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Research Report

Between integration and repression: Government responses to Islamism in the Maghreb

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Isabelle Werenfels

Between Integration and Repression

Government responses to Islamism
in the Maghreb

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**Between Integration and Repression:
Government responses to Islamism in the Maghreb**

A great public debate has broken out in the West, not least as a result of the events of September 11, 2001, and the war in Iraq, over the extent to which the Arab world is capable of sustaining democratic governments or, indeed, whether Islam and democracy are compatible. It tends to be an abstract and highly ideological debate that is, moreover, generally far removed from the political realities in the Arab world. A more instructive way to determine the prospects for democratization is to investigate how Islamists—defined here as actors who base their political activities on an exclusively “Islamic” frame of reference and whose goal is to establish an “Islamic” social and political order—actually behave when they are given the opportunity to participate in the political process, as has been the case in numerous Arab states in recent years, including Morocco and Algeria.

Just a few years ago, Algeria was considered a case study in the calamitous dynamic that can unfold from failed state strategies to fence in Islamist mass movements. Since then the country’s leadership has been pursuing a policy of selective inclusion into the political process. Neighboring Morocco is regarded as the ideal typical case of successful political integration of a formidable Islamist actor and its resulting “domestication.” A third Maghrebian state, Tunisia, has taken an entirely different course by locking Islamists out of the political process completely for the last 15 years, not even allowing them to do charitable work. Consequently, we find in these three states of the Maghreb region—which are direct southern neighbors of the European Union (EU) and which the organization has ties to through association treaties in the framework of the Barcelona Process—three different strategies in the state’s handling of Islamists that essentially have the same goal, namely to weaken Islamist challengers.

This study looks at the governmental strategies of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia and their effects. In doing so, two questions remain at the forefront: what has been the effect of these strategies on the various Islamist actors and their agendas, and what do they mean for the EU’s policies aimed at reform and stability that are being pursued within the frame-

work of the Barcelona Process and the European Neighborhood Policy?

The record of the different strategies supports the thesis that the repression of Islamists creates barriers for achieving profound political reform. The fact that repression in Algeria was destabilizing, while it was seemingly stabilizing in Tunisia, can be attributed to differences in the political cultures of the two countries and to a comprehensive Tunisian strategy of economic and social development. Conversely, a policy of integrating Islamists who support democratic processes is promising in terms of the prospects for political reform. In Algeria and Morocco in the second half of the nineties, such a strategy has resulted in political systems that are, though not democratic, nevertheless more pluralist and competitive. Integration has been shown to have a stabilizing effect in Algeria, while in Morocco it has at least had no clearly destabilizing impact.

Islamist parties not only represent a major part of the population in Algeria and Morocco, they also show great interest in reforms leading toward the rule of law, good governance, and democracy. Those Islamist parties that are participating in the political process have become more pragmatic and willing to compromise ever since they were in a position to lose status and influence and have been forced to deal with real political problems. They are increasingly prepared to put aside their religiously inspired sociopolitical goals when the national interest is at stake. Moreover, in those states in which Islamists have been integrated, there is an increasingly clear division between two factions within the Islamist movement: a dominant one that is nationally oriented and interested in participation and democratic processes, and one that is numerically marginal, violent and transnationally oriented.

If the EU takes seriously the reforms called for in the Barcelona Process, and if it hopes to have its rhetoric on democratization and human rights taken seriously in the Maghreb, it should welcome Islamist participation, and, in the case of Tunisia, it should insist upon the participation of democratically-oriented Islamists. The EU has concrete opportunities, above all within the framework of the Barcelona Process, to support constructive governmental strategies and promising developments among Islamists in each of these three countries. In doing so, the EU should take the following general points into consideration:

- ▶ There is no reason for European actors to apply different standards to Islamists than it does to other actors in these states. Islamists should be judged according to their concrete political behavior and their rhetoric, not on their assumed intentions. Europe should not accept the state's views of these actors, rather it should try to form as clear a picture as possible of its own of the various Islamist actors and their respective goals, agendas, and activities.
- ▶ The interests of the EU in various key policy areas—be it constitutional, voting rights or economic reform or combating corruption—are more closely aligned with those of the Islamists than with portions of the ruling elites. Consequently, it makes sense to also cooperate with Islamist parties and organizations within the framework of MEDA programs.
- ▶ European actors should not downplay differences, rather they should deal with them in a proactive manner. European views on the rights of women and minorities usually differ strongly with those of Islamist parties. This also holds true with regard to anti-Semitism. European actors need to make it absolutely clear that anti-Semitic positions and statements are unacceptable. But this should be expressed through dialogue, not boycotts. If the EU were to refuse to speak with anti-Semitic actors, it would have to boycott the majority of secular parties in the Arab world, too.
- ▶ A policy that seeks to weaken and “domesticate” Islamists through division and/or integration, as in the case of Morocco and Algeria, can only have a sustained stabilizing impact if it is simultaneously accompanied by serious steps toward democratization. If Islamist parties are denied the opportunity to participate in shaping the fate of their countries, there is a danger that their grassroots supporters will turn to more radical actors in the medium term.
- ▶ The governments of all three states violate human rights and make examples of innocent people under the pretext of the fight against terrorism. The EU Commission should therefore tie the allocation of MEDA funds more strongly to the implementation of the desired judicial reforms laid out in the association agreements and to significant advances on human rights issues.

State Strategies towards Islamists

For nearly thirty years, the post-colonial and partially secular ruling elites of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia have been confronted with Islamist challengers, though the intensity has varied over time. The most prominent example is Algeria, where in 1991 the Islamist party FIS (*Front islamique du salut*) won the first parliamentary elections but was prevented from taking power due to the intervention of the military elite. Initially, the Islamist phenomenon (see inset opposite) was in all three states primarily a defensive response to the authoritarian post-colonial elites and their monopoly on power and self-privileging, as well as in opposition to a social and cultural project of these elites that was discredited as “un-Islamic” (see inset on page 8).

Moreover, well into the eighties the ruling Algerian, Moroccan, and Tunisian elites did not view the Islamists as the most threatening opposition group to their grip on power. In their view, the greater danger stemmed from the (radical) leftist forces based in the student and labor union movements. As a result, there was no clear position towards the Islamist movement, not to mention a strategy. The policy oscillated from repression to co-optation, attempts to divide, and a hands-off approach. Following the example of Egypt, the Algerian, Moroccan, and Tunisian ruling elites repeatedly played Islamist actors off of the leftist opposition. It was not until the beginning of the nineties that a coherent strategy began to take shape in all three states. This came in response to the electoral success of Islamist groups in Algeria and Tunisia.

The policy of the ruling Algerian and Moroccan elite aims at weakening the Islamist spectrum in order to maintain their hold on power, though they are careful not to say as much so bluntly. The Tunisian policy goes a step further and seeks, also in an effort to keep their grip on power, to wipe out the Islamist phenomenon altogether. In order to achieve these goals, a multifaceted strategy emerged in all three states in which the still dominant political and national security dimension has been gradually expanded to include socioreligious and, especially in Tunisia, socioeconomic dimensions.

What Are Islamists and What Do They Want?

Islamists are actors who base their political activities on an exclusively Islamic frame of reference, which in each case is subjectively defined. Their overriding goal is the establishment of an Islamic social and political order. Opinions are highly divergent over the concrete vision of this order and with what methods it should be achieved. Although the majority of Islamists favor the implementation of *Shariah*, for some this simply means a method of the judicial process, while others want to see the penal code and the laws governing the civil status of individuals codified in *Shariah* implemented.

The case is similar with another demand of Islamists, namely the institutionalization of *Shura* (consultation). This concept can be used to legitimate a parliamentary democracy as well as traditional ruling advisory councils.* Frequently, even looking at the political programs of Islamic actors does not reveal what precisely is meant by this term.

An additional religiously motivated demand of Islamists is a form of justice that is encompassing in a political and social sense. The various interpretations of what is Islamic are represented in the Maghreb by a broad Islamic spectrum. Today, this ranges from governmental parties whose concrete political agendas ascribe to religion a role similar to that which it plays in conservative Christian parties in Europe, to armed groups that should be labeled as terrorists.

* For further information see Gudrun Krämer, *Gottes Staat als Republik: Reflexionen zeitgenössischer Muslime zu Islam, Menschenrechten und Demokratie* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft), 1999.

The Rise of Islamists in the Maghreb

The strengthening of Islamist movements in the Maghreb began in the late seventies. A decisive factor was the crisis in the respective post-colonial models of development that occurred in connection with specific international developments.* The three states had fundamentally different political systems: Algeria was a military-bureaucratic one-party state, Morocco maintained a feudalist monarchy, and Tunisia boasted a corporatist republic. Still, they shared a series of shortcomings and problems, including lack of political participation and repression of opposition groups; social injustice; a growing demographic imbalance, which, in combination with economic structural problems, led to high rates of youth unemployment; and conflicts of values between Western-oriented (often francophone) elites and the majority of the population. Several of these problems were at least in part a legacy of colonial politics.

The fact that these phenomena played more into the hands of the Islamists than of the leftists is largely related to international developments and influence. These include the defeat of the Arabs in the Israeli-Arab wars, the Islamic revolution in Iran,

the war in Afghanistan (which laid the foundation for a violence-prone Islamist International), the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt, and the end of the East-West conflict. The latter also scuttled the dream of an Arab nationalist or socialist utopia. The resulting ideological lack of orientation—combined with country-specific crises in social values and economic shocks—prepared a fruitful breeding ground for national Islamist social movements. Finally, the two US-led international coalitions in wars against Iraq in 1991 and 2003 have also strengthened Islamist movements in the Maghreb. The current Iraq war remains, along with the continuing Israeli occupation of Palestine, a central factor that boosts Islamist movements, or at least their propaganda efforts.

* For further information see International Crisis Group, *Islamism in North Africa I: The Legacies of History*, ICG Middle East and North Africa Briefing (Cairo/Brussels: April 20, 2004); Sigrid Faath, "Islamismus in den Maghrebstaaten. Eine Denkrichtung mit mehr Vergangenheit als Zukunft?," in *Religiöser Fundamentalismus. Vom Kolonialismus zur Globalisierung*, Querschnitte, Vol. 16, eds. Clemens Six, Martin Riesebrodt, and Siegfried Haas (Innsbruck: 2005), 163–184.

Algeria: Lessons Learned from Failed Attempts at Eradication

The way Algeria deals with Islamist forces today is the result of the lessons of a long process of trial and error that can be broken down into three phases.¹ In the

1 For further literature on the relationship between the state and Islamists see Séverine Labat, *Les islamistes algériens. Entre les urnes et le maquis* (Paris: 1995); Noura Hamladji, *Co-optation, Repression and an Authoritarian Regime's Survival: The Case of the Islamist MSP-Hamas in Algeria*, EUI Working Paper, SPS No. 7 (Badia Fiesolana, San Domenico: European University Institute, 2002); Hugh Roberts, *The Battlefield Algeria 1988–2002: Studies in a Broken Polity* (London/New York: 2003); Frédéric Volpi, *Islam and Democracy: The Failure of Dialogue in Algeria* (London/Sterling: 2003); Michael Willis, *The Islamist Challenge in Algeria: A Political History* (Berkshire: 1996); Khadija Katja Wöhler-Khalfallah, *Der Fall Algerien*, (Wiesbaden: 2004), especially the chapter "Der islamische Fundamentalismus, der Islam und die Demokratie. Algerien und Tunesien: Das Scheitern postkolonialer 'Entwicklungsmodelle' und das Streben nach einem ethischen Leitfaden für Politik und Gesellschaft," 51–340.

first phase, which began with independence in 1962 and ended in 1991, a strengthening of the Islamist movement took place. Although the political elites of the period did not react uniformly, a policy of piecemeal concessions to the Islamists crystallized over time. For example, the Family Code and law governing the civil status of individuals enacted in 1984, which is conservative even when compared to other Arab societies, was aligned to a rigid interpretation of Islamic legal sources and is highly discriminatory and patronizing towards women. In addition, in the course of the political opening that took place in 1989—which was by far the furthest the Arab world had witnessed up to that point—the president at the time, Chadli Bendjedid, legalized Islamist parties, despite the fact that this contradicted the law governing political parties. Much suggests that the ruling elites were using such measures in an attempt to diffuse the growing social tension and to weaken the leftist and explicitly democratically-oriented parties. A faction of the elites hoped to maintain their suprem-

acy in the new multi-party system with the help of an Islamist junior partner.

