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EXCEPTION OR PIONEER?

POLITICAL ISLAM IN MOROCCO

Helmut Reifeld

Shortly after the first stirrings of the Arab Spring, the *éxception marocaine*, the Moroccan exception, quickly became one of Morocco's hottest topics in the media and in public debate. To understand the political factors underlying this exception, we need to look at the country's recent history and in particular the fact that the country has a stable monarchy. The current king, Mohammed VI, is seen as a reformer whose policies are often described as a *culture de l'anticipation*. Added to this are the parliamentary structures and autonomous political parties that have been established since the independence in 1956, constitutional developments since 1962, and the country's multi-ethnic population structure and pluralistic culture. For almost two years now, Morocco has been peacefully run by a moderate Islamic government, while Islamic governments in Tunisia and Egypt have been the cause of renewed unrest and have contributed to instability.

Without further verifying these particular factors, it is also clear that the relatively successful process of transformation currently taking place in Morocco is setting it apart from the other countries of North Africa. Morocco's elite sees its country as a hub between Europe and Africa, and the spotlight is increasingly being turned on Morocco as a model for peaceful transformation to parliamentary democracy and stronger ties with Europe. However, it is no secret that the country also has its darker aspects. Indeed, the 2012 United Nations *Human Development Index* ranks Morocco 130th out of 186 countries, while Reporters Without Borders rank the country 136th of 179 countries in its Press Freedom Index. Almost half of all young people do not attend school and have no regular job, and the

country's literacy rate is one of the lowest in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region.

When it comes to the status of Islam, Morocco takes a strictly conservative approach. Until the mid-20th century, Jews made up 2.3 per cent of the population, but now most of them have left the country. And as there are virtually no Christians in Morocco, over 98 per cent of the population can be considered followers of Islam. To what extent has Islam contributed to Morocco's process of transformation? And what role does organised party-political Islam play in the development of Morocco when compared with other North African countries?

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A SEARCH FOR RULES

The recurring key question that underlies this debate is the relationship between Islam and democracy. In recent years, there have been ever-increasing numbers of articles, particularly editorials and commentary pieces, on this issue. The authors are constantly searching for a set of rules to describe a process that in fact is subject to the particular conditions and requirements of each country. This quest for rules of the transformation process is dependant on how much the individual writer believes "Islam" is willing and able to reform. Nader Hashemi's book *Islam, Secularism and Liberal Democracy*[1] provides a more balanced approach to this issue, especially as the author has been able to integrate Morocco successfully into his analysis, and it gives full consideration to some specific Moroccan problems. Hashemi takes the view that the road to democracy for predominantly Islamic states may be a long one, and that there will inevitably be phases when Islamic governments are in power.

He sees two main reasons for this. Firstly, he believes there needs to be discussion on the role of religion in politics. To date, the main mistake made by Islamic parties in the MENA region has been the assumption that Muslim societies have long held a theological and emotional consensus

1 | Nader Hashemi, *Islam, Secularism and Liberal Democracy. Toward a Democratic Theory for Muslim Societies*, Oxford, OUP, 2009.

over the role of religion in politics. Most Islamists are also convinced that this consensus is basically democratic and not fundamentally different in character from the western concept of democracy. Hashemi believes this should be called into question.

Secondly, he believes that Islamic parties and politicians will only be able to play a key role in the process of democratisation in their respective countries if they are capable of reconciling their religious beliefs with international human rights standards and the basic principles of parliamentary democracy. There are already signs that this might be possible, but Hashemi sees as the main hurdle the formulation and acceptance of a kind of "Islamic secularism" that would allow clear separation of state institutions and religious bodies.

According to Hashemi, the main obstacle along this path may well be the negative experiences many post-colonial Arab states have had with authoritarian regimes that proclaimed their secularity in order to gain legitimacy. Many Islamists, including those in Morocco, still see Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan as the ideal counterpart to these "secular" dictators. However, this idealised image of Erdogan has increasingly become tarnished since his power politics have also clearly begun spreading to the Arab states.

In order to help curtail the inevitable conflicts between religion, secularism and democracy, Hashemi recommends shifting the focus towards the idea of "multiple modernities", a concept originally introduced into international debate by the Israeli sociologist Shmuel Eisenstadt. "Multiple" is used in this context to suggest that developments within a country or society, in religion and politics, business and culture, both within a country and between countries within a region, should not necessarily happen all at the same time nor be directly related to each other. Nevertheless, the concept is rapidly losing its relevance in the digital world of the 21st century; it is clear that political transformations are indeed still taking some very different paths. Hashemi believes that even European modernity has developed at different levels and was predominantly

secular rather than Christian. He rightly concludes that each Arab country must decide for itself exactly what developments are possible.

