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MOROCCAN ISLAMISTS : ALL THE TASTE, HALF THE CALORIES.

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This paper will show that all major political groups in morocco, including Islamic organizations, have been or are in the process of being co-opted by the monarchy. From the early years of independence, the Moroccan palace has nurtured a political system of favor granting from the top and has gradually integrated all major political movements that do not challenge its supremacy in exchange for a privileged access to the resources of the state. This gradual co-optation has been made possible by a methodical *divide et impera* strategy based on the cyclical affiliation of major political groups, the discreet creation of new opposition movements always loyal to the King and the refusal of the monarchy to engage in any sort of comprise with disloyal groups. This strategy has also been made possible by the use of those various groups for the dissemination of popular discontent and by the sacred character of the King, maintained trough a sophisticated symbolic, that makes any frontal attack against the monarchy both a religious and political sin. The first part of the paper will build on Ellen Lust-Okar argument and provide an overview of the strategy used by the Moroccan monarchy to gradually integrate major political groups who do not challenge its supremacy. This integration is made possible by the division of the opposition into three groups: vocal and non-vocal loyalists in one hand and disloyal groups opposition in the other hand. As the vocal loyalist groups are progressively co-opted by the palace and integrated into a sophisticated clientelistic structure, the monarchy discreetly encourages the creation of new vocal loyal opposition in order to weaken the demands of the former groups and counteract the disloyal opposition. The second part of the paper will illustrate the previous point by addressing the relationship between the palace and the Islamists and will show that the main Islamic political in Morocco is in the process of being completely co-opted by the monarchy. This part will also show that the full institutionalization of the PJD will eventually open the door for the co-optation of the other major Islamic movement: al-Adl wal-Ihsan as soon as its leadership clearly acknowledges the full authority of the King. Finally, the last part will provide a number of prospects for the future of democracy in the country, particularly through the examination of the dazzling progress of the pro-palace Parti Authenticité et Modernité, PAM, as the new vocal loyal group at the service of the monarchy.

The Monarchical Strategy for Consolidation.
A historical overview.

Moroccan authority is based on a divine relationship between the king and his subjects (Hammoudi 1997, 12), maintained trough a yearly oath of allegiance and by a sophisticated religious symbolic that makes any attack against the King a religious sin (Hammoudi 1997, 13). As a descendent of the prophet, the monarch holds the title of Commander of the Faithful and conducts regularly a number of religious rituals in order to maintain the absolute spiritual leadership of the person of the king vis-à-vis the community. In the case of the Moroccan monarchy, the two bodies of the King described by Ernst Kantorowicz keep coexisting very naturally (Kantorowicz, 1997). The King is the distant head of the state but also both a severe

and benevolent fatherly figure who grants fortune, provides ultimate justice and guarantees peace in the community. To that end, the monarchical authority uses the *makhzen[1],* an ancient security apparatus completely faithful to the palace to maintain its absolute supremacy (Hammoudi 1997, 25). As shown by Sater, the makhzen merges the political and bureaucratic spheres, which leads to a confusion between the State, the government and the regime and the ultimate domination of traditional forms of power over rational-legal ones (Sater 2007, 12-3).

Patronage.