The triumphant electoral victory of the FIS in the first free local elections in Algeria in 1990 made it clear that this strategy had not worked. The socio-political views of the FIS—for example in terms of the legal status and social role of women—were fundamentally different from those of the ruling franco-phone elite. In addition, the radical wing of the FIS made no secret of their intention to use the democratic process in order to achieve an electoral victory and then to dismantle that very same process. When the FIS also won the first round of the parliamentary elections by an overwhelming majority in 1991, the military elite stepped in the name of “maintaining democracy.” They forced the president to resign, cancelled the elections, declared a state of emergency (which has not been lifted to this day)², banned the FIS, replaced all elected institutions with appointed bodies, and took over political control of the state.³ This heralded the second phase of the state’s engagement of Islamists.

Paradoxically, the military terminated the democratic process with the alleged intention of saving democracy. A small portion of FIS activists and supporters, including hundreds of former fighters in Afghanistan, went underground and took up arms. By the end of 1993, the prevailing conditions in the country could be described as civil war.⁴

The Political and National Security Dimension

It is doubtful that the new Algerian leadership—in which the generals had the final say—was truly interested in democracy. While the generals negotiated with the imprisoned FIS leadership over an end to the violence up until 1995, they rejected political solutions, such as the promising Platform of Rome. This was an agenda for national reconciliation and

democratization that had been signed by all important parties, including the former party of national unity, *Front de libération nationale* (FLN),⁵ and the FIS under the auspices of the Roman Community of St. Egidio. Their goal, rather, was to eradicate⁶ the FIS and all groups associated with it through military and police force and infiltration. The (unofficial) slogan of this policy was “terroriser le terroriste” (terrorize the terrorists), and it resulted in massive human rights abuses, including summary executions.⁷ More than 6000 victims of this policy are still officially regarded as missing.

The reaction of the West, and especially of the former colonial power France, to the end of the democratic experiment and the massive repression of the Islamists was decidedly reserved. Those in power in Algeria succeeded in stoking European and American fears of an Islamist theocracy à la Iran. They portrayed the FIS as a homogeneous block opposed to democracy and prone to violence. The increasing brutality and indiscriminate violence of the armed Islamist groups played right in to the hands of the propagandists who had drawn this caricature of the party. Former Algerian military and secret service officers also claimed in publications that the Algerian secret service had, in their efforts to discredit Islamists nationally and internationally, infiltrated the *Groupe ment islamique armé* (GIA) and provoked them to conduct a series of attacks in Algeria and France.⁸ Such claims can neither be discounted out of hand, nor can they be verified.

In the second half of the nineties a change of strategy became apparent and with it the third phase began. In addition to repression, efforts were stepped up to further fragment the already divided Islamist spectrum and completely isolate the FIS. The generals co-opted selected Islamists into important offices and involved the Islamist parties MSP (*Mouvement pour la paix sociale*, formerly *Hamas*) and *Ennahda* (Renaissance)

2 This allowed among other things the Interior Ministry and the regional prefectures the right to curtail the freedom of expression and association in the name of fighting terrorism.

3 This change of course was already apparent prior to the elections when the two leaders of the FIS were arrested in the summer of 1991. After the elections were canceled, more than 9000 people were interned in camps in the Sahara, including elected FIS local politicians, party officials, activists, and supporters.

4 For an excellent handling of the civil war see Martínez, Luis, *The Algerian Civil War 1990–1998*, London: 2000.

5 At this point in time the FLN leadership had joined the opposition even though there were party members sitting in the Cabinet.

6 The hardliners among the generals were hence commonly called the “*éradicateurs*” (the Liquidators).

7 See Amnesty International, Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l’homme, Human Rights Watch, Reporters sans frontières, *Algérie. Le vivre noir* (Paris: 1998).

8 The publications referred to include: Mohammed Samraoui, *Chronique des années de sang. Algérie: comment les services secrets ont manipulé islamistes* (Paris: 2003); Habib Souaïdia, *La sale guerre. Le témoignage d’un ancien officier des forces spéciales de l’armée algérienne, 1992–2000* (Paris: 2001).

Table 1
Algeria: Most Important Islamist Parties

Party/Organization	Official Status	Strength in 2005	Characteristics
MSP (ex-Hamas) (Mouvement de la société pour la paix) Founded 1990	Recognized since 1991; represented in parliament and the government since 1997	Fourth strongest party in parliament; 2002 Election: 38 seats; 1997 Election: 69 seats; 5 seats in the government	Pragmatic governmental party; proponent of democratic process; seeks stronger entrenchment of Islamic values in society; fairly liberal economic platform
MRN/el-Islah (Mouvement de la réforme nationale)	Recognized since 1999; Split from Ennahda in 1999	Third strongest party in parliament; strongest legal Islamist party; 2002 Election: 43 seats (one female representative)	Populist opposition party supportive of the political system; strives for Islamization of society; less pragmatic than MSP; in favor of a state-run command economy; plays by democratic rules of the game
Ennahda (Renaissance) Founded 1988	Recognized since 1990	Prior to the split with the MRN (1999) Ennahda was the fourth strongest party in parliament; 2002 Election: 1 seat 1997 Election: 34 seats	Former governmental party supportive of the political system; not much by way of a concrete program; strives for deeper entrenchment of Islamist values in society; proponent of democratic processes
FIS (Front islamique du salut) Founded 1989	Banned since March 1992, after electoral victory in the first round of 1991 parliamentary elections	Unknown; continues to have a foothold within portions of its former electorate of 1991	Radical opposition party, split into numerous wings, some of which reject the existing political system; nowadays its discourse is primarily democratically-oriented and almost entirely rejects violence; supports the Islamization of society and government (Islamic state); political platform lacks uniformity

sance)⁹ in the 1997 elections—the first since 1991—and in the governing coalition. Both parties differed only marginally from the FIS in terms of their sociopolitical goals, but very clearly in terms of their strategies. They relied on compromise rather than confrontation and rejected the use of force. In 1991, the MSP and *Ennahda* had been unsuccessful competitors of the FIS, and they possessed little mobilization capacity at the time of their co-optation.¹⁰

⁹ As a matter of simplicity, for the purposes of this study the transcriptions used by the actors themselves will be used for Arabic names.

¹⁰ *Wafa*, a party with potentially strong mobilization capacity, is less radical in terms of its sociopolitical agenda than the legal Islamist parties. Nevertheless it has been

The military leadership not only co-opted former FIS competitors, they also negotiated over a ceasefire with their military wing in 1997, but not with the GIA and the GSPC (*Groupe salafiste pour la prédication et la combat*).¹¹ Two years later, after President Bouteflika had taken office, the Law on Civil Concord established

waiting to be legalized by the Interior Ministry since 1999. The party head of *Wafa* is the long-term minister and former FLN regime insider Taleb Ibrahim, who could equally be characterized as an Arab nationalist. The constitutional commission excluded him from participating in the 2004 presidential election on questionable formal grounds.

¹¹ More on the military strategies vis-a-vis these groups can be found in *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 12 (December 2003) 15: 10–15.

the modalities for Islamists in the underground to lay down their arms. It was passed by a great majority in a referendum, and when it came into effect, the president decreed an amnesty.

This change in strategy was not only a consequence of the poor record of the massive repression, it was also an attempt to broaden the national legitimacy of the military regime and to put an end to the international isolation into which Algeria had slid due to its violent conflicts.¹² The Algerian generals have also been trying to move the international rehabilitation of the Algerian regime forward since the events of September 11, 2001, by portraying Algeria as an early victim of international terrorism. In this way, they are trying to justify their strategy of repression against the FIS *ex post facto* and to let the international community's memory of the homegrown causes of the civil war to fade away.¹³

The new national Charter for Peace and Reconciliation, which was accepted by 97% of the voters at the end of September 2005, can be considered an attempt by President Bouteflika to close the book on the civil war and the FIS.¹⁴ The charter, essentially an expanded new version of the Law on Civil Concord, exempts from punishment armed Islamists who were not involved in massacres, attacks on public places, or rape, and offers them amnesty. Moreover, the state declares in the document that it is "responsible for, but not guilty of" the disappearance of Islamists and contains an offer to provide compensatory payments. The charter explicitly blocks the former leadership of the FIS from political involvement and ascribes to them all the blame for the outbreak of violence. The principal (hidden) interest of the authors of the document is the impunity granted to members of the security forces who were involved in massive human rights abuses. As such, the initiative is neither likely to lead to any fundamental accounting of the civil war nor

to a coming to terms with the past. But, it could contribute to a further containment of the violence.

The Socioreligious Dimension

In its fight against the FIS, the Algerian state tried to seize control over the religious sector and influence religious discourse. Since the beginning of the nineties the official anti-Islamist discourse maintains that Islamism was a foreign import that has nothing to do with the traditional Algerian "folk Islam" with its mystic influences.¹⁵ The Algerian authorities point to the external influence of Egyptian and Syrian teachers who were brought to Algeria during the "Arabization" in the sixties and seventies, to Saudi-financed mosques and preachers, and, not least, to Algerians who became followers of a religious International in Afghanistan. Such claims are not entirely without foundation.

Nevertheless, the ruling elites did not develop a religious policy that went beyond security measures—in the form of control of mosques and prosecution of preachers who espouse hate and violence and are not recognized by the state—until the late 1990s, and even then it remained incoherent. In 1998 a high religious council was established with the goal of, among other things, "correcting national and international erroneous perceptions of Islam".¹⁶ Since President Bouteflika took office in 1999 the government has also intensified efforts to revive Algerian "folk Islam," basically in order to counteract political and conservative interpretations of the Koran. One instrument of this policy involves support for the Sufi brotherhoods, which had been marginalized for decades. Now, however, they receive generous financial backing from the state and their property, which had been expropriated in the aftermath of independence, is being gradually returned to them.

In addition, an ambitious educational reform program elaborated by a presidential commission in 2002 aims at conveying, among other things, universal values and an apolitical understanding of religion. But to date this program has been implemented only partially and incoherently. Religious

¹² In the second half of the nineties intensive media campaigns, particularly in France, were conducted against the Algerian military regime by Algerians in the opposition and international human rights organizations.

¹³ Not least, the events of September 11, 2001, brought about a strategic alignment with the US. Since then, Algeria has worked closely together with the US in the fight against international terrorism and within the framework of the Pansahel Initiative launched by the US—not only on Algerian ground, but also in neighboring states of the Sahel region.

¹⁴ The text of the charter is available on the Internet at <http://193.194.78.233/ma_fr/stories.php?story=05/08/16/8641027>.

¹⁵ What is meant here is the form of Islam practiced in Algeria (and Tunisia) that is an amalgam of written Islam, the worship of saints, and Sufism.

¹⁶ For the prerogatives of this council, see http://www.joradp.dz/J08499/1998/004/F_Pag.htm.

education in primary school has been replaced by a course in civic education, and in spring 2005 the special baccalauréat (A-levels) in Islamic Studies was abolished. In January 2006, however, the Minister of Education announced that Islamic Studies would be reintroduced into the curricula of the primary schools.¹⁷ Since coming to power, Bouteflika has tried to find a balance between moving forward with social and religious reforms and not raising the ire of socially conservative circles (which includes not only the Islamists). That is why the reform of the family law which came into effect in 2005 brought little substantial change.¹⁸ In a clear concession to the conservatives, French was forbidden as the main language of instruction even in private schools in 2005.

The Socioeconomic Dimension

After 1992, Algeria's political elite rightly identified social discrimination, high unemployment, and decades-long state mismanagement of resources as factors that played into the hands of (radical) Islamist actors.¹⁹ Yet in Algeria—in contrast to Tunisia—no coherent, sector-bridging policy aimed at reclaiming lost social ground was developed. But the virtually continuous rise in oil prices since the end of the nineties has made it possible to dramatically raise state expenditures and selective distribution of considerable funds which have served to increase social satisfaction and buy political loyalty.²⁰ The funds have gone into, among other things, alleviating housing and water shortages, and reforms of the broken-down health system. Since 2005 an ambitious new state-development program is underway: 55 billion dollars are to be spent until 2009 on labor intensive projects such as one million new housing units in cities and the provision of basic infrastructure in rural areas.²¹

¹⁷ See *Liberté*, 24 January 2006.

