Islamist Opposition in Authoritarian Regimes

The Party of Justice and Development in Morocco

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For Miquel

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Abbreviations

AL	Alliance of Liberties (Alliance des libertés)
CAM	Committee for Action in Morocco (Comité d'action marocaine)
CNI	National Congress Party (Congrès national ittihadi)
FC	Civic Forces (Forces citoyennes)
FD	Forum of Development (Forum du développement, of PJD)
FDIC	Front for the Defense of Constitutional Institutions (Front pour la défense des institutions constitutionnelles)
FFD	Front of Democratic Forces (Front des forces démocratiques)
FIS	Islamic Salvation Front (Front islamique du salut, al-Jabha al-Islamiyya li-l-Inqadh [Algeria])
IAF	Islamic Action Front (Jabhat al-'Amal al-Islami [Jordan])
ISMO	Islamist social movement organization
MDS	Democratic and Social Movement (Mouvement démocratique et social)
MENA	Middle East(ern) and North Africa(n)
MNDS	National Democratic and Social Movement (Mouvement national démocratique et social)
MNP	National Popular Movement (Mouvement national populaire)
MP	member of Parliament
MPCD	Popular Constitutional Democratic Movement (Mouvement populaire constitutionnel démocratique)
MUR	Movement of Unity and Reform (Harakat al-Tawhid wa al-Islah)
OADP	Organization of Action for Democracy and the People (Organisation de l'action pour la démocratie et du peuple)

PA	Action Party (Parti de l'action)
PADS	Party of the Democratic Socialist Vanguard (Parti de l'avant-garde démocratique socialiste)
PCM	Moroccan Communist Party (Parti Communiste marocain)
PDI	Democratic Party for Independence (Parti démocratique pour l'indépendance)
PED	Party of Environment and Development (Parti de l'environnement et du développement)
P(G)SU	United (Left) Socialist Party (Parti [gauche] socialiste unifié)
PJD	Party of Justice and Development (Parti de la justice et du développement)
PLS	Party for the Socialist Liberation (Parti de la libération socialiste)
PML	Liberal Moroccan Party (Parti marocain libéral)
PND	National-Democrat Party (Parti national-démocrate)
PPS	Party of Progress and Socialism (Parti du progrès et du socialisme)
PRD	Party of Reform and Development (Parti de la réforme et du développement)
PRE	Party of Renewal and Equality (Parti du renouveau et de l'equité)
PSD	Social Democrat Party (Parti social et démocratique)
PT	Labour Party (Parti travailliste)
RNI	National Rally of Independents (Rassemblement national des indépendants)
SA	Pstructural adjustment program
UC	Constitutional Union (Union constitutionnelle)
UD	Democratic Union (Union démocratique)
UMD	Moroccan Union for Democracy (Union marocaine pour la démocratie)
UNFP	National Union of Popular Forces (Union nationale des forces populaires)
USFP	Socialist Union of Popular Forces (Union socialiste des forces populaires)

Preface

THIS STUDY BEGAN as a comparative project about the institutional integration of two social movements, the Islamist one in Morocco and the environmentalist one in Germany. In the back of my mind, I had the idea that ideology—religious or environmentalist—ultimately should not matter that much when a social movement organization enters into formal politics. After quite some work in this direction, I had to drop the comparison. It was not because the two movements' extreme ideological divergence made them an unfruitful comparison. To the contrary, the Moroccan Islamists and the German environmentalists shared many features in their integration process, such as the broadening of support through a pragmatist approach and the betrayal of movement principles.

What turned out to be incomparable were not characteristics of the movement organizations or parties, but characteristics of the political environment: democracy in Germany, autocracy in Morocco. As I went on with my field research, it became clear that a large share of Islamist party decisions in Morocco were driven by the latter authoritarian political environment. Accepting or rejecting a law: What's the king's position? Choosing the number of electoral districts to cover: Will the political elites feel threatened? Designing the relationship between party and movement organization: What's the best way of decreasing our vulnerability to repression? And so on. In short, only below a certain threshold did the Islamists feel free to choose their mobilization strategy. Perhaps the leaders of the Moroccan Party of Justice and Development were overly cautious, yet what matters is the fact that they had to consider an actor that is simply not there in a democracy, a veto player that can outlaw them if they cross a "red line" whose coordinates are not even fully known to opposition groups. It is for this reason that this study is not a comparison of environmentalist and Islamist

groups going into politics, but a study about the dilemmas that opposition parties must deal with in authoritarian regimes.

I thank collectively all the people who have helped me do field research in Morocco and Jordan—from those who provided me with the first telephone numbers I needed to those who made my life there much nicer. I also thank all my interviewees—Islamists and non-Islamists. They may not always agree with my interpretation, but I hope they feel that their answers to my questions have been correctly reproduced.

