
**Islamist Parties
in the Maghreb
and Their Links with EU: Mutual
Influences and the Dynamics
of Democratisation**

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Executive Summary

One of the main aspects of the European Union's (EU) new Neighbourhood Policy towards countries of the Maghreb is the strengthening of the process of democratisation. Islamic parties which were for a long time kept in illegal opposition and are now official, such as the Mouvement de la Société pour la Paix (MSP, Movement of the Society for Peace) in Algeria and the Parti de la Justice et du Développement (PJD, Justice and Development Party) in Morocco are appearing increasingly as actors that can play a role in the democratisation process of the Maghreb. This new perspective is reinforced by the transformation that political Islam has undergone in the last decade or so. The Islamic parties of the 70s and 80s have abandoned their revolutionary rhetoric and opted for legality in the early 90's. By integrating into the official political landscape, they have become conservative and centre-ground parties: politically by adhering to the institutional frameworks of the kingdom and the nation, and economically in calling for liberalism. By presenting themselves as critical supporters of the regimes in place, they aim to take part in the different governmental coalitions whilst satisfying part of their electorate by their dissenting arguments.

This political change in Islamic parties also affects their relationship with EU and its member states. In the 80s, Europe was considered only as a land of exile and an occasional political platform. Since the mid-90's, however, these parties have tried to embrace Europe's Muslim population in three ways: by presenting themselves as defenders of the rights of European Muslim minorities; conducting electoral campaigns towards nationals living in Europe during respective elections in Morocco and Algeria and, finally, engaging in an external relations policy destined to the EU's public authorities, but without much success.

Since the 1990's, political instability in the Maghreb and the emergence of the phenomenon of terrorism have led the EU to marginalise the Islamic parties, prioritising instead a Euro-Mediterranean Partnership centred on the security and stability of the region, with little inclination to integrate these actors in the negotiations and initiatives concerning the region. However the partnership engaged by the United States with some legal Islamist activists in Morocco and Algeria seems to be having an influential impact on the EU - as the latter attempts to identify more flexible ways to integrate these political players with a view to renewing the democratisation process in the region.

The EU has in its relations with its Maghreb neighbours have for some time now given emphasis to the issue of democratisation. The role of the 'religious' factor, i.e. using Islam as a source for legitimisation in national policies, has rarely been addressed officially between the two partners. But the issues of democratisation and the instrumental mobilisation of Islam have historically been intertwined in Euro-Mediterranean relations and particularly within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP)¹. Be it a European perception of Islam as the main reason for the region's economic and social backwardness², or the Arab leaders' tendency to set Islam against the 'imperialist policies' of Europe – as seen during the cartoon episode³ - these two factors are crucial in the dynamics of political, identity and cultural exchanges going on between the north and the south. At the heart of the new European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)⁴, the issue of democratisation is of particular importance with regard to the countries of the Maghreb. The topic of democratisation, however, also implies taking into account opposition movements in the region. Islamist movements, particularly in Morocco and Algeria, have for a long time been among the main drivers of political opposition. However, the idea that Maghreb states are secular regimes confronted by religious movements needs to be revisited in light of the political use of these Islamic movements by these regimes since the 70s, especially in their negotiations with the EU. Recent developments in the political strategies of the Islamists and their new attitudes towards Europe need also to be taken into account, as do their strategies to gain inclusion into the political life of their countries. This study will therefore assess the role that mainstream Islamic parties in Morocco and Algeria could play in the context of the ENP, and more specifically vis-à-vis the issue of democratisation in the region. The example of Turkey, a neighbouring country of the EU governed by an Islamist party, and the discussions surrounding its EU accession, show the importance for Europe today of the question of inclusion of a political model inspired by an Islamic identity⁵.

Southern countries and EU member states have both experienced Islamism for several decades now. There is a considerable diversity among those actors that claim to be Islamists, whose demands and working methods are shaped by the political framework within which they are operating. Very often, this diversity is not taken into account by EU policies, especially by those designed to prevent terrorism and religious radicalisation. In this study, we will focus on political Islamism, defined as "the active assertion and promotion of beliefs, prescriptions, laws, or policies that are held to be Islamic in character"⁶. We will focus more specifically on two Islamist political parties, the Justice and Development Party (PJD) in Morocco and the Movement of the Society for Peace (MSP) in Algeria, and their interest in issues of democratisation, good governance, human rights and participation in civil society. We use the term Islamist to define these two parties in the sense that their political beliefs are based on the fact that the constitution and laws of the state must respect the principles of the Koran while also espousing a democratic framework (Morocco and Algeria are in fact two countries where Islam is the state religion). It is worth noting that the term Islamism is contested by these political players, who prefer to define themselves as "Muslim democrats", an allusion to European parties of a "Christian democrat" persuasion, or as political actors with an Islamic or religious bent, even as a traditional party whose only peculiarity is that they are acting in a Muslim country. Without neglecting their own internal ideological evolution, it seems that their development from the category "Islamist", with its sometimes aggressive and oppositional tendencies, to that of "Muslim democrats", with its elements of openness and acceptance of democracy, often results from the dynamics of repression or inclusion that they have been subject to. With Algeria and Morocco having experimented with a certain degree of openness in their political systems since the end of the 90's, we are seeing a profound change in the political nature of these Islamist parties, especially with their participation in elections, which has often met with success⁷.

Our argument relates to the absence today of a predominantly Islamist nature to the political choices of the MSP and PJD parties, giving place instead to a more or less problematic recourse to religious ideas, expressed in different ways according to the political context. Political Islamism (we will not refer here to the jihadi or salafi movements, whose relations to politics do not align themselves with democratic precepts) is therefore a historic process that has undergone major changes in the last 50 years. First of all up until the 90's set up in opposition to the state, with a strategy that failed (a notable example is that of the Algerian FIS)⁸, we see today that its proponents have a new capacity to adjust and take on the daily concerns of civil society, bringing them out of their revolutionary posture. We also see how Islamism as a social movement is today, after its political failure to overturn the state, one of the most importance forces of change in the region, having spread, to different sectors such as trade unions, associations of women, young people and students, networks of businessmen, etc.

Introduction Islamists?

1. Launched in Barcelona in 1995, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership covered the countries of the European Union and twelve Mediterranean partner countries, namely Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Malta, Egypt, Israel, the Palestine Authority, Jordan, Syria, Turkey, Cyprus and Lebanon. Organised along bilateral and regional dimensions, it allows the EU to apply its foreign policy in the region. It is based on three baskets – political, economic and financial; and social, cultural and human. Its implementation instruments are: association agreements between the EU and its Mediterranean partners, as well as a certain number of meetings such as that of the region's foreign affairs ministers, themed conferences bringing together officials, members of civil society, parliamentary and civil society for economic and foreign policy research networks, industrial federations and programmes concerning the media, youth or heritage.

2. Shireen T. Hunter, Huma Malik (eds.), *Modernization, Democracy and Islam*, Praeger/CSIS, 2005.

3. Olivier Roy, "Géopolitique de l'indignation" in *Le Monde*, 9/02/2006.

4. The European Neighbourhood Policy was developed as part of the enlargement of the EU in 2004 to maintain stability and security in Europe and its neighbours. Enlarged to include the southern Mediterranean countries, it also aims to overcome the status quo of the EMP. The "Strategy Paper on the European Neighbourhood Policy", which sets out the main ways in which the EU and its neighbouring countries can develop closer ties, was drafted in May 2004. This programme consists of shared values such as democracy and human rights, good governance, principles of the market economy and sustainable development. The ENP is designed to offer more political partnership and economic integration, using "positive conditionality" whereby countries of the south gain fuller access to the market economy [of the EU] as well as integration of transport, energy and telecommunications networks provided that they respect the above-mentioned values. It is not a process of enlargement and does not offer accession prospects to neighbouring countries. Its main tools are action plans, a kind of road map which sets out for each country how far they have come in terms of respecting the common values and carrying out sector reforms that the EU deems necessary. See http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index_en.htm

5. Nilüfer Göle, *Interpénétrations: L'Islam et l'Europe*, Paris, Galilée, 2006.

6. "The active assertion and promotion of beliefs, prescriptions, laws, or policies that are held to be Islamic in character" in International Crisis Group, *Understanding Islamism, Middle East/North Africa Report*, n° 37, March 2005.

7. For a description of the debate surrounding the category "Muslim democrats", see Vali Nasr, "The Rise of Muslim Democracy" in *Journal of Democracy*, April 2005.

8. On the issue of the failure of political Islamism to impose on the state a new regime of Islamic governance, see, among others, Olivier Roy, *L'Échec de l'Islam politique*, Paris, Seuil, 1992. Kepel Gilles, *Jihad, expansion et déclin de l'islamisme*, Paris, Gallimard, 2000. For a description of the dynamics of the evolution of Islamist parties, see, among others, Eickelman Dale, *Piscatori James, Muslim Politics*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1996. Beinin, Joel and Stork Joe (eds.), *Political Islam*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997. Hafez Mohammed, *Why Muslims Rebel?*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner, 2003. Wiktorowicz Quintan (ed.), *Islamic activism. A social movement theory*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2004.

The changes that political Islam can undergo are therefore conditioned by the political opportunities that arise (repression or inclusion, open or closed election system) and the changing demands of the populations that recognise themselves in Islamism. The interactions that Islamist actors can have with different political or social actors (and more and more with the EU) are also a factor in major changes. To understand the dynamics of Islamism in the Euro-Mediterranean region today, it needs to be thought of as a process and not just as a political project limited in time⁹.

The issue of including Islamist movements in EuroMed relations is not just about the need for the EU to rethink its relations with certain types of political actors, but also highlights the EU's capacity to propose in the region a democratisation programme that is more credible for civil society as a whole, a credibility that was eroded by the relative failure of the Barcelona process, which marked its ten year anniversary in November 2005.

Who are the Maghreb Islamists today? What mutual influences can we see between the EU and the Islamist movements, after 15 years of promoting democracy and north-south dialogue? Can we still talk of Islamism in the case of official political parties using religious ideas, and evolving in a process of democratic transition after having positioned themselves formerly against authoritarian regimes?

The two parties, the PJD and the MSP, which we have chosen to focus on, are fairly representative of the changes in Islamist parties in the region, and of implications of their inclusion in the democratisation process that is at the heart of the European Neighbourhood Policy. At the same time, the fact that Algeria and Morocco have fairly different relations with the EU will also allow us to highlight the national specificities of these movements.

History of the Movement of the Society for Peace (MSP) in Algeria

In Algeria, legalised political Islam is made up of three official parties:

The Movement for National Reform (MNR - Harakat al-Islah al-Watani) was founded by Abdallah Djaballah in 1999. After winning 43 seats in the 2002 legislative elections and 5% of the votes during the 2004 presidential elections, this party is now the most powerful Islamist political force in opposition and the third most powerful party in parliament.

The second official Islamist party is En-Nahda (Islamic Renaissance Movement), led today by Lahbib Adami and with one seat in parliament. The party, created in 1990 as an association by Abdallah Djaballah, emerged following a split with the current members of the Islah party.

The third Algerian Islamist party is the Movement of the Society for Peace Movement (MSP - Harakat al-Moujtama' al-Silm), created in 1990, whose abbreviated Arab name is HaMaS. It is currently led by Aboujerra Soltani. The history of the MSP is closely linked to that of its founder, the late Mahfoudh Nahnah. Born in 1938, this teacher of Arabic started his preaching activities at the end of the 70s and was opposed to the regime of President Houari Boumediene. In 1977, he carried out sabotage operations by sawing down electricity pylons and was sentenced to 15 years in prison. Pardoned by the next President, Chadli Bendjedid, Nahnah is then reported by various sources as having made a commitment to military security services to be less extreme in his preaching and to abstain from any association with Islamist groups criticising the authorities.

Following the October 1988 Algiers riots by the youth of the country, he was asked by Ali Belhadj, a young preacher, to take part in setting up the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS). He turned down the offer, saying there were enough Islamic associations and that it was useless to create a new one. He preferred to found his own association - Guidance et Réforme (Al-Irshad wa-l-Islah, Guidance and Reform), largely financed by the Organisation of Muslim Brothers to which Nahnah belonged ideologically and which he saw as a non-political organisation of preaching, religious education and charity. Without opposing the FIS, which was very popular at the time and were seeking to set itself up as the only Islamist force in the country, Nahnah's association was keen to affirm its ideological specificities. Presented as an Islamist alternative to the FIS, Nahnah's numerous conferences and his newspaper Al-Irshad expressed less radical positions than those of Abassi Madani, then the FIS's top man. In the eyes of many observers, his discourse differentiated itself from that of the FIS through its reformist reading of Islam and the political moderation of his association.