Although Mohammed V inherited the modern French bureaucratic apparatus, the father of Moroccan independence, reactivated the old clientelistic structures and allowed for the creation of a sophisticated neo-patrimonial system where official functions were distributed in order to reward allies and secure the allegiance of potential dissidents (Vermeren 2002a, 42-3). From the early years of independence, the Moroccan political apparatus became a system of favor granting from the top rather than being an open space for political bargaining (Korany 1998, 157). As both Hammoudi and Tozy have shown, the master and disciple relationship is central to Moroccan politics. Power is comprised of two main circles: the first one is hermetic and is limited to the person of the king, his family and his childhood friends and schoolmates. The second circle is made of various advisors, technocrats, businessmen and co-opted politicians who use their proximity to benefit from access to power decisions and state resources (Tozy 2008, 35-6 and Hammoudi 1997, 4). Although the King promotes a liberal milieu to encourage political participation, elections are simply a way to penetrate the second circle trough "membership in institutional structures of representation such as Parliament (Tozy 2008, 36)". The Moroccan palace has therefore been able to create a liberal milieu in order to secure internal and external legitimacy while consolidating a liberal authoritarian regime (Abrecht and Wagner 2006, 128-9 and Saad Eddin Ibrahim 1995, 40). Parliament where competition and political dissent are tolerated is used to co-opt political elites and allow the expression of articulated protest as long as the supremacy of the King remains uncontested (Abrecht and Wagner 2006, 128-9). The aim of the next paragraphs is to show that the Moroccan political system has historically been built around the person of the King who uses patronage to divide the opposition in a cyclical fashion (Korany 1998, 166). Even when new political groups try to distance themselves from the traditional political mechanic, their ultimate survival depends on the acceptance and their emulation of the logic and the limits of the traditional monarchical power.

Division.

From 1956 to 1998, Moroccan politics could be summarized as a continuous struggle between the monarchy and the nationalists (Tozy 2008, 35 and Korany 1998, 164). The consolidation of the monarchy during the last years of the protectorate and the early years of independence was possible by the division between the nationalists (of al-Istiqlal) and Sufi groups (Hammoudi 1997, 15-7).

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[1] Consolidated at the 17th century, the makhzen was initially used to collect taxes and wage wars before becoming a synonym of the Moroccan bureaucratic and security apparatus (Vermeren 2002a, 18-9).

The monarchy favored the scissions among the main nationalist party and discreetly pushed for the competing pro-regimes parties (rural but also urban) and independent notables co-opted by the King (Korany 1998, 165). This alliance with rural notables and the systematic attack on urban political forces created the original pattern of government that is still in use today (Hammoudi 1997, 28-9). Mohamed V and Hassan II will both use all cleavages between Arabs and Berbers, rural and urban, traditionalists and reformists in order to weaken the opposition and impose the supremacy of the Palace (Hammoudi 1997, 28). The *divide et impera* strategy adopted by the monarchy led to the establishment of a very sophisticated patronage system and the "gradual weakening of political parties and unions, trough the repression of those seeking change and the co-opting of elites devoted to the system (Hammoudi 1997, 32)". From then on, the palace was able to decide of both the nature and the boundaries of political groups willing to formally participate in the political process (Lust-Okar 2004,159).

Although Morocco has a relatively strong civil society compared to other Arab regimes with political parties and influential unions operating openly since the early seventies, "there is strong evidence that Moroccan opposition parties are capable of mobilizing the masses but unwilling to do so (160). As demonstrated by Lust-Okar, the lethargy of Moroccan political parties is a direct result of the divided nature of the Moroccan political environment, which makes the opposition less likely to challenge the regime (159-60). For her, the palace was able to create a divided political environment by strictly separating loyalists and radicals. The former enjoyed privileged access to the resources of the state in exchange for their support for the system while the latter had to pay a high price for their frontal opposition to the palace by being forbidden from formal political participation and being subject to frontal repression (160). As underlined by Lust-Okar, Hassan II solidified the pattern of political manipulation in the country. Every time the regime is confronted to popular mobilization, the palace makes cosmetic concessions to loyalist groups by allowing them to play a limited role in the government (but not letting them mobilize the street) (Lust-Okar 2004, 164-5). This relationship makes the loyalist parties less willing to push for reform (even when demands are not met) as the price for destabilizing the system becomes too high. The radicals on the other hand, though having more incentives to destabilize the system, ultimately need the help of the loyalists in order to carry-on reform and are not able to significantly threaten the system (161).

