequences of the economic reforms, Islamism can exploit them to gain ground.

Given the lower weight of the extremist fringe of the representatives of Islamism<sup>32</sup>, almost all of them imprisoned or hunted by the government as a reaction to the terrorist attacks, I will narrow the focus on the moderate components of Islamism in Morocco.

*Justice and Charity* The moderate scene is formed essentially<sup>33</sup> by the “Parti de Justice et de developpement” (PJD) and the al-‘Adl wa’l-Ishan or Justice and Charity (JC) of the Sheik Abdesslam Yacine, ruled nowadays by his daughter Nadia. The JC closely adheres to the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood in relation with the peaceful Islamisation of society as a preparatory stage to the construction of an Islamic polity. Born with a marginal position, during the years the movement has gained an important moral stature, particularly after the clash between Yacine and King Hassan, a clash which is steadily decreasing by the time .

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<sup>29</sup> Joffè(2007); p.67

<sup>30</sup> Cavatorta(2005);p.19

<sup>31</sup> Daoud(1999);p.1

<sup>32</sup> Ansar al-Mahdi Organization, Bellijerai Organization, al-Sirat Mustquim of Miloudi...

<sup>33</sup> It includes the old movement of Sheik al-Zamzani, now of minor importance

The organization is pacific and completely apolitical. The movement in fact eschewed the democratic option but it is now stressing the necessity of a pluralist political society. Anyway, it has been until now denied registration as a formal political party<sup>34</sup>.

The government threatened to ban JC for certain statements of its leader, but it dropped its plan, thanks also to the US pressures; the movement rests barely tolerated by the Kingdom but not prosecuted, for its scarce interest in the political sphere and its concentrations on social activities. It does not seem able to take part in the formal political life in a short term and it is substantially become inoffensive<sup>35</sup>.

*The PJD*

Born from radical movements, comprehensive of armed wings, in strong contrast with the Kingdom, PJD has moderated its position until it has been be co-opted, obtaining the possibility to enjoy the formal political process. It has in fact participated in the elections of 2002 and 2007 with an unexpected success<sup>36</sup>.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to note that during the local elections of 2003, under government pressure in response to the terrorist attacks<sup>37</sup>, it had to reduce the number of its candidates, which couldn't run in all constituencies, in order to "avoid sweeping the board and embarrassing the King with significant Islamist electoral victory"<sup>38</sup>.

The co-option and the efforts to reach it as a goal, heavily conditioned the program of the party. In the attempt to appear as a reliable partner for a political dialogue, the Party left the notion of being depositary of religious truth, developing a cultural and political compromise, abandoning the purpose to create an Islamic state that nowadays they assert still exist: as a PJD representative said "In Morocco it was Amir Al-Mouminine who guaranteed compliance of laws with the state's Islamic standards. We do not have to build it (the Islamic state) since it already exists. The constitution itself states that Morocco is an Islamic state"<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> Joffè(2007); p.68

<sup>35</sup> Ibid

<sup>36</sup> Boubekeur-Amghar(2006); p.26

<sup>37</sup> Condemned officially by the Party

<sup>38</sup> Laskier(2003); p.4

<sup>39</sup> La vie économique(2004)

*Reaction of PJD to co-option: from Islamist to Islamic party* “PJD is contextually leaving behind religious areas for more political and secular issues. What is more, PJD is also adjusting its political program to its government’s public policies”<sup>40</sup>. The co-option influence is reflected by the evanescent political program of the party, based on pure pragmatism, impossible to identify with a precise ideology and rather related to some general principles that can change according to the political circumstances. The necessity of PJD to be distinguished as Islamic party and to continue to be a reference for its audience is limited to its proposed image of defender of the Islam virtue, with insistence on the defence of moral dictates. They can for instance propose to ban the sale of wine, or accuse the decadence of the moral for the promiscuity on beaches, or prohibit a certain film, but those are all contingent occasions for the PJD to appear as the “defender of Islamic values at low cost, and in a consensual way, as the positions converge with conservative and traditionalist wings of opinion in the country... But this issue remains quite vague and can be summed up as a position of principle and a profession of faith to the masses more than a real work of political theology”<sup>41</sup>. PJD, as Islamist party, is proceeding towards the way that lead to be a mere Islamic party as the traditional ones on which the Moroccan authoritarian pluralism is based.