Whilst advocating the creation of an Islamic state, Nahnah's organisation aimed at the time to carry out its activities autonomously as opposed to the monopolistic strategy of the FIS,

which wanted to bring together Algerian Islamic activity for the purposes of revolution. Nahnah advocated a vision of Islam open to the world, calling for political and economic reforms to go ahead and insisting that human rights were respected. The association said it was in favour of work for women and had one of the most important 'women' sections in the country. This was the opposite to the FIS, who considered that women's role was to look after the home. The association called for the family code to be amended with new provisions guaranteeing better protection for women. The women's section of the association declared that it condemned violence against women and demanded that their working hours be reduced in order to allow them to better carry out their roles at work and in the home.

In 1990, the association became a political party and called itself the Mouvement de la Société Islamique, (MSI-Hamas). At that time, the association had 4 centres, around forty wilaya sections and 916 offices in the municipalities, 133 of which were women's offices. Its political activities ran alongside important social work from employment, helping families, widows and the needy as well as access to medical care.

So Hamas presented itself as a direct competitor to the FIS by advocating an Islam that did not reject the notions of democracy, human rights, women at work and equality between the sexes. It advocated the creation of an Islamic state in stages – a state founded on dialogue, distancing itself from violence, political and religious terrorism. To make the distinction between politics and ideology and despite a long period working behind closed doors, Hamas has focused on cooperating with the state since the beginning of the 90's. In supporting the government's decision to stop the electoral process of 1992 (it had secured only 5.3% of the votes in the legislative elections in 1991), the party was to condemn both terrorist violence by the Islamic Army of Salvation, the armed wing of the FIS and the Armed Islamic Groups as well as the repressive policy of the Algerian security services. This intermediary position cost Hamas the lives of nearly 50 senior party members, killed in terrorist acts.

As from 1995, Nahnah responded to the invitation by the Algerian state to relaunch the democratic process and decided to take part in the different elections (especially the presidential ones), highlighting his strategy of joining the political process. He stood as a candidate in the 1995 presidential elections, officially winning 25.38% of the votes and coming second after the Algerian army's candidate, General Zeroual. Hamas became the Movement of the Society for Peace - MSP (Harakat al-Mujtama' al-Silm) in 1997 following a law on political parties that banned any ideological use of Islam. It then switched its slogan from "Islam is the solution" to "peace is the solution". Whilst advocating 'another' politically negotiated solution to the civil war that was then afflicting the country, it was against the armed struggle of Islamist terrorists and the lack of dialogue with the Algerian state. The MSP did not either the 'National Contract', an appeal for democracy and peace launched in 1995 in San Egidio by representatives from the FIS, the FFS and the Workers' Party. In the 1997 legislative elections, the MSP officially secured nearly 7% of the votes and 69 seats, becoming the fourth most powerful political party in the country. The Algerian state refused to give the MSP the chance to run in the 1999 presidential elections. Since 1997, the MSP has been part of different government coalitions and is today a member of the Presidential Alliance, which brings together the three parties with a parliamentary majority – the MSP, the National Liberation Front (FLN) and the National Democratic Rally (RND). But this policy was to cost the MSP dear as it only won 7% of votes and 38 seats, i.e. half the number of seats it had won in 1997 in the 2002 legislative elections.

Mahfoud Nahnah died in 2003 and was replaced at the head of the party by Aboujerra Soltani. Since 2002, the MSP has had five ministerial portfolios – Mustapha Benbada as Small and Medium-sized Businesses Minister, El Hachemi Djaaboub as Industry Minister, Smaïl Mimoun as Fisheries Minister, Amar Ghoul as Minister of Public Works and Aboujerra Soltani as Minister of State without portfolio¹⁰.

The landscape of political Islam in Morocco seems to feature more ideological diversity than its Algerian neighbour. Three Islamic parties are today recognised in Morocco:

The first is the Justice and Development Party (PJD), whose history will be described in this section.

The second is the Civilisation Alternative Party (Al-Badil al-Hadari). An association created in 1995 and legalised as a political party in June 2005, its President is Mustapha Moutassim.

History of the Justice and Development Party (PJD)

10. For a fuller and 'official' list of the members and their programme, see the MSP's website (in Arabic) at <http://www.hmsalgeria.net/>

The party sees itself as close to the socialist left and as a green party, and presents itself as a moderate alternative to the existing Islamist parties, especially via a policy of alliances with secular parties.

The third is the Renaissance and Virtue Party (En-Nahda wal-Fadila), created in December 2005 and led by Mohamed Khalidi. Wishing to position itself between PJD, which it sees as too far to the right, and Al-Badil al-Hadari, which it sees as too far to the left, the Renaissance and Virtue Party was in reality set up as an alternative for those disappointed with the PJD, the majority of its members being former PJD activists.

Although it is not an official Islamist party, we need to mention the existence of the Islamo-Sufist association Justice and Charity (JB - Al 'Adl wal-Ihsane), named thus in 1987 but made up of a number of former associations, all created by Abdessalam Yassine since 1973. The daughter of Abdessalam Yassine, Nadia Yassine, is the current leader of the movement, having succeeded her father. From 1989 to 2000, Sheikh Yassine was put under house arrest by the Kingdom of Morocco for his revolutionary positions (still advocated by the movement), which included abolishing the monarchy in Morocco and setting up an Islamic caliphate. Sometimes tolerated by the Kingdom of Morocco, sometimes violently repressed, the association is said to be made up of 25,000 active members and over 140,000 supporters in Morocco¹¹. As the main opponent of legalised political Islam, it has always refused to take part in elections and focuses on preaching, charity and education in Morocco¹². The JB's three principles are the rejection of violence, clandestine methods and external finance. It is made up of several sub-sectors focusing on new technologies, students, women, trade unions and so on.¹³

The history of the Justice and Development Party (PJD), created more recently and less tied to the political history of a founder, is different. Created in 1998, the PJD resulted from the merger of two movements. One was led by Abdelkrim Khatib, who was close to the Moroccan monarchy and created the People's Democratic and Constitutional Movement (MPDC) in 1957. The other was headed by Abdelillah Ben Kirane, who belonged to the Islamic youth movement, Shabiba Islamiyya, a jihadist social revolutionary movement that was accused of having assassinated the trade union activist Omar Ben Jelloul. In 1981-82, Ben Kirane set up the Islamic Group Association and decided to work through legal political channels. In 1992, the association changed its name to *Islah wa Tajdid*, Reform and Renewal. It asked for permission to create a political party in 1992, which the authorities refused. Unable to create its own structure, it sought other political formations which might welcome its activists. Of all the parties that already existed, the closest to Ben Kirane was the MPDC, which saw this newcomer as a way to gain new political impetus. The MPDC welcomed the activists from Ben Kirane's association. The merger of Islamists and the MPDC took place in two phases in 1996. Ben Kirane gathered around him a considerable number of Islamist associations. This is how three associations came together in 1996 – the Islamic Ad-Da'wa Association (preaching) of Fès, the Rabat Ashourouk and the Islamic association of Ksar Kébir. This merging of associations took the name of League for an Islamic Future (Rabitat al-Moustaqbal al-Islamy), led by Ahmed Raïssouni, which would later become the Unity and Reform Movement (Harakat at-Tawhid wal-Islah) bringing together nearly 200 Islamist associations. Ben Kirane was then elected Deputy Secretary of the party, becoming Khatib's right-hand man. During the 1997 legislative elections, the PJD secured nine parliamentary seats. In 1998, the party became the Party of Justice and Development. In 2004, Saad Eddine Othmani became the party's Secretary General. During the 2002 legislative elections, the PJD won 42 seats out of 295. With its emergence as a major political force, the question then arose how it could effectively take part in government.

11. Source: Ahmed R. Benchemsi, *Le peuple des rêveurs*, TelQuel, n° 194.

12. For a historical description of the Islamist movement in Morocco, see Malika Zeghal, *Les islamistes marocains. Le défi à la monarchie*, La Découverte, 2005.

13. A short description can be found on the association's website (in Arabic) at <http://www.aljamaa.info>. See also the website dedicated to the "Sheikh" at <http://www.yassine.net/>.

Renouncing violence

The ideologies of the leaders of the MSP and PJD have considerably evolved in terms of both their methods and their political options. In the past, those in favour of direct and revolutionary action and opposed to their respective regimes largely took inspiration from the Iranian revolutionary model and their aim was to set up an Islamic state. A large proportion of those who today say they want moderate Islamism (PJD and MSP) were behind violent and radical action in the 70s and 80s, a form of action that they considered to be the only one capable of establishing an Islamic state in the context of a closed political system and of political repression of any form of opposition. Mahfoud Nahnah, the founder of the Hamas movement, carried out sabotage operations. Abdelillah Ben Kirane, who was at the origin of the PJD, started out in the Shabiba Islamiyya, a group believed to be responsible for several assassinations. Over time, these movements, which had promoted the revolutionary aspect of their activism, abandoned violence and opted for legal action as and when they were made an official part of the Algerian and Moroccan political arenas. In the 80s, by undertaking violent action, they wanted to destroy from the inside the institutions that they considered as anti-Islamic but were too weak to do so. To shed further light on their attitude to violence in recent years, it is also worth noting that the events of 11 September 2001 (and the attacks on Casablanca in 2003 in the case of Morocco) had a sort of 'regulating' effect for the majority of Islamist movements in the Arab world¹⁴.

Integrating into the political process

Little by little, their leaders began to take part in the political process. From a revolutionary discourse, they evolved towards dissent, before becoming conservative pillars of society and the state. With the approval of different governments, the political integration model of the MSP and PJD involved a subtle game of self-inclusion and self-exclusion from the parliamentary system. The aim was to reassure their grassroots, who are drawn in by the dissenting dimension of the ideology of these parties, whilst wanting to appear for the other parties and the monarchy as approachable actors and as a factor of stability in the country. The aim was to set themselves up as a non-disruptive political force of stabilisation whilst maintaining their dissent potential. Unlike the FIS and Al 'Adl wal-Ihsan (another big Moroccan Islamist association that has not been legalised), the MSP and the PJD are legal parties. The former has taken part in all elections since 1997 and accepted ministerial portfolios. The latter was elected into parliament the same year. Rather than challenging the current political system (parliament, monarchy etc.), they urge their voters and members to fully respect the republican and monarchist institutions. The PJD thus appears to be pro-monarchist and the MSP to be pro-nationalist. The MSP is therefore very sensitive to the Islamic facet of the identity of the Algerian state and its institutions and now presents itself as a defender of the country's abiding features.

The MSP and PJD have accepted compromises, toned down their discourses and gradually changed their values in order to win votes beyond their original base and to build essential alliances with non-Islamist formations. Those that could be described as legal Islamists have abandoned their former revolutionary methods, based on political radicalism, in favour of a pragmatic strategy based on negotiation and dialogue. Thus, by launching into political party and electoral processes and by abandoning the notion that they are the depositaries of religious truth, they have developed a culture of political compromise. We see leaders of these parties abandoning the idea of establishing an Islamic state because Algeria and Morocco are countries that already respect Islamic prescriptions. At the end of the 90's, these political parties had the aim of creating an Islamic state where the Shari'a would be applied. They thought that Islam could solve the economic, social and political problems that Algeria and Morocco were facing. In other words, Islam was the solution and the Koran contained the means to resolve the crises that Moroccan and Algerian societies were undergoing. Gradually, the Islamist model presenting Islam as the solution to all the problems moved into a phase of crisis and of inability to adapt to the political realities of the time. They no longer contested, as they had before, the existing national political frameworks such as the Moroccan monarchy and called for these to be respected: "The PJD is Islamic as are all the institutions in Morocco," said a senior official from the party. "Algeria is a Muslim country - the call for prayer can be heard, Ramadan is respected, women increasingly wear the veil - so talking about the Islamisation of society when the country is a Muslim country is a false problem," said the former MSP Member of Parliament for the wilaya (administrative region) of Béjaïa.

Chapter 1

Doctrines and Organisation

Ideology: Constants and Changes

14. Isabelle Werenfels, *Between Integration and Repression - Government responses to Islamism in the Maghreb*, SWP Research Paper, 2005.

It should also be added that these parties have become more professional, especially via their entry into parliament, triggering a change in their political nature. Their entry into the national political framework has enabled them to be in contact with other political actors and to form alliances that have brought in issues other than those typical of an Islamic state. The change in their ties with their grassroots, moving from the role of associations on the ground to that of parliamentary political leaders, has meant that the idea of change becomes a process in which the subject matter is largely secularised.

In addition to the internal crisis in the Islamist model, which is pushing them to rethink the political frameworks of their action, comes the will of the authorities in power to integrate these parties or rather co-opt them. There are two main reasons for this new openness.

The first is that the force of protest and radicalism of these parties has been domesticated and neutralised by the state in order to control them better. According to this theory, the state continues to control directly or indirectly the electoral results of Islamists, who, following what they are told by the parties in power, can decide to limit their electoral ambitions themselves (as was the case for the PJD, which decided to cap the number of its candidates during the 2002 legislative elections, avoiding too big a victory). The state has consequently reduced these parties “to the role of an instrument, by preventing them from acquiring power via the elections”¹⁵.