Lust-Okar however, does not distinguish between vocal and non-vocal loyalist groups. In fact, this distinction is at the heart of the monarchical strategy for power consolidation and has been a constant characteristic of Moroccan politics since independence. The management of the opposition by the palace rests on the careful distinction between three distinct groups: a loyal non-vocal opposition already co-opted and enjoying the subsidies of the regime, a loyal but vocal opposition in the process of negotiating its complete inclusion in the government, and a disloyal opposition with no hope of integrating the official political sphere without a clear recognition of the full supremacy of the King.

After independence, the loyal opposition was divided between the rural elites (later represented by the "'monarchical' parties [of] the Rassemblement National

des Indépendants, RNI; the Union Constitutionnelle, UC; and the Parti National Démocrate, PND)" (Korany 1998, 160) and the more vocal nationalists of al-Istiqlal. The socialists on the other hand, were frontally opposed to the monarchy who in turn, waged a fierce repression campaign against the socialist Union Nationale des Forces Populaires, UNFP, and the communist Parti Communiste Marocain, PCM. In this perspective, the Moroccan secret services tried to dismantle the radical wing of the UNFP through the arrest of 5000 militants in 1963, the assassination of Mehdi ben Barka, certainly the most prominent representative of Moroccan socialism in 1965, and the detention and torture of hundreds of militant of the far-left movement of Ila-al-Amam in 1972 and 1974 (Vermeren 2002a, 33-58). The brutality of the repression and the successful integration of al-Istiqlal in the government, forced the major leftist groups to gradually moderate their stance towards the palace. The national union triggered by the question of the recovery of the Western Sahara finally gave the socialists the opportunity to negotiate a first compromise with the monarchy. In 1969, Ali Yata, the head of the illegal PCM sent a letter to the King stating his full support to the monarchy on the question of the Sahara (70). Six years later, his party was legalized and allowed to compete with the newly created Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires, USFP; in the 1976 municipal elections. Following the social unrest of the early eighties, the participation of the al-Istiqlal in the government marked the total inclusion of the nationalists in the regime (from then on, faithful supporters of the monarchy) and the consecration of the USFP as the new vocal loyal opposition. On the other hand, disloyal groups unwilling to recognize the absolute supremacy of the monarch such as Marxist-Leninists movements and the Islamists of al-Adl wal-Ihsane kept being fiercely harassed by the authorities.

By the late nineties, once the al-Istiqlal leadership was completely ingrained in the neo-patrimonial state hierarchy and humbled by its participation in the government, the King opened the door to the USFP who fully joined the regime in 1998 as the new non-vocal opposition (Lust-Okar 2004, 163). The socialists were de-facto being replaced by the pro-government Islamic Parti de la Justice et du Dévelopemment, PJD; as the new official villain, while al-Adl wal-Ihsane was still firmly entrenched in its anti-monarchical role.

The next section will show that the main Islamic party in Morocco is in the process of being completely co-opted by the regime. During the last ten years, the electoral strategic choices of the PJD were carefully designed to fit with the moderate gradual integrative approach of the monarchy in the hope of fully integrating the regime. Even if the party attempted at times to show some independence vis-à-vis the decisions of the regime (notably trough a rather short-lived opposition to the reform of women's status in 2000), the leaders of the party have been trying to accommodate the wishes of the palace by pushing for a transformation of the role of the party from a vocal-loyal opposition to a non-vocal but always loyal one.

The transformation of the PJD.

Following Yavuz's typology of Islamic movements (Yavuz 2004, 274), Islamic movements can be classified in 4 big types: Reformist, societal, revolutionary and spiritual. The decision to repress or tolerate a group by the authorities is based on the use of violence and the recognition of the supremacy of the monarch (Kalpakian 2008, 125-9). All four types are well represented in Morocco.