The nature of the PJD seems to have been irremediably captured in the tearing dilemma of an Islamist party that has to deal with its religious essence to maintain its popular consensus and the necessary transformations that the political scene implies in the masked dictatorial Moroccan framework and the co-option process.

“The force of protest and radicalism of these parties (PJD and JC) has been domesticated and neutralised by the state in order to control them better”<sup>42</sup>. But the transformation of the PJD and of the JC is also driven by the international attention that they enjoy and that they are at the same time trying to draw. PJD and JC are “anxious to attract international approval for their positions and are willing to engage with western politicians and the media.... They look to Europe and the United States for support and

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<sup>40</sup> Boubekeur-Amghar(2006); p.12

<sup>41</sup> Ibid

<sup>42</sup> Boubekeur-Amghar(2006); p.9

engagement. As such both seek to put forward the image of modern movements based on political Islam”<sup>43</sup>, “their aim is to appear as respectable agents of change”<sup>44</sup>.

*USA relation with Moroccan Islamism* USA need this dialogue with the moderate Moroccan Islam, for their political strategy in the region, for the necessity to show a positive attitude towards Islam, to revive their role in the Middle-East starting from the extreme periphery, to open windows of communication in the Arab world, where they are more and more losing ground and credibility<sup>45</sup>.

According to the American aim to promote an Islam favourable to the US, the PJD has benefited from training programs open to all parties, participating in an enormous amount of meetings and colloquia with US politicians; it has been supported in crisis moments (as in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in 2003)<sup>46</sup> and it has been consulted frequently by American diplomats on Morocco’s political situation<sup>47</sup>. “In exchange PJD has never failed to encourage prospects for economic cooperation between Morocco and the US”<sup>48</sup>. Following the wake of the US example, the EU is now shiny looking to PJD and JC as possible conversation partners to implement its political plan for the region (ENP).

*EU relations with Moroccan Islamism:* The EU’s shyness towards the Moroccan Islamist currents is criticized by the same PJD and JC, that complain that “the EU has fallen well behind the US in terms of engagement with Morocco Islamists”<sup>49</sup>.

*EMP and ENP* The EU since the ‘90s has been more concerned about the political instability of the Maghrebi area and the onset of the phenomenon of terrorism, prioritizing a policy centred on security and stability of the region, with very little propensity to include Islamist components in the negotiations and initiatives<sup>50</sup>.

But the partial failure of the Euro Mediterranean Partnership<sup>51</sup> (EMP) drove Europe to rethink its Mediterranean policy, conceiving the European

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<sup>43</sup> Joffè(2007); p.71

<sup>44</sup> Pingree-Abend(2005)

<sup>45</sup> Boubekeur-Amghar(2006); p.17

<sup>46</sup> Ibid p.18

<sup>47</sup> Pingree-Abend(2005)

<sup>48</sup> Boubekeur-Amghar(2006); p.22

<sup>49</sup> Pingree-Abend(2005)

<sup>50</sup> Boubekeur-Amghar(2006); p. 1

<sup>51</sup> See [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/euromed/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/euromed/index_en.htm)

Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)<sup>52</sup>, based on the offer of a stronger political partnership and economic integration through positive conditionality on the commitment on common values, in particular democratisation and human rights.

“One of the main aspects of the European Union’s new Neighbourhood Policy towards country of the Maghreb is the strengthening of the process of democratisation”<sup>53</sup>.

JC and PJD are the only, although maybe not so powerful, form of opposition to the regime; so it is natural that the internal and external pressure on the EU, to include them in the democratisation discourse implicated in the ENP, is growing too much to rest easily unheard. The ENP can have a real impact on the Moroccan reality of democratisation only integrating the Islamist moderate movements that represent a “non-negotiable part of public opinion and enjoy popular support.... Multiplying interlocutors in the framework of EMP and ENP would force the Moroccan regime to take greater account of EU recommendations concerning democracy and economy”<sup>54</sup>.

The engagement of the US with the Islamist currents of Morocco can influence the EU in its attitude. But the result can be very limited for the particular combination of the EU policies (EMP and ENP) towards Maghreb, which aims, in the long-term, to reach security and economic development through the promotion of democratisation and human rights. The way in which the two policies have been combined in the last years suggests that they are more competing than strengthening one another.