The second lies in the establishment by the states of a superficial climate of democratic transition, notably following calls from the EU and the primacy of the theme of democratic transition within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The participation of Islamist parties and other opposition parties would thus give substance to the idea of there being a new political era. But numerous observers object that, since it is not being accompanied by structural and institutional changes, this idea of democratic transition is above all allowing the states to consolidate their legitimacy while continuing to limit the influence of the new arrivals. Thus, in essence to survive unaffected in a process of change.

Structure and organisation

Towards a political professionalisation

This “instrumentalisation” of parties by the states is not considered to be an obstacle by the parties themselves. On the contrary, the fact that elite Islamists are co-opted by the state mainly through legislative elections strengthens their policy of mousharaka (partnership), which is at the heart of their current political strategy¹⁶. This policy allows them to learn to govern without really having the means to do so for the moment, and by entering into a practical apprenticeship exercise of policy management that is more routine and less revolutionary.

Indeed, the Islamism that we have seen needs to be thought of as a process and not a state of political nature. Thus, the organisational structures and operating methods of these parties change as they are institutionalised by being recognised by the state. Previously focused essentially on activities surrounding religious preaching, these movements will professionalize themselves in the political sphere. We can see in both parties a division of labour when it comes to the Islamist identity. On the one hand we see actors responsible for representing the party's official position, and on the other hand we see a multitude of associations and networks adding to the dynamic of the party without officially being part of it. For example, before setting up the political party Hamas, Mahfoud Nahnah was at the head of a multitude of religious associations which gave him very useful support as well as a significant popular base to reach out to and woo potential voters. These associations also gave real visibility, which other opposition parties do not necessarily gain, as was seen during the actions of Hamas supporters during the Algerian earthquake in 2003 and the floods in the Bab el Oued district in Algiers in 2001. The independence enjoyed by some unelected activists, who may also belong to the associative movements supporting the party, also allows them to make statements in their own name on controversial issues of Islamist identity (customs, human rights etc.), leaving the consensual and professional political discourse to elected officials.

As for the PJD, Mounia Bennani-Chraïbi observes that the “PJD certainly occupies the religious and ethical sphere, in accordance with its identity as a party of Islamic reference; however, it draws value from that position in its interactions with the masses. In meetings with senior officials, it seeks to show that it has produced an overall programme, covering all the sectors, borrowing the most fashionable human rights and sustainable development terminology, adding only a hint of Islamist morals (...). They are no longer into revolutionary “awareness-raising” but rather into eliminating political illiteracy”¹⁷. The reason for this division between

15. For more on this theory, see Lahouari Addi, “Les partis politiques en Algérie” in *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, n° 111-112, April 2006. For Morocco, see Haddadi Said, “The EMP and Morocco: Diverging Political Agendas?” in, Jünemann Annette (ed.), *Euro-Mediterranean Relations After September 11 – International, Regional and Domestic Dynamics*, London: Frank Cass, 2004. Michael Willis, “Morocco, Islamists and the Legislative Elections of 2002: The Strange Case of the Party That Did Not Want to Win” in *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol.9, No.1, 2004.

16. Noura Hamladi, “Co-optation, repression and authoritarian regime's survival: the case of the Islamist MSP-Hamas in Algeria”, SPS Working Papers, European University Institute, 2002.

17. Mounia Bennani-Chraïbi, “Mobilisations électorales à Derb Soltan et Hay Hassani (Casablanca)” in Mounia Bennani-Chraïbi (ed.), *Scènes et coulisses de l'élection au Maroc, les législatives 2002*, Karthala/IREMAM, 2004.

Islamist and secular issues is on the one hand to explain political mechanisms to the mass of supporters and on the other hand to transform the support gained in their “Da’wa” (religious prayer) activities onto the political stage. By organising themselves into parties, they are delegating their former religious activities to associations such as the Unity and Reform Movement (MUR) and its newspaper Al-Tajdid, which allows some of those elected from the PJD to issue statements on Islamic morals and identity, untenable on the political level. Mosques are also an important place to spread the political message, and while the parties do not formulate their demands at the mosques, many of their activists are imams and pass on their message. The many charitable and religious associations that gravitate around these parties will thus be an essential factor for how the EU could establish links with them.

The issue of money is another important element in the professionalisation of these parties. In the 80s, these movements did not work in a very transparent manner because they were semi-revolutionary and more or less radical in their opposition to the state. Today they are opting for transparency and openness on monetary affairs, first of all in their relations with the state from which they receive funding as legalised parties. “Our financing comes from two sources: the state first, which allocates, as to all parties, a subsidy proportionate to our representation in parliament (42 seats), i.e. 1.2 million Moroccan dirhams (about 120,000 euro) per year. Then there are the contributions of our members of parliament. Out of the 30,000 Moroccan dirhams (DH) that they are given every month, they pay 6,000 to the party, which are then evenly split between national and provincial levels. In total, the amount of these contributions comes to around 1.4 million DH per year. Then there are the contributions of members (200 DH per person and per year), which go to local structures”¹⁸. The same goes for the MSP, with a budget which is said by its second in command, Menasra, to be annually “around 20 to 30 million dinars. The party receives a contribution from the state, but also a sum of 200,000 DA per MP per year”¹⁹.

However, here too their behaviour is caught in the dilemma of making a distinction between being an Islamist party with its religious nature while at the same time making the necessary adaptation to the rules of the political arena. As regards the PJD, the emphasis is on the implacable fight against corruption within the party, since according to its leaders, an Islamist party is more subject to criticism in case of corruption, something which would be fatal for its electoral credibility. In Algeria, there was a huge conversion of the majority of Islamists of all kinds into businessmen at the end of the 90’s. The big retailers that support the MSP often become the decision-making centre of the movement. So this is a far cry from an interest in the theological-moral issue of the place of money in Islam. Along the lines of the Turkish model of the AKP (Justice and Development Party), there is a move away from revolutionary utopia towards a more efficient vision where money has largely replaced ideas in their defence of Islam. Here we must note the emergence of a new sort of Islamist activist, increasingly replacing the figure of an association leader with that of a political leader. This new population often belongs to financial circles and brings to the Islamist parties other networks which are often more useful to them in the political management of their daily mission than religious actors alone.

Popular parties?

In its desire to establish a dialogue with Islamist parties, Europe has often presented them as being representative of the masses. While it is true that the secular actors currently associated with EuroMed dialogue have limited ties to civil society, we should nonetheless remain cautious about suggesting that these parties represent the political opinion of the man in the street. The principle and conception of membership of the party is indeed very elitist, based on a small number of co-opted people. In their relationships with the state, with secular actors or with the EU itself, they continually stress that the majority of their supporters are from the rising middle classes. We see a large number of women, students and professionals (retailers, lawyers, doctors, engineers, etc.). The PJD says it has more than 10,000 members and as many supporters²⁰. Faced with this process of more and more Islamists becoming middle class, many former activists are turning to salafism²¹, a movement that does not mix with politics and can be occasionally encouraged by the state to thwart legalised Islamism²². In reality, there is a need to differentiate between the electoral success of these parties and the reasons that push activists to commit to them. They are today the only real receptacles for protest votes by the people against the frustrations generated by the Western world’s scorn and by state authoritarianism. They also have the advantage for voters of never having really exercised power, and that which they denounce is in reality a matter of consensus with current Algerian and Moroccan officials (fight against poverty, corruption, inequalities, etc.)

¹⁸. The PJD party is presented on its website: <http://www.pjd.ma/>

¹⁹. “Voyage à l’intérieur des partis, Hamas ou l’Islamisme en costume” in *El Watan*, 11/04/2006.

²⁰. Interview with a senior PJD official.

²¹. “Youridoun moughadarat al-bilad wa bad’ safha jadda: Shabab Jazairiyoun tarakou al-silah ila al-Ouslah wa Khaybat al-Amal” (They want to leave the country and move on: young Algerians are giving up weapons for solitude and despair) in *Al Hayat*, 23/05/2000.

²². Lahouari Addi, “En Algérie, du conflit armé à la violence sociale” in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, avril 2006.

The fact that these parties often put emphasis on the active participation of their cells for women and young people (the women's cell of the MSP being the most significant in the Algerian political scene in terms of numbers) sets them apart for the Algerian and Moroccan populations as an alternative to the lack of political openness for them in these countries. People are not necessarily activists for political or ideological reasons but for more pragmatic reasons. The PJD and the MSP provide the chance to learn about politics through training units that draw strongly on the Muslim Brotherhood (Ousra) model. These are political education programmes that the activists will not find elsewhere. These parties also organise meetings to comment on current news and to report on books that are read individually. Every year, the PJD also organises a national forum which brings together all the youth sections in the country for a programme that includes classes, conferences, workshops, a collective reading of the Koran and meetings with party leaders. This prompted a young 19-year-old activist to say: "In the PJD, I am getting a political and general education that I could not get anywhere else. The PJD brings in intellectuals from the whole world to enlighten us on what is going on".²³

The universities are also important places to raise awareness about the MSP and the PJD. For example, the National Union of Students in Morocco and the General Union of Free Students in Algeria, both having shifted their support to the Islamists after being disappointed by the left, regularly organise conferences on their campuses on the role of Islam and the Muslim peoples, organise demonstrations to support needy students, distribute religious literature or organise protest strikes against various draft laws.

These parties also play a socialising role for activists and supporters, giving them a network of solidarity within which members can find spouses, get help setting up businesses via investment vehicles (known as 'tontines'), or find accommodation. Finally, the parties also often benefit from the vote of activists from other Islamist parties that are either banned or not very well tolerated by the state, as was the case 2002²⁴, when votes for the Al 'Adl wal-Ihsane de Nadia Yacine association went to the PJD.

So the idea that these parties are intrinsically popular in nature and have their roots in the masses needs to be reviewed. The support they can build is linked to the type of access to politics open to people in these countries. Also to be taken into account is the change of generations underway within these parties, where young people are tending more to express themselves by setting up networks of para-professional associations without necessarily turning to politics to be influential and change things. These new actors could also change the face of these parties from within.

Remaining Islamists in the state: grey areas and relations with democracy

This arrangement nevertheless raises the following problem: How do you continue to be opponents and set yourself apart as Islamists while at the same time playing the inclusion card? The PJD and MSP frequently denounce any draft measure that would attack the Muslim nature of the state or the monarchy. In Algeria, the Arabic language, which the MSP says is marginalised by the widespread use of French in the administration, is regularly defended. The MSP has played a lobbying role, mobilising as necessary those in society and in the administration that fear that the Arab-Islamic identity of the country is being undermined. The party recruits essentially from the urban middle classes, among civil servants and teachers. The MSP therefore tries to show that it is critical of the government in a supportive way. It takes the side of the majority whilst criticising the government on some points, reserving the option to speak out when it deems Islamic identity to be at stake.

Instead of adopting a detailed political programme specific to them as Islamists (the internal crisis of the former model of the Islamist utopia adjusting poorly to the daily and non-revolutionary reality of its citizens), these parties prefer to present themselves as defenders of Islamic virtue by insisting on the defence of morals. Thus, MPs of the MSP have managed to ban the broadcasting of the Lebanese variety programme "Star Academia" in Algeria on the grounds that this programme presented Algerian youth with "depraved" young singers. The MSP also denounce the evangelisation of Kabylia and continues to be vague on the rights of religious minorities. It also took issue with the decision to remove the teaching on the Koran from the baccalaureate by saying that it was "in blatant contradiction with the government's initiatives to teach good Islam".

23. "Rencontre. Ces jeunes du PJD" in *TelQuel*, novembre 2005.

24. Interview with Nadia Yassine in *Arab Reform Bulletin*, Volume 4, Issue 6, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, July 2006.

The PJD (and the MSP) have also asked for a ban on the sale of wine to, and the consumption of alcohol by Muslims, with the threat of severe fines, and restrictions on their sale in tourist areas. The issue of morals in public life was also addressed in August 2000 with regard to beaches and the behaviour of Moroccans. The PJD thought that there were occurring practices “which defy morals and general good behaviour and contradict the values of the Islamic religion”, referring thereby to the mixing of males and females on beaches in swimsuits. The PJD also called for a ban and then appealed for a boycott of the film “Marock” and the music festival gnawa d’Essaouira. In the same spirit, it declared in the newspaper of the MUR, Al-Tajdid, that the tsunami was divine punishment that Morocco might not escape because of the debauchery rampant in the country.