¹⁸ Polygamy, for example, is still legal and a woman still needs a legal guardian if she wants to get married; see *Le Monde*, 25 February 2005.

¹⁹ This was made clear during interviews which the author has conducted with five prime ministers of the last decade, including the acting PM Ahmed Ouyahia.

²⁰ In the run-up to the 2002 presidential elections Bouteflika and a series of Algerian ministers toured through various provinces and promised up to 50 million euros from special funds for housing, education and health care projects. See *Le Matin*, 15 July 2003; *Quotidien d'Oran*, 8 September 2003.

²¹ See *Le Monde*, 25 June 2005.

Morocco: Carefully Orchestrated Integration

When the civil war broke out in Algeria, the then ruling Moroccan King Hassan II declared to a Saudi newspaper that he regretted the cancellation of the elections in Algeria, noting that the country could have become an experimental laboratory for overcoming the internal contradictions of religious extremism.²² Hassan II also did not shy away from meeting the FIS leader Abbassi Madani in Algiers in 1990. Although such comments and actions were probably primarily intended as side-swipes at the Algerian rulers who supported the independence aspirations of Western Sahara²³, they are also evidence of the greater faith of the Moroccan king in his own political power, which is based on the specific construction of the Moroccan monarchy. The Moroccan royal family is directly descended from the prophet Mohamed. The king claims not only to be the political leader of the nation, but also its religious leader, with a monopoly on religious affairs and interpretation.²⁴ With few exceptions, not even Islamists who have confronted the state have simultaneously publicly questioned the political and religious legitimacy of the king.

Morocco also went through several phases in its dealings with Islamists.²⁵ In the first phase from the end of the seventies until the beginning of the nineties, the royal palace followed no clear strategy, apart from attempts to divide. Some Islamists were co-opted into public office while others were tolerated. Those

²² See *Le Monde*, 4 September 1994.

²³ Morocco occupied Western Sahara in 1975 after the withdrawal of the Spanish colonial powers. Since then, the liberation front Polisario has been fighting for the independence of Western Sahara, originally in armed battle but now through peaceful means. The movement has its "headquarters" in southern Algeria. Morocco has yet to approve a concrete plan proposed by the UN in 2003 for a referendum to determine whether the area become independent, autonomous or a part of Morocco.

²⁴ According to Article 19 of the Moroccan constitution, the king is "Commander of the Faithful" (*amir al mu'minin*) and the "Supreme Representative of the Nation"; In addition, Article 23 declares the king to be "sacred" and "inviolable."

²⁵ For background information, see Hanspeter Mattes, *Aktionsfeld Religion. Das Kräftefeld zwischen Islamisten und dem neuen König in Marokko* (Hamburg: Deutsches Orient-Institut, October 2001), <<http://www.menavision2010.org/dokumente/tp5-aspekte-sechs.pdf>>; Mohamed Tozy, *Monarchie et islam politique au Maroc* (Paris: 1999); Pierre Vermeren, "Dans le nouveau Maroc, le Palais seul face aux islamistes?," *Esprit* 308, (October 2004): 103–114; Malika Zeghal, *Les islamistes marocains. Le défi à la monarchie* (Paris: 2005).

Table 2
Morocco: The Most Important Islamist Parties and Organizations

Party/Organisation	Official Status	Strength in 2005	Characteristics
PJD (Parti de la justice et du développement), formerly MPDC (Mouvement populaire démocratique et constitutionnel)	Legal	Third strongest party in parliament; 2002 election: 42 seats, including 5 for women; 1997 election: 9 seats	Pragmatic opposition party that supports the political system; accepts monarchy in its current form; proponent of democratic processes; strives for deeper entrenchment of religious norms in politics and society; holds nationalist position on the issue of Western Sahara.
Exists under this name since 1999; Islamists accepted in MPDC in 1996			
At-Tawhid Wal-Islah/MUR (Mouvement unicité et réforme), cultural, social, and political association	Not legalized, but tolerated	Unknown	Extraparliamentary wing of the PJD; more radical sociopolitical stance; strives for thorough renewal of society based on “genuine” Islamic values; has reservations about Western models of democracy
Exists under this name since 1996			
Al-Badil Al-Hadari (Cultural Alternative), political party	Legalized in June 2005	Unknown because have not yet participated in any elections.	Opposition party supportive of the political system; left-wing Arab nationalists with ecological platform; supports stronger entrenchment of religious values in society.
Exists since 1995			
Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan (Justice and Welfare), cultural, political, and religious association	Banned in 1990, although never legalized; existence is tolerated	No exact numbers known; is a strong mobilizing force in demonstrations	Opposition movement with its own Islamist doctrine; critical of the king’s monopoly on religion; propagates the Islamization of society and politics; no concrete political platform; rejects violence as a means of politics
Exists since 1986			

that were repressed were above all the members of Islamist youth organizations who were involved in violent confrontations with leftists at the universities.

A differentiated strategy crystallized in the nineties, marking a second phase which took place in the context of the political opening initiated by Hassan II and in view of the dramatic developments in Algeria. Moroccan officials considered Algeria’s strategy a mistake on two counts: At first, democratization was too rapid and too far reaching, and then this was followed by too harsh of a crackdown. On the one hand, the new Moroccan strategy aimed at “domesticating” actors who were loyal to the monarchy by integrating them into the political process. On the other hand, the

royal palace tried to pacify opposition Islamists by taking a (largely) hands-off approach. The overriding goal of the monarchy remained the division of the Islamists. Since the death of Hassan II in 1999, his son Mohamed VI has continued this policy. With the attacks in Casablanca on May 16, 2003—in which 43 people (including 12 perpetrators) were killed and which were carried out by Moroccans with connections to international terrorist networks²⁶—the third phase began which continues to this day. In this latest

²⁶ According to Moroccan officials, responsibility for the attacks lies with the so-called *Salafya Djihadia*. This, however, is actually an ideology and not an organization.

phase, the royal palace has abandoned its tolerance of the radical wing.

The Political and National Security Dimension

The participation of Islamists in Moroccan politics is carefully orchestrated by the king and subject to clear rules of the game set by the royal palace. These include loyalty to the monarchy in its present form and firm adherence to the state's position on the sacrosanct issue of Western Sahara. Islamists were first allowed to compete in parliamentary elections in 1997, though not with their own political party. On the king's initiative, the MPDC (*Mouvement populaire démocratique et constitutionnel*), a party close to the royal palace, opened itself up to Islamists and won nine of the 325 seats. Prior to the 2002 elections, as the prospects looked good for a major success for the party, which had since been renamed PJD (*Parti de la justice et du développement*) and was dominated by Islamists, the Interior Minister hinted to them that they should not compete in all electoral districts. The fact that the PJD—which did not describe itself as Islamist, but rather simply as a “party with Islamic leanings”—did in fact opt for voluntary underrepresentation and chose to do the same in the local elections in 2003, has a great deal to do with the consequences of the FIS electoral victory in Algeria.²⁷

Islamists who reject the current political system in Morocco are either not officially recognized or banned, but they are tolerated as long as they distance themselves from violence and don't publicly challenge the monarchy. The Islamist organization *Al-Adl-Wal-Ihsam* (Justice and Welfare), which has the strongest mobilization capacity of any Islamist organization in Morocco, is an example, having officially rejected violence as a means of achieving their goals since 1996.²⁸ Their leader, Abdeslam Yassine, has formulated his own mystic-influenced Islamic doctrine which calls for all areas of life to be governed by God's law. But he has yet to present a concrete political platform.²⁹

²⁷ Interview with Mustafa Ramid, former PJD party whip, in Casablanca, May 2005.

²⁸ *Al-Adl* does not reveal publicly how many members it has, but according to Moroccan officials and Islamism experts their mobilization capacity at demonstrations surpasses that of the PJD.

²⁹ See Hanspeter Mattes, “Die politischen Auswirkungen des 11. September in Nordafrika,” (Hamburg: Deutsches Orient-

From 1989 to 2000, Yassine was under house arrest because he refused to recognize the constitution.³⁰ Proceedings against his daughter were also opened in July 2005 after she declared in a Moroccan newspaper that the country was not meant to be a monarchy. But school teachers and university professors in the ranks of the *Al-Adl* who don't make public pronouncements against the monarchy can work without interference and talk openly, even to an international audience. The state's strategy with this tolerance seems to be to avoid excluding the organization to such an extent that it becomes radicalized. This is all the more important given that *Al-Adl* can play a key role in moderating the behavior of potentially violent youth because of their established position among the country's less-privileged.

The attacks on Casablanca have led the state to modify its strategy. The king announced the end of the era of tolerance and had a far-reaching anti-terror law passed by parliament. This resulted in the arrest of several thousand Islamist activists who were prosecuted in summary proceedings, with some also being subjected to abuse. There are still today some 1000 Moroccans sitting in prison who are accused of having some connection to the attacks. The guilt of many of them is far from having been proved.³¹ At the same time, the king continues to pursue the policy of integrating moderate Islamists following the attacks. He did not ban the PJD—even though some had called for such a move—and in June 2005 he allowed the legalization of *Al-Badil al-Hadari* (Cultural Initiative) as the country's second Islamist party, in this case one which finds its support more among left-wing Islamist intellectuals. Among other things, this was probably done in order to create an Islamist competitor to the successful PJD.

Institut: April 2002), available at the website of Edition Wuquf, <<http://www.wuquf.de/wuquf-online-analyse-6.pdf>>.

³⁰ During the same period, however, numerous fruitless attempts were made to co-opt the *Al-Adl* leader.

³¹ On the issue of human rights abuses in Morocco and the problematic implications of the law see Comité Contre la Torture Maroc, “Observations et recommandations relatives au rapport gouvernemental du Maroc en vertu de la Convention contre la torture et autres peines ou traitements cruels, inhumains ou dégradants,” (Geneva/Rabat: October 2003), <<http://www.fidh.org/magmoyen/rapport/2003/ma2011f.pdf>>.

The Socioreligious Dimension

Moroccan officials believe the increased strength of the Islamists in general and their violent tendencies in particular is due to both internal and external factors.³² Poverty, unemployment and lack of education, the role of Saudi-influenced Salafist preachers, and the importation of “un-Moroccan” religious teachings broadcast over Arab satellite TV are among the frequently cited factors.³³ Mohamed VI is trying to address these problems by modernizing society. The most important social reform to date has been the enactment of a new family law, which is progressive by Arab standards.³⁴ The young monarch’s other tactic has been to embark on a new path for the state’s religious policy. In 2002 he appointed a religious “modernist,” who is also a member of the Sufi brotherhood, to head the Ministry of Religion. Under Hassan II, the influence of Islamists within this ministry had steadily grown as the result of his policy of co-optation, which sought to make monarchists out of Islamists. The Ministry of Religion had tended to view negatively the society’s traditional, deep-rooted religious practices and structures, including worshipping saints and the Sufi brotherhoods, both of which represented a potential counterweight to Islamism.³⁵

Since 2002, the new Minister of Religion has confronted the various Islamist groupings with a religious “counter project.” The main components of this project are the traditional, strongly mystic “folk Islam” and Koranic interpretations that emphasize tolerance and pluralism. The latter is supported by “Radio Holy Koran,” established in 2004, and a state-run religious TV station that went on air in October 2005. Traditional Koranic schools at the primary school level have been integrated into the public

³² Interviews with various ministries in Rabat, May 2005.

³³ The claim that 40% of the approximately 35,000 mosques in 2001 were under the influence of radical preachers who were often influenced by Saudi Wahabism (see. Vermeren, *Dans le nouveau Maroc*, p. 107) is questionable. That notwithstanding, the presence of radical preachers in Morocco does stand out.

³⁴ Wives are no longer required to obey their husbands, they are equally responsible for maintaining the household and family, cannot be simply cast out and can more easily be granted divorce. Polygamy was not made illegal, but practicing it was made more difficult.

³⁵ Last but not least, the Arabization of the curriculum, the repression of instruction in philosophy and the concomitant support for Koranic instruction played into the hands of the Islamists.

school system. In addition, the Council of Religious Scholars, which is appointed by the king and has been the only body allowed to declare fatwas since 2004, is to be expanded with councils at the local level and the integration of female religious scholars, making it more open and closer to the grassroots.³⁶ The state is also trying to prevent the influence of Islamists on uneducated sectors of the society by providing literacy courses in mosques, something that was once the preserve of the Islamists. Last but not least, some of the most radical preachers were arrested in 2003.³⁷

Along with the reforms, the state has granted to the Islamists some partial concessions on moral issues that are of a more tactical than strategic nature. For example, permissive films are banned and the ban on alcohol in areas surrounding religious institutions has been expanded. Another concession made primarily in response to the sensibilities of the Islamists was the postponement of the king’s wedding due to the Israeli attacks in the West Bank in 2002. With such gestures, the royal palace is trying to counteract the impression that it is too friendly towards Israel.