Many thanks go also to my parents. Even if they were sometimes not really happy with the places I was going to, they never stopped encouraging and helping me. And, as is convention, the person one owes the most to goes last: Miquel, to whom I dedicate this book, has supported me (in both the English and the French meanings of the term) from almost the beginning and surely until the end over many periods of doubt and confusion. If today I am writing a preface to a book, it is thanks to him.

Introduction

The Framework of the Study

THE ISLAMIST PARTY OF JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT (PJD, Parti de la justice et du développement) was the projected winner of the Moroccan parliamentary elections in 2007. In the months before the elections, the Islamists were highly scrutinized. Whereas some feared the policies of an Islamist government—the Spanish newspaper *El País,* for example, put photographs of fully veiled women next to an article on the forthcoming elections—others reassuringly reported on how "moderate" the PJD was.

The PJD did not win the elections; it actually lost votes compared to its results in 2002. Two months later I was in Rabat, talking to PJD leaders about the electoral results. What had gone wrong? The outcome was first unsurprisingly blamed on electoral fraud. The king ultimately had not wanted an Islamist prime minister, and other parties had been buying votes. When I pushed them a bit more, they admitted that other factors were involved. The PJD had not mobilized the street for its positions—for example, against an unpopular increase of the value-added tax—for fear of provoking the regime. Moreover, the party had lost the support of its Islamist founding organization, which in previous elections had campaigned vigorously for it. There had also been some discontent among party members about the procedures to nominate the candidates for the elections.

These events provide a good illustration of this study's perspective. In the end, the relevant questions to ask regarding the 2007 legislative elections were not which policies a PJD-led government would pursue, but which strategies the party had pursued in the years before the elections and why. The episode also points at some important factors to consider in the analysis: the interactions with

the authoritarian regime, the relation with the Islamist social movement, and the evolution of the PJD's organization.

What electoral mobilization choices do Islamist opposition parties make? How do they relate to authoritarian incumbents? Which key factors influence these parties' choices and thus their evolution? This book seeks to contribute to answering these questions by studying the Moroccan PJD. The case study covers the period from 1992 to 2007. The book traces and explains the PJD's choices through an analysis of organizational, ideological, and institutional constraints. It adopts a simple but novel perspective on Islamist parties as opposition in electoral authoritarian regimes, whose main difference with other oppositional actors in such regimes is their origin from and linkage to a powerful social movement. The study is based on field research in Morocco in 2003–4 and 2007, and it uses both qualitative and quantitative data.

A typical and legitimate critique of scholarship on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is that it is atheoretical and cut off from major trends of political science research (see Anderson 1999, 2006). This study attempts to avoid this problem by placing the Moroccan case in an explicit heuristic model based on a broader literature on opposition, electoral authoritarian regimes, political parties, and social movements. Moreover—beyond the interpretation of the Moroccan case—I also hope to contribute to our knowledge about other Islamist parties and more generally about opposition strategies in authoritarian regimes.[1] The last chapter thus compares key choices made by the PJD with those made by another Islamist party, the Jordanian Islamic Action Front (IAF, Jabhat al-'Amal al-Islami) in the framework of the heuristic model.

ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY, ISLAMISTS AND DEMOCRATIZATION

How scholars and the media framed the PJD's potential victory in the 2007 elections reflected the focus of almost two decades of research and debates around

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1. See McKeown 2004, Platt 1999, Snow and Trom 2002, and Stake 2000 for recent discussions of case studies and theory building. In general, recent discussions of case-study research have a more process-oriented and realistic view of research than earlier ones, emphasizing the constant interactions between foreknowledge, empirical findings, and theory building.

Islamist electoral participation: What exactly is the ideology of Islamist political parties? Is it compatible with democracy? Can Islamists moderate, and if so, which factors are conducive to their doing so? The origin of these questions lies in the electoral landslide of the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front (FIS, al-Jabha al-Islamiyya li-l-Inqadh or Front islamique du salut) and the subsequent military coup in 1992 and civil war. Ever since then, there has been an extended and heated scholarly discussion about Islamist groups' participation in elections. The Algerian instance was not the first case of Islamist electoral participation in the Arab world, but the degree of political liberalization was much higher in Algeria than it had been, for instance, in Egypt, where members of the Muslim Brotherhood (Jama'at al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun) had contested the 1984 and 1987 parliamentary elections. Constitutional reforms in Algeria provided the basis for the formation of a democratically elected government. The FIS had already secured an absolute majority of seats (182 out of 323) in the first round of the elections.[2] The Islamists would thus have had a crucial role in designing the future shape of policies and political institutions in Algeria. In this context, the FIS's religious references and the antidemocratic statements made by some of its leaders culminated in the question of whether Islam and democracy or Islamist parties and democratization could be compatible. After the elections had been canceled, the FIS banned, its leadership jailed, and Islamist groups started to commit atrocities against civilians, the question about the Islamists' real agenda was answered for many.[3]

The focus on the compatibility between Islamist opposition groups and democratization was reinforced by a strong pressure on many MENA regimes to open up the political sphere and by many Islamist organizations' quest to get legalized and to participate in elections. Since the early 1980s, social, economic, and legitimacy crises had gained in scope. Social pressure was strongly expressed through bread riots in Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Jordan

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2. This landslide was due in part to the ruling elites' miscalculation regarding support for the ruling party. The electoral law, favoring enormously the biggest party (single-member districts with runoff) was designed on the assumption that it would ensure the dominance of the ruling National Liberation Front (FLN, Front de libération nationale) (Lust and Jamal 2002, 359–60).