This high visibility in terms of defending Islamic morality is for these parties a way to appear as the defenders of Islamic values at low cost, and in a consensual way, as these positions converge with conservative and traditionalist wings of opinion in the country. These criticisms are designed to win popularity among the masses, especially in election periods when declarations on the Islamic nature of society are most frequent, but do not stand in the way of more complex strategies of forming alliances with the state or other parties on the defence of the “national” Islamic identity. Menasra, for example, the MSP’s number two man, explained that the party agrees with the RND when it comes to the economy because it advocates the total opening of the market. Its differences with the FLN are a lot more to do with religion and freedoms. As for the PJD, its Secretary General says: “We simply ask for application of the law and nothing but the law. As you know, the PJD is not a police force for morals and the law cannot regulate or resolve all problems. What’s more, social phenomena cannot be dealt with only by legal or repressive means. We need to resort to social remedies through information and awareness-raising (...). Besides, for all draft laws with a religious connotation (casinos, alcohol, abortion, etc.), the parliament should call on the religious expertise of the Council of the Ulema (theologians) and use that information to find an acceptable compromise. In Morocco, it was Amir Al-Mouminine who guaranteed compliance of laws with the state’s Islamic standards (...) We do not have to build it (the Islamic state) since it already exists. The Constitution itself states that Morocco is an Islamic state”.²⁵ In reality, it seems that the PJD and MSP are skilfully sharing out the tasks relating to the “defence of Islamic morals”. On the one hand, certain MPs are responsible for embodying the radical wing of the party and giving the party visibility by raising controversies about issues of identity and morals, and on the other there are strategies of alliances with the state on the Islamic nature of the nation, designed to bring in moderate reforms.²⁶

The traditional issue of knowing how sincere or duplicitous²⁷ they are being with regard to some “grey areas”²⁸ such as application of the Shari’a and the Houdud (corporal punishment), the use of violence, political pluralism, the religious freedom of minorities, women’s rights or their position on what the EU calls “European values of democracy” must be resolved in a pragmatic way, mainly because, in the first place, their opinions on these grey areas are changing.

By setting up political parties in the 90’s and by taking part in different elections (local, presidential and legislative) and in different government coalitions (in the case of Algeria), the political nature of these parties has changed. Parliamentary and government experience has led their leaders to renew their discourses. They are leaving behind religious areas for more political and secular issues. What is more, they are also adjusting their political programme to their government’s public policies. It is therefore difficult to precisely define the political programme of the PJD and the MSP. Indeed political pragmatism carries the day over a clear definition of an ideology, and is thus set out more in the form of a set of general principles that might change depending on political circumstances. The political programme of these so-called moderate Islamist parties has not emerged from a single line of thinking growing out of a fundamental Islamist theory developed by the leaders and intellectuals of the movement. The political programme of the MSP and PJD has been built in a pragmatic way from the fundamental ideological givens of these parties. These remain flexible, capable of espousing, where necessary, the different government policies while distinguishing themselves as “Islamic” to continue to appear as a resource for protest by activists. The political programme of the MSP and the PJD is consequently pretty imprecise. It stresses the principle of the Islamicisation of society through institutional and legislative work. But this issue remains quite vague and can be summed up as a position of principle and a profession of faith to the masses more than a real work of political theology. In many cases, the ideology of these Islamist parties fits in closely with the positions and religious/government policy of religious affairs ministries. It is a basic and moralising discourse of probity. This lack of precision in terms of a political programme can also be found in the sphere of economics, where only the main lines concerning social justice and liberalism

25. “PJD : si nous étions au gouvernement ... Entretien avec Saadeddine El Othmani” in *La vie économique*, 28/05/2004.

26. “Two Countries: Who is Using Whom in Egypt and Morocco?” in *The Economist*, 16/12/2004.

27. Graham E. Fuller, “Islamists in the Arab world: The dance around democracy”, *Carnegie Papers*, September 2004, n° 49.

28. Nathan J. Brown, Amr Hamzawy, Marina Ottaway, “Islamist movements and the democratic process in the Arab World: Exploring the gray zones” *Carnegie Papers*, March 2006, n° 67.

are developed. “For the MSP, the economy is important – we want to defend free markets without falling into the vices of capitalism and defend social justice without falling into the negative things of capitalism, these two elements sum up the economic policy of the MSP if we arrive in power one day but it is clear that we have not yet thought through the details”.²⁹

These parties seem in fact to be caught in a double bind, the external one of adapting their ideologies to the state’s programmes and the internal one of the crisis in the traditional Islamist model now out of date. For example, having condemned the attacks on Casablanca in 2003, the PJD was forced to restrict its participation in the elections and prevent a possible electoral landslide in its favour. In this context, although defending a religion that they describe as universalistic, their demands essentially form part of the national political context. Once again, it is the profoundly political nature of Islamism, a nature that changes according to current events and the demands of the people, which will have to respond to the question of their sincerity on in relation to democratic values. It is the framework within which their ideology is expressed (opposition to authoritarianism, then involvement in constant national issues), which determines their relations with democracy. The will to promote democracy today in Algeria and Morocco has resulted in a phenomenon of co-optation controlled by elite Islamists within governments, notably through parliamentary dynamics. The power thus created is more symbolic than really dangerous for the political status quo of the country, given that an Islamist electoral success is hardly a risk.³⁰ The grey areas will not be determined by their ideology but by the political framework available at the time. The question of Islamists’ compatibility with democracy is therefore not very relevant, and we observe rather the participation of Islamists in the process of democratisation underway, strongly controlled by states. To answer this question, two factors will need to be taken into account. What are the political conditions which will permit Islamist parties to change their relationship with the grey areas and democracy? Instead of debating a vague and broad concept of democratisation, it is more pertinent to ask what type of specific and neutral institutional frameworks, and which political and parliamentary professional standards should be promoted today to circumscribe the action of Islamists?

Their presence in the political arena today is the sign of new political opportunities in terms of multiple representations suitable for Algerian and Moroccan conditions. But that does not mean that structural changes are actually taking place, and this is the real key to understanding their relations with democracy. At the state level, we would underline the policies of pardoning political prisoners undertaken simultaneously by Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, and the fact that the press and governments in the Maghreb are demonising these parties less and less. In addition to these national changes, there is also some thinking taking place on their relations with Europe. These political actors are aware of their political importance and the questions that they raise, notably after Hamas’s victory in Palestine and the electoral advance of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt. They are therefore taking various diplomatic steps to maintain contacts in Europe and the United States, where they go to present their programme, carry out interfaith dialogue and take part in discussions on Arab reforms.

29. Interview with an official from the MSP.

30. Jean-Nôel Ferrié, “La parlementarisation de l’islam politique : la dynamique des modérés”, EuroMeSCo Papers, n° 41.

An instrumental relationship with Europe – land of exile and political platform

Maghreb Islamists have long developed an interest in political action linked in one way or another to Europe. Their implantation in Europe is partly due to the fact that the scope for political action is so limited under Arab regimes. Thus, the stopping of the electoral process in Algeria in 1991, which prevented the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) from coming to power, led some of its leaders, activists and supporters to leave the country and settle in France, Great Britain, Germany and Belgium. Between 1984 and 1988 many activists and officials from the Tunisian Islamist party En-Nahda (Islamic Tendency Movement - MTI) fled the repressive politics of Presidents Bourguiba and Ben Ali to settle in Europe (the current leader and founder of the En-Nahda party, Rachid Ghannouchi, lives in Great Britain today). It is because they could partly express themselves freely there that the West and particularly Europe was perceived by Islamists as a natural refuge. Historically, relations with Europe were initially only about using Europe as an instrument. It was about using this region of the world as a political platform. In France, some exiled members of the FIS created the Algerian Brotherhood of France (FAF). Founded in 1990, the FAF, led by Algerian students such as Moussa Kraouche, aimed to be the FIS's representative in France. At the end of the 70s, a group of Tunisian students was responsible for founding a branch of Rachid Ghannouchi's Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI) in France. This group was to become the cornerstone of the Union of Islamic Organisations of France (UOIF), the main federation of Islamic associations in France, and a pillar of the French Muslim Council (CFCM), a body which aimed to represent the interests of Muslims in France and was set up by the Ministry of the Interior in 2003. Within the CFCM, there are also members and supporters of the Moroccan Islamist party, the PJD.

At the end of the 90's, in Morocco Sheikh Yassine's Justice and Charity (JB) movement decided to "export" their ideas outside their national borders towards Europe, noting that as 'undesirables' the development of their ideology was being limited and even blocked by the authorities. This was done by creating an association, Muslim Participation and Spirituality (PSM), with chapters in Europe and the USA. The implantation of this movement was partly the result of the activism of political refugees who had fled political repression in their countries, but also the political engagement of students who came to Europe to pursue further education at the beginning of the 90's. Voicing its views on the Moroccan situation from outside and therefore hoping to put pressure on the monarchy, the PSM tried to make use of its presence in Europe to have its Moroccan organisation legalised and to secure guarantees on human rights and democracy. For the Islamists of Justice and Charity, a presence in Europe was a strategy to circumvent their political action being limited to the confines of their own country. It was no longer necessary to work within the country concerned to oppose politically its state. From then on, the political struggle of Islamists could rely on transnational opposition. Thus we witness here a deterritorialisation³¹ and relocation of Islamist activity away from its centre towards Europe in order to avoid repression in Morocco and to accumulate in Europe resources that could be used in future negotiations with the monarchy.

By becoming in Europe a force of opposition against the monopoly of the Moroccan regime in terms of political and religious expression, the JB-PSM movement appears *mutatis mutandis* as an actor of democratisation. The French and Belgian wings of the PSM regularly organise demonstrations denouncing the political situation in Morocco. The PSM's communications officer in France Abderrahman Makhlof said that "Nobody talks about the catastrophic political situation in Morocco. With our means, we wanted to alert French public opinion about the very bad situation in Morocco for the movement of our Sheikh Yassine. That is why we decided to put an article on the subject on our internet site." Along the same lines, Nadia Yassine also regularly travels to Europe to denounce the political situation in her country and the repression of her movement. On 17 June 2006, New Friendship Europe-Morocco, an association close to the Islamist movement of Sheikh Yassine, publicised the Moroccan government's repressive policy towards the movement by organising a conference in Brussels, moderated by the Sheikh's daughter Nadia, on "Human rights flouted in Morocco". A month later, while Justice and Charity continued to suffer abuse in Morocco, Nadia Yassine began a European tour to denounce the police repression of her movement was being subjected to. During one of her speeches in France, she said: "The conditions for political and democratic participation in Morocco do not exist. How can you expect people to vote and choose their leaders when a significant proportion of the people are illiterate? To talk of free elections in these conditions is a joke. The political set-up is a closed shop and all elections in Morocco are a farce." Despite a structure that is presented as autonomous, the PSM is still guided by the daughter of Sheikh Yassine, who spreads the ideology of his party, notably via conferences on Islam's compatibility with modernity (democracy, secularism, women's rights, etc.). French-language Muslim internet sites that

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The Involvement of Islamist Parties in Europe

31. Olivier Roy, *L'Islam mondialisé*, Seuil, 2002.

are widely consulted by young Muslims in Europe, such as saphirnews³² or Oumma.com also convey its positions. “As distinct from other countries such as Spain, Belgium and even the United States, France has very little respect for the Human Rights of which it is so proud, especially as far as we are concerned. One way, Human Right chosen and to be earned in the politically correct west. France is so close to the Moroccan monarchy that it may forget its strongest and most essential principles! I think that it will get a grip on itself and show the world that all the oppressed people can still count on it,” she said on the Muslim internet site Oumma.com.

It is also interesting to observe how Islamist movements espouse the available political structures in Europe (through councils such as the CFCM, the presence of imams in the local mosques and integrating with the Islamic associations that already exist there). Justice and Charity, for example, decided to implement its policy of criticising the Cherifian regime through the PSM, not on the question of the illegitimacy of the monarchy but on human rights and public freedoms. Supporters of the PSM movement who were living in Belgium and France have in 2006 created an association under the 1901 law, Alliance for Freedom and Dignity (AFD), to defend and promote human rights and democracy in Muslim countries and especially in Morocco via different events and conferences. Nadia Yassine has of course been invited to express her views on human rights within this association.

While Sheikh Yassine’s movement uses Europe as a political platform (something that it cannot do as freely in Morocco), a presence in Europe is, for the MSP and PJD – two parties taking part in elections in their country and recognised as official movements by their regime – above all important for electoral reasons. With nearly 3 million Moroccans, or nearly 10% of the total Moroccan population, living abroad and a significant proportion in Europe (France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain and Italy, etc.) and more than a million Algerian nationals living mainly in France, the MSP and PJD see these immigrants and their dual-nationality children as a significant pool of voters that can be mobilised. Election campaigns are therefore also targeted at compatriots living in Europe with the hope of gaining their votes. “There is quota of parliamentary seats reserved for Algerians in France. The authorities organise elections in the consulates to elect these MPs. So, in the MSP we target our campaign in France at Algerian nationals by distributing leaflets or organising little meetings. The aim is to woo the immigrant voters. We do politics here in France to win the elections; we try to have a network within the Algerian community in Europe. We also have a party representative in each consulate,” said one of the officials from the MSP network in France³³.