ISLAMIC STRUCTURES AND TENDENCIES IN MOROCCO

Although the manifestation of Islam in Morocco has changed significantly over the last ten years, it can still be divided into two main tendencies.[2] The first group includes the followers of formal Islam – the Islam of the legal scholars (*Ulema*), which prevails in the cities, among the Arab population and the country's elite. The second group is made up of the followers of what is known as Folk Islam, which is particularly strong in rural regions. In simple terms, it is the Islam of the Berbers, who make up more than half of the population. Folk Islam originally incorporated mystical and even pagan elements and is significantly influenced by Sufism.

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In the past, the relationship between these two groups was generally one of incessant conflict, so that a large part of their energies was no doubt focused on their disagreements. The *Ulema* generally like to portray themselves as being in the king's camp, whereas it is in fact the responsibility of the monarch to reconcile the country's various secular, lay and religious interests. There has also traditionally been fierce competition between the Islam of the legal scholars and a more Sufist-influenced Islam. This conflict is reflected in all three key areas of town versus country, the elites versus the people, and Arabs versus Berbers. Even though the last decade has seen overall smoothing over of the differences and antagonisms between these general groupings by the policies of Islamic governments, they have not disappeared entirely.

2 | Cf. also the empirically and analytically excellent study by: Mohammed El Ayadi, Hassan Rachik and Mohamed Tozy, *L'Islam au Quotidien. Enquête sur les valeurs et les pratiques religieuse au Maroc*, Casablanca, 2013, 25 et sqq. The study is based on more than one thousand structured, representative individual interviews carried out throughout Morocco. The introduction by the three authors (p. 15-55) gives an excellent overview of the earlier literature and current state of research on this issue.

One peculiarity of the Morocco/Maghreb region is the tombs of hermits or saints (*marabouts* or *zaouias*), which are a feature of Sufism. There are some 100,000 of these tombs in Morocco. In political terms, they represent a demonstration of religious self-determination for the Berbers. There is no doubt that their centuries-old roots in Moroccan society make a significant contribution to the conservative image of Islam in public life. For centuries, many of these important sites have attracted pilgrims, and brotherhoods have built up around them. These brotherhoods have traditionally had strained relations with the monarchy. The French exploited these tensions against the monarchy in the early years of the 20th century; however, Hassan II managed to bring about a degree of rapprochement in the 1960s. Since then, some of these brotherhoods have received financial support from the crown, and their members even include high-ranking representatives of government and Moroccan society. Even today, these brotherhoods have at times been able to mix religion and politics, as they enjoy great popularity not only among traditionally-minded intellectuals but also across all sections of society. For example, the current Minister of Religious Affairs is a member of the famous Boutchichyya brotherhood.

The spiritual father of the Al-Adl wal-Ihsan movement, Sheikh Yassine, died at the end of 2012, but the movement has supporters all over Morocco.

The Al-Adl wal-Ihsan movement (for justice and welfare) is also strongly influenced by Sufism, and while it is banned as a political party, it is tolerated as a movement. The spiritual father of the Al Adl, as it is known generally, was Sheikh Yassine from Salé, a town close to Rabat. He died at the end of 2012, but the movement has supporters all over Morocco.[3] It played a key role in the Mouvement 20 Février (non-parliamentary protest movement) in 2011 and 2012. There were almost daily protests, especially in Casablanca, Rabat, Fes and Tangier but also in other major towns and cities across the country, with protestors calling for greater social and economic rights, for measures to combat corruption and for democratic reforms in many areas of government.[4]

3 | On the movement's development and importance cf. Youssef Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife. Sociologie religieuse de l'islam politique au Maroc*, Lyon, 2011.

4 | Abdeslam Bekkali, *L'an 1 de la Cyber Democratie au Maroc: 20 Février 2011*, Edition Hammouch, 2012.