The prevalence of the security and economic agenda can “minimise the lack of new proposals for democratisation and participation in political process by civil society and Islamists”<sup>55</sup>; that mortifying the innumerable efforts that the Moroccan moderate Islamists are making to appear as desirable conversation partners, modifying their attitudes towards Europe and the Moroccan government. These considerations give us a bridge for the next

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<sup>52</sup> See [http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/policy\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/policy_en.htm)

<sup>53</sup> Boubekeur-Amghar(2006); p. 1

<sup>54</sup> Amghar(2007); p.10

<sup>55</sup> Boubekeur-Amghar(2006); p.22

step in our discourse: the problem of democratisation.

## DEMOCRATISATION

*Illusion of a new democratic era* The ascent of King Mohammed VI, after the iron regime of his father Hassan II, has been publicised as a shift in a series of political changes, started before his investiture, that would place Morocco on the path of a real democracy. The new King bolstered those expectations in an early moment with various showy gestures: for instance, he permitted the return of several opposition figures, many of them with experiences of political imprisonment and he fired the omnipotent Minister of Interior, Driss Basri, symbol of the old regime's human rights abuses<sup>56</sup>.

*Indemnity Commission* An exemplar case, which explains how the illusions were destined to clash with the reality of a mere embellishment of the previous status quo, is the *Commission d'arbitrage*. In the attempt to build a state of law, Mohammed VI ordered to create an independent Indemnity Commission (*Commission d'arbitrage*), in order to indemnify victims of forcible disappearance and arbitrary detention during "les années de plomb" of his father Hassan II. But "the Moroccan Indemnity Commission began at the end - with indemnities - of any genuine truth and reconciliation process... There are no public hearings, no attempts to provide the nation with an account of the past and blanket amnesties were declared as part of the creation of the Indemnity Commission.... No one has been tried and crimes are considered unproven"<sup>57</sup>

Some few progresses have been made in the field of freedom of expression and association, but after a few months, there has been a sharp roll-back<sup>58</sup>.

The publicized progress appears more an adjustment of the democratic Moroccan façade rather than a real structural change towards democratisation.

*Political* Same conclusion we can make for the pluralism in the political process, as

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<sup>56</sup> Slyomovics(2001); p.19

<sup>57</sup> Ibid

<sup>58</sup> See for instance the freedom of press and the ban of two independent weekly publications in Sweet(2001); pg. 25

*pluralism* we have seen in the case of the co-option of the Islamist Parties, the real possible opposition, where the iron hand of the Kingdom influences so much the nature of the opposition to make it an instrument of maintenance of the status quo.

*Moroccan activism* The Moroccan activism in the political sphere remains almost totally undeveloped, for the great historical legacy of repression and political action<sup>59</sup>. There is still a deep mistrust related to the idea of reforming the state within it, that neither the Islamists seem to be able to tarnish. There is still the conception that what is politics has not to interest, because politics “is conceived of as something which is automatically in opposition to the state”<sup>60</sup>.

“A tacit rule of the new political climate is that activists should not hold spontaneous demonstrations... While this conflict revealed that activists would be punished if they speak too loudly, it made it equally clear that the government would reward them with lucrative and prestigious positions if they were willing to moderate and keep their aims non political”<sup>61</sup>. The previous formula has been used for various movements, as women associations and human rights groups. The co-option strategy is expanding beyond the Islamist groups.

*The cosmetic approach* “Morocco has unquestionably seen improvements in civil liberties in the past several years....but the expansion of political liberties has lagged far behind. In spite of the impressive array of democratic-looking institutions<sup>62</sup>, no significant power has devolved outside the regime”<sup>63</sup>. Not one of the changes has touched the supra-institutional power of the King but, that is worse, the changes appear more a cosmetic make-up of the existing situation<sup>64</sup>.

The government is trying to draw attention to its democratisation efforts, aware of the potentiality that derive in order to attract foreign capitals. “So it would be incorrect to characterize Morocco’s recent political evolution as

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<sup>59</sup> Burton-Rose(1998); p. 8

<sup>60</sup> Ibid

<sup>61</sup> Ibid

<sup>62</sup> As the bicameral parliament, multiparty electoral competition and the legal presence of the PJD

<sup>63</sup> Sweet(2001); p.22

<sup>64</sup> Cavatorta(2005); p. 47

democratisation. To the contrary, many of these democratic changes have instead solidified the monarchy's position as the first among institutions"<sup>65</sup>.

*Role of inter-national pressures* The central point is that Morocco is answering to international pressure for democratisation that does not require an enormous effort and a structural and real change. Those pressures are in fact demanding a mere cosmetic approach that the country is properly realising.