Given the electoral power of Moroccan nationals living abroad, the PJD has even recently applied pressure for their votes to be better taken into account. Thus, along with other political formations, it signed a press release in 2006 in which it noted “the government’s step backwards when it comes to organising elections involving Moroccans abroad...”

In the case of the MSP, the idea is also to maintain the feeling of national belonging among Algerian nationals and to carry out a cultural development policy between the two countries. According to an official from the MSP, “the MSP’s policy on immigration is to act as a bridge between the immigrants and their country of origin. We also want to take part in bringing France and Algeria closer together. Personally, I’ve tried to twin two towns – one Algerian and the other French – we have had meetings with French and Algerian doctors, between researchers, etc. Having a network is really our first objective. All the moderate Muslims in France and Algeria vote for us even if they are not members because they recognise themselves in our discourse. Now with the beurs [second-generation North Africans living in France], it is true that it doesn’t really work for all the Algerian parties. They are much more interested in French politics. We prefer that they take an interest in France but if they can do both that’s good.”

During the 1997 presidential elections, the MSP candidate Mahfoud Nannah took first place in the Algerian consulates of Strasbourg, Nice and Grenoble, well ahead of the candidate winning the presidential elections, Liamine Zeroual³⁴.

Actors in re-Islamisation: defence and representation of Muslims in Europe

The activities of Maghreb Islamist parties in Europe are not based solely on mobilising Muslim European voters, and Europe is not only perceived as a political soap platform for Islamists who are not wanted in their countries. In the early 80s, Islamists in exile considered the European political arena as a platform from which to challenge the authoritarian regimes of the Arab world. Islamist activists thought of their presence in Europe as a place of refuge to work out a way to reform the authoritarian regimes of the Arab world, with

a view to returning once the regimes in question were brought down. These movements were therefore originally set up as the rear base of a multinational Islamist opposition. They saw Europe as a virgin political territory where activists could be trained as they waited for the political scene in their country to open up so that they could establish an Islamic state there. In addition to challenging the authoritarian regimes, they had a critical relationship with Europe in denouncing the cultural, political and ethnic imperialism of the West to which Muslim societies were allegedly subjected. The interpretation of Islam by these movements in exile was based on the reislamisation of the social practices of immigrants in Europe, practices seen as being corrupted by European societies (loss of the Arab language, the practice of religion and the difficulty of passing on this identity to their children born in Europe), and on the politicisation of religion, presented as an overall system capable of solving the political, social and economic problems of Muslims.

However, in the 80s, the influence of Islamist discourse on immigrant populations was still marginal, reaching only segments of the European Muslim community (Islamist refugees and students). This indifference can be explained by the fact that the immigrants were still largely dependent for their religious practice on the Moroccan and Algerian consulates, charged tacitly by the host countries with organising it. The immigrants also thought of their presence in Europe as temporary, barely tolerated by the host states, and were not in favour of political action that could disrupt public order. In addition, the revolutionary aspirations of the Islamists for the politicisation of Islam was not really taken up in the more pragmatic and day-to-day cultural practices of the immigrants. Faced with this failure, some of those immigrants who defended the establishment of an Islamic state were to change their line of argument. This was also the time when a new generation of Muslims, born in Europe and in need of Islam, emerged.

So the Islamists of the Arab world exiled in Europe stepped up their action from the early 90's, in different degrees and different ways, to defend and represent Muslims in Europe via various Islamic structures. The range of actions of this new Islam was to draw mainly on the heritage of the Muslim Brotherhood (some officials were to remain organically tied to it) through the organisation in the summer of religious camps, cultural events where moralising plays were acted out and religious songs were sung, Islamic teaching conferences, etc. Emphasis was placed not on the political party but on associative activity. Such associations were to organise the activities of the new activists, young Muslims born in Europe, in a specific and hierarchical way, as done in the Arab world (creation of sections for "young people", "students", "women", "theological education", "humanitarian action", "culture" etc.). Whereas the structures drew heavily on the Islamist experiences of challenging authority in the Arab world, the discourse was to be adjusted to the very different political meaning for Muslims born and living in Europe. These associations were to campaign to integrate Muslims into the European political and social scene, for example by calling on the activists to sign up on electoral lists and vote.

The Union of Islamic Organisations of France (UOIF)³⁵ is an example of an association which started off with an Islamist heritage but converted its activities to the defence and integration of Muslims in Europe. An activist structure founded in 1983 by a group of Tunisian and Middle Eastern political refugees and Islamist students, the UOIF was destined to become the host organisation of exiled Islamists. Linked to the international Muslim Brotherhood, the UOIF initially had a strong Islamist tradition and had little interest in action in the host country. Towards the end of the 80s, it changed direction, convinced of the relevance of and need for being active in France and Europe. The UOIF took up the cause of the veiled female pupils who were thrown out of school in 1989, organising demonstrations and alerting the media on this issue. In the same spirit, it also tried to ban the appearance in French of the Satanic Verses by Salman Rushdie. More recently, it called on members of the Muslim community to mobilise through petitions, demonstrations and boycotts so as to bring an end to Islamophobic representations of the prophet Mohammed during the recent cartoon affair.

Some of the MSP activists and supporters, such as Okacha Ben Ahmed, Secretary General of the UOIF, and Fethi Belabdeli, former president of the student section of the UOIF, known as the Muslim Students of France (EMF), were among the senior officials of the UOIF. With Algerian roots, they were active in Algeria through the General Free Students' Union (UGEL), which had close ties to the MSP, before moving to France to pursue their higher education. When they arrived in France, they continued their activism in the EMF, present in twenty or so French universities. They then joined the management structures of the UOIF.³⁶

These political parties are not present as such in Europe. Many have merged into the European Islamic scene preferring to work with cultural associations, either creating new associations, or joining existing organisations.

32. Interview with Nadia Yassine, "La meilleure façon d'avancer se trouve dans la résistance pacifique" <http://www.saphirnews.com>

33. The votes and voting slips of these nationals are counted for different local and national elections that take place in Algeria and Morocco and a quota of MPs is reserved for Algerian nationals. The PJD also goes on regular trips in Europe to recruit new activists and present its programme to Moroccan immigrants.

34. Although dissolved since 1992, the FIS is also trying to win the votes of Algerians abroad. Rabah Kébir, head of the executive delegation of the Front Islamique du salut, who took refuge in Germany for a long time, had called on them to vote for Abdellaziz Bouteflika during the 2002 presidential elections. He also invited the different Islamists and terrorists living in Europe to come to Algerian consulates abroad to benefit from a law on civil concord, promulgated in 2000, and whose aim was to amnesty those responsible for crimes during the civil war.

35. Committed to a strategy of using associations at national and European level, the UOIF has become a major player in reislamisation by proposing a range of social services (school support, psychological and legal help for families etc) and religious services. It is part of a supranational structure whose headquarters, the Union des Organisation Islamiques en Europe (UOIE), led by a Briton of Iraqi origin, Ahmed al-Rawi is in the UK. The UOIF manages around thirty mosques throughout France, including in Bordeaux (800 seats) and Lille (1,200 seats). Every spring, it organises in France a big event, the congress of Bourget, bringing together nearly 50,000 people from all over Europe. Representatives from the MSP and the branch of the PJD dealing with the association, the Mouvement pour l'Unité et la Réforme (MUR - Harakat al-Tawhid wal-Islah) take part. Thus, every year, Mahfoud Mahnah, the founder of the MSP gave a lecture/paper. Currently, it is Aboujerra Soltani, the current President of the MSP, who speaks on behalf of the movement during the congress. In 2006, his speech was about the "ethics of dialogue". Back then he was to explain to us the meaning of his speech by stating that "it is of no use to head towards polemics. It is profitable for everyone to head towards dialogue between civilisations". Finally, we would add that numerous imams who operate in French mosques are linked to the MSP and the PJD.

36. In terms of influences on one another, it is also interesting to note that existing Muslim associations in Europe can be a starting point in the creation of new political movements in Maghreb countries. Thus, the UOIF, currently led by Frenchmen of Moroccan origin, Fouad Alaoui and Lhaj Thami Breze, has tried to set itself up politically in Morocco by creating a branch of the Muslim Brothers. But this initiative failed because of opposition from the PJD, who did not look kindly on the arrival of an Islamist 'brother' competitor on its land.

Various senior officials in the National Federation of Muslims in France (FNMF)³⁷, another federation of Islamic associations in France and a competitor to the UOIF, are members and supporters of the PJD, such as Anouar Kbibech, president of the Regional Muslim Council (CRCM, a regional branch of the CFCM) for Ile de France Est. The latter is behind the creation of a new Muslim movement, the Rally of Muslims in France (RMF), which held its first assemblies in June 2006 in Paris, bringing together around 200 officials from mosques and associations. For the President of CRCM Ile de France Est, Anouar Kbibech, this initiative is meant to be “complementary to and not in competition with the French Muslim Council”.

Muslim Participation and Spirituality (PSM)³⁸, founded more recently than the UOIF and the FNMF, claims to have its roots in the Moroccan Sufi and Islamist movement Justice and Charity, Al ‘Adl wal-Ihsan, created in Morocco by Abdessalam Yassine. This association represents the European branch of JB (mainly in France and Belgium). Set up by Moroccan students who had come to follow their university courses in Europe in the early 90’s, it developed in the 2000s into one of the most active Islamic associations operating in Europe. Much more discrete in its activities than the UOIF, with which it came into competition, it too recruited part of the emerging re-islamised middle classes (students, young professionals, etc.).

Considering themselves responsible for defending the interests of European Muslims, all these structures proposed an Islam based on the idea that being a good Muslim is not incompatible with being integrated into European societies. The Islam advocated by these structures does not seek to break with European political and social values, and, according to officials in these associations, the Muslim religion is a means to assert oneself within European society. The discourse of these movements advocates respect for European political standards based on values such as citizenship, and an Islam that takes account of western social realities. In this sense, they seek to put in place an “Islamic citizenship”, proposing themselves as privileged partners for local and national public actors on issues as diverse as religion, racism and petty crime in the suburbs. Whilst the first generations of Muslim immigrants did not feel attracted by this form of Islamic activism and preferred to organise themselves around such projects as the building and management of mosques, some of their children, mainly born and schooled in Europe, were to find in this ideology a way to realise their full potential as practicing and committed Muslims whilst successfully integrating economically and socially. PSM opposed in France the draft law banning religious symbols in schools by taking part in the “One school for all” group, which led to the emergence of a protest bringing together Muslim and secular associations.

The Islamist parties are mobilising themselves from their home countries to defend European Muslims. During the 33rd session of foreign ministers of member countries of the Islamic Conference Organisation in 2006, Aboujerra Soltani proposed setting up a mechanism to fight against the Islamophobia that he claims is rife primarily in the West. “Its aim is to bring Islamic states to pass laws to fight this phenomenon and work towards adopting a UN resolution to protect Islam and its symbols. The Algerian proposal calls for the creation of an Islamic fund to support efforts to combat Islamophobia in western countries and to promote the values of dialogue and tolerance between cultures, religions and civilisations. It also puts the emphasis on the need for Islamic countries to legislate economic boycotts against countries that encourage Islamophobia. The proposal sets out a series of measures - mobilisation of Muslim NGOs working in Europe and stepping up cooperation with the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). It also advocates closer dialogue with political parties, decision-makers and NGOs to influence the content of school programmes that circulate a ‘distorted image’ of Islam passed from generation to generation”.³⁹

External relations work

Whilst the West, and in particular the United States, is almost unanimously condemned by “Arab public opinion” for its policy in the wider Middle East (war in Iraq, support for Israel on the Palestinian and Lebanese issues, etc.), European administrations have chosen since the attacks of 11 September 2001 to reflect on their more or less official ties with representatives of the legalised Islamist movement in the Maghreb and in the Middle East. How in the space of a decade, can Islamist actors that were considered as enemies now be perceived as dialogue partners? This comes partly from a change of strategy in the management of the Islamist phenomenon by western governments and partly from a change in the Islamists’ attitudes towards the West.

37. The FNMF was created in 1985 by bringing together nearly 500 associations, according to its officials. Reputed to be close to Morocco, it is a member of the Conseil français du culte musulman (CFCM). The CFCM was created by the French Minister of the Interior to bring together the religious structures representing the Islamic countryside in France. Its role is in part to act as an interface between the public authorities and Muslims from France and to manage all issues related to the practice of the religion.

At the origins of this debate is the assumption made by Americans that the democratisation of Arab countries will inevitably lead to victory by the Islamists. “So it is better to prepare the ground by discussing with the moderates among them rather than see this region plunge into terrorism,” explained an American diplomat. The aim is to encourage the “democratisation of the regimes” concerned because it is “Arab despotism” that has driven the resentment of the populations and their resorting to political violence. The Islamists in the Arab world also seem to be convinced by this prophesy, and have since the early 2000s been undertaking important semi-diplomatic external relations work with the US and EU member states.