Al Adl accepts political debate as a vehicle for change. It holds the view that Islamic values are not counter to democratic values, but rather are an argument against a lack of democracy. Its demonstrations are almost exclusively peaceful, and its members seek to reconcile the democratisation of Morocco with the Islamic principles of equality, justice and solidarity. They are not looking for a return to some imaginary, pre-modern form of society or the kind of Islamic "authenticity" envisioned by many smaller Sufi groups. Instead, they want to live with and in the modern world, but want this modernity to retain the kind of "Islamic" character that Sheikh Yassine described in 1998.[5] One can only speculate as to how much moral pressure from the political base Al Adl has so far succeeded in putting on the ruling moderate Islamic Justice and Development Party (PJD). Some observers believe that Al Adl actually influences public opinion more than the PJD.

Salafist Protest in 2012: The fact that their strict, dogmatic injunctions also extend to areas of politics and public life, means that Islamic parties have to find ways of distancing themselves. | Source: Magharebia ⓒⓘ.

As in other North African countries, the main political problem is presented by the Salafists. The commonly-held view throughout the region is that they have been involved in terrorist attacks and that they are in large part responsible for Islam's radical, violent image. In contrast to the moderate Islamists of the ruling PJD, they not only reject political parties, but also the whole idea of politics, democracy and

5 | Abdessalam Yassin, *Islamiser la Modernité*, Rabat, 1998.

a constitutional state under the rule of law. They have no interest in political institutions, human rights or civil liberties. Based on their interpretation of the Koran and the Sunna, and the resulting Sharia laws, they are seeking a "reform of the soul", which they believe is far more important than any reform of the state.[6] When it comes to implementing their vision, they dream of a *tabula rasa* that would effectively allow war to be declared between Salafists and moderate Islamists. An extreme example of this can be seen in the destruction of the mausoleums and holy tombs in Timbuktu, which were places of pilgrimage for many devout Moroccans until well into the 20th century. Both Mali's Salafist groups, Ansar Dine and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, rampaged through the area in May 2012. Their motto at the time was "No to tombs and palaces" – the two most important symbols of superstitious beliefs. Similar destruction took place in Tunisia in 2012.

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The Salafists have been unable to establish a unified, coherent system for their beliefs and ideas on social order anywhere in the Arab world, including Morocco. As long as they refuse to become involved in politics, any such system will remain fragmented, fluid and unclear. In particular, they have generally failed to distance themselves from terrorist violence. In contrast, their harsh internal religious debates regarding codes of conduct, dress and food are based upon a desire to continue to uphold the original practices of the Prophet, but they remain generally baffling to outsiders and are viewed by most Muslims as affected and artificial. The fact that their strict, dogmatic injunctions also extend to areas of politics and public life, and are rarely voiced in peaceful terms, means they not only present a general security problem but also that Islamic parties, in particular, have to find ways of distancing themselves. Salafist followers are estimated to make up one per cent of the whole Islamic population, a figure that also applies to Morocco. However, here they seem to be attempting to present a more politically loyal image following the shock of events

6 | Cf. also: Mohammed Mouaquit, "Marginalité de la charia et centralité de la commanderie des croyants: Le cas paradoxal du Maroc", in: *La charia aujourd'hui. Usages de la référence au droit islamique, sous la direction de Baudouin Dupret*, La Découverte, Paris, 2012, 141-151.

in Egypt and Tunisia.[7] According to officials, the majority of Salafist activists in Morocco either are in prison or at least kept under constant surveillance.

POLITICAL ISLAM AND GOVERNANCE

Since the moderate Islamic PJD was formed in 1998, its representatives have been more interested in politics than religion. Right from the outset, they accepted that the party could only stand for election if it was not known as an "Islamic" party, but as a party "based on Islamic values". Their main motivation was to bring together religion and politics in a new way that promoted social justice and was fundamentally democratic. Following the example of the ruling AKP in Turkey, and in stark contrast to the Salafists, their aim was to bring Islamic values into the framework of a modern constitutional state with the aid of a democratically legitimised party. However, since the 1970s, before this profile of the PJD could take shape, dozens of Islamist groups and organisations had been formed and then either dissolved or been banned. Their adherents often went on to join the PJD in an attempt to effect change from the inside. Today, the adherents present themselves with a predominantly conservative image, although with some socialist and liberal leanings.

The success of the PJD in the last parliamentary elections in November 2011 was due to its repeated promises to bring religious values into politics. Shaped by its goal of creating fair social and economic policies, it also claimed to bring the necessary skills to other areas of policymaking. A new constitution came into force after a referendum on 1 July 2011, which necessitated these early elections to the Lower House. This constitution guaranteed that the king would ask the party that won the most votes in the election to form a government. This task fell to the PJD, which won 107 seats out of a total of 395. Since then, the critical question has been: Is political Islam dictating policy in Morocco?