		REPERTOIRE OD ACTIONS	
		Legitimate	Illegitimate
GOALS	**Vertical** Elite-based movement (from above)	*Reformist:* **[PJD]** Participation in the hope of controlling the state or shaping policies through forming their own Islamic party or in alliance with other parties *Target* Education, legal system, social welfare *Outcome* Accommodation	*Revolutionary:* **[Takfiri Groups]** Rejects the system and uses violence and intimidation *Target* State *Outcome* Confrontation
	Horizontal Society-centric associational (from below)	*Societal:* **[MUR]** Groups using the media and communication networks to develop discursive spaces for the construction of Islamic identity; (…) use associational networks to empower community *Target* Media, economy, (private) education *Outcome* Integration	*Spiritual*: **[Al-Adl wal-Ihsan]** Withdraws from political life to promote self-purification and self consciousness *Target* Religious consciousness *Outcome* Withdrawal

Source (Yavuz 2004, 274).

The PJD is the result of the fusion of the Mouvement Unicité et Réforme, MUR; and the Mouvement Populaire Constitutionnel et Démocratique, MPCD. The MUR stems out of a scission of the Chabiba Islamiyya (Islamic youth), a radical organization created in the early seventies and immediately instrumentalized by the authorities to fight leftist groups in universities (the organization was responsible of the assassination of the socialist leader Omar Benjelloun in 1975) and as of 1982, used to undermine the irresistible growth of Cheikh Yassin's movement (Chaarani 2003, 99-101). As of the early eighties, a number of future leaders of the PJD distanced themselves from all subversive activities, recognized the supreme authority of the monarch and attempted to enter the official arena of political

participation trough a new organization, the MUR (PJD) (quickly recognized by the authorities as of the mid-nineties) (Darif 1999, 94).

According to Chaarani, but also some political analysts such as Ksikes, the links between both the MUR and the MPCD and the authorities are surprisingly ancient and solid (Chaarani 2003, 168 and Storm 2008, 40). Abdellilah Benkirane, the current secretary-general of the PJD worked as informant for the Moroccan secret services from the 1973 to the late 1980's. Dr. Al-Khatib, head of the MPDC is also close to the monarchy (his grand-father was the Ministry of War under Sultan Abdelaziz and he is personally linked to the different security apparatuses of the country) (Chaarani 2003, 168). In this context, it is also interesting to note that al-Khatib posited the recognition of the supremacy of the monarchy as a condition of the fusion of the two movements and the creation of the PJD (169-70).

As underlined by Mohamed Darif (1999), the goals of the MUR as a political movement are the exact copy of the objectives stated by the official religious organizations of the country such as the Moroccan Ulama league and the regional religious councils. Both the Islamic party and the official institutions call for the defense of Muslim values, the fight against anti-Islamic ideas and the need for participation in social work (137-9). In this perspective, the MUR (PJD) appears simply as a "popular" version of the official institutions put in place by the authorities (137-9).

After its breakthrough in 2002 and despite it electoral strength, the PJD have proved remarkably willing to accommodate the authorities whenever an opportunity presented itself. The party backpedaled on the question of the reform of women's status (Moudouwana) and fully acknowledged the reform presented by the King (Albrecht and Wagner 2006, 133). The PJD also accepted the strict anti-terrorist law voted by the parliament after the terrorist attacks of may 2003 in the hope of protecting itself from police harassment and in order to diminish the risk for re-exclusion (133).

More importantly, the keystone of the strategy of the PJD is its total recognition of the authority of the King. The party is careful not to challenge the leadership of the palace and does not hesitate to adjust if need be. As shown by Kalpakian for instance, the PJD's ex-president Ahmed Raissouni was forced to resign after he suggested that someone other than the king could hold the sacred position of "commander of the faithful" (Kalpakian 2008, 126). Other signs of the absolute willingness of the party to accommodate the monarchy appeared in the media after the marginalization of Mustapha Ramid (a high profile and very popular PJD leader) who was advocating for constitutional reform (Storm 2008, 40).

