DEMOCRATISATION TRENDS IN THE MAGHREB

Bernd Manuel Weischer / Helmut Reifeld

The political and social upheavals that have been taking place in nearly all the states of the Arab world since December 2011 have different causes that partly go back a long way. The initial assumption that there would be a "domino effect" has gradually given way to the realisation that while parallels exist, there are also many idiosyncrasies between the different countries. One can already see the same phenomena occurring in many places in spite of the prevailing conditions not being comparable. It is among the causes of the protests that most parallels can be found. These include above all miserable living conditions, particularly for young people, high levels of unemployment and lack of freedoms. This situation is exacerbated by overwhelming corruption and authoritarian regimes denying their people democratic participation. But as for the ways of dealing with these problems, the differences are there for all to see. The approaches range from a mostly peaceful path of reform, as is the case in Morocco, all the way to the state waging war on its own people, as is taking place in Syria. This development is of great importance for Germany as well as the other states of the European Union. Supporting democratisation in the MENA region, i.e. in the Middle East and North Africa, is in the genuine interest of all European states. But to do justice to the problems both in the analysis as well as in the implementation of measures will require a sustained and multi-faceted effort.

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When examining the three core states of the Maghreb, Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, one must separate out parallels and idiosyncrasies. One should also bear in mind that the Arab monarchies, with the exception of Saudi-Arabia, had far more liberal systems than the other Arab states, which sooner or later ended in rigid military dictatorships

after independence. It is in those countries, i.e. Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Syria and Yemen, that we see the majority of the riots today. Iraq also forms part of this group, although the situation there took a different turn after the two Gulf wars.

MAGHREB RETROSPECTIVE

Even before independence, the course of development by no means ran along uniform lines in the original Maghreb states. Unlike Morocco and Algeria, the national movement in Tunisia was not linked to Islam. In spite of the establishment of the French Protectorate, the Bey of Tunis remained the country's sovereign as a vassal of the Turkish Sultan, relying on support from military and religious leaders. The renowned innovator Hayreddin Pasha, who served as Prime Minister from 1873 to 1877 and became renowned as an innovator, conducted reforms in the areas of the military, finance, and education. In particular, he founded the Collège Sadiki in 1875 as a centre for the young elite, who received an education there that combined Islamic studies with modern French education and who were keen to preserve this dual culture. Former students of the Collège would become the politicians and leaders of the country in later years. The year 1907 saw the movement of the Young Tunisians emerge as a result of the frustration about unfulfilled demands for equality with the French before the law. However, the existence of the French Protectorate, (which, it was hoped, would lead the country out of backwardness) was not questioned until the advent of the First World War. The Young Tunisians found little sympathy with the general public. In 1920, the Destour, the Liberal Constitutional Party (Parti libéral constitutionnel), was founded. While its members considered themselves secular nationalists, they did want religion to be respected to some degree.

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In 1934, a faction of the Parti libéral constitutionnel, generally referred to as the Néo-Destour, broke away under Habib Bourguiba. This party was decidedly secular and wanted separation between state and religion in line with the French model. There were similar tendencies in Algeria at that time as well. The influential trade union movement,

which already had a large following at that time, was socialist and not Islamist, which no doubt also influenced the party's ideology. After independence in 1956, Bourguibism became the ideology of the petty bourgeoisie. As the anticolonial component was fading, a new idea had to be added: Tunisian socialism, which aimed at creating a new social order through evolutionary socialist development without a social revolution. The party was thus renamed Parti socialiste destourien (PSD) in 1964. After the failure of the socialist economic model under Ahmed Ben Salah, this component also took a back seat. There was a development toward an ethnocentric nationalism, partly informed by Arab and also Islamic elements. People started talking about the Arab *Ummah* (nation) and the Tunisian Nation, and above all about Tunisian culture and authenticity. In addition, there was also often talk of Maghreb unity, although this had to be regarded as pure rhetoric for a long time as the political differences between the Moroccan monarchy, the so-called Democratic People's Republic of Algeria, and the civic Republic of Tunisia, as well as the country-specific problems of the individual states, were too great to allow joint Maghreb action. One opinion frequently voiced in the Maghreb: During the times of the anticolonial battle the concept of the Maghreb was one of the ideas that buoyed us up, but subsequent to liberation every state was concerned exclusively with itself.