7 | Vgl. Mohammed Masbah, "Moving towards Political Participation. The Moderation of Moroccan Salafis since the Beginning of the Arab Spring", *SWP Comments* 1, German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), Berlin, Jan 2013, http://swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/comments/2013C01_msb.pdf (accessed 3 Sep 2013).

Even during the coalition talks, the PJD's right to lead was put to the test. The new prime minister and leader of the PJD, Abdelilah Benkirane, was only able to form a ruling coalition on 3 January 2012 due to limited time constraints. Morocco had its first government led by an Islamic party thanks to the support of the conservative, nationalistic Istiqlal Party, the more liberal Mouvement Populaire and the socialist PPS. These coalition partners were approved solely based on parliamentary majorities, irrespective of potential ideological reservations. In the wake of the withdrawal of Istiqlal from the coalition on 7 July 2013, the PJD has been able to continue governing for the time being, but is looking for new partners in the opposition ranks in order to regain a parliamentary majority. The king's vote certainly played its part, but nevertheless, it can be seen as a clear victory for the new constitution and hence for democracy that this crisis has so far been confined to parliament.

Looking back, it is clear that the PJD was not seeking to politicise religion, but vice versa. Its moral conservatism had to be capable of being transformed into policy, so right from the outset, there was going to be conflict with the everyday secularism of Moroccan democracy. It is striking how religious issues took on a totally different significance during the election campaign compared to after the elections. At the same time, the nationalistic tendency of the PJD policies became much more pronounced after the formation of the government. After its victory in the elections, the party barely referred to its original orientation along the lines of the Turkish AKP. Additionally, many of its election promises have been quietly sidelined.

The modest concrete successes that the PJD has achieved in its almost two years in office demonstrate the stability of the existing political structures. The party has managed to adapt to them and has successfully integrated itself into them. The fact that this system is primarily of a secular nature points to a secularisation of political Islam and to the primacy of the political over the religious. The two years since the referendum on the new constitution have seen constructive debate in government and in parliament about its significance and aims, but most of the laws that are needed to carry through

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these aims have not yet been passed. The power-sharing between monarch and prime minister is continually being put to the test. It seems that only a tiny intellectual elite is interested in what the constitution means by secularism and guaranteed personal freedoms. For example, not a single prominent party member has pushed for the reintroduction of the death penalty – particularly for apostasy – as demanded by the Salafists and some of the *Ulema*. As far as the PJD is concerned, democracy and human rights guarantee its political participation.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE MONARCHY

Benkirane's most thorny problem over the last two years seems to have been the issue of how to work together with the monarchy. The king has a critical role to play when it comes to the cohesiveness of Islam in Morocco and its political potential. Ever since the Alaouite dynasty took power in 1631, the Moroccan kings have claimed to be *cherifs*, meaning they can trace their lineage back to Hassan, son of Mohammed's daughter Fatima, and that they are, therefore, direct descendants of the Prophet. This is also the origin of the title Amir Al Mouminine: Prince or Defender of the Faith. Today, this title is contained in Article 41 of the new Moroccan constitution and gives the king the right to make the final decision on all religious issues by decree (*dahir*). Al Adl is the only movement to express criticism of this right publicly.

Mohammed VI in the White House in 2002: The king is not only the referee but also a player, and he usually always wins. | Source: Eric Draper, White House.

With this fall-back, the king not only controls the education of imams, teaching of the Koran and the sermons given at Friday prayers and times of fasting. Indeed, he often seems to be the only person who is still capable of shaping policy. He has appointed a *Ministre Délégué* in the government's seven main ministries, alongside the minister appointed by the prime minister. In every city, region, national institution and, above all, in the Ministry of the Interior, the final decision is made by the *wali*, who is directly appointed by the king. Even the members of the Constitutional Council, which continues to meet behind closed doors, are appointed exclusively by the king. It has only subsequently come to light that the king has been making changes to the constitution, even after the publication of its contents for the purposes of the referendum.

Most observers rate the new constitution as the most democratic one in Moroccan history. The king's prerogatives are limited to religion, security and strategic decisions on policy orientation.