A first order of pressure, and maybe the most negligible, can be identified with the collapse of socialism and a certain necessity "to adapt domestic and economic institutions to the winning values of democracy and liberalism to profit from the new-look international system"<sup>66</sup>. The second order of pressure is the privileged relation that Morocco maintains with the EU and the US.

Among the Mediterranean partners, Morocco has been the first beneficiary<sup>67</sup> of the European financing<sup>68</sup>. The Kingdom is basically following the calls of the EU and the primacy of the democratisation issue in the ENP and EMP perspective. But a real conditionality has never been imposed for the continuance of such a good relationship; a superficial climate of democratic transition, in which it is possible to properly collocate also the inclusion through co-option of the Islamist moderate currents, seems to be enough for both<sup>69</sup>.

The same happened for the USAID assistance program dating back to 1953<sup>70</sup>. Something similar for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), which supervised in the '80s a far-reaching program of economic reforms. Morocco has been the first North-African country engaged in SAPs. But at the time, unlike nowadays, IMF and WB were not interested with the political changes that should go along with economic reforms. The aggressive liberalization process had such an extraordinary result<sup>71</sup> that Morocco is still continuing in this way and searching for further implementations.

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<sup>65</sup> Burton-Rose(2008); p.

<sup>66</sup> Cavatorta(2005); p. 17

<sup>67</sup> Boubekeur-Amghar(2006); p.22

<sup>68</sup> With 1.1 billion of euros committed from 1995 to 2004

<sup>69</sup> Boubekeur-Amghar(2006); p.9

<sup>70</sup> www.state.gov

<sup>71</sup> Cavatorta(2005); p. 14



*Lack of conditionality* The traditional allies of Morocco in its economic paths have never posed a real conditionality to partnership or aids, related to democratisation or political changes. On the contrary the US and the EU, have always been somehow worried about the regional stability where a substantially authoritarian Morocco, with a pure façade of democracy, can play an exemplary role. For this reason Morocco continued in great extent to benefit from international engagements without any real pressure for a democratic transition.

It has been a clear tendency from western countries to support certain authoritarian regimes, able to control and, if necessary, suppress Islamist acmes, in order to maintain the stability necessary to play an active role and extract benefits from the region.

What was better than Morocco, an authoritarian regime, with a democratic make up, particularly disposed to liberalization and open economy, even in positive relations with Israel?

“In sum, dependence on foreign loans” (and external relations for the market) “could lead Morocco to face enormous issues of conditionality, but external actors do not use this potential tool of pressure.... All leading external actors guarantee political legitimacy because for its principal allies and economic partners (US, EU and France) Morocco seems to be an example that needs to be followed (by other countries in the Region)”<sup>72</sup>.

It is so a probable conclusion that this factor well explains why Morocco has been approaching democratisation in its particular cosmetic manner; and it is in this scenery that it is proper to collocate the recent co-option tendency, used by the Kingdom towards Islamist actors, to control them and, in the meanwhile, to establish a “superficial climate of democratic transition”<sup>73</sup>.

In this perspective, peace and security are not pursued throughout the spreading of democracy or similar values. They are reached trough a coat of liberal paint, not to compromise the possibility to prevent the spreading of non-tamable Islamism, which had been worrying more than the authoritarian nature of its controller.

External actors have strengthened the present status quo with their narrow

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<sup>72</sup> Vermeren(2002); p.222

<sup>73</sup> Boubekeur-Amghar(2006); p.9

focus on economic openness and façade democracy. Free trade agreements, granted credits and loans are all measures that could be potentially have been used as carrots to promote democratic change and have actually ended to be a support for the Moroccan kingdom.

## CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, Morocco is an exemplar case of mutual interaction between Islamism, Democratisation and external environment. It has been influenced, in order to maintain its international relations, to make apparent democratic adjustments to its façade, but it has never been egged on real structural changes. The risk was to jeopardize the authoritarianism, useful to control Islamist shakes.

As a result, repression or co-option have continued to be the only two possible perspectives for Islamist actors, in front of a total governmental lack of genuine desire about a democratic inclusion. The same co-option is a cosmetic means to feign democratic attitudes.

I analyzed how the Moroccan Islamist movements have been changed after getting in touch with the national and international political arena; we can assume that if the western concern was to prevent that Islamism could change politics, it happened the contrary, because politics changed Islamism.

Moreover this was the cost of a particular transaction: repression and co-option are the tools of the Moroccan cosmetic attitude, the two sides of the same coin used as currency for foreign relations with the West.

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