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TUNISIA'S IDIOSYNCRASIES

Initially, Bourguiba's system was paternalistic rather than authoritarian. The reform movements of the late 19th and the early 20th century were continued, with Bourguiba making reference to the five pillars on which Tunisian politics was based:

1. Women's emancipation. Tunisian women are equal to men under the law (contrary to Islamic law), which had significant consequences for the labour market and Tunisia's economy generally in other areas. Compared to the law concerning persons in other Arab countries, this was the most progressive legal reform modelled on Western concepts in this area. It was part of the secularisation of the state intended by Habib Bourguiba.

2. The same applies to the dissolution of the habous, pious, and religious foundations, comparable to the Napoleonic secularisation in the Europe of 1803. The aim was to incorporate "church assets" that were lying fallow into the economic process in the course of effecting the separation between Islam and the modern state.

3. The introduction of a mixed economy, which entailed the abolition of traditional types of patronage and feudal structures and laid the foundation for the development of modern industry and economy in Tunisia.

4. The adoption of Europe's political philosophy. One must bear in mind in this context, however, that although the political philosophy of the Enlightenment with its secular ideas, particularly in its French embodiment, was accepted in principle as the model for Tunisian politics and maintained in spite of pressure from proponents of Islamic integration, this does not mean that Tunisia has fallen in line with the concept of European, that is Western European, strategy.

5. The ideal of a policy of balance. This ideal has been invoked time and again by the President and by those bearing political responsibility in innumerable speeches and statements; and it has been realised in the foreign policy arena with a truly extraordinary adaptability in response to individual, sometimes highly complex political situations and diplomatic challenges.

The balanced nature and originality of Tunisian foreign policy, which has demonstrated an astonishing continuity and has not involved any real breaks, has had a positive impact on the country's development after independence. Decolonisation did not end in an abrupt turning away from the former colonial power or from Europe generally, but rather segued into a new phase of collaboration between partners.

Bourguiba could conceivably enter the annals of history as the most brilliant Arab statesman of the 20th century, and could do so mainly for three reasons: First, he represented the separation between state and religion. He once ostentatiously allowed himself to be shown on television eating

during Ramadan, an inconceivable act these days! Secondly, he demanded the recognition of Israel (which earned him a temporary exclusion from the Arab League at the time), and the founding of a Palestinian State within borders that the Palestinians can only dream of today. And thirdly, he was opposed to the idea of a single Arab nation promoted by then Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser and advocated the independent statehood of individual Arab countries.

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What remained of these aims by the end of the Bourguiba era? The most modern law of personal status of any Arab country has remained in place until the present day. Furthermore, 1981 entered the history books as the year that Tunisian pluralism and national détente took root. For the first time, a person who had never belonged to the state party was voted Secretary General of a trade union. Bourguiba further announced a multi-party system for Tunisia, which did not, however, achieve any real results in the elections of 1 November 1981. The non-parliamentary opposition group MDS, one of whose members was the current President Moncef Marzouki, the MUP and the Communists did not make it into Parliament. Nor was the "tolerant Tunisia" immune to Islamic ideology, which demanded a return to the principle of din wa dawla (unity of state and religion). Particularly towards the end of the Bourguiba era, there was a hardening of the front between the state and the fundamentalists, quite a number of whom had lengthy prison terms imposed on them.

After Ben Ali took power in 1987, a more cautious approach was initially adopted in dealing with the fundamentalists, who had come together as the Mouvement de Tendance Islamique (MTI) in the early eighties. The new President acted far more in keeping with Islamic customs than his predecessor. The Islamists, whose leader Rachid Ghannouchi had been living abroad for years, shuttling between Iran, Libya, Iraq and the USA, maintained that they were being subjected to stronger repression since their success in the elections of 2 April 1989. During these elections, in which they took part as independents, they had immediately attracted between 10 and 20 per cent of the votes, and in lower class districts even more. The MTI, which

constituted itself as the Hizb al-Nahda (Renaissance Party), was never registered officially, in spite of which the party declared repeatedly that contrary to the government's assertion it was not a religious movement but a political party that had focused its programme not necessarily on Islam but on constitutional freedoms and the elimination of social injustices and corruption.