On 9 March 2011, Mohammed VI gave a speech announcing the new constitution, remarkably soon after the protests erupted in Tunisia. This undoubtedly helped the country to take a further step on its path towards democracy. Most observers rate this new constitution as the most democratic one in Moroccan history. It recognises the principle of the separation of powers, guarantees basic rights and freedoms, strengthens the rights of both the government and the parliamentary opposition and covers all the key areas of the political system. The king's prerogatives are limited to religion, security and strategic decisions on policy orientation. However, there is at times the impression that the king not only reigns but also governs and intervenes directly in decision-making by the executive branch. Recently, the weekly newspaper *Telquel* referred to a *monarchie exécutive*, saying that the king is not only the referee but also a player, and he usually always wins.[8]

An important part of the king's policy on Islam is his direct control over the Dar al-Hadith al-Hassaniya, a research institute for religious studies that is known and well-respected beyond Morocco's borders. It was founded by Hassan II in Rabat, partly as a counterweight to the traditionally independent Islamic studies carried out in universities, particularly in Fes. Foreign Minister Saad-Eddine

8 | *Telquel*, 7 Jun 2013, 25 and 28 Jun 2013, 22.

El Othmani and Justice Minister Mustafa Ramid (both PJD) graduated from this institute. The king also heads the Rabita Mohammedi des Oulema, a kind of theological think-tank, and the Majliss Al Ilmi, a study centre for Ulema scholars from the whole of Morocco. Both these centres are based in Rabat. Since 1979, Mohammed VI has also gained recognition in the Arab world by chairing the Comité al Quds, a committee that supports the Palestinian claim to Jerusalem as their capital.

In power as a result of the king's reforms: Prime minister Abdelilah Benkirane (PJD, left), in a conversation with his Spanish colleague Mariano Rajoy. | Source: Magharebia ⓒⓘ.

Despite its role in government, moderate Islam has not pushed through any changes to the established power structures of the Moroccan monarchy – indeed, it has not even attempted to do so. After all, it did not come to power in the face of the monarchy but as a result of the king's reforms. Benkirane's self-evident statement, "L'Etat c'est le Roi", was made in an affirmative rather than a resigned tone. The PJD does not claim to be a mouthpiece for religion against politics. Instead, it is a new player that is now allowed to tread the boards of established power. No doubt Moroccan voters will decide at the next election how well it is playing this role, but until then it is the *Makhzen*, the king's established apparatus of power and control, that will decide on the future of the reforms.

ISLAM – BETWEEN SECULARISM AND DEMOCRACY

As in other predominantly Islamic states, the preamble to Morocco's new constitution and many of its articles stipulate that Islam is the national religion. This means that the decision-making authority is taken out of the hands of government when it comes to religious affairs, leaving such decisions at the sole discretion of the king. The stipulation also does not exclude the possibility of separating religious and political issues.

Even before the constitution's stipulation establishing Morocco as an *Etat musulman souverain*, the first sentence of the preamble states that the kingdom of Morocco is an *Etat de droit démocratique* based on principles *de participation, de pluralisme et de bonne gouverance*. The preamble and many of the subsequent articles also recognise human rights as indivisible and universal. However, any explicit mention of religious freedom is avoided. Article 3 simply guarantees that followers of other religions are free to exercise their religious rituals. This basically means that it is impossible for Muslims in Morocco to convert to another religion.

The de facto secularism that has long characterised Morocco's political culture and that encourages its citizens to believe that democracy is progressing creates a hurdle to Islamic ambitions.

The Islamic government is confronted with the same problems in everyday political life as any other government. The de facto secularism that has long characterised Morocco's political culture and that encourages its citizens to believe democracy is progressing creates a hurdle to Islamic ambitions. The majority of the population are not keen to change the country's existing course with regard to foreign and European policies, the economy and energy issues. Additionally, as far as modern culture is concerned, we need only point to the annual international film festival in Marrakech or the annual Mawazine international music festival in Rabat. For weeks, these two events attract a great deal of public attention, while criticisms on the part of Islamist groups are kept very much in the background. This shows how Islamist notions of cultural policy no longer hold sway in modern, urban Morocco and how the country is increasingly moving towards globalisation in many areas, rather than looking backwards and following the strict interpretations of the Koran.