But this change in relations between western countries and Islamists is also the result of changes in the views of Islamists themselves about the West. Islamists who used to see the West as an enemy to be defeated now see it as a partner for dialogue. The idea is to develop an international network via meetings, conferences and seminars bringing together diplomats, politicians, senior civil servants and Islamist party officials. By developing such relations, they can present their often poorly known programme to the outside world, while appearing as central political actors capable of building international networks and support. While the MSP’s diplomatic work is still limited, with just a few meetings and conferences in the European Union and with its think tanks, the diplomatic activities of the PJD and Justice and Charity are more advanced.

A journey to Spain from 26 April to 1 May 2005 for meetings with several political officials was among the recent initiatives of the PJD. Five members of the party’s general secretariat, including General Secretary Saaddine Othmani, were hosted by the vice-president of the PSOE (Spanish Socialist Party) and the president of the People’s Party (politically to the right of centre). This delegation also met the president of the Spanish parliament. This kind of visit also includes other key actors in the public sector, with PJD officials meeting senior officials from the Association of Moroccan Workers and Immigrants in Spain (ATIME) and being hosted by José Maria Cuevas, president of Spain’s employers’ association, the Spanish Confederation of Business Organisations. Finally, they met the President of the Spanish Congress, Manuel Marin, to discuss the role the PJD could play in countering Islamic terrorism, notably through the training of imams. The PJD delegation even took part in a ceremony in memory of the victims of the attacks of 11 March 2004 in Madrid. This visit was part of a programme set up by the general secretariat of the Islamist party, which aimed to visit several European capitals ahead of the 2007 legislative elections in Morocco.

As part of this European tour, the PJD delegation also went to Paris from 6 to 12 April, where it met several representatives of the main French political parties. These included a representative from the Union for a People’s Movement (UMP - right), François Bayrou, the President of the UDF party (centre), Jean-Pierre Chevènement and Gérard Chenel, the Socialist Party’s (PS) officials for Mediterranean issues. Here again, visits to political parties were matched with initiatives targeting Muslim communities. Various PJD officials, including Abubakr Belkora, the mayor of Meknès, and Réda Benkhaldoun, responsible for the party’s external relations, gave a conference for activists of Muslim associations from the Moroccan community living in France³⁸. During this meeting, the PJD said that it opted for transparency in political actions and for the involvement of Moroccan citizens in public life in European countries. Referring to the “disinterest of Moroccans in politics”, the party said it counted on attracting the votes of Moroccans abroad by “the resolution of extremely concrete issues of concern to citizens through a policy of proximity”.

The political context in the country of origin also shapes the approaches taken by these parties for their actions in Europe. Whilst the PJD’s external relations work targets European political and institutional parties given its electoral representativeness and its status as an official political party recognized by the Moroccan monarchy, Sheikh Yassine’s movement prefers the establishment of semi-diplomatic relations with Europe via alternative political networks as well as “opinion-building” among academics and intellectuals. Nadia Yassine thus takes part in forums and meetings organised by anti-globalisation movements such as the 4th European Social Forum held in Athens from 4 to 7 May 2006, or the first Congress on Islamic Feminism held in Barcelona from 27 to 29 October 2005. Speaking as a “thinker” or “academic” is also a possible means of access for this kind of actor who is not officially recognised by their states and consequently not by the EU member states either. Nadia Yassine again often takes part in university conferences where she is invited as an intellectual to express her views on the state of political Islamic thought today. Such was the case in May 2003, at the sixth International Congress of the Mediterranean Studies Association in Budapest, in June 2004 in San Sebastian, and the same year in Amsterdam on the initiative of the “Al Bayt al-Arab” institution.

38. What marks PSM out is its original way of drawing people into its doctrine. The ways it mobilizes people are drawn from those initiated by political Islam but also from those used by Sufism, while the UOIF and the UJM are more along the lines of the techniques of the Muslim Brothers. Much more discrete in its activities than the UOIF, with which it comes into competition, its recruits, as the latter does, some of the emerging re-islamised middle classes, disappointed by the overly bureaucratic discourse of the UOIF. Its attraction is that it acts as a group where its members can take refuge without asking them to be activists only for them and encourages them to take up political positions at a local level, to get involved in various associations defending citizens’ rights without asking them to make explicit reference to the movement in their interactions in public.

39. Abdelkamel Kader, “Aboujerra Soltani se met à la diplomatie islamique”, *Liberté*, 21/06/2006.

40. It is worth noting that members of the PJD can also speak on Europe without putting stating their political persuasion and prefer dialogue between cultures along the lines of what was done at this conference on women’s rights in the Maghreb at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris in November 2003 which Ms Benkhaldoun from the PJD took part in.

Since the early 2000s, therefore, Europe has been a strategic location for the dissemination of the ideas and political programmes of Islamist movements from the Maghreb. Alongside the Muslim communities present in Europe, an effort is under way to establish a political dialogue with the institutions of the member states both at the level of structures (political parties, trade unions) and intellectual or semi-political activities (think tanks, foundations, universities, etc.). How is the European Union responding to these demands and what is its “official” position towards these Islamist parties in the Maghreb?

Chapter 3

Islamism in the Policies of the European Union: State of Play

The European Union currently has no policy aimed specifically at initiating a dialogue with Islamist parties. The institutions and programmes that potentially interact with the Maghreb states, and are likely to be concerned by the question of political Islam, include the Council (in particular through its Common Foreign and Security Policy) and Parliament (with its different working groups, Foreign Affairs Committee, Interparliamentary Delegations and its delegation in the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly). To these should be added the European Commission's Delegations in the Maghreb, the European Commission itself (primarily the External Relations Directorate-General) and its programmes such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (with its MEDA financing instrument, the association agreements that include a chapter on political dialogue⁴¹, and its foundations focusing on human rights, democratisation and participation by civil society, especially young people). Further, there is the new European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which is articulated in the 'action plans' that are mutually agreed by the EU and the partner country, and which seek to establish an agenda for economic and political reforms⁴².

These different European instruments do not officially target Islamists and in practice the great majority of Islamists as such are marginalised in EU programmes. It is nonetheless worth noting that certain members of parliament from the Islamist parties represent their country, for instance, through participation in inter-parliamentary friendship groups with their counterparts from the member states. The foreign ministries of certain member states have also set up discussion groups focusing officially on the 'Islamic world'⁴³. European foreign ministers likewise met in April 2005 in Luxembourg for an unofficial debate on possible co-operation with Islamist parties. Dialogue with the Islamists consequently remains informal and does not take place within an institutionalised structure, in spite of the growing interest expressed by the European Union over the question of political Islam.

The EU's caution stems from a number of factors: terrorism (particularly after the London and Madrid attacks), the monopolising presence of secular associations and government elites in EU programmes with the Maghreb, and the difficulty developing and mobilising cooperation tools that correspond to the official emergence of these new Islamist political players.

Might the inclusion of Islamist parties in the Mediterranean policies of the EU and its member states be a factor of stability in the region? How can the EU and its member states, especially those already experienced in dialogue with these parties, safeguard stability in the region through some kind of triangular diplomacy involving Europe, the governments and the Islamist parties of Algeria and Morocco⁴⁴? How could the European Neighbourhood Policy regard the promotion of Islamist parties as an argument for democratic opening in the Maghreb states? How can the visibility of Europe and its development programmes (research, youth, media campaign, contacts between political parties and foundations, etc.) be improved on the ground? Such visibility is particularly crucial in the Maghreb in making the Euro-Med partnership concrete and appealing, particularly to young activists and sympathisers of Islamist parties.

The EU first began to take due account of Islamist movements in the region largely on the basis of security considerations, these movements being considered to have ambiguous relations with terrorism. Indeed, in the 1990's, European policymakers did not equate Islamist movements with institutionalised political parties, but rather with the attacks in the Paris underground or the hijacking of the Air France aircraft, for which the Algerian GSPC had claimed responsibility. Apart from the organisation of the Sant Egidio conference in January 1995 with a view to the signing by the different Algerian parties, and notably the SIS, of national crisis-resolution, throughout the 1990's the EU and its member states implicitly supported policies of repression by the southern Mediterranean states in the face of Islamist movements⁴⁵. We might recall Algeria's refusal of a greater European involvement in the Islamist question in the 90's: with for example, the EU Troika's⁴⁷ controversial visit to Algiers on 19 and 20 January 1998, proposed by the then Foreign Minister of Germany Klaus Kinkel, and which aimed at setting up a committee of inquiry into the massacres of Algerian civilians. The initiative ended in failure because Algeria refused to allow the Troika to meet representatives of civil society (including Islamists).

The European Parliament's role has always been considerably different, although often marginalised. Indeed, it was at the Parliament that Mahmoud Nahnah, then President of the MSP, spoke out on the Algerian civil war. Another visit to Algeria was organised by nine members of the European Parliament, from 8 to 12 February 1998, with the aim of providing support for the national assembly in Algeria and the process of democratisation. In spite of their insistence on holding talks with members of civil society and the FIS, the MEPs met

Relations between the EU and Islamic parties since 1995

41. The agreement of association between Morocco and the EU was signed in 1996 and the one with Algeria in 2002.

42. The action plan for Morocco was finalised in 2005, the one for Algeria is reported to be still a work in progress and is due to be published in 2007, despite the disinterest in the ENP process officially displayed by Algeria. See "L'Algérie et la dictée européenne", *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 12/11/2006.

43. We note the British initiative by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, entitled "Engaging with the Islamic World" and the one by the German Foreign Affairs Ministry entitled "Dialog mit der Islamischen Welt" [Dialogue with the Islamic world].

44. Bilateral diplomacy between Islamist parties and the EU undertaken in parallel would run the risk of being a source of conflicts and suspicion between the different actors.

45. Annette Jünemann, "Support for democracy or fear of Islamism? Europe and Algeria" in: Hafez Kai (ed.), *The Islamic World and the West: An Introduction to Political Cultures and International Relations*, London, Brill Academic Publishers, 2000.

47. This Troika was at the time made up of members of former EU presidencies, namely Luxembourg, the United Kingdom and Austria.

with the same refusal as the Troika. The EP delegation, while rejecting all sympathy for the FIS and in particular an open letter addressed to it by that party, argued that the FIS should be included in the effort to work out a political solution to end the civil war. Members of the EP roundly criticised the EU's process of selecting its political partners to the detriment among others of the Islamists⁴⁸. The EU continued for some time to stigmatise the Islamist parties, seeing them as terrorist organisations undermining the region's stability and security, and refusing to treat them as political partners. Civil society associations or NGOs with Islamist leanings were excluded from the Euro-Med Partnership. This stigmatisation also gave rise to an over-representation of secular and pro-governmental associations and a relative indifference by Islamists to the Euro-Med Partnership. The disbanded FIS, whose members have sought refuge primarily in Europe since the 1990's, was the only party to complain to the European Parliament, in a letter dated 2 July 2001, about the European Union's role in the settlement of the conflict. The EU "multiplied its political, diplomatic and financial aid to the regime and stepped up its security cooperation with it through the Mediterranean forum, the conference of home affairs ministers of the Mediterranean countries and other Euro-Mediterranean bodies"⁴⁹.

On the Moroccan side, Islamists were particularly critical of the policies pursued under the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, decrying Europe's supposed determination to impose its own values, in particular on women's rights⁵⁰, through its cooperation programmes. Another frequent reproach by Islamists was that Europe should work to ensure respect for the rights of Muslims in Europe rather than try to influence the orientations of Muslim civil societies of the Arab world⁵¹.

The start of the 21st century saw a major change with respect to the role of Islamist parties in European policies. This concerns the effective monopoly maintained by France in the 1990's over the orientation of the EU's relations with Islamist parties and democratisation in the Maghreb countries, for whom France had long been the privileged partner. The idea held at the time was that popular terrorist movements were rooted in the economic problems of the countries concerned⁵². That view was shaken by the events of 11 September⁵³, as well as the experience of terrorist attacks of member states other than France, such as Spain and the United Kingdom. These countries contributed to a view of terrorism much less linked to a political Islam aiming at the destabilisation of regimes in the region; on the contrary, they established a clear distinction between the economic and political conditions of the countries concerned, and the fight against international terrorism. Paradoxically, the fact that "security thinking has absorbed the political"⁵⁴ perhaps offers new opportunities today for purely political dialogue with the Islamist parties, and consequently greater integration into EU policies, as they are set apart from the question of terrorism. The emergence of bilateral initiatives by member states such as Britain, Germany and Spain is going to lead to a more pragmatic dialogue with the Islamist parties⁵⁵. What does not exist at European level is therefore already a reality at the national level. A number of Islamist MPs are indeed members of bilateral parliamentary groups or take part in interregional or intermunicipal projects with certain member states. The reason for such cooperation stems no doubt from the fact that these activities are in keeping with the national policies of their countries and leave very little room for them to play on their specific Islamist identity. Similarly, initiatives such as the Convention of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference⁵⁶ on combating international terrorism, signed in Ouagadougou on 1 July 1999, and the OIC's ongoing dialogue with the EU since 1999⁵⁷ involve certain Islamists in dialogue with the EU, but always as representatives of their national entity.