After his term as Military Attaché at the Tunisian Embassy in Warsaw, Ben Ali commanded the Tunisian secret service as State Secretary in the Ministry of the Interior and was thus able to prepare the coup.

Subsequently it was Ben Ali who gradually turned Tunisia into a dictatorship by the security apparatus. Ben Ali had himself actually been a member of the military. After his term as Military Attaché at the Tunisian Embassy in Warsaw, he commanded the Tunisian secret service as State Secretary in the Ministry of the Interior and was thus able to prepare the coup. Shortly beforehand, he had been appointed Prime Minister by the Head of State Bourguiba, who had become senile by then, establishing the constitutional prerequisite to allow him to disempower his patron in the autumn of 1987. From this time onwards, human rights in Tunisia were curtailed under the motto: "No freedom for the enemies of freedom". It was not just the Left and the Islamic opposition that suffered as a result, but the people as a whole. In spite of assurances by the first Minister of the Interior Kallal, there were instances of arbitrary arrest and torture, which continued and even escalated until the end of the Ben Ali era, while the President and his rapacious wife, Leila Trabelsi, robbed the people blind. This produced greater poverty and unemployment, which are now difficult to combat in light of increasing demographic pressures. These problems are common to all Maghreb countries.

THE PATH FOLLOWED BY ALGERIA

Algeria gained its independence on 1 November 1962. The driving forces at the time were the workers' movement L'Etoile Nord-Africaine, the religious figures around Ben Badis and most notably the Front de la Libération Nationale (FLN). The latter was a military organisation, which set itself up at the country's only legitimate political authority, a phenomenon that continues to the present day. Initially, a socialist state capitalism along Soviet lines was in place, which was abandoned during Chadli Benjedid's second term in office (1984-1989). But the economic reorientation could

not reverse the disastrous consequences of the old socialist system in the short term. Although the military was able to brutally quash the social unrest of 1988, these events prompted the realisation that the problems of the country could only be addressed through a broad consensus among all political forces in Algeria. The President thus introduced a multi-party system against opposition from within the ranks of the FLN. Prominent parties entering the political arena besides the FLN included the Rassemblement pour la Culture et Démocratie (RCD), a secular party headed by Sadi Said, and the Front des Forces Socialistes, a social-democratic party, under Ait Ahmed; these immediately came under attack from the party of the Islamists led by Abbassi Madani, which increasingly gained in strength. Under the slogan "ad Dimuqratiyah Kufr" (democracy is disbelief), the Islamist leader wanted to create an Islamic unity party.

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Relinquishment of the one-party system in Algeria (FLN) was no doubt a victory for democracy and in this regard made the country something of a trailblazer in the Maghreb. On the other hand, this development facilitated further dissemination of Islamic ideology by legal means. The Front Islamique du Salut (FIS) was already able to establish a foothold in the local elections of 12 June 1990. By then, parties and political groupings had sprung up in large numbers. The official list comprised 42 parties. The elections that had been scheduled for 27 June 1991 were postponed to the end of the year. It was clear from the outset that the Islamist parties were antidemocratic in their outlook and that their aim was to replace the democracy, which was just in its infancy in Algeria, by a unity party of pure Islam. It also became clear that the FIS was anti-progressive and had no concepts to tackle serious economic problems. With its demand that the parliamentary elections should be combined with the presidential election, it called the FLN onto the scene.

When the first round of the parliamentary elections was held on 26 December 1991 and the FIS won 82 per cent of the votes, this triggered a military coup. Since they wished to prevent a theocracy (this was the official explanation, which was adopted to a large extent by the Western

media), the military forced President Chadli Benjedid to resign on 11 January 1992 and recalled an old independence fighter from Moroccan exile: Mohamed Boudiaf, who was appointed temporary interim president of a phantom structure, the Haute Commission de l'Etat (HCE). He was slated for the Presidency and was meant to bring calm to the situation. But when he decided to fight corruption in the upper echelons, he was assassinated in front of live cameras on 29 June 1992 by one of his own bodyguards on the generals' orders. The Islamists were blamed for his murder. The country descended into years of civil war.