The Socioeconomic Dimension

Following the attacks of May 2003, domestic and foreign attention focused on the belt of poverty around the city of Casablanca where the majority of the attackers came from. As a result, the government has massively increased police presence in these areas and begun to improve the infrastructure in the so called *Bidonvilles*—not only in Casablanca. In some cases, the sprawling, often makeshift accommodations in these areas are being replaced by government housing projects. In addition, the king announced in May 2005 the *Initiative nationale pour le développement humain* (INDH), which is directed against social marginalization and strives to bring about an improvement in living conditions in 360 of the poorest rural communities and 250 of the poorest urban areas by 2010.³⁸ Social integration is another intended function of the INDH: Following the Tunisian model,

³⁶ See *Dahir* no. 1-03-193; *Dahir* no. 1-03-300.

³⁷ Among them is also Mohamed Fizazi, who attracted attention at the end of the nineties for his radical preaching, including at, among other places, the mosque in Hamburg which was frequently attended by the perpetrators of the September 11th attacks.

³⁸ The INDH has a budget of around one billion euros and is also supported by the World Bank.

the initiative is to incorporate not only national and local government institutions, but also political parties, labor unions, NGOs, and individual citizens. While the initiative should not be interpreted as a direct response to radical Islamism, in the long term the state unquestionably intends to destroy the breeding ground for Islamist mass movements by adopting the issues and concerns of the Islamists as its own.

Tunisia: From Dialogue to a Strategy of Zero Tolerance

Tunisian policy towards Islamists differs markedly from that of Algeria and Morocco. To a certain extent, Tunisia has chosen the opposite path and has since 1990 been pursuing a strategy of zero tolerance, following a short phase of tolerance and integration of Islamists at the end of the eighties.³⁹ Before 1980, Tunisia also had no clear position towards the still new phenomenon of Islamism. The founder of the Tunisian state, Habib Bourguiba, systematically pushed forward a policy of radical social modernization that is frequently compared with Attaturk's policies, although Bourguiba did not go as far in pushing back religion.⁴⁰ Islamists, who beginning in 1970 were initially active in a cultural association, enjoyed considerable support within the political establishment. Although the Tunisian Islamist movement's ideological roots are in part to be found in the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, it developed on the whole into a more pragmatic movement in its approach to concrete social issues, such as women's rights.

At the beginning of the eighties, on the heels of the Iranian revolution, the Islamists began to strive

³⁹ For further literature on the subject, see Michel Camau and Vincent Geisser, *Le syndrome autoritaire. Politique en Tunisie de Bourguiba à Ben Ali* (Paris: 2003); Sigrid Faath, "Der 7.11.1987: Beginn einer 'neuen Ära' für die politische Opposition in Tunesien?," *Wuquf* 12 (Hamburg: 1999): 125–171; Cecil Jolly, "Tunisie: Du MTI au Nahda," *Les Cahiers de L'Orient* 38, (2nd Trimester 1995): 19–40; Lotfi Hadji, *Burquiba wa-l-islam. Az-za'ama wa-l-imama [Bourguiba und der Islam. Die Führerschaft und das Imamats]* (Tunis: 2004); Michael A. Köhler, "Islamismus und Autoritarismus in Tunesien," *KAS-Auslandsinformationen*, 8 (March 1992) 3: 12–24; Khadija Katja Wöhler-Khalfallah, "Der islamische Fundamentalismus, der Islam und die Demokratie," in *Der Fall Tunesien*: 341–432.
⁴⁰ See Abderrahim Lamchichi, "Laïcité autoritaire en Tunisie et Turquie," *Confluences Méditerranée* 33, (Spring 2000): 35–57.

for political participation and the majority of them organized themselves into the MTI (*Mouvement de la tendance islamique*). When they started to have conflicts with labor unions, the government reacted alternately with repression and attempts at co-optation. The policy of repression reached an initial high point in 1987 following attacks on tourist hotels which caused some injuries. The attacks were not committed by the MTI, but rather by a radical splinter group.

A new phase in relations with Islamists began with the ascension to power of Zine el-Abedine Bel Ali, who deposed the aging Bourguiba in a "medical coup" at the end of 1987 and who continues to rule to this day.

The Political and National Security Dimension

Ironically, Ben Ali was celebrated as the liberator of the Islamists when he took power, despite the fact that as Interior Minister under Bourguiba he was responsible for co-orchestrating the campaign of repression against them. As State President he granted amnesty to the incarcerated leader of the MTI, brought MTI representatives into the national Higher Islamic Council, legalized the Islamist student movement, and involved the MTI in negotiations over a national pact. Ben Ali's new policy was more the result of a change in strategy than a change in beliefs. Members of the Islamist opposition—who, thanks to a strategy of infiltration inspired by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, were present in all state institutions, from the boy scouts and labor unions to the army and ministries—were expected to become loyal supporters of the regime through participation. In the parliamentary elections of April 1989, in which the MTI, which had since been renamed *Al-Nahda* (Renaissance), was not allowed to participate, independent Islamist candidates won some 30% of the votes in Tunis and other cities, and 13% nationwide.

The Islamist electoral success was the final straw that heralded in a strategic change towards a policy of zero tolerance, which was stepped up due to a series of events in 1990-1991. Among them were violent Islamist demonstrations, an attack by Islamists on the office of the ruling party in 1991, and the fear of developments similar to those in neighboring Algeria, where the FIS seemed poised to take over power. In this third phase, the infrastructure of Nahda was destroyed. A propaganda war against all Islamists was launched which continues to this day, including

Table 3
Tunisia: Most Important Islamist Actors

Actor	Official Status	Strength in 2005	Characteristics
<p>Al-Nahda (Renaissance), political party</p> <p>Founded in 1989 Successor organization to the MTI (Mouvement de la tendance isla- mique), which has been in existence since 1979</p>	Never recognized	Unknown because they are not allowed to organize; weaker basis within the population than in 1989 when candidates close to Nahda got 13.5% of the votes in parliamentary elections	Discourse is supportive of the political system; pragmatic; strives for political participation; conservative values, but sociopolitically progressive in comparison with other Islamists; democratic-oriented discourse, categorically rejects violence.
<p>Progressive Islamists No organizational structure, with the exception of the association Nadi al-Jahath (Club of Jahath)</p> <p>In existence as a movement since the end of the seventies</p>	Nadi al-Jahath recognized since 1990	Unknown, numerically of little importance	Intellectual opposition reform movement; seeks Islamic-inspired solutions to crises in values and identity; accepts cultural pluralism; democratically oriented; politically left-wing; has kept a low profile since the beginning of the nineties

against so-called progressive Islamists, who represent an intellectual avant-garde among Arab Islamists. Around 8000 Nahda followers were arrested and in many cases tortured;⁴¹ some 500 Islamists are still imprisoned. Furthermore, all Islamist publications and charitable organizations—even if they were not close to Nahda—were banned, and police spying on the entire Tunisian population has increased.

In 1990 and 1991, a government propaganda campaign disclosed alleged terrorist involvement of Nahda and their plans to overthrow the government.⁴² It is hard to tell whether this information was fabricated. In any case, it served to discredit Nahda at the national and international level. To this day, Islamism is considered the equivalent of terrorism by Tunisian officials⁴³ and moderate Islamism is considered a con-

tradition in terms.⁴⁴ On a regular basis, examples are made of alleged terrorists, most recently in 2004 when six teenage Internet users, including a German-Tunisian, were sentenced to long prison terms in a dubious judicial process for supposedly planning attacks.⁴⁵

Officially nothing has changed in Tunisia’s policy towards Islamists since the beginning of the nineties. But the increasing pressure to democratize, which above all the US is applying to Arab countries⁴⁶, and the new American and European policy focus on dia-

Rachid Ghannouchi, who lives in exile in London, the adjective “terrorist” is rarely missing.

⁴⁴ To foreigners they explain that, after all, there were also no moderate Nazis.

⁴⁵ More information on these court cases can be found in an article from July 7, 2004 posted on the website of the *Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l’Homme*: “Condamnation des ‘internauts de Zarzis’ à de lourdes peines au terme d’un procès entaché d’irrégularités,” <http://www.fidh.org/article.php?id_article=1558>.

⁴⁶ Tunisia itself is not subjected to a great deal of pressure; still, President Bush has repeatedly expressed criticism of political shortcomings in Tunisia to Ben Ali; see *Jeune Afrique/L’intelligent*, (3–9 April 2005) 2308.

⁴¹ 279 Nahda party officials were tried in military courts; 46 of them received life sentences. According to the principle of collective responsibility, not only are Nahda activists not permitted to travel and are banned from holding public office, so too are their family members (which in many cases has led to social stigmatization and financial ruin).

⁴² See Köhler, *Autoritarismus und Islamismus*, 16–21.

⁴³ When official Tunisian media mention Nahda leader

logue with moderate Islamists, seems to have forced the hand of the Tunisian government. It now appears increasingly willing to make concessions, if initially only tactical in nature. In November 2004, 80 members of Nahda, including for the first time members of the leadership, were released early from prison, though only by a few months. In the same year, the Tunisian ambassador in Bern received Nahda party officials for exploratory talks. In May 2005, several former Nahda party officials living in Tunisia (along with over 80 party officials living in exile), signed with impunity a manifesto that was published abroad calling for the amnesty of political prisoners and political reconciliation.⁴⁷

The Socioreligious Dimension

Since coming to power, Ben Ali has confronted growing Islamic-conservative values in Tunisian society in two ways. Firstly, he has continued the process of social modernization, which began under Bourguiba and has since 1959, among other things, brought about the Arab world's greatest advancement in women's equality.⁴⁸ Ben Ali uses the educational system as the central tool for furthering social and religious reforms. Since a comprehensive educational reform in 1991, religious instruction attempts to convey a non-dogmatic, cosmopolitan understanding of Islam. The 30-page education law of 2002 includes only one reference to the concept "Islamic."⁴⁹

Secondly, Ben Ali has symbolically enhanced the importance of religious rituals and institutions and emphasized his own devoutness. While his predecessor Bourguiba publicly and demonstratively broke the fast during Ramadan, Ben Ali made a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1988. Tunisian television returned to broadcasting the call to prayer at the scheduled times beginning in 1998, in 1992 a Ministry of Religion was established, and the *al-Zeitouna* university, one of the most

⁴⁷ The fact that a Nahda party official under house arrest in Tunisia was able to participate in a discussion (moderated by a Tunisian) on the talk show *Al-Mustaqilla* in London, could have only been possible with official approval. In 2005, a Tunisian newspaper had also broken a taboo by reporting on a press conference at which Ghannouchin called for dialogue with the Tunisian government.

⁴⁸ Tunisia, for example, is the only Arab country that allows for civil partnerships.

⁴⁹ In defining Tunisian identity, Islamic is given as one of many components, including Arab, African, Maghreb, and Mediterranean. See *Loi* No.: 2002-80, 23 July 2002.

traditional and prestigious institutions for Islamic studies in the Arab world, which had been marginalized under Bourguiba, is once again highly esteemed. Increasing consideration is given to religious sensibilities. For example, for several years now the call to prayer may also be made over loudspeakers at night, and the sale of alcohol is no longer allowed during Ramadan, even in foreign supermarket chains.

These concessions to conservative circles are fully in line with Ben Ali's policy to not hinder religiosity, but to prevent its politicization. The latter is achieved by, among other things, an increase in the control of mosques, which had already begun under Bourguiba, and the establishment of guidelines for preachers. Ben Ali does indeed mix religion and politics by having government officials dictate sermons for Friday prayers which are designed to express approval for the policies of the president. For example, in the run-up to the UN World Summit on the Information Society which was held in Tunis in November 2005, the preachers praised the technological foresight of the president, who had issued the invitation to the conference. This was no doubt intended to take the wind out of the sails of Tunisian opponents of the conference, who were disturbed by Ben Ali's invitation to Israeli Premier Sharon. Moreover, the opponents pointed out to the international media the paradox of the conference taking place in a state that prevents freedom of expression.