For Lahcen Oulhaj, former Dean of the Faculty of Law, Social Studies and Economics at Rabat University, there are three main factors underpinning Morocco's secular character which could stand in the way of strict Islamic policies. Firstly, he stresses that it is secularism alone that has enabled the country's political and economic progress, and assured its integration into the global economy. There is no popular support for the kind of religious fundamentalism that attempts to turn back the clock on Morocco's integration. Secondly, he points out that even the 1962 constitution, but more specifically the new 2011 version, guarantees a raft of fundamental rights, human rights as well as gender equality, and bans discrimination on the basis of a secular social order. Every area of the country's economic, political and cultural integration presents the PJD with problems that can only be meaningfully resolved in a secular way. And thirdly, he comments that the majority culture of the Berbers has always been more influenced by individualism and pluralism than by orthodox religion. He points to Jacques Berque, a world expert on the Maghreb, who postulates that the Berbers have done more to "Berberise" Islam than the other way around.[9]

It is necessary to analyse in detail the relationship between politics and religion in each country and each region in line with their historic and current circumstances.

One of the key questions for political Islam in North Africa is surely whether the region's Arab states are able to establish "modern", democratic, and, above all, pluralistic forms of government without a fundamentally secular underlying structure. It is necessary to analyse in detail the relationship between politics and religion in each country and each region in line with their historic and current circumstances. In Morocco, such an analysis quickly leads to the conclusion that a greater Islamic influence in society must be harmonised with a corresponding Islamic influence in politics. There seem to be three positive basic conditions in this respect. Firstly, the country has a strong civil society that demonstrates great social engagement and builds vibrant communities. Secondly, there is widespread desire for more civil liberties and a better standard of living. Thirdly, particularly in business, there is a great willingness to face the challenges of globalisation.

9 | Lahcen Oulhaj, "Une perception du sécularisme au Maroc", in: Farid el Bacha and Helmut Reifeld (eds.), *La Liberté de Religion*, Rabat, 2013, 45-58, here: 55.

In parallel, there is a great deal of debate on religious issues at all levels of Moroccan society. This is not only exemplified by the 20 Février protest movement but also applies to broad circles of the country's educated elite, many of whom sympathised with these protesters but who were not prepared to take to the streets. As previously mentioned, many members of this movement are motivated by religion but are non-violent. Their zeal is not fed by religious fundamentalism but by a desire for religious self-determination and a participative democracy. In this respect, it is a sign of Morocco's democratisation and changing attitudes to religion.

The practices of a religious life have become strongly individualised. There is a growing sense of pragmatism.

The studies carried out by Ayadi, Rachik and Tozy demonstrate that Islam in Morocco – and in other North African countries – has been marked by two strong tendencies over recent years: a renewed claim to power by the state over religion, and a growing fragmentation in many areas of religious life.[10] However, the authors have difficulty in positioning the country between the two main theories of development that have characterised global cultural debate over recent years: the theory of a globally advancing secularisation of societies on the one hand and the "return of religion" on the other. With regard to the first theory they believe insufficient consideration is given to the effects of state-controlled religion on the individual. To the second theory they retort that Morocco has never experienced any phasing-out of religion, so it cannot currently be experiencing a return. They claim religion has always been an element of public life. The change is that religious education has now intensified, particularly among women. But above all, the practices of a religious life have become strongly individualised. There is a growing sense of pragmatism that has been easy to internalise, and its political opportunities have already often been reflected in public life. This also applies to all age groups, even though people often become more dogmatic in their beliefs as they grow older. The authors call for a general understanding of this structural change in the public face of Islam and of people's everyday religious practices in light of the secularisation process.

10 | El Ayadi, Rachik and Tozy, n. 2, 280-289.

With regard to most of the political changes that have taken place in Morocco over the last ten years, it is difficult to explain them primarily or indeed at all based on Islamic religious or cultural ideas. The growing recognition and validity of human rights, the reform of women's laws (*Moudawana*) and, above all, the implementation of the new constitution since 2011 have all been at the instigation of the king. They have not been pushed through in the face of the country's Islamic forces but rather in collaboration with them. Any attempts by certain Islamists to draw up orthodox lines of demarcation have increasingly come into conflict with the forces of globalisation and the country's gradual process of democratisation.

Olivier Roy points out that this conflict ultimately takes place according to Western categorisations. Many Islamists still believe "that they are the embodiment of tradition, but in reality, they are expressing a negative form of Westernisation".[11] He believes this leads first of all to a privatisation of re-Islamisation and secondly, to stricter state monitoring of religious institutions. Under these circumstances, Morocco could also find that increased modernisation and democratisation go hand-in-hand with an increase in personal freedoms. And the earlier the rest of North Africa decides to go down a similar route of "multiple modernities", the earlier there will no longer be any talk of the *éxception marocaine*.

11 | Olivier Roy, *Der islamische Weg nach Westen. Globalisierung, Entwurzelung und Radikalisierung*, Munich, 2006, 36.