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Without going into the details of the events, we can now attribute the greatest blame for the disaster to the leading military junta, which infiltrated the Islamist movement with its structures, such as the Direction du Contre-espionnage (DCE). They also supported and provided arms to the Groupes islamistes armés (GIA) with their emirs. Even the murders of twelve Franciscan monks, which caused a great stir in Europe and were initially blamed on the Islamists, appear to have been commissioned by the military secret service.

When the regime came to realise that it could no longer disregard the long-standing economic and social demands of the population voiced by the FIS and that strong-arm tactics, e.g. arbitrary arrest, torture, and murder, had not achieved anything, it tried a new approach and called presidential elections on 16 November 1995, which were won by the regime's preferred candidate General Liamine Zeroual with a purported 62 per cent of the votes. Attempts were made to win back the voter potential of the FIS through administrative reforms, through a new urbanisation policy and the creation of new jobs, which were meant above all to reduce youth unemployment. The regime thus survived for the time being.

After some infighting within the regime, President Zeroual resigned in September 1998 and Aziz Bouteflika was voted President in March 1999. He still holds this post today but is of course dependent on the good graces of the military. He made an attempt to bring about reconciliation with the victims of the civil war. It is after all inconceivable that over 70

per cent of the population had turned Islamist and fanatical overnight. The main concern was therefore to solve social issues and not to return to a backwards-looking Islam that would be detrimental to social liberty. It was actually the irresponsibility of the leading military personnel, who laid claim to the fruits of the country's labour, which had led to the catastrophe. All of this was to the detriment of the young people of Algeria, who by then made up almost two thirds of society. The frustration and hopelessness among the country's youth has still not been alleviated to date, which means that it is entirely possible that the repression may lead to further revolutionary outbreaks. Against this backdrop, one increasingly gets the impression that one is dealing with a regime in Algeria that is a military dictatorship masquerading as a democracy, which is unlikely to survive in its present form in the long term.

THE MOROCCAN MONARCHY

The situation in Morocco differs clearly from that in Algeria and Tunisia. This country too has social problems such as unemployment, lack of housing, and particularly a tremendous gap between rich and poor, but it is on the right track to solving these problems. Under the reign of Mohamed VI, a great deal has been done to improve social conditions. Soon after his enthronement on 30 July 1999, he initiated measures to improve the human rights situation, particularly with respect to equal rights for women, and to achieve reconciliation with the victims from the so-called "leaden years" under the reign of his father Hassan II. A new constitution put in place in 2011 drove forward the country's democratisation, and it was even possible for a new government of Islamic orientation in line with the Turkish model to be established through proper elections at the beginning of 2012. That was not always the case.[1]

In the 1930s, several parties formed while the country was still a French Protectorate: the Istiqlal (Independence Party), the Parti Démocratique pour l'Indépendance (PDI)

1 | Cf. Mohamed Tozy, *Monarchie et Islam au Maroc*, Paris, 1999; Bernd Manuel Weischer*, Einblicke in Geschichte und Kultur Marokkos*, Rabat, 2012; Helmut Reifeld, "New Government or New System? A Special Path for Morocco", *KAS International Reports*, 4/2012, 31-45, http://kas.de/wf/en/33.30747 (accessed 24 Apr 2012).

and the Party of National Reforms, which had links with Arab parties in the Middle East. The party founders Allal Fasi, Hassan al-Ouezzani and Abdelkhaleq Torres were pioneers for independence. However, a rift developed between the PDI, which attracted the intellectuals, and the Istiqlal Party. The former advocated a multi-party system, while the populist Istiqlal Party favoured the single party system so that it could govern the country by itself – merely working with the military. There had already been some discussions to that end and it appeared as if there might be a similar development as in Algeria. But Mohamed V put a stop to that after independence. His first government included members of the Istiqlal and the PDI as well as several independents. King Mohamed V was therefore in favour of a multi-party system from the start. The Istiqlal party broke up back in 1959, i.e. three years after independence. Bouabid and Ben Barka founded a socialist party, the Union Nationale des Forces Populaires (UNFP), subsequently renamed Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires (USFP).