As of 2007, the PJD put itself in accordance with the imperatives of the monarchy by lowering the number of its fundamentalist leaders (but also some reformist members) ad by encouraging young technocrats (Tozy 2008, 39). The party also tried to veer away from its Islamic ideological discourse by focusing on a program pushing for transparency and anti-corruption policies (Kristianasen 2007). The party leaders in particular stressed the Turkish example of the AKP and the need to move from a role of "'critical support' to 'advisory opposition' (Kalpakian 2008, 125)". Finally and although the PJD is still struggling to keep a rather delicate equilibrium between the party's basis and its elites, the current general-secretary

always wanted to join the mainstream parties in a coalition (Kristianasen 2007). In this perspective, Benkirane sees "no reform without the King" while the latter remains the "ultimate referee" for Ramid (Kristianasen 2007).

After the terrorist attacks of May 16th, 2003, the palace became more willing to work with previously marginalized political parties (particularly the Islamists but also the anti-monarchical far left) (Tozy 2008, 35). As shown above, the palace was encouraged to pursue its inclusive efforts because the party systematically reassured the monarchy since 1997. According to Albrecht and Wagner (2006), the pursuit of the inclusive efforts is the result of the ruler's approval of the success of the previous inclusive experiments with the nationalists and the socialists (123).

As underlined by Tozy (2008), the monarchy succeeded in forcing the PJD to mutate from a religious fundamentalist movement to a "normal" political party (with a strong technocratic leaning) and making it marginalize its more ideologist figures, reinterprate majors politically sensitive dogmas, and even consider completely unnatural alliance such as a possible cooperation with the USFP (40). Thereby, as underlined by Storm (2008), the big victory of the Palace was to establish a political party that was not only "makhzenized" (co-oped by the monarchy) but also popular (Storm 2008, 40).

Far from being a real threatening vocal opposition, the PJD appears to be a clearly co-opted party anxious not to anger the authorities and willing to do the impossible to accommodate the monarchy. Although more ambiguous, the position of al-Adl is also increasingly in favor of a better dialogue with the regime. After the death of Hassan II and the lifting of Cheikh Yassin's house arrest, the movement has been showing signs of moderation and a new willingness to take the role of a new vocal but loyal opposition.

The End of Exclusion? Al-Adl wal-Ihsan

Al-Adl wal-Ihsan created by Sheikh Yassin in the early seventies is an everyday life-based societal movement that uses the market and social networks to create an independent religious space and strengthen the religious community. Despite its huge popularity[2] in the poor urban neighbourhoods in Morocco, the movement has been strongly restricted fore more than 3 decades (Chaarani 2004, 147-8).

Yassin comes from a poor Berber family. He worked as an Arabic teacher before being promoted as an education inspector (thanks in part to a poem he wrote in honor of Mohamed V). Very close to the tariqa boutchichiya, a Sufi order of the East part of the country, Yassin attained a certain notoriety in 1974 after sending a letter to Hassan II under the title of "Islam or the flood" asking the King to repent. In reaction, he was sent to a psychiatric asylum for three years and later put on house arrest until the late nineties (Chaarani 2004, 146-7). However, despite its obvious insolent tone, it is important to mention that Yassin's letter was relatively moderate as it recognized the status of the King as a descendant of the prophet and called him to rise to the same level as the righteous caliphs (212).

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[2] According to Tozy, should free elections occur, the movement could gather 30% of the vote (Vermeren 2002, 57).

Yassin denounces the moral crisis and corruption in the country and calls for an Islamically inspired change that is led by the ulamas whose influence should cover all aspects of society (and just not the official religious realm fixed by the authorities) (211). However, Yassin's approach to change in society is a bottom-up Islamization process based on popular practice. In this perspective, the actions of the movement emphasize grass-roots activities and education (Lauzière 2005, 250). In particular, al-Adl focuses on the concept of charity by attempting to provide a number of public services neglected by the authorities such as literacy classes, basic health services and waste management in poor urban areas. It also targets university students and has been able to take advantage of the arabization policy introduced by al-Istiqlal to attract disgruntled students. A good illustration of the popularity of the movement among the youth has been its ability to control the largest student union in the country (Vermeren 2002b, 53).