The treatment of problems of democratisation, as addressed again on the 10th anniversary of the Euro-Med Partnership in November 2005, is manifestly not working. Consequently, the absence of new instruments of dialogue with the new political players from the Arab world (among them the Islamists) has led to a consensus to focus on counter-terrorism and its definition (the only consensus obtained between north and south at the 10th Euro-Med summit). Does this consensus in favour of security at the expense of democratisation take the EU another step away from a real debate on the place of Islamists in its programmes?

The predominance of economic and security issues in European policies

While European policies have so far not really tackled the problem of stemming the exclusion of Islamists from the Euro-Med Partnership (EMP), the question of terrorism has enabled a number of Arab states to use the post-11 September security situation as a tool for negotiating with the EU, particularly to obtain funds⁵⁸. What is the reality today of the EU's security relations with Algeria and Morocco, which now have a much greater bearing on the role of Islamists than the question of democratisation?

48. Committee for Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence Policy, Report by the ad hoc delegation for Algeria (8-12 February 1998), European Parliament, Brussels, 1998.

49. <http://ccfis.fisweb.org/dispcol.asp?art=411&ccolumn=6>.

50. Fouad Ammor, "Morocco's Perspectives towards the EMP" in Haizam Amirah Fernández, Richard Youngs, (eds.), *The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Assessing the First Decade*, Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE) and the Real Instituto Elcano de Estudios Internacionales y Estratégicos, October 2005.

51. Interviews with several members of different Islamist parties.

52. Olfa Lamtoun, "L'enjeu de l'islamisme au cœur du processus de Barcelone", *Critique Internationale*, n°18, janvier 2003.

53. Euromed Report, "Conséquences économiques éventuelles des événements du 11 septembre 2001. Eléments d'appréciation pour la Méditerranée", n° 50, 26 June 2002.

54. Olfa Lamtoun, Op. cit.

55. As regards Islamists in Europe, the EU assiduously avoids referring to their participation in a political sense, emphasising intercultural dialogue. Tariq Ramadan, a Swiss intellectual close to the thinking of the Muslim Brothers, took part in the group of wise men created under Romano Prodi in 2004. See the resulting report: Group of Policy advisers, *Dialogue between peoples and cultures in the Euro-Mediterranean area*, European Commission, Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2004.

56. The Organisation of the Islamic Conference was founded in 1970 and has 55 member countries. Its headquarters are in Jeddah in Saudi Arabia.

57. The first dialogue with the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) took place in Helsinki in December 1999, was then followed by a meeting of 30 foreign affairs ministers from the EU and OIC within the joint OIC-EU forum in Istanbul in February 2002 on the issues of harmony between civilisations, resolution of conflicts, human rights in Islam and cooperation in the fight against terrorism. The forum was held at the invitation of the Turkish foreign affairs minister. Source: website of the Turkish MAE: http://www.mfa.gov.tr/OIC_EU_cdrom/index.htm

58. Algeria's change of position in security cooperation is particularly striking. See Luis Martínez, "La sécurité en Algérie et en Lybie après le 11 septembre 2001", *EuroMeSCo Papers*, n° 22, April 2003

Both Algeria and Morocco ratified the Barcelona Agreement creating the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in 1995. In that context, Algeria signed an Association Agreement with the EU in April 2002, in Valencia, Spain. The Association Agreement is essentially aimed at regulating economic cooperation between the two parties. Certain Algerian civil society players have nonetheless protested against the way the EU's demands on human rights in Algeria (freedom of association and expression, ban on torture and disappearances) are overshadowed in the agreement by greater priority accorded to economic, energy and security integration, to which the MSP Islamists claim not to be opposed, moreover. On the European side, the fear of terrorism and of the radicalisation of Islamist parties seems to be one of the reasons for negotiations of this type.

The European Neighbourhood Policy, which henceforth frames Europe's relations with the Maghreb, came in 2004 to absorb the failure of the Euro-Med Partnership. Its methodology, which differs from that of the EMP, nonetheless also seems to evade the issue of political reforms, focusing on other areas instead. For example, the ENP offers neighbouring countries the possibility to share markets bilaterally, to introduce free movement of people, standards etc., without access to shared institutions, giving pre-eminence to economic questions rather than democratic reform. Under the Euro-Med Partnership, democratisation and good governance programmes concentrated far more on training for government officials (police, judges, etc.) than on the inclusion of civil society associations and NGOs. This situation does not seem to have evolved under the new ENP, which seems to prioritise the 'stable' nature of this good governance rather than real political reforms⁵⁹. The Neighbourhood Policy, however, by introducing the principle of "positive conditionality" in place of the sanctions implied by the EMP's "political conditionality"⁶⁰, could enable Europe to propose the gradual inclusion of political minorities such as women, young people or Islamists.

Cooperation between Algeria and the EU has improved appreciably, with the rate of payments reaching 28% of the amounts committed under MEDA at the end of 2003, compared to 14% at end 2001. From 1995 to 2003, Algeria and Morocco received MEDA funding in the amounts of 345.8 million euros and 1,181.3 million euros respectively⁶¹. In spite of the absence of new instruments, the EU declares its intention to reinforce programmes in Algeria promoting good governance, the rule of law and civil society, such as the Justice, NGO and Media programmes⁶², which remain however on a modest scale. While it is not declared officially, the EU's determination to step up the development of programmes of this type is also linked to the future of Islamism and terrorism, particularly in the context of the Civil Concord: "The development of civil society, still fragile in Algeria, is essential for sustaining dialogue and reconciliation mechanisms. The Commission supports the institutional strengthening of a number of development associations under MEDA. The activities of local NGOs can also be strengthened, particularly in the areas of human rights, the effects of terrorism and democratisation (specific budget heading)⁶⁴".

Morocco signed an association agreement with the EU in 1996 that entered into force in 2000. Among the Mediterranean partners, Morocco is the principal beneficiary of Community financing, with 1.1 billion euros committed from 1995 to 2004. The ENP action plan for this country also hints at the EU's interest in developing the relationship between democratisation and the repression of Islamism for security reasons: "Furthermore, the relevant UN committee and NGOs are reporting new cases of torture, especially in cases of arbitrary detention linked to investigations into terrorism, including Islamist terrorism."⁶⁵

As can be seen, the EU's position through the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership remains ambivalent for want of relevant institutional tools being made available to the south. Officially, the EU's mixed policy consists for the long-term in promoting democracy and human rights programmes, which should lead to political stability and economic development, thus consolidating the establishment of a security consensus in the Mediterranean region. However, the way in which these two discourses - political and security - have been combined through the Barcelona process, and now through the ENP, suggests instead that they compete with one another⁶⁶. The pre-eminence of security thinking and of the economic agenda makes it possible to minimise the lack of new proposals for democratisation and participation in political processes by civil society and Islamists.

The member states' bilateral policies with Algeria and Morocco reveal this dichotomy. The United Kingdom signed in April 2006 an agreement on the "extradition of terrorists and criminals" aimed at the possible extradition of Islamist political refugees. Another Anglo-Algerian agreement signed in 2006 concerns judicial cooperation in criminal matters between Algiers and London. Spain has also approved the extradition of Algerians having ties to terrorism. France is said to have asked Algeria to re-incarcerate certain former prisoners pardoned under the Civil Concord and has requested a list of such persons so as to avoid granting them visas.

59. The challenges of democratisation and political reform in the Middle East: Between Autocracy, Islamism and Liberalism Juan José Escobar Stemann FRIDE, February 2005.

60. The "political conditionality" of the EuroMed Partnership foresaw economic and political sanctions where human rights were not respected in partner countries. The "positive conditionality" foreseen by the Neighbourhood Policy allows greater access to markets where "good results" in terms of respecting human rights and democratic principles are achieved by member countries. See European Commission, "Wider Europe-Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours", Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, 11 March 2003. Neighbourhood Policy - Strategy Paper, (Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament) COM, 2004, 373, 12 May 2004.

61. European Commission, Europe Aid Cooperation Office, Mediterranean Program (statistics). <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/med/financial/1995-2003.pdf>. 61.http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/algeria/csp/algerie_nipos_06_fr.pdf.

62. http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/algeria/csp/02_06_fr.pdf.

63. Said Haddadi, "Political Securitisation and Democratisation in the Maghreb: Ambiguous Discourses and Fine-tuning. Practices for a Security Partnership", Paper 040323, Institute of European Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 2004.

64. The European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), a project which is about developing an independent European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), was launched by the European Council of Cologne on 3 and 4 June 1999, as a distinct component of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the EU. The main aim of the ESDP is to strengthen the EU's ability to act externally by developing its civil and military capacities to prevent international conflicts and manage crises.

65. For more on this phenomenon, see EuroMeSCO Working Group III, "European Defense - Perceptions vs. Realities", First Year Report, Paper 16, 2002. Annette Jünemann, "Repercussions of the Emerging European Security and Defence Policy on the Civil Character of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership" in Annette Jünemann (ed.), Euro-Mediterranean Relations after September 11. International, Regional and Domestic Dynamics, London, Frank Cass, 2003.

66. Erwan Lannon, "Parlements et société civile dans la sécurité euro-méditerranéenne", EuroMeSCO working Papers, n°19, November 2002

The priority of security considerations in cooperation with the southern states is matched with a view of democratisation linked to other problems such as intercultural dialogue. New initiatives have been put in place in the last three years, presented by the EU as part of its strategy for the promotion of democracy in the region. These include: the Dialogue between Cultures and Civilisations, the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, the Euro-Mediterranean Nongovernmental Platform, Euromed economic networks, the Euromed Youth Platform, the Ana Lindh Foundation and the Euromed Heritage programme. We are therefore witnessing the shunning of the political treatment of democratisation issues in favour of the economic integration and security cooperation promoted by the ENP, and the absence of an autonomous democratisation programme outside the intercultural dynamic in the Barcelona process.

The European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP⁶³) also plays an important role in the EU's relations with the southern countries, particularly in the wake of 11 September⁶⁴. As regards the role of Islamist parties in this context, the ESDP should be offering more effectively and positively keys to conflicts in the region, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in July 2006 being major issues for the Islamist parties of the region and a recurring source of disappointment for Arab civil societies in view of EU policies. Accordingly, security imperatives should be accompanied by a crisis settlement tool that more effectively includes the opinions of Arab civil societies so as to avoid a possible radicalisation of these populations, feared by the EU. Such representation could take place, among others, at an inter-state level, giving the Algerian and Moroccan parliaments the opportunity to include Islamist parties in a controlled way into European policies for the region⁶⁵. Even if such inclusion of the opinion of Islamist parties on defence policies remains delicate and sometimes problematical, their exclusion, or the exclusion of civil society as a whole, is not a positive option. The participation currently proposed to them by the United States is also a new element that Europe has to factor into its relations with these parties. "Arguably, with the US spotlight much stronger, Arab regimes are more sensitive to parallel European criticism than they have been at any time in the EMP's existence"⁶⁷.

The role of the United States

An analysis of European policies on Islamist issues must necessarily refer to the policy currently being implemented by the United States towards these actors. This approach is first and foremost shaped by the experience of 11 September and the United States' determination to introduce a process of democratisation throughout the Muslim world, with the aim of curbing terrorism⁶⁸. While Europe considers Islamism through the eyes and expectations of the southern states, depending upon the dynamics of openings or restrictive the political space, the United States takes an (overly) global approach to the Muslim world. It aims throughout what it now perceives as the "Greater Middle East" to influence Muslim public opinion, regarded as largely anti-American. This anti-Americanism is understood in the United States to result from the influence of radical Islamist movements and their battle against the free world, notably with regard to the US role in the conflicts in Palestine, Iraq and more recently Lebanon. Islamism in the Muslim world is therefore in large measure a foreign policy matter for the United States, implemented after the announcement by George Bush in 2003 of the Muslim World Outreach and the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), a plan for cooperation with the Muslim world, coming succeeding the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism.

Among the projects implemented under this policy with the aim of promoting an Islam favourable to American democratisation dynamics, Washington has financed throughout the Muslim world numerous Islamic radio and TV programmes, publications to which members of Islamist parties have contributed, think tanks headed up by members of Islamist parties, classes in Koranic schools, workshops for Islamist activists on political questions and aid for restoring mosques, collections of ancient Korans⁶⁹, etc. In Algeria, workshops for Islamist activists have been organised and more than 1,000 ancient Islamic manuscripts have been restored. The National Democratic Institute opened an office in Algiers in 2003 to facilitate training programmes, meetings and consultations with Islamist actors. In Morocco, the PJD has also benefited from training programmes open to all Moroccan political parties.