After the early death of Mohamed V on 26 February 1961, Hassan II ascended to the throne. He had a different concept of the state than his father. He immediately began to modernise the institutions of the kingdom. But every institutional and constitutional reform was undermined by the fact that as a descendent of the Prophet, the King was a monarch virtually by divine power. Although this meant he was able to keep the aspiring fundamentalists in check, because his person was sacrosanct and he reigned over an authentically Islamic state, this imposed some limits on the Western principles of public law in the constitution.

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The first constitution of 1962 defined Morocco as a constitutional monarchy with the participation of parties to be voted for by the people. A number of parties were however founded at the behest of the King, probably to present a functioning multi-party system to the world. The legitimacy of the ruler as "Prince of the Faithful" stood in contrast to that of the voting public. The Left spoke with some justification about an absolutist regime. But Hassan II did not wish to succumb to pressure from either the Left or from the right-wing Parti Istiqlal, which was aspiring to autoc-

racy, and initially relied on the methods of authoritarian rule, strong repression, and a wave of arrests.

After the social unrest and student revolts of 1965 in Casablanca, Hassan II dissolved Parliament, since the opposition between Istiqlal and the leftist parties was paralysing political life, and declared a state of emergency. In July 1970 he ventured into another democratic experiment by presenting a new constitution, which was accepted by way of a referendum. However, the elections and the casting of votes were not conducted in accordance with proper procedures. After the failed military coup of July 1971 and General Oufkir's attempt to assassinate Hassan II on 16 August 1972, the so-called "leaden years" began. During that same year, the monarch had presented a third constitution, in which he established close links between Parliament and the Palace. He controlled the executive in person and made all political appointments. Not all MPs were elected, several were appointed by the Palace. This constitution remained in force for twenty years.

After the failed military coup of July 1971 and General Oufkir's attempt to assassinate Hassan II in 1972, the so-called "leaden years" began.

In 1988 the monarch began an ambitious privatisation programme to kick-start the economy. But there was still the sizeable problem of the national economy depending to a large extent on agriculture, which still made up 17 per cent of GDP and 31 per cent of exports in 1997. After cyclically recurring periods of drought, the rural exodus increased, periodically resulting in social unrest in the congested urban areas, such as in Casablanca in 1981 and in Marrakech and in the north of the country in 1984. The King attempted to alleviate the negative impacts of the climate through a major dam building programme, which counted amongst his greatest achievements. Even with the role of agriculture declining, the country needed to achieve at least four per cent growth per year in order to avoid poverty and unemployment worsening because population numbers were on a consistent upward trend.

In regards to political developments in Morocco, the years under Hassan II saw both the Arab-Moroccan Left as well as the influence of Nasserism being classed as dangerous to the regime and curbed where possible. The dangers posed by the jihadist Salafism as well as the classic pro-Saudi

Salafism (around Sheikh Maghraoui for instance), on the other hand, were ignored or even condoned. It was not until the attacks in Casablanca in 2003 that the people in power took this development seriously.

It was only in the course of the 1990s that Hassan displayed more democratic tendencies. The constitution of 1992 and its expansion in 1996 produced sustained reforms. The King now appoints the ministers on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. Parliament was constituted with two chambers, whose members are elected by the people. This increasingly more liberal development made political change possible. Hassan II thus appointed his old political opponent from the Socialists Abderrahman Youssoufi Prime Minister in 1998. Article 1 of the constitution states: "Morocco is a constitutional, democratic and social monarchy"; of course it is not comparable to the monarchies of the Nordic countries or Spain. But one has to bear in mind that, in contrast to the military dictatorships in Algeria and Tunisia, Morocco did not fossilise, but developed along democratic lines at a gentle pace. This development has been strengthened noticeably under Mohamed VI.