Al-Adl tries to preserve its independence by relying on internal funding only, by using ideologically distinct references based on the prophetic method[3] as unique source of legitimacy and by attempting to preserve the unity of the movement at all costs through strict bureaucratization (Darif 1999, 160). Aware of the disastrous consequences of the atomization of the different Islamic groups in Algeria, the association also tries to act as federalizing structure for all religious opposition groups in the country (295) and advocates a strict respect for the principles of non-violence (Kacimi 2002, 216). The leader of the movement has always been calling for peaceful resistance and has been very careful not to engage in any violent activity. This attachment to non-violence can be explained by Yassin's personal spiritual upbringing (he was part of the Sufi order, tariqa boutchichiya and had personal relationship with Cheikh Hamza, the head of the order who made him promise not to use violence (Chaarani 2004, 146-7)), but it can also be explained by a number of theosophical reasons. For Yassin, Islam is better spread without violence. Hostility is incompatible with the work for *da'wa* and the movement should act as an example for other Muslims and not encourage violent activities (Darif 1999, 178-9). The leader of the movement has also stressed the fact that secrecy or armed action should be avoided as it provides the authorities with an excuse to crack down on the movement (Kacimi 2002, 219). In this context, al-Adl's strategy is to call for an Islamic uprising (*qawma*) that will occur when Islamic awareness is general and when popular frustration reaches its maximum limit. According to Darif (1999), the choice of the word *qawma* was done specifically to avoid using the word revolution that may be giving the impression for a call for violence (176).

Opposition to the monarchy.

If the authorities and the Islamists were able to agree on the need to fight leftist ideologies by the early seventies, a real agreement could not occur with al-Adl because of the non-recognition by Yassin of the absolute supremacy of the

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[3] According to Lauzière, the prophetic method "proceeds from the assumption that one must combine Sufi spirituality and Salafi legalism to revive Islam and to respond to the problems of contemporary umma (Lauzière 2005, 251)".

monarchy. The Sufi leader acted as a *wali* (religious guide) and was therefore frontally competing with the monarchy for political and religious legitimacy (Darif 1999, 48-9). Contrary to other Islamic groups, al-Adl was not simply attempting to bring the authorities to behave in a more Islamically compliant fashion but had the ambition to replace this same authority (53), though it is still unclear whether Yassin intended to replace or supplant the King. As a consequence, and as shown by Vermeren (2002b), the unpredictable nature of Yassin forced the authorities to turn towards the PJD as a way to federate the different Islamic groups and avoid an Algerian scenario (53).

As a result, the debate about the future of the movement occurring within the religious group has been particularly strong. Some are willing to cooperate with the regime and negotiate a full inclusion in the official political sphere while others want the movement to remain out of the system (Chaarani 2004, 268). As underlined by Darif (1999), a generational clash is occurring inside the movement between the first generation of early members who are completely faithful to the leader of the group (seen as the living incarnation of the movement) and a younger generation of members (represented by Mohamed Bachiri, Yassin's son-in-law, and ex-number three of the movement) who think that a distinction ought to be made between the organization and its leader (296). The sharp differences between the two generations have led to the forced resignation of Bachiri and is a clear sign of the current leader's fear of a fragmentation of the movement (that can only be unified trough the person of Yassin) (296). For Chaarani (2004), Bachiri was excluded from the association because he saw the non-recognition of the movement by the authorities as a personal matter between Yassin and the King and not a question of principle[4] (267). In this context, it is important to underline the fact that even high profile representatives of the older generation see the non-participation of the movement as simply the result of political calculations and not the consequence of an inherent opposition to the monarchy. For Abd-el-Wahid al-Moutawakil, the general-secretary of the political circle of al-Adl, the non-participation of the movement in the official political game can be explained by two conjunctural reasons. First the weak participation in the elections may lead to a fragmentation of the vote and a dilapidation of the political potential of the movement. Second, a strong victory could alarm western countries and prompt a harsh backlash from the government (Chaarani 2004, 275). It is therefore clear that a significant part of the leadership of the movement is willing to engage in the official political game under favorable conditions.