The Socioeconomic Dimension

Tunisia, in contrast to Algeria and Morocco, responded very quickly with far-reaching measures to the findings that poor socioeconomic conditions are fertile ground for the spread of Islamism. According to the motto "no security without development and no development without security," Ben Ali combined his policy of repression with a coherent, comprehensive development policy and an economic reform agenda which gave Tunisia an international reputation as an exemplary Arab reformer of the economy.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ See International Monetary Fund, *Tunisia: 2004 Article IV Consultation—Staff Report; Public Information Notice on the Executive Board Discussion; and Statement by the Executive Director for Tunisia*, IMF Country Report No. 04/359 (Washington, D.C.:November 2004), <<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2004/cr04359.pdf>>.

The symbolic centerpiece of Ben Ali's development policy is the national solidarity fund established in 1992. Known also by its account number 26/26, both the state and Tunisian citizens pay into the fund. The fund has financed electric and water utilities, schools, and health care facilities for the country's 1150 poorest communities. Additional initiatives have also been responsible for creating jobs. All over Tunisia, less-privileged families receive special social services, including psychological treatment if necessary. In addition, the state supports countless charitable organizations and citizen's initiatives, while keeping an eye on them at the same time. Through its own work and involving citizens and civil society in carrying out tasks which in Morocco, for example, are still left largely to Islamist welfare organizations, the government in Tunisia leaves virtually no niches for the Islamists to fill. This also leads to a clear separation between charitable and religious activities.

The Impact of State Strategies

The record of success of the different state strategies not only lacks uniformity, but it is also contradictory. Measuring what has been achieved on the basis of the goals set by the states—which were primarily concerned with ensuring that the ruling elite stay in power and weakening the Islamist movement—suggests that the Tunisian strategy is the most successful. In Tunisia, Islamist actors have completely disappeared from the public arena and it would be difficult for them to clandestinely reorganize. By contrast, in Morocco Islamist parties and organizations are continuing to gain ground. As a result, it is entirely possible that the PJD will emerge as the big winner in the 2007 parliamentary elections. In 2005, the Islamist movement in Algeria was more divided and thus weaker in the political arena than it was just a few years ago. Nevertheless, according to official reports, 400 Algerians still fell victim to violent acts committed by Islamist groups last year.

Taking a more sophisticated approach to measuring success and failure, however, results in a much more complex picture. Here we consider how the state strategies have affected the potential for political reform in each of the states, how sustainable the strategies are, how they have changed the agendas of Islamist actors, and what new dynamic they have unleashed within the Islamist spectrum. In doing so, the downside of the Tunisian success is revealed.

More Pragmatic Islamists

Paradoxically, in all three states, despite such different strategies, a similar development can be observed. The Islamists have clearly become increasingly divided between an overwhelming majority who are concerned primarily with national affairs, and a minority who pursue transnational goals and are in solidarity with transnational jihadist organizations and embrace their goals.⁵¹

⁵¹ The term Jihadist is used here according to its use in Arabic to mean Islamist forces who interpret Jihad—a term that in Islamic theology stands generally for efforts in the service of the faith—exclusively as violent struggle.

Today, the former, herein referred to as nationalist Islamists, clearly distance themselves from violence.⁵² Rhetorically, religious teachings remain the guiding principle for their actions. But in practice, the nationalist Islamists have clearly become more pragmatic in their political behavior over the last few decades. They are increasingly willing to compromise on their socio-political goals inspired by Islamic values if national interests or national reconciliation are at stake. In debates on patriotic issues, for example the issues of Western Sahara in Morocco or foreign involvement in Algeria, nationalist Islamists often take especially hard-line nationalist positions. At the same time, their rhetoric has become less anti-Western and they show increasing interest in talks with (official) Western counterparts, not least in the hopes of safeguarding their domestic political position.

The transnational Jihadists, on the other hand, today place more than ever the international, missionary fight against the US and the West before feelings of national solidarity, even if they are primarily active in the national arena. The increasingly transnationally-oriented Algerian GSPC, for example, endorsed the murder of two Algerian diplomats in Iraq by Zarqawi's forces in July 2005, while nationalist Islamists, with the exception of the former number two in the FIS, Ali Belhadj, condemned the act.⁵³ The growing transnational alignment of the most radical elements of the Islamist spectrum is most likely due to international developments, and can be considered—for example, in the case of the Algerian GSPC—a new recruiting strategy for organizations operating in an increasingly difficult national political environment.

⁵² It is also notable that protests in the Maghreb in early 2006 against the caricatures of the Prophet Mohamed published in a Danish newspaper and republished by several other newspapers in Europe tended to be non-violent and generally more restrained than in other parts of the Islamic world.

⁵³ During the kidnapping, Belhadj expressed his support for the resistance in Iraq in a telephone interview with Al-Jazeera and he refused to condemn the kidnapping of the Algerian diplomats. As a result, he was arrested by Algerian security forces.

It would be hazardous to conclude that the recent pragmatism of the nationalist Islamists is only a response to state strategies, particularly given that the Moroccan and Tunisian cases are diametrically opposed. That the Tunisian strategy of repression has not brought about any, with a few exceptions, notable violent reactions, while repression in Algeria, on the other hand, sparked a civil war, cannot be explained alone by the fact that Tunisia pursued a more enlightened development and social policy. The differences between the Islamists in both countries are also decisive. Each has been shaped by specific historical (colonial) experiences and political cultures.

Moreover, Islamists learn from the experiences that other Islamists have in other countries. The fact that the PJD has thus far, partly by its own volition, held itself back in elections and, in view of the 2007 elections, asserted “we don’t want to instill fear in anyone,”⁵⁴ can primarily be attributed to a thorough analysis of the Islamist electoral victories in Algeria and Tunisia. And, last but not least, the massacre in Algeria, the events of September 11, 2001, and the attacks on Casablanca have drastically reduced the tolerance at the national and international level for perpetrators of violence in the name of Islam. As a result, the nationalist Islamists have altered their strategies and agendas.

Algerian Islamists on Course for Reconciliation

Roughly fifteen years after the FIS electoral victory, several legal Islamist parties exist in Algeria, yet none of them are capable of winning an election, even if the election were completely “fair and free.” The leader of the MRN, currently the strongest of these parties, was the only Islamist presidential candidate in 2004 and he got just 5.02% of the votes. It is also improbable that a re-legalized FIS would today again be triumphant in elections because it is divided in several competing wings both domestically and abroad. It would, however, be wrong to thus conclude that the Algerian strategy of repression in the early nineties was successful. On the contrary, it forced the most radical wing of the FIS movement to go underground, and it made it impossible for the moderate wing to win over to a non-violent counter project those FIS

followers who became radicalized after being cheated out of their electoral victory.

The fact that the violence has nevertheless starkly subsided since the end of the nineties and that Islamists have been weakened on the whole, is not simply due to the military superiority of the security forces and the technological support that they have received in the battle against armed groups that the US has provided since September 11, 2001. More decisive was that the government modified its strategy by offering amnesty in return for disarmament and by supporting Islamist alternatives to the FIS. Furthermore, violent Islamists had gone too far and lost nearly all their support among the people because of their massacres of civilians and their increasingly indiscriminate acts of violence.

The GIA, notorious for its violence against civilians, has basically ceased to exist since 2004.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, according to official Algerian estimates there are still several hundred armed Islamists who are primarily organized in the GSPC, which is increasingly active in transnational activities. This group appears to continue to have good opportunities for recruitment. Despite nearly daily reports in the Algerian press about arrests and killings of GSPC fighters, the official figures of their strength have not been reduced for years. Although rumors continue to circulate that portions of the GSPC are willing to negotiate with Bouteflika, it appears that the radical wing continues to call the shots. One of the first reactions of the GSPC to the official announcement of a reconciliation initiative in August 2005 was to call for the killing of Algerian officials in France, too.⁵⁶ Compared with other Arab countries, it appears a large number of Algerian Islamists have been recruited to participate in the armed jihad in Iraq. According to investigative reporting conducted by the Associated Press in the summer of 2005, up to 20% of the foreign suicide bombers in Iraq were Algerians, with Moroccans and Tunisians accounting for a further 5%.⁵⁷

The remainder of the Algerian Islamists, including virtually all FIS party officials, fall within the nationalist Islamist camp. They were forced to reposition themselves as a result of the escalation of violence. Consequently, they have decidedly abandoned radical

⁵⁵ For more information on the continuing Islamist violence, see International Crisis Group, *Islamism, Violence and Reform in Algeria: Turning the Page*, ICG Middle East Report No. 29 (Cairo/Brussels: 30 July 2004).

⁵⁶ See *Al-Hayat*, 16 August 2005.

⁵⁷ See *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 2 July 2005.

⁵⁴ Interview with PJD General Secretary Othmani in Rabat, May 2005.

rhetoric and a willingness to commit acts of violence as well as demands for the establishment of a theocracy. At the same time, they strive for participation in the existing political system and seek to gradually change it. What has become evident in the course of the state's partial policy of integration is that the Islamists' pragmatism and willingness to compromise has grown the closer they get to the center of power and the more they have to lose.

The MSP, part of the governing coalition and the so-called *Alliance présidentielle*, has not only increased its influence on decisions, it has also—although not without considerable initial resistance—supported measures which promote universal values, such as education sector reform. But the MSP was penalized by the electorate for its closeness to the regime in 2002, a situation from which the opposition party MRN was able to profit. However, even their party leader has shown that he can put his religious convictions aside when it comes to matters of power politics.⁵⁸ Further evidence of the pragmatism of the MRN and the MSP is that both parties support the new initiative for national reconciliation, despite the fact that it does not envision prosecuting those who committed massive human rights violations against Islamists during the civil war. Algerian Islamists also demonstrated a certain tolerance for diversity with their support for the constitutional establishment of Berber as a national language in 2002. Last but not least, reactions of Islamist cadres to the Hamas election victory in Palestine in January 2006 showed a sense for *Realpolitik*: One of their main concerns was that the US, Europe and Israel would not grant Hamas enough time to find more pragmatic positions concerning Israel. That Hamas would have to find new positions went without saying for these cadres.⁵⁹

Such developments show that Islamist parties integrated in the political system have become a normal factor in politics, inasmuch as their differences with other parties continue to decline and they tend to act more out of a concern for political power than based on religious criteria. This is not least the result of their interaction with secular parties. This

⁵⁸ In the run-up to the 2004 elections, the MRN leader Djballah formed a tactical alliance with the radical-secular Berber-speaking candidate Said Sadi. In addition, the economic policy views of MRN adherents in parliament which lean towards a command economy often agree with those of the Trotskyists. Meanwhile, with its market orientation, the MSP is closer to the anti-Islamist party of the Prime Minister.

⁵⁹ Interviews, Algiers, January 2006.

supports the thesis of a post-Islamist development in Algeria, meaning that in practice there is a separation between religion and politics and that, paradoxically, the driving force behind this separation is those who wanted it the least, namely the Islamist parties. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the implementation of the Islamists' religious agenda quickly came up against boundaries in day-to-day politics. Secondly, changes in the national and international environment forced these parties to increasingly separate religion and politics.⁶⁰ This development does not, however, imply that the Algerian society is becoming less religious. Religious sentiment is anything but fading away.⁶¹

Moroccan Islamists in Turkish Footsteps

Morocco's strategies have not led to the intended weakening of the Islamists.⁶² This is not least a result of its laissez-faire, Islamist-friendly policy toward the religious sector, which has since been amended. Moreover, the state has so far failed to even marginally get a handle on the enormous social and economic problems, including unemployment, illiteracy, social divisions between regions and along urban-rural lines, and insecurity due to globalization. Finally, Moroccan society is traditionally very religious and conservative in terms of its values. A survey by the Pew Research Center in 2005 revealed that 57% of Moroccans perceived Islam taking an increasing role in politics, while 93% of this 57% considered this a positive development.⁶³ Nevertheless, it would be incorrect to con-

⁶⁰ For more on this thesis, see Olivier Roy, *Globalised Islam. The Search for an New Ummah*, (London: 2004): 72–99.

⁶¹ Interviews with a sociologist, a political scientist and a historian from Algiers University, January 2006.