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MOROCCO'S PATH OF REFORM

When mass protests broke out throughout the country and particularly in Morocco's large cities on 20 February 2011, the first obvious result was the emergence of a new protest movement, calling itself Mouvement 20 Février, later shortened to M20. It was a type of protest that Morocco had not experienced before, driven by the same motives as the protests in Tunisia, Egypt and other Arab countries. The protests were about social demands for fighting poverty, illiteracy and unemployment, and thereby ultimately for social justice, economic balance and above all for abolishing political corruption and paternalism.

King Mohamed VI and his staff of advisors responded swiftly and sensitively. Numerous unemployed academics were promptly given jobs and subsidies for basic foods were introduced. The most important step after the King's national address on 9 March was the creation of a

constitutional commission, which presented an initial draft for a new constitution within three months. This was put into force on 1 July by means of a referendum, in which it was approved by a great majority. In this constitution, the fundamental principle of the separation of powers was recognised for the first time. The parties, the parliament, and the judiciary were to be democratised. In particular, the King agreed to appoint the Prime Minister from the ranks of the party that had won the greatest number of votes in democratic elections. The King himself was to remain "Ruler of the Faithful"; yet he would no longer to be regarded as "holy" but merely as "inviolable". However, he retained the last word in questions of faith as well as in the areas of foreign, security and defence policy. It was on this basis that early elections were held on 25 November – one year earlier than required – and a new government was subsequently formed.

On the one hand, the political situation in Morocco remained stable in 2011; public order was guaranteed and the King continued to enjoy unbroken popularity. His preventative actions were acknowledged around the world and within his country he appeared more like a "Citizen King" than an absolute monarch. On the other hand, the protest movement saw the changes merely as a top-down reform, which left the existing power architecture intact. Demonstrations by M20 continued on the streets of the big cities on a weekly basis. But virtually all of them were peaceful and the law enforcement agents generally responded with great sensitivity. Not many people followed the call by M20 to boycott the elections for the first chamber of Parliament on 25 November; but voter turnout had always been low at previous elections as well.

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No doubt some of the criticisms voiced before these elections were justified: Only 13.5 million of the around 20 million people entitled to vote were registered. Moroccans living abroad, serving in the army or in law enforcement as well as prisoners were not eligible to vote at all. At the same time, a legal basis had been created for observers to monitor the elections for the first time. And it was the most peaceful day of voting in the country's history. Even the chronically low turnout, which had often been a cause to

question the legitimacy of elections before, reached a new high of 45.4 per cent, in spite of the still prevailing fundamental opinion that the King can achieve almost anything and democracy very little.

As expected the moderate Islamist Justice and Development Party (PJD) emerged the clear election winner. It presented itself as highly pragmatic and amenable to enter into a coalition from the outset. It is modelled predominantly on the Turkish AKP. Its success is due to the commitment of its representatives in social matters as well as its intelligent and efficient communication strategy. Using the motto "L'État c'est le Roi", it succeeded in presenting itself as unequivocally loyal to the Crown. It is said that the PJD even attracted votes from the illegal and allegedly "fundamentalist" movement al-Adl wal-Ihsan (Justice and Charity), which set the tone within the M20 for a long time in 2011. How the dynamics between these two "Islamist" forces will develop remains an intriguing question.

Using the motto "L'État c'est le Roi", the PJD succeeded in presenting itself as unequivocally loyal to the Crown. So it even attracted votes from the illegal Islamist Justice and Charity movement.

At the same time as the political practice of the new government, formed at the beginning of January 2011 under the leadership of the moderate Islamist Prime Minister Abdelilah Benkirane (PJD), has yet to take shape, the formation of a new parliamentary opposition is similarly slow in taking place. Now that the new constitution has come into force, the role of the opposition should no longer be considered trivial. It now has specific tasks allocated to it as well as possibilities of becoming involved in parliamentary work. It has more opportunities than ever before to join in the legislative process and to demand for the first time that its counterproposals are discussed in Parliament and made public.