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[4] In this perspective, it is interesting to note that Nadia Yassin, Yassin's daughter, admitted that the protest organized by the movement against the reform of women's rights had no real religious base and was done for purely political reasons (Chaarani 2004, 262). It is also interesting to note that the de-factor spoke-person of the movement holds a rather ambiguous discourse: she acknowledges the progress made under the new King for instance while wishing that the regime ended with the death of his father (262).

Moreover, as underlined by Chaarani (2004), the association is under considerable financial stress (since it can only count on internal donations and is not willing to draw support from the Middle-East) (271) which makes Yassin himself recognize the importance of a legalization of the movement for an easier mobilization of new members (Kacimi 2002, 219). During the last couple of years, the movement also backpedaled on the question of women's rights (Nadia Yassin is even saying that the new family law did not got far enough), and is willing to work with non-religious associations (in order to condemn torture for instance) (Cavatorta 2006, 215-9).

More importantly perhaps, the movement is willing to engage in a dialogue with all political movements in the country (215-9). As shown by Vermeren, al-Adl has been able to nurture close links not only with the leaders of the PJD (with whom the movement shares a solid ideological base) but also a number of important figures across the Moroccan political spectrum. High profile members of the USFP were considering a rapprochement with al-Adl while the nationalists of al-Istiqlal were naturally always close to the conservative agenda of the movement (Vermeren 2002b, 56). The leaders of other parties such as the monarchical Berber Mouvement Populaire also do not hesitate to acknowledge their proximity with the religious association (56).

It is therefore clear that Yassin's movement is increasingly moving towards a gradual inclusion in the official political sphere as soon as the movement clearly acknowledges the supremacy of the monarchy. In this perspective, the imminent death of Yassin will allow the movement to finally go beyond the personal animosity between the old leader and the monarchy and consider normalization with the regime.

The following section will argue that the limits of the political liberalization in Morocco are not the result of a fear of the PJD but seem to be in anticipation of a future participation of al-Adl in the official political game. In this perspective, the changes made in the electoral law in 2007 are particularly revealing of the palace's long term strategy. Despite its close links with the PJD, the King does not want to be at the mercy of the Islamists or the victim of the failure of the traditional parties. The terrorists attacks of 2003, the low participation rate in the last elections and the inability of the traditional parties to diffuse popular dissatisfaction forced the monarchy to limit its political opening and re-invest the political space.

Prospects for the Future

A number of students of Moroccan politics such as Francesco Cavatorta and Lise Storm overestimated the importance of elections in the Moroccan context (Cavatora 2006 and Storm 2008). The gradual integration of the PJD through regular elections does not mean that the palace is willing to relinquish any significant prerogatives to Islamic moderate groups or even to the increasingly weak and unpopular traditional parties. In this perspective, the impressive progress of the Parti Authenticité et Modernité (PAM), (established less than two years ago by a close friend of the King, during the June 2009 communal elections) is the proof that the monarchy has no intention of abandoning the strategy of division that proved so successful in the past

As highlighted by Tozy (2008), the elections in 2007 were in no way a free and open competition for effective power[5] (36). The monarchy kept the monopoly of political initiative and the results of the 2007 elections do not really measure the success or the failure of democratic transition in Morocco (Tozy 2008, 39). In order to do so, the palace kept encouraging the weakness of the political class and maintaining its absolute control of the ministries of sovereignty and other royal funds (Tozy 2008, 35). The effect of the palace strategy can be clearly seen in the high level of popular dissatisfaction with the political elites. As shown by Storm (2008), the Moroccan voter turnout has been irresistibly declining from 85.3% in 1970 to 51.6% in 2002 to a blatantly low 37% in 2007 (43) and a survey conducted by the Economist in 2005 showed that 95% of respondents did not identify with a political party, 68% have no confidence in political parties and 73% feel being inadequately represented (Storm 2008, 44).