⁶² Khadija Mohsen-Finan, "Maroc: L'émergence de l'islamisme sur la scène politique," *Politique étrangère* 70 (Spring 2005) 1: 73–84; Jan Senkyr, "Wie stark ist die islamische Opposition in Marokko?," *KAS-Auslandsinformationen* (October 2003) 10: 65–78; Michael J. Wills, "Morocco's Islamists and the Legislative Elections of 2002: The Strange Case of the Party That Did Not Want to Win," *Mediterranean Politics* 9 (Spring 2004) 1: 53–81; Michael J. Wills, "Between Alternance and the Makhzen: At-Tawhid wa Al-Islah's Entry into Moroccan Politics," *The Journal of North African Studies* 4 (Fall 1999) 3: 45–80.

⁶³ See <www.pewglobal.org>. The results of this survey, however, should be taken with a grain of salt because the relatively unspecific questions allowed for a wide range of answers. That notwithstanding, it does show a certain developing trend.

clude from this that the record of Morocco's strategies has only been negative. On the contrary, the PJD, a party integrated into the political process and which now sees itself as an Arab counterpart to the Turkish ruling party AKP,⁶⁴ has become an exemplary model of a pragmatic Islamist-nationalist party that is supportive of the state.

The PJD, some of whose party officials rejected the monarchy at the beginning of the nineties, is now severely critical of statements against the monarchy made by the Islamist organization *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*. Moreover, they have argued that since Morocco is already an Islamic state, the party does not need to fight for the establishment of such a state. The PJD has also made little effort to force through their moral values, even where they could have easily done so.⁶⁵ Although they were still calling for the implementation of *Shariah* just a few years ago, they now declare that this is no longer a main priority, and they have distanced themselves from traditional methods of punishment.⁶⁶

This change of heart, however, cannot only be attributed to their integration and the resulting rise in their power. It is also a result of the attacks on Casablanca. Although the PJD was not mentioned in connection with the attacks, an anti-Islamist mood spread throughout the political elite such that the party felt obliged to vote for both the anti-terror law and the progressive, new law governing family matters and the civil status of individuals, which it had opposed with an enormous street demonstration in 2000.

The PJD leadership, however, is walking a fine line with its pragmatism. The party is the parliamentary arm of the organization MUR (*Mouvement unicité et réforme/At-Tawhid Wal-Islah*), which takes decidedly more radical sociopolitical positions. In early 2005, the newspaper *Attajdid*, which is close to the MUR and the PJD, wrote that the tsunami in Southeast Asia was God's punishment for sex tourism in Asia and a

warning sign for Morocco. The PJD responded to this statement by noting that the paper and the party are not the same. It remains unclear whether the PJD failed to clearly distance itself from the statement because they share the same view, or because they did not want to alienate those of their supporters who belong to the MUR.

The rhetoric of the illegal but tolerated *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* has barely changed over the past decade, apart from increasingly distancing themselves from violence. The participation of the PJD in the political decision-making process at the national and local levels and the legalization of *Al-Badil Al-Hadari* in 2005 has had some effect, especially on the younger *Adl* party officials.⁶⁷ Following the death of the sick and aged Sheikh Yassine, there will likely be an internal battle over which compromises the organization is willing to make in order to become legalized.⁶⁸

It is also worth noting that approval for acts of violence committed by Islamists against civilians has, according to the Pew survey, fallen drastically: in 2004 it was at 40%, falling to 13% in 2005. Moreover, in 2005, 83% of Moroccans believed that the use of violence to defend Islam in the country was never justified. But the figures also revealed the presence of a small violence-prone minority. Despite the security measures in effect since 2003 and the increased control of mosques, radical, transnational networks still continue to enjoy recruitment opportunities. In August 2005, for example, more than a dozen people were arrested who reportedly admitted to having contacts with the Algerian GSPC.⁶⁹ Three months later, in November 2005, the security forces uncovered a cell of 17 people with alleged close ties to al-Qaeda.

⁶⁷ The author got this impression from interviews with numerous members of the organization.

⁶⁸ As part of its effort to be recognized as a political player, the organization's officials are increasingly seeking exchanges with Western officials during which they can appear to be moderate and democratically-oriented. The extent to which *Adl* would actually be willing to compromise on those of its goals that are incompatible with those of other important Moroccan actors, such as the socialist USFP, can only be evaluated when it is allowed to participate in the formal political process. In view of the ideology of Yassine and the organization's dominant political culture today, it is unlikely that *Adl* would use violence in an attempt to achieve its goals.

⁶⁹ For further information on Moroccan and Algerian perpetrators of violence see Guido Steinberg, *Der nahe und der ferne Feind. Die Netzwerke des islamistischen Terrorismus* (Munich: 2005).

⁶⁴ This does not mean that the PJD agrees with all of the AKP's actions. After the Turkish Premier Erdoğan visited Israel in spring 2005, the PJD leadership sent a note of protest—though only after pressure from the party rank and file.

⁶⁵ For example in Meknès where the mayor's office is in their hands, or in Casablanca where they are strongly represented in the city council. See *Tel Quel*, 14–20 May 2005; *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 3 May 2005.

⁶⁶ In doing so, they argue that these are no longer appropriate for the times; Interviews with various PJD party members in Morocco, May 2005.

Tunisia's Progressive Islamists

The fact that there are no longer any notable Islamist structures in Tunisia today is largely—but not entirely—due to the state's strategies. It has been much easier for Ben Ali to systematically and quickly push through measures in the relatively small country of Tunisia, with its 10 million inhabitants, than it would be in Algeria, with its ethnically diverse and socially fragmented population of more than 30 million people. Of equal importance has been the ability of Ben Ali to build his anti-Islamist campaign on the back of the policies of social modernization of his predecessor Bourguiba. Moreover, in Tunisia there was, and is, a sentiment among the population that they have something to lose; primarily, this has to do with the relative economic prosperity from which a broad middle class in Tunisia has benefited. But, in view of the civil war in Algeria, political stability is also something Tunisians clearly hope to maintain. Finally, Ben Ali was confronted with a political culture that is characterized neither by fault lines nor a tradition of underground partisans.

The strength of the Islamists in Tunisia today is difficult to assess because they are not allowed to organize publicly. Today, former Nahda party officials can only be politically active within non-Islamist opposition organizations, such as the PDP (*Parti démocratique progressiste*).⁷⁰ But the majority of these party officials, to the extent that they have not turned their backs entirely on politics or Islamism, are either in exile, jail, or under house arrest. The former general-secretary of Nahda, Abdelfattah Mourou, who lives in Tunisia, estimates that nowadays, at most 20% of the population would vote for a party like Nahda. Both secular and religious Tunisians perceive an increase in religiosity as manifested, among other things, in more people participating in prayers and more head scarves. Whether and to what extent this religiousness translates into sympathy for Islamists remains an open question. Islamists conclude from this development with some justification that there is space for a political force that represents conservative values.

Nahda was divided by the government's repressive campaign at the beginning of the nineties into one wing that is committed to (non-violent) confrontation and another wing committed to compromise. More recently, the two wings have come closer together

⁷⁰ The PDP is a catch-all party for Marxists, socialists, Arab nationalists, and Islamists.

again and pursue the same primary goal, namely participation in the political process. Nahda had always taken relatively progressive positions on sociopolitical issues within the Arab world. In 1990, for example, they accepted Bourguiba's law governing the civil status of individuals and, in doing so, recognized what essentially amounted to women's legal equality. Because Nahda is also influenced by the reforms under Bourguiba, the context in which they make their sociopolitical demands differs from that of, for example, the Moroccan PJD, which operates in a considerably more traditional and conservative society. But Nahda has learned from the PJD that restraint in the political process is a sensible strategy. Nahda leader Ghannouchi, who while in exile in London has explicitly distanced himself from the extremist milieu, has for years been calling for a democratic front in Tunisia comprised of several parties, in which Nahda would be a part.⁷¹ The statements of other party officials, above all those in Tunisia, are still more reserved.⁷² The state's policy has made a supplicant of Nahda, and announcements by the party these days are primarily concerned with the issue of (national) reconciliation—even with Ben Ali.

The second, numerically rather insignificant Islamist faction in Tunisia, the so-called progressive Islamists, meet in a discussion club that enjoys legal status.⁷³ As a result of the repression, nowadays they stay out of politics for the most part or are involved in human rights organizations led by secular leftists. Due to their intellectual leanings, which focus on finding cultural responses to values and identity crises, the progressive Islamists have always been among the most advanced religious actors in the Arab world. Today they are more concerned than ever with the separation of religion and politics. As such, they are better characterized as "value-conservatives" than as Islamists. Encouraged by the slight change in the political climate that has come about as a result of Ben Ali's tactical concessions, since 2004 they have been once again venturing to organize public discussion forums.

⁷¹ Camau and Geisser, 311.

⁷² The former number two in Nahda, Mourou, declares today that it is not in Tunisia's interest to be ruled by Islamists.

At the same time, he says it is in the country's interest to incorporate Islamists into the political process because they are a component of Tunisian society. Interview, Tunis, June 2005.

⁷³ The club calls itself *Nadi Al-Jahath* (Club of Jahath—named after a well-known Arab author).

In contrast to Algeria and Morocco, fifteen years after the onset of repression against Islamists in Tunisia, there are virtually no indications of the existence of violent Islamists. It is unclear whether or not the six young Tunisians who were arrested in April 2005 for alleged terrorist activities in western Algeria had targets in Tunisia.⁷⁴ The Tunisian administration and media are completely silent about such incidents. Still, an attack carried out by a Tunisian in Djerba in April 2002, in which 19 tourists, including 14 Germans, lost their lives, shows that Tunisia is not immune to Islamist violence inspired by transnational networks. The government in Tunis continued to maintain that what had happened was the result of an accident, long after foreign governments assumed an attack had taken place.⁷⁵

More Democratic Systems Thanks to Islamist Participation?

The state's policies towards Islamists have had consequences in all three countries for other political actors and, moreover, the entire population. In Algeria and Tunisia, it has also resulted in changes in the political system. The repression of Nahda in Tunisia was accompanied by the scaling back of political freedoms for all citizens, massive curtailment of freedom of the press, and, not least, gross human rights abuses. Today, even secular opposition actors hardly have any chance to gather or organize large-scale events. They are also frequently restricted from traveling, and they see themselves as the victims of a witch hunt in the state media. In the course of the fight against Islamists in the past 15 years, Tunisia has developed from a potentially democratizing state to one of the Arab world's most authoritarian systems.

Whether the fight against Islamists was the main objective and the increase in authoritarianism was a side effect, or whether the opposite was the case, is unimportant at the end of the day. What is decisive is that the exclusion of Islamists restricts a process of democratization that aims at more than a limited opening of the political system and a diverse party

landscape (pluralism). This exclusion necessarily results in authoritarian structures and blocks real political competition. The Algerian experience at the beginning of the nineties serves as an illustration. The repression of the strongest and only relevant Islamists at the time, the FIS, meant the abandonment of the most radical experiment in democratization the Arab world had known up to then. As a result, a decidedly authoritarian military regime was able to establish itself.

The related question of whether the reverse is true, namely that the participation of moderate Islamists such as the Moroccan PJD furthers the prospects for democratization in the Maghreb or at least creates key conditions for democratization, can be tentatively answered "yes."⁷⁶ Islamist parties in the Maghreb have a great interest in democratic processes: In "free and fair" elections they can count on good results, if not a majority. One cannot rule out the possibility that some of them secretly still bet on the formula of "one man, one vote, one time," as some segments of the FIS did. That notwithstanding, in the past decades all nationalist Islamists have become increasingly aware that they have to deal with significant social groups that hold different views from their own according to democratic processes, and that these groups cannot simply be subjugated. If today no small number of Algerian and Moroccan Islamists are convinced advocates of democracy, this is above all due to their experiences with pluralist political processes.⁷⁷

In addition, the participation of Islamists in Morocco and Algeria since the end of the nineties has changed political processes and, in part, also structures. With the establishment of the PJD, the representativeness of formal political institutions in Morocco has increased, political debate is more pluralist, and the political process has become more competitive. The concrete impact of the political reintegration of a small segment of Islamists in Algeria beginning in 1997 is difficult to assess because it took place at the same time as the integration of secular opposition parties. But here too, Islamist participation has given rise to a more pluralist political discourse and (some-

⁷⁴ Depending on the source, they have been accused of having ties to the Algerian GSPC, planning attacks in Tunisia, or having been recruited for the Jihad in Iraq. In August 2005, five Tunisians were once again picked up in Algeria because the officials alleged that they had received paramilitary training from the GSPC.