Against this backdrop, the constitutional reform, the elections to the first chamber of the Moroccan Parliament and the formation of the government can be seen as achievements in terms of the country's democratisation and its constitutionalism. One can assume that the upcoming elections for the second chamber will stabilise this development further so that Morocco's political order will gain new legitimacy, which has been achieved through reform rather

than being forced by revolution. This development goes hand in hand with an increase in transparency and new opportunities for participation. People will be keeping an even closer eye out for corruption and political parties will be held to account more forcefully in public. These changes are supported by the majority of the country's political forces and are finding a positive response amongst most of the population. They demonstrate to the MENA region that there are different paths to a democratic future.

TUNISIA AND ALGERIA IN A STATE OF UPHEAVAL

In regards to Tunisia as well as Algeria, optimism about a new democratic future remains muted. In Tunisia, which still carries many people's hopes for democratic renewal, numerous fundamental political and social changes have been initiated that will be difficult to bring to a successful conclusion. This applies particularly to the social policy demands of the young generation of the 20 to 35-year-olds, who have only been able to gain from the political change to a very limited extent to date. Although a few doors could be opened towards democratisation, it is not yet clear where they will lead. It is political Islam that has to be considered the political winner in Tunisia, similar to the situation in Morocco and many other Arab countries. While this has certainly produced a tendency for political life to become more "democratic" to some degree, since support from the population is stronger than it has been for a long time, it is also becoming a great deal more conservative at the same time.

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As far as the current political situation in Tunisia is concerned, one can hardly be particularly optimistic. "Revolution does not constitute democracy," is the striking statement with which Béji Caid Essebsi analysed the situation of his country when, at the beginning of 2011, he was appointed President of what was already the third transitional government since the revolution. In actual fact, the situation was dramatic. The security situation deteriorated from one day to the next; unemployment was rife and uncontrolled strikes were the order of the day, domestic and foreign investments stalled, tourism collapsed and factories closed their gates. The country was

threatened by chaos. It was a slow process to re-establish public order so that the country could also regain international confidence. Without being able to offer "solutions" to all the economic, political and social challenges, Essebsi ensured that the upheaval would bring about a new period of stabilisation.

There are two phases to be distinguished with respect to this upheaval. The first, aiming to stabilise the country and create new, sustainable political structures, has been concluded to a large extent. In regards to the second phase, the objective of which is to create a new "culture of the majority",[2] there are still major tasks outstanding. Neither social cohesion within society nor political cohesion in Parliament has been completed. Major parties and associations know that they can act more independently than in preceding decades, but they still need to learn how to carry society as a whole with them. There are still significant tensions, especially with respect to the relationship between politics and religion. There is neither a consensus nor an adequate debate about the place that religion, Sharia and religious parties should take within the future political order in Tunisia. The danger of anarchy is clearly written on the wall, security forces often turn a blind eye, and many Tunisians no longer recognise their own country.

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Currently, the tone of democratic change in Tunisia is set by the Islamists, who are no more homogenous here than in the other North African states. Although Ennahda, which plays the dominant role at the party-political level, won more votes than any other party during the elections for the Constituent Assembly in October 2011, it failed to gain an absolute majority. It is now finding itself in a position where it is negotiating simultaneously about political and religious rights. This might make Tunisia into a kind of model for how democratic values and Islamic rules might be reconciled. But whether and how this will succeed remains to be seen.

Tunisia's greatest problems are currently not of a religious but of an economic and social nature. However, there are hardly any solutions to these problems apparent, particu-

2 | An expression used by Ahmed Driss during a lecture given on 21 Feb 2012.

larly as the state is withdrawing more and more from responsibility. Problems on the country's borders serve to draw attention away from the situation, and the newly won freedom is more likely to lead to anarchy than to new security. The Salafists, who are increasingly gaining in influence, also enjoy freedom of speech; they keep fanning the flames of unrest and are dreaming of a new Caliphate. This is creating numerous new identity conflicts among the populace. Particularly the older generation does not feel at home in the new Tunisia. There are retrograde trends in daily life, such as in the area of women's rights. When the Islamists promise women 50 per cent participation, they only do so on the basis that 42 of the 49 women in the Constituent Assembly are members of Ennahda. On the face of it, this may make the democratic development in Tunisia appear a great deal more "feminine" than in Europe.