3. For different perspectives on the Algerian case, see Hafez 2004, Heristchi 2004, Kalyvas 2000, Maghraoui 1992, Schemm 1995, and Takeyh 2003.

(cf. Sadiki 2000, 80). External constraints—economic but also to some extent political (regarding good governance)—intensified these domestic problems. Because other major opposition groups with a large support base were absent, Islamist social movement organizations (ISMOs) became the principal transporters of organized extrainstitutional protest and the major challengers to the ruling elites.

Pressures to implement changes were especially acute for the rulers of resource-scarce MENA states. Many of them resorted to standard political liberalization measures: an increase in press freedom and civil rights, the liberation of political prisoners, constitutional reforms, the holding of elections, the (re)animation of Parliament, and the inclusion of formerly excluded actors in state political institutions. During this period, Islamist movements increasingly claimed legal recognition as political parties and participation in the political process. From the rulers' side, formal or informal inclusion became a more prominent way of relating to their most vital opposition during the 1980s and 1990s. It was clear that relatively free elections were likely to channel a large share of votes to the Islamists in most states. The debates on Islamist actors' potential to be integrated in a democratic game—and to respect the rules of this game in the long run—thus went far beyond the Algerian case.

There is fierce disagreement about the existence of such potential.[4] The contributions to this debate are essentially situated between two poles. On one side, the argument is that the Islamists' demands for inclusion and their appraisal of pluralism, democracy, and human rights are merely the latest strategy of an antidemocratic movement that will eventually not respect the cornerstones of the democratic process that brought them to power. Islamist electoral participation would therefore be an experience of "one man, one vote, once." A statement made by the Egyptian secularist Farag Foda illustrates this view: "I don't care whether they put me on a camel [i.e., contesting elections] or in an airplane [i.e., Islamic revolution]. At the end of the trip is always the Islamic dictatorship" (quoted in

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4. This literature is very vast. For an illustration of the debate, see, for instance, Ahmad and Zartman 1997; Kramer 1997; and Pelletreau, Pipes, and Esposito 1994. Individual contributions include Denoeux 2002; Esposito 1997; Esposito and Voll 1996; Ghadbian 1997; Karam 1997; Kramer 1993; Krämer 1993, 1995, 1999; and Miller 1993.

Hesse 1998, 170).[5] Islamists may pursue different strategies at a different pace, but they all ultimately serve the same goal. On the other side of the debate, scholars argue that many Islamist movements have evolved toward an acceptance of pluralism (Wickham 2004), that electoral participation can bring about a "habituation process of democracy" (Ahmad and Zartman 1997, 72), and that the Islamic concept of *shura* (consultation) is similar to democracy. This second position is often combined with the view that risk-free democracy does not exist (e.g., Esposito 1994, 22–24).

Regardless of the sympathy one may have for either of the two appraisals, a serious problem of this literature is the question in itself. With the exception of Turkey, the political environment of Islamist political parties in the MENA is not democracy but autocracy. Political liberalization and Islamist inclusion, where it occurred, in the 1980s and 1990s were attempts to secure the political and economic elites' power base under conditions where regimes were unable to afford the costs of a dominantly repressive strategy. The aim was to enhance the authoritarian regimes' capacity to contain and moderate dissent. As Lisa Anderson has argued, "In none of the cases of political liberalization did regimes intend to actually confront competitors for power: In both intent and content, these reforms were designed not to inaugurate a system of uncertain outcomes—democracy—but to solidify the base of the elite in power, making possible increased domestic extraction" (1997, 20). A more "democratic" image deriving from decreasing repression helped to enhance not only domestic but also international legitimacy, the latter being important for regimes that depend to some extent on foreign aid and investment.[6] In short, the political liberalization measures of the late 1980s and early 1990s did not lead to democratization, but to the persistence of authoritarian rule in MENA states (see, among many other sources, Albrecht and Schlumberger 2004; Anderson 2006; Bellin 2004; Penner-Angrist and Pripstein-Posusney 2005; Schlumberger 2007).

5. Translations of non-English material are my own throughout the book unless otherwise indicated.

6. Alain Roussillon suggests that regimes may actually consider Islamic movements' participant strategies as more threatening than radical strategies because overt repression is then more difficult to legitimate (2001, 107).