⁷⁵ See *Le Monde*, 13 and 18 April 2002.

⁷⁶ When looking at the entire Arab world, one notices that in all of the states that are listed as potential democracies—Bahrain, Yemen, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, and Morocco—Islamists are represented in parliament and in some cases in the government as well.

⁷⁷ This clearly emerged from the interviews conducted by the author with numerous Algerian, Moroccan, and Tunisian Islamists since 2002.

what) more representative political institutions. The more reconciliatory policy towards Islamists and the Law on Civil Concord, which resulted in a decrease in the violence, has also strengthened President Bouteflika's domestic power base. Both are important factors for the gradual shift in Algeria's center of power from the military leadership to the president which has been going on since 2000. The integration of Islamists is thus one of the factors responsible for the return to constitutional political processes, in which decisions are made by the elected executive, not the army.

At the same time, the participation of parties like the PJD and the MSP has contributed to the perpetuation of existing authoritarian structures.⁷⁸ The co-optation of the Algerian MSP in the presidential alliance has made the democratically-oriented party into an actor that supports authoritarian practices of the president. This has included, for example, the increasing repression of the press since 2003, which is decidedly independent when compared to other Arab countries. The reconciliation initiative, which is supported by the Islamist parties, is a step in the direction of ending the violence, but not in the direction of democracy. Because of their declaration of absolute loyalty to the king, in Morocco the PJD cannot question a main obstacle to democratization, namely that the main political decision-maker is not elected.

None of the three states under discussion is today undergoing democratization. There is no evidence of developments leading to the effective separation of powers and the top decision-makers can not be voted out of office either because of formal restrictions or because democratic and civil values are (still) not widespread within society. But even if Islamist parties cannot for the moment shake-up certain structural barriers to democratization, they still contribute decisively to progress in reforms that are key preconditions for successfully developing towards liberal democracy, namely the rule of law and the establishment of some civil values within society.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ See Eva Wegner, *The Contribution of Inclusivist Approaches towards the Islamist Opposition to Regime Stability in Arab States: The Case of the Moroccan Parti de la Justice et du Développement*, EUI Working Paper RSCAS No. 42 (Badia Fiesolana, San Domenico: Robert Schuman Center for Advanced Studies [RSCAS]: 2004).

⁷⁹ See also Amr Hamzawy, *The Key to Arab Reform: Moderate Islamists* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: August 2005, Policy Brief 40).

Islamists as a Driving Force for Reform

In terms of the political, and for the most part, economic arenas, Algerian and Moroccan Islamists are among the reform-oriented actors in their countries. In Algeria, the MRN was a driving force behind a modification of the electoral law in 2004, which aimed at more transparency. Both the Algerian MSP and the Moroccan PJD stand out from the majority of parties in their respective countries through their democratic internal structures and processes. Informed by the Koran, the nationalist Islamists value (social) justice, and hence they call more loudly than others for transparency, accountability, anti-corruption measures, good governance, the rule of law⁸⁰, and an independent judiciary. To this extent, their agenda corresponds at least in part with those of external actors such as the EU, the US, and Bretton Woods institutions.

As a result of their (former) status as outsiders, Islamists are generally less strongly integrated in the existing patronage networks in which the state administration and business world are entwined. This is especially true of Algeria's rentier state with its partially mafia-like economic networks. Consequently, the majority of nationalist Islamists are in favor of a (careful) liberalization of the economy.⁸¹ They hope that such a liberalization will bring to an end the corrupt practices of the ruling elite and open up new perspectives for medium and small enterprises, which represent a not insignificant portion of the Islamist electorate. For similar reasons, the FIS had been a proponent of market liberalization.

In the sociopolitical arena, the nationalist Islamists are, however, more likely to slow down the pace of reform. One Islamist party in Algeria (the MRN) has opposed educational reform, while the other party (the MSP) has reluctantly supported it. The Islamists are also responsible, though not solely, for watering down the first draft of what had been a new, more progressive Algerian family law. In Morocco, the PJD only approved the new family law because any other course of action after the attacks on Casablanca would have been political suicide. Social modernization may move forward more slowly as a side effect of Islamist

⁸⁰ Islamists, however, understand the rule of law differently than Westerners in key areas, for example in terms of gender equality and the rights of minorities.

⁸¹ The Algerian MRN is an exception because they fear that this would be accompanied by the importation of Western values.

participation, but one should not forget that the Algerian and Moroccan Islamists are, with their moral ideals, closer to the pulse of their value-conservative societies than the Western-oriented (and in the case of Algeria, strongly francophone) elite. If one believes the Pew survey, the agenda of the PJD reflects the desires of the majority of Moroccans. According to the survey, they are in favor of not only an increased role for Islam in politics, but they are also increasingly less likely to consider democracy as a Western concept that can't work in Morocco.

The Islamist parties also undoubtedly have an important sociopolitical function: They are able to cushion the increasingly intense values crises in Maghrebian societies in the wake of social modernization, political opening, and economic globalization. This function is all the more important as such crises in values coincide with problematic social and demographic developments. Around 70% of the population in the three countries is under 30 years old and the rate of youth unemployment is high. The social differences are striking and continue to deepen. Although Islamist parties, which are close to their grassroots and are generally more established among society's less-privileged sectors than all other political actors, are not in a position to provide jobs to unemployed teenagers, they can at least convey to them ethical and moral guidelines, even if these don't conform to European ideals. In doing so, they contribute to preventing young people from getting involved in criminal activity or becoming recruits for violent Islamist groups. The secular Moroccan political scientist Mohamed Tozy maintains that he would find it more reassuring if half the country's teenagers were involved in the activities of the nationalist Islamist association *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* than if they were hanging out in the streets or tuning into content promoting radical Islamic Arabism via the Internet or satellite TV stations.⁸²

In Tunisia the values crisis is not as burdened with the consequences of economic misery as in Morocco. Yet here too, the question of religious socialization is particularly explosive. From whom and in what way are young people learning about religion? As long as legal Islamist forums which can convey Tunisia's relatively progressive Islamist tradition are missing, there is a danger that young people will be introduced

to violence-prone transnational Islamism through the Internet and video cassettes.⁸³

⁸² Interview, Casablanca, May 2005. According to Tozy, Moroccans first discovered their radical Salafists through the Qatari satellite TV station Al-Jazeera.

⁸³ The following anecdote about the former Nahda General Secretary Abdelfattah Mourou, an icon of Tunisian Islamism, shows the extent to which young Tunisians can be cut off from the Islamist tradition in Tunisia. Mourou, who works as a lawyer, was asked to provide legal aid to the alleged Jihadists arrested in Algeria in May 2005 by their relatives. Mourou discovered that his name meant nothing to the young imprisoned Islamists.

European Scope for Action

Both state actions towards Islamists in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia and the changes among Islamists themselves raise a series of sensitive issues for the EU. The European Union has ties to these three states through bilateral association treaties within the framework of the European-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP, also known as the Barcelona Process). Its policy is dominated by one major interest, namely stability. Europe's fundamental interest in the stability of its neighboring states to the south stems from a diversity of motives, including access to resources, limiting migration, and fighting organized crime and international terrorism. The EU sees this stability best guaranteed through consolidated democratic systems and economic prosperity. Consequently, within the framework of the EMP the EU attempts to support economic and political structural reforms in the southern partner states. In this regard, democratization and upholding human rights are of central concern.⁸⁴ Democratization is also the goal of the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative (BMENA) carried out in conjunction with the US. But the fundamental assumption that consolidated democracies are predictable and stable is not transferable to the preceding phase of democratization. In practice, the process of democratization is not only open ended, it often has a destabilizing effect.⁸⁵

The specific national government policies towards Islamists in the Maghreb is, as has been shown in this study, of great importance for the prospects for political reform in each of these states. Islamists represent a major part of the population in the Maghreb and without their integration, democratization is unimaginable. In Tunisia, the successful destruction of the Islamist movement came at the high cost of massive restrictions on political rights and civil liberties for the whole society. The same was true for Algeria in the first half of the nineties, where the Islamists suffered repression at the hands of the newly established military dictatorship after their

victory in democratic elections. The result was civil war. Both cases suggest that the repression of Islamists necessarily goes along with increased authoritarianism. As such, this contravenes European interests in achieving long-term regional stability through the establishment of consolidated democracies. The fact that repression had a destabilizing impact in Algeria, but a stabilizing impact in Tunisia is, in addition to Tunisia's diversity of political cultures, primarily due to its comprehensive strategy of development. The improved standard of living in Tunisia has to a certain degree compensated for the lack of political liberties. Replacing democratization with prosperity is not a sustainable strategy for stability, and in Tunisia's case, moreover, economic success is quite vulnerable.

More promising for the long term are the developments that Algeria and, above all, Morocco went through in the second half of the nineties. Here the partial and gradual political integration of portions of the Islamist spectrum has created more pluralist, competitive, and representative, if not more democratic, political systems. In Algeria, this integration has had a stabilizing effect, while in Morocco it has had no noticeably destabilizing impact. In both states, the Islamists participating in the political process have become more pragmatic and willing to make compromises ever since they were in a position to lose status and influence and were forced to deal with real political problems. They also appear to be increasingly prepared to scale back their religiously inspired sociopolitical goals if an issue of national interest or national reconciliation is at stake. In both states, Islamists have shown considerable self-interest in reforms leading to the rule of law, good governance, and democracy, and, as such, they belong to the camp of political reformers.

It cannot be clearly predicted how the political systems and Islamists will change further. For that, the developments are still too recent and a snapshot of Islamist agendas is insufficient. If we turn our attention to the process of democratization in the Maghreb, it is, however, possible to apply analytical findings from analogous processes in other regions of the world. This leads to the plausible assumption that democratization won't work unless the following

⁸⁴ These concerns are not only part of the Barcelona Declaration, but also in the Article 2 of the various association treaties.

⁸⁵ See Laurence Whitehead, *Democratization. Theory and Experience* (Oxford: 2002).

conditions are met: the firm establishment of a civil society, the incorporation of all relevant actors in society into the political system, a commitment to democratic rules of the game, and a basic consensus on national identity.⁸⁶ Moreover, the developments in Algeria and Morocco in the past decade have shown that the ideological chasm between nationalist Islamists and transnational jihadists widens if progress is made in Islamist participation and the opening of the political system.

Commensurate with their efforts to reconcile supporting stability and democratization in the Maghreb, Europe thus has an interest in the broadest possible participation of Islamists who reject violence and are committed to democratic rules of the game, even if Islamist participation in itself does not guarantee that reforms will take place. There is undoubtedly a danger that, especially in Algeria, the integration of Islamists will merely broaden the authoritarian power base and will emerge as a means to maintaining the status quo. Europe is thus all the more called upon to support the dynamics of reform in both government policy and among Islamists.

The EU does have instruments at its disposal for influencing political decisions in the region. They simply need to be used more effectively. The EU can use financial and economic incentives—both through the disbursement of MEDA funds within the framework of the Barcelona Process and within the European Neighborhood Policy, which to date only affects Tunisia and Morocco—to urge the partner states to observe human rights and expand political participation. Positive signals that the EU policy sends in one state will also be picked up on in the other two states and can provide the impulse for cooperative behavior on critical issues.

It has proven problematic that the member states of the EU have adopted different official positions towards individual Islamist actors, and their judgment of the Maghreb states' strategies towards opposition groups in general and Islamists in particular varies. For historical, cultural, and economic reasons, France especially tends to overlook repression and human rights problems in the three North African states.⁸⁷ A clear and uniform EU position

towards the strategies and the actors would be desirable. Not least, it would boost the reputation of the EU among those active in the region's civil society.

Considerations in Dealing with Governments

A policy that attempts to weaken and "domesticate" Islamists through division and/or integration as it is practiced in Morocco and Algeria may seem desirable from the European perspective. But such a policy can only have a sustained stabilizing effect if it is accompanied by serious steps towards democratization that open up the prospects for Islamists to truly participate in determining the country's fate, instead of merely serving as a fig leaf for formal pluralism. If this accompanying element is missing, there is a danger that the grassroots of these parties will turn to more radical actors in the medium term.