The foreign policy scene is characterised by an increasing drifting apart and diversification. Whereas Tunisia used to take its cue exclusively from Europe in this area, it is now looking primarily to the East, at the instigation of the Islamists, and particularly to Saudi-Arabia. The President, the Foreign Minister and the representatives of the strongest party speak from different perspectives, i.e., from European, Maghreb and Saudi-Arabian perspectives. The Mediterranean Dialogue is taking a back seat, Israel is being sidelined. The country is thus pursuing totally new, partly revolutionary foreign policy activities. Traditionally, Tunisian foreign policy was of a mediatising nature; today, people desire to be involved and participate in shaping policies.

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At first glance, current developments in Algeria are also characterised by the gulf between tradition and modernity, as is the case in Tunisia. However, There is no willingness apparent to give in to pressures for a democratic opening. The question remains as to whether the situation might yet produce a democratic awakening. The country's social problems are similar to those of their neighbouring states, but its economic situation is more stable. There has been no change in the rigid control exercised by the military regime. The country's stability is ultimately based on military patronage. The military has succeeded in exerting

continuous strong influence right to the present day and there have been virtually no social upheavals.

"In 2011, the Algerian police registered 9,000 minor riots, but a revolution was never in the cards."[3] This is how the Algerian author Kamel Daoud describes one year of stagnation. Allegedly, there were also over 50 cases of attempted self-immolation, but it did not spread like wildfire. The response provided repeatedly from the official authorities was: "Algeria has already paid up!" This was to remind people of the purported "achievements" of the 1988 revolt, i.e. the establishment of the multi-party system, freedom of the press and of assembly, even though these have remained very superficial to date. It is predominantly the violent confrontations of the early 1990s that are still being felt in Algeria today. During that time, the first free elections in the Arab World had brought the Islamists to power in 1991/1992 – two decades earlier than in Tunisia and Morocco. The military repression of those days resulted in the death of between 150,000 and 200,000 people. Many observers are still convinced that this is the reason why the supposed "Arab Spring" hardly "blossomed" here. There was simply insufficient will to act and a lack of new hope. To most Algerians the achieved stability seems more important than new freedom.

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FURTHERING DEMOCRACY

The political upheaval in most North African states has forced European states to refocus measures they are taking to further democracy. It is less acceptable than ever before to cite economic and security interests in defence of tolerating despotic rulers and authoritarian regimes. Corruption and lack of freedom on the one side and Islamophobia on the other side can serve neither as a basis nor as a determining condition for future neighbourly relations. At the same time, "Generation 2011" will not remain an ephemeral phenomenon. Instead, participatory democracy, the rule of law, human rights, the social market economy,

3 | Kamel Daoud, "Ein Gemüsekarren und ein Haufen Asche. Warum in Algerien die Revolution ausgeblieben ist", *Le Monde diplomatique*, 9 Mar 2012, http://monde-diplomatique.de/pm/2012/03/09.mondeText.artikel,a0042.idx,11 (accessed 15 Jun 2012).

freedom of opinion and religion will form the crucial contents and appropriate basis for future collaboration.

To what extent it will be possible to further democratisation processes of this type can neither be foreseen nor generalised. But efforts in this direction can generally be justified with cogent arguments. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and other German political foundations have also made considerable contributions to this end in the Maghreb over the last few decades. Particularly in Tunisia and Morocco, KAS has accompanied the countries' political developments with hundreds of pertinent projects. Every year, several national and international conferences were held to deal with topics such as the development of constitutional institutions, the tasks of a democratically elected parliament and of free media; trips to Germany for information gathering and cultural exchange purposes complemented these measures. As far back as the eighties, KAS provided assistance in Morocco with efforts to revise the contents of commercial law and to strengthen local self-government, which remains one of the areas on which its activities still focus today. Its publications on topics of intercultural and interreligious dialogue fill an entire shelf in the Dean's office of the Faculté des Lettres at the University of Rabat. Reaching far beyond the circle of its partner organisations, this work is also familiar to government institutions and national umbrella organisations. But the long-term impact of these measures can probably be judged less from the immediate feedback given by the people attending these events than from the occasional recollections by attendees who subsequently take up positions of responsibility. And there are quite a number of those.