The results of the 2007 elections were also particularly revealing and underlined the importance of a return of the monarchy in its established strongholds (rural and semi-rural areas). The traditional dominants parties such as the Istiqlal (52 seats) the Mouvement Populaire (MP), 41 seats and the Union Constitutionnelle (UC), 27 seats (all with strong rural basis) were the big winners of the 2007 elections. The PJD (despite scoring the largest number of votes) arrived second with 46 seats only (Storm 2008, 44). These results reminded the palace of the importance of the traditional patronage networks (particularly in rural areas) but also the risks related to a high level of popular dissatisfaction (particularly in urban areas where the rate of invalid votes reached an amazing 30% in Casablanca).

The next vignette will show that the dazzling progression of the PAM as of 2008 can be seen as an attempt by the monarchy to consolidate its presence in its traditional strongholds and introduce a new loyal player in parliament able to diffuse popular pressure in a more efficient way.

The PAM was founded in 2008 by Fouad Ali el-Himma, a close friend of the King and ex-general-secretary of the ministry of Interior. Quickly nicknamed "the King's shadow " by the Moroccan press (Mansour), el-Himma is one of the most efficient and powerful political figures in Morocco. In 2007, the ex-head of the royal cabinet left his position at the ministry of Interior to run for a parliamentary seat from his "native" rhamna region. His electoral victory was rewarded with a visit of the King who authorized 7 billion dirhams (USD 700 Million) of local investments. Having promptly "fulfilled all his electoral promises (Bennani and Boudarham 2009)", the newly elected deputy expanded the base of his new political party by convincing a series of small rural parties of notables (notably the PND, the PED, the ADL, the ICD

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[5] As shown by Tozy (2008), the changes in electoral regulations adopted in 2007 such as the setting of a 6% threshold for parliamentary representation, a strict ban on fundamentalist or regional parties and the establishment of a watchdog agency on funding, are not a genuine push for democracy but only a tactical adaptation of the palace vis-à-vis an elite crisis (Tozy 2008, 37).

and al-Ahd) to merge in his new political formation[6]. Having astutely played on its proximity with the palace to attract all would-be "clients", el-Himma was able to wage a successful electoral campaign during the 2009 communal elections in which the PAM scored the highest number of seats.

A number of students of Moroccan political such as Mohamed Darif and Karim Boukhari agree on the fact that the PAM is the latest attempt by the monarchy to curve the influence of Islamic groups in the country (Boukhari 2008) . Even if the official rhetoric of the party is directed towards the PJD, the monarchical party seems to be positioning itself if order to better deal with the future entry of al-Adl. The return of the monarchy in its traditional rural stronghold appears to be as a strategic consolidation move in prevision of future developments.

Conclusion

This paper have attempted to show that all politically significant groups in Morocco (including the Islamists) are either already co-opted or in the process of being integrated to the regime. The co-optation is made possible by a combination of patronage and repression and consolidated through a sophisticated divide and rule strategy that rewards loyal groups and cracks down on disloyal ones. In this perspective, the PJD appears as a quasi institutionalized party while al-Adl is already starting to negotiate its future entry in the official political game. The publication in 2008 of "Jami'âne Min Ajl Al Khalass (All for Liberation)" a political pamphlet resembling an official electoral program is a good indication of the imminent transformation of the religious association (Boukhari 2008). In this perspective, the striking electoral victory of the King's party, PAM; and the return of the monarchy in its rural strongholds suggests that the regime is trying to position itself in order to better negotiate the future entry of the Cheikh Yassin's movement in the official political sphere.

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[6] For more information on the impressive progression of the party, see the excellent moroccan-swedish blogger Ibn Kafka. http://ibnkafkasobiterdicta.wordpress.com/2009/06/13/le-pam-les-elections-et-larticle-5-de-la-loi-sur-les-partis-politiques-ou-comment-avoir-juridiquement-raison-et-politiquement-tort/ Accessed December 23rd, 2009. In french.

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