These relations are nevertheless particularly advanced with the Moroccan Islamist party, PJD. The goal of an election success by the PJD in 2007 prompted the US to support the PJD in the wake of the attacks of 16 May 2003, whereas Moroccan political leaders have called for it to be disbanded. In exchange, the PJD never fails to encourage prospects for economic cooperation between Morocco and the United States. Nadia Yassine, of the Al'Adl wal-Ihsan movement, also enjoyed American support in her judicial proceedings challenging the

67. Irene Menéndez, Richard Youngs, "The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Turns Ten: Democracy's Halting Advance?" in *Relações Internacionais*, n° 9, 13/03/2006.

68. Yahia Zoubir, "Algeria and US Interests: Containing Radical Islamism and Promoting Democracy", *Middle East Policy*, 9/1, Spring 2002.

69. For a full list of projects carried out by country, see the website of the National Endowment for Democracy, US Agency for International Development, US Department of State. http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/050425/25roots_11.htm.

existence of the monarchy in Morocco. The United States is also implementing a policy to train the Islamist elite (academic, political and economic), under which the editor-in-chief of the main Arab-language Islamist publication, Al-Tajdid of the Unity and Reform Movement (MUR), was admitted to John Hopkins University in Washington for political science studies and a course of training at the US Congress. The PJD was also invited to speak in May 2006 by the American think tank, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, on the subject “An Islamic party faces the challenges of democracy and development”. So while relations between the EU and Islamist legalists are still in their infancy, relations between the United States and supporters of political Islam, especially Moroccan parties, are already fairly well established. Between 31 March and 1 April 2006, the PJD organised a meeting in Morocco entitled “American Decision Making and its Impact on Moroccan-American Relations”, bringing together American politicians and Moroccan Islamists from the PJD party. The PJD General Secretary Sa’ad ine Othmani explained that “the aim of this colloquium is to understand decision-making in the United States, so as to identify potential allies for our national cause and for Arab and Islamic affairs. We wish to increase the awareness of political players and civil society so that they can assimilate the complex mechanism of American lobbying and decision-making. (...) We wish to explore possibilities for identifying parties who can act as our interlocutors or even our partners for possible lobbying in favour of Morocco⁷⁰”.

This strategy does not materialise solely in US embassies on Moroccan and Algerian soil, but also enables representatives of Islamist parties to travel abroad, often to American embassies in Europe or government departments in the United States such as the Department of State, the National Security Council (NSC) and Congress, where meetings with Islamists are multiplying with the aim of exchanging views on the American occupation of Iraq, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or the political situation in their country⁷¹.

For the United States, the interest in the Islamist issue is also, as in Europe, coloured by a security imperative and the desire for political stability in the region. However, in the framework of the “battle of hearts and minds” the United States seeks to apprehend the opinion of civil societies and to promote dialogue with Islamist parties on international political issues. In spite of this advance of the US’s dialogue with Islamist parties from the Muslim world, a weak point of the policy could well be its global aspect. Indeed, the Islamists, like the ‘Greater Middle East’, are imagined to be a homogenous group, with no account given to the diversity of their national political environments and the wider implications of their inclusion. The US is asking the Islamist parties to enter into an ideological partnership, questioning them on their commitment to democratic norms⁷² and asking them to espouse the idea of an increased US role in the region, without a real interest in their national dynamics. Yet we have seen how these parties must be considered as purely political players, whose opinions can change according to the political situation of the moment. In spite of their specific ‘Islamic’ identity, it would be dangerous to view them as religious actors charged with interpreting US or EU policies from a “religious” standpoint, without focusing on the institutional challenge of greater political pluralism in the region.

The episode of the EU’s refusal to recognise the democratic electoral victory of Hamas, the Palestinian Islamist party, has in large measure undermined the credibility of EU discourse on democratisation in Muslim countries among civil societies and Islamist parties alike. Today, a number of Islamist party leaders and activists are raising the question of the possibility of an ‘Islamic democracy’, i.e. a democratic system inspired in large measure by the European democratic model and Islam, but with an original trajectory independent of Europe’s whims⁷³. In our interviews, the majority of Islamist players declared that they did not reject the possibility of becoming more democratic “thanks to Europe” and its support, but not “like Europe”. What they dispute is the necessity of being in conformity with European demands and of acting solely through the democratisation programmes proposed by Europe, and from which they are often excluded, to build democracy. The Islamists also contest, as regards the dynamics of democratisation in the southern countries, the EU’s promotion of a democracy with external objectives, i.e. in being aimed at creating stability and security for direct exchanges between Europe and its partners (which illustrates well the current direction taken by the European Neighbourhood Policy concerning the economy, energy, security, counter-terrorism, or the Israeli-Palestinian issue); and this to the detriment of democracy with internal objectives, i.e. having direct effects on civil society and the opposition parties (particularly through freedom of expression, access of the masses to the political sphere, etc.).

An Islamic democratisation?

70. Mohamed El Hamraoui, “Le PJD veut comprendre le lobbying” in *Le reporter*, 9/04/2006.

71. “Stratégie : Bush drague nos islamistes” in *Tel Quel*, n°177, 21/5/2005.

72. There is an interesting description of the “Muslim World Initiative”, carried out by the United States Institute of Peace in the USA that can be read. Retranscribing a meeting with several Islamist officials and their opinions, it comes under the title “What Do Islamists Really Want?” and is at http://www.usip.org/pubs/usipeace_briefings/2006/0522_islamists.html.

73. Bobby Sayyid, *Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism*, London & New York, Zed Books, 1997.

The United States and Europe would like a democratisation of their own choosing, realising that the democratisation dynamic they have long been advocating will not necessarily produce the political result they are seeking for the stability of their dealings in the region, with notably the eviction of the Islamists, particularly in the case of the Palestinian Hamas⁷⁴.

One of the signs that perhaps attests to the EU's nascent will to take these factors into account is found in the recommendations of the Final Report on the "EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East", calling on the EU to "engage with non-violent political organisations and civil society movements at all levels in society, with such engagement open to all organisations committed to non-violent and democratic means"⁷⁵. The EU's disregard for cases of torture and abusive detention of Islamist activists, the exclusion of trade unions dominated by Islamists from EuroMed networks, and the intercultural aspect given to inter-religious dialogue have also given credence to the idea among Arab protagonists of a profoundly secular European conception of democracy, leaving very little room for the expression of religious identities⁷⁶.

Accordingly, the democratisation initiatives promoted by the EU seem no longer to inspire confidence among Islamist players, who have difficulty in identifying with these. For many observers, a reflection in the EU on Islamic political and social values, especially concerning the question of democracy, could help dissipate the Muslim countries' impression of cultural imperialism in Europe's attempts to promote democracy in the region⁷⁷. The idea is that the Islamists would serve as a rampart against dictators and would be a vector of democratisation, developing "an Islamic ethic of democracy"⁷⁸ that does not manage the government but supports it, since democracy is a political culture that can have such cultural specificities, notably in the Muslim context. Drawing on resources in support of democracy and human rights from within the Islamic heritage, such as the concept of shoura (fair consultation in a policy-making process), respect for law, the central role of moral values such as equality, social justice and women's social and political rights, has never been considered by Europe and the study of such possibilities should be launched. Including elements of Islamic philosophy in the arguments in support of democracy does not, however, mean locking this issue into an Islamic framework. What Europe has to avoid in this type of approach, however, is reducing democratisation in the south to a sort of intercultural dialogue between the two parties, legitimating therein the use of political norms different from those applying to political players in the north. It is precisely the argument of an "Islamic cultural specificity" that has enabled the authoritarianism of certain Arab states to monopolise Islam as a resource, and to crack down on all attempts at opposition and change. Paying heed to the requests of civil societies and what they are trying to build, and thus ensuring their representation in institutions in these countries, will consequently be more effective than the north's current obsession with the question of "Arab reform", without, moreover, managing to identify the reformers. It would also be illusory and superficial to consider the Islamists as the new "miracle" political protagonists of the region, after having long treated them as the "untouchables of the democracy assistance world"⁷⁹.

A renewal of the elite participating in both the Euro-Med Partnership and the European Neighbourhood Policy is imperative today. Unfailing support for the authoritarian aspects of certain southern countries and over-representation of their elite in the EU's co-operation programmes will not be effective for reducing the perception that Europe has no legitimacy to discuss questions of democratisation, a feeling that is on the increase in the Arab world.

The interest presented by Islamist parties and the civil society associations that form part of their movement is not due exclusively to the question of Islam. It is in any case not the role of the EU to exacerbate the religious aspect of these parties, which is extremely cyclical, moreover. What is no doubt more useful is the possibility for the EU to embark upon a new dynamic on democratisation questions with new political actors, who are seen as legitimate in the eyes of part of Arab civil societies. These Islamist parties must nonetheless agree to clarify their stance on political pluralism and other values promoted by the EU, not on an Islamic normative basis, but pragmatically through training programmes approved jointly by the EU, the states and the parties.

74. Gregory Causse III, "Can democracy stop terrorism?" in *Foreign Affairs*, September-October 2005.

75. See the final report of the EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East, The European Commission, EuroMed Report, issue no.78, 24 June 2004.

76. See Commission of the European Communities, "Wider Europe Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours", Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament 11 Mars 2003, Commission of the European Communities, "Reinvigorating EU Actions on Human Rights and Democratisation with Mediterranean Partners", Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament: Strategic Guidelines, 21 May 2003.

77. Richard Gillespie, Richard Youngs, "Democracy and the EMP: European and Arab Perspectives", EuroMeSCo Brief, n° 6, 2003.

78. Bassam Tibi, "Islam, Freedom and Democracy in the Arab World", in Michael Emerson (ed.), *Democratisation in the European Neighborhood*, Center for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Brussels, October 2005.

79. Richard Youngs, "Europe's Uncertain Pursuit of Middle East Reform", *Carnegie Papers*, No.45, June 2004.

Conclusions and recommendations

Throughout this study we have seen that the official entry of Islamist parties into politics has had two results – avoiding radicalisation and professionalisation. The approach of the EU should cease to regard them as if sacred, and in this sense also cease demonising them, so as to allow decision-makers to focus on the political issues that the presence of Islamists has raised. Having dropped their revolutionary trappings and become committed to the political management of the daily problems of their voters, these parties should be prepared to take part in cooperation programmes from which the EU, in the opinion of a large part of Arab civil societies, should no longer exclude them.

The partnership that the EU could have with Islamist parties should relate to the sector-specific programmes in the region, differentiating the political, social and economic lines of action. There is no need to think up new programmes specifically created for Islamist actors and their organisations but simply to encourage their inclusion in the programmes that already exist. However, this work of including them needs to take account of the following points:

1) Start a dialogue with Islamists:

Algeria and Morocco have a long history of cooperation with Europe. As a result, the interest of their Islamist parties in the policies of Europe and its member states is important, as compared to elsewhere in the Middle East. In spite of that, European policies relating to the region are still not very well known by Islamists. So the EU, especially via its delegations in the countries concerned, should work to step up the visibility of and explain its main programmes such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the European Neighbourhood Policy. It will be particularly important to associate grass root activists and Islamic civil society associations in these training activities on Europe.

2) Cooperation with political actors:

The emphasis should be put on the political nature of Islamist actors and their parties, and thus differentiate the political approach of Islamists from the religious or intercultural. Members of these parties need to acquire specific skills and bring their experience into line with international political practices. Exchanges of experience between Maghreb Islamist parties and European foundations/political parties should be promoted both by member states at a national level and by the EU as part of Euro-Mediterranean exchanges (notably via the EuroMed Parliamentary Assembly).

Ahead of the 2007 elections that will take place in Morocco and Algeria, technical training on managing political projects, running electoral campaigns and on cooperating with national and international institutions should be made available to candidates. Such training actions will also be required for the longer term and in due course be opened to activists and not just leaders.

3) Cooperation with national institutions:

The EU must promote work in these countries to strengthen national institutions which do not exclude Islamist parties. Only civil servants chosen by governments have so far benefited from MEDA programmes to strengthen institutions. Professional norms should be strengthened, notably through parliamentary experience, and cooperation with appropriate secular parties.

The issue of democratisation, ever present in the partnership with the EU, should also leave room for joint work on specific points where the institutions can address social problems. This cooperation in an institutional framework will also allow the Islamists to gain credibility by clarifying their positions on what are called “grey areas” (women’s rights, religious minorities, morals in public life, etc.)

To ensure that the partnership evolves and continues to concern actors from the south, the EU must promote the existence of independent national structures making it possible to assess, criticise and propose adjustments to European policies for the region.

Bringing Islamists into these kinds of structures would help counter the feeling that the EU only proposes a Euro-centred democratisation which does not meet the expectations of those concerned.

4) The role of Islamic (“religious”) structures:

Islamists are not therefore religious actors and their inclusion in the partnership must focus on politics. Nonetheless, many NGOs from civil society and charitable and humanitarian associations share their