- ▶ Strategies that aim to improve living standards in order to deprive radical Islamists a breeding ground within society are basically not misguided. However, the advocates of such strategies ignore the fact that Islamism is not merely the result of poverty, rather it is a product of many factors, including a crisis in values within society brought on by globalization and political repression. European politicians should thus not expect miracles from initiatives such as the new Moroccan one for human development. Instead, such initiatives should be supported as one of many sensible measures to prevent radicalization (see below, pp. 31ff, for further country-specific measures).
- ▶ The governments in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia abuse human rights and make examples of innocent people under cover of the fight against international terrorism. It is therefore important that the EU Commission make the disbursement of MEDA funds more strongly dependent on the implementation of the judicial reforms foreseen in the association treaties as well as on substantial advances on human rights issues. In addition, in view of bilateral legal treaties concerning the deportation of radical Islamists to their countries of origin, Europe should be more energetic in demanding that the governments abide by human

about a member of the Tunisian opposition on hunger strike, he explained that the most important human rights are that one has enough to eat, a roof over his head, that the health care system works and that there is access to education. See *Le Monde*, 5 December 2003.

⁸⁶ John Higley and Richard Gunther (eds.), *Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and Southern Europe* (Cambridge: 1992).

⁸⁷ During a visit to Tunisia in 2003, French President Chirac praised Tunisia for having made much more progress on human rights than a great many other states. When asked

rights and judicial processes in accordance with the rule of law, and that they undertake reforms to establish independent judiciaries.

Considerations in Dealing with Islamists

Since September 11, 2001, US diplomats and American NGOs have actively sought relations with moderate Islamists in the Maghreb.⁸⁸ A number of European diplomatic representations, political foundations, and cultural institutes also maintain contacts with moderate Islamists, especially in Morocco. At the meeting of EU foreign ministers in Luxembourg in April 2005, if not before, dialogue with such players at the EU level became an issue, though it is still a controversial one.⁸⁹ Germany has played a leading role inasmuch as the so-called “Dialogue with Islam,” which also includes Islamists, has increasingly become an instrument of German foreign policy since 2001.⁹⁰

However, European actors need to be aware that contact with moderate Islamists is a thorn in the side of Arab governments, not only in the Maghreb. Arab officials interpret this sort of dialogue as an attempt to establish good relations with the power holders of tomorrow. Nevertheless, this should not stop Europe from developing its own policy towards Islamists. In doing so, it should take the following points into consideration:

- ▶ There is no reason for Europe to have standards for Islamists that differ from those for the other actors in these states. Islamists should be judged according to their concrete political actions and their rhetoric, not their supposed intentions. It is in the interest of the governments of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia that European decision makers adopt the same view towards Islamists as theirs. If Europe used the same standards as the Maghreb states, it

⁸⁸ The Moroccan weekly magazine *Tel Quel* (21-27 May 2005) titled an article “Bush Flirts with Our Islamists.” Members of the Islamist elite are in fact seen at US embassy receptions, are increasingly invited to conferences at American universities and think tanks or participate in workshops of American NGOs. The author was repeatedly told by Moroccan Islamists—tongue in cheek—that the Europeans need to hurry up if they don’t want to yield entirely to the Americans on Islamist matters.

⁸⁹ See *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 18 April 2005.

⁹⁰ See German-British Workshop “Engaging with the Islamic World” at the Foreign Office of the German Federal Government, 13 April 2005, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/de/aussepolitik/kulturpolitik/islamdialog/engaging_html>.

would have to steer clear of Tunisia’s Nahda, which is outlawed and officially labeled a terrorist organization, while it could establish relations with Morocco’s legal PJD, although both parties have virtually identical agendas in the areas which Europe is concerned about.

- ▶ Europe should not downplay existing differences, but rather openly acknowledge them and deal with them in a proactive manner. European perspectives on the rights of women and minorities generally diverge strongly from those of Islamist parties. Europe must also use a process of dialogue—and not a policy of boycotting—to make it clear that anti-Semitic positions and statements are unacceptable. If the EU were to make anti-Semitism grounds for refusing to talk with a group, it would also have to boycott the majority of secular parties in the Arab world.
- ▶ Because of the numerous differences, particularly on sociopolitical matters, European politicians and officials often overlook the fact that their interests in important political objectives—whether the issue is constitutional, electoral or economic reforms or fighting corruption—are more closely aligned with those of the Islamists than of segments of the ruling elite. Consequently, it makes sense to also cooperate with Islamist parties and organizations within the framework of MEDA programs for local development and capacity building.
- ▶ Islamists are generally underrepresented or not represented at all in visits by parliamentary delegations, EMP civil society forums, or at conferences and round-table talks in EU member states. As such, an influential voice in the political landscapes and societies of these countries goes unheard. European political foundations, cultural institutions, and NGOs should make an effort to change this situation. It would also be desirable to provide young Islamists the opportunity to have exchanges with their European cohort within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Youth Action Programme. One could also consider including Islamists in joint activities such as observing elections in third countries.⁹¹

⁹¹ This is already practiced by the American National Democracy Institute and can be seen as a sensible method of socialization in democratic processes.

Country-Specific Priorities

Supporting Reconciliation and an End to Violence in Algeria

Algeria has come a long way since the civil war in the nineties. In order to finally turn the page on its violent chapter and begin a sustainable process of social and political reconciliation, the structural causes of the conflict which still exist need to be overcome and a way of dealing with the past that is commensurate with the problem needs to be found. In contrast with South Africa's exemplary path, the president's controversial new Charter for Peace and Reconciliation does not foresee appropriate measures for coming to terms with the past. Rather, it represents an attempt to avoid allowing a debate about the past to even begin. Nevertheless, from Europe's perspective, this is tentatively a positive initiative because it at least could encourage some of the perpetrators of violence who are still active to give up. It can not, however, be forgotten that there may be players in the Algerian military and political establishment that have no interest in completely wiping out terrorism—whether in order to profit from illegal economic activities or to have a pretense for preventing profound political reforms.

What is important is that the EU support non-military solutions to ending the violence. This includes negotiations with perpetrators of violence as well as measures against smuggling, money laundering, and organized crime, all of which serve as their economic foundation. Political officials from various European states already cooperate with partners in Algeria who are trying to prevent such activities. The EU Commission could contribute to this process by tying the disbursement of MEDA funds in the future more closely to effective cooperation from Algeria and to recognizable improvements in the rule of law. Even if one could rightly argue that oil and gas rich Algeria is not dependent on these funds, conditioning them makes sense nevertheless, for it is also a symbolic gesture that underlines European determination and consistency in such key policy areas.

Poor governance, corruption, and arbitrary behavior in politics and the judiciary are factors that have led to the strengthening of (radical) Islamists. They were also important causes of the Berber uprisings in Kabylie in 2001. A series of new political developments are very much welcomed, namely the far-reaching disengagement of the army from the political arena.

Still, there are structural problems that have not been addressed, such as the lack of power sharing and the regime's authoritarian character. The EU Commission should also make stronger use of financial incentives and sanctions in order to achieve goals in this area. This would help the calls for reforms leading to good governance and the rule of law laid out in the association treaty to actually be implemented instead of sounding like empty rhetoric.

Avoiding Placing Obstacles in the Way of Morocco's Lawful Islamists

Following his welcomed integration of the Islamist PJD into parliament, the Moroccan king is likely to be confronted with three key challenges in the mid-term. The first concerns the question of whether and how far he should allow the integration of the PJD into the government if they are further strengthened and end up winning the 2007 parliamentary elections, a victory that currently does not look improbable. Secondly, sooner or later—that is to say after the passing of the founder and spiritual leader of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* which can be expected to occur in the foreseeable future—the issue needs to be clarified of how to deal in the future with this illegal, strongly mobilized organization. Thirdly, the violence-prone elements in the Islamist movement need to be weakened.

All of these challenges concern Europe inasmuch as managing them is decisive for the success of Morocco's gradual transformation process. The EU can have a positive influence on this process by working for transparent and competitive elections, even if the PJD could emerge as the victor. Democratization, which Europe desires, can only move forward if real political competition is allowed to take place. Even the unlikely scenario of the royal palace appointing a PJD member as prime minister need not worry the EU. Such a development could rather be seen as an important experiment taking place in a relatively secure space, given that the royal palace still has the last word on strategic decisions. The same holds true for the possible political participation of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*.

Morocco's new religious policy, which seeks to weaken radical Islamists, is also worth supporting. At the same time, expectations over the short term should not run too high: for the foreseeable future, the programs of radical and politicized preachers on

Arab satellite TV stations are likely to continue to influence some segments of the population of Morocco. In the long term, violence-prone Islamists are most likely to lose ground if improvements are made in governance, the rule of law, and the standard of living. Advances in these areas have long been among the EU's priorities. To this end, it is problematic that Morocco receives considerably less support from the EU per capita than Tunisia. This is surprising given Morocco's massive demographic and socioeconomic challenges and its much greater political opening and willingness to undertake reforms. The EU should support this willingness with positive financial incentives. In doing so, it would also send a signal to the other states that reforms pay off.

Advocating for the Participation of Islamists in Tunisia

The Tunisian leadership sees no need to revise its policy towards Islamists. There are two ways in which the EU can deal with this position: either it continues to accept the Tunisian position, as it at least implicitly has done thus far, in which case it should give up on the notion that Tunisia will institute democratic reforms in the foreseeable future. Or the EU can show Tunisia what it has to gain if it follows the example of Morocco in the gradual and partial integration of Islamists. Europe also has a long-term self-interest in this scenario inasmuch as Tunisia's stability is strongly dependent on Ben Ali; there is no "crown prince." The integration of the broadest possible spectrum of democratically-oriented players into the political process while Ben Ali is still in power is likely the best guarantee for an orderly transition free from chaotic events. The conditions for the successful political integration of Islamists in Tunisia are currently good. Given the relative economic prosperity and the fact that Tunisian Islamists are pragmatic and prudent, a radical Islamist mass movement seems unlikely.

The action plan that the EU has worked out with Tunisia within the framework of the European Neighborhood Policy lists as one of its primary tasks giving more weight to the political dialogue on democratization and human rights issues. Furthermore, the participation of political parties should be increased. The EU Commission ought to make these abstract formulations more concrete and convey to the Tunisian leadership that it understands participation

to also mean integrating Islamists into the political process. In evaluating progress in freedom of expression and association, the Commission should not only consider the legalization of secular, civil society organizations. It should also be concerned with the legalization of Islamist NGOs, for example those organizations close to the Islamists which support political prisoners.

European actors may be uneasy about many of these recommendations because their implementation is risky and could create diplomatic ill-will. But European decision makers should not ignore two strong points—in addition to the previously referred to interest in stability in the Mediterranean—that argue for an open policy toward Islamists parties and for supporting political reform processes in the Maghreb. Firstly, such a policy sends a message to the entire Muslim world that they consider Samuel Huntington's thesis of a clash of civilizations incorrect. Secondly, their policy towards Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia is followed closely by people of Maghrebian descent living in Europe. Although there are great differences of thought among these Muslims, one can expect EU calls for democratization in the Maghreb region to find enormous support among them. Moreover, direct European contact with Islamist parties and organizations in the Maghreb is important because it influences immigrant communities in Europe. Having already recognized this, the Spanish government invited the party leader of the Moroccan PJD to Madrid in 2005 to discuss possibilities for exerting influence in a positive manner. Given the structure of the population in the majority of the EU member states, today European foreign policy towards states and actors in the Maghreb region is now more than ever also to a certain extent domestic policy.

Acronyms

AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party; Turkey)
BMENA	Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative
EMP	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
EU	European Union
FIS	Front islamique du salut (Algeria)
FLN	Front de libération nationale (Algeria)
GIA	Groupement islamique armé (Algeria)
GSPC	Groupe salafiste pour la prédication et le combat (Algeria)
ICG	International Crisis Group
INDH	Initiative nationale pour le développement humain
KAS	Konrad Adenauer Foundation
MEDA	EC programs aimed at supporting decentralized Euro-Mediterranean co-operation
MPDC	Mouvement populaire démocratique et constitutionnel (Morocco)
MRN	Mouvement de la réforme nationale (Algeria)
MSP	Mouvement de la société pour la paix (Algeria)
MTI	Mouvement de la tendance islamique (Tunisia)
MUR	Mouvement unicité et réforme (Morocco)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PDP	Parti démocratique progressiste (Tunisia)
PJD	Parti de la justice et du développement (Morocco)
UNO	United Nations Organization
USFP	Union socialiste des forces populaires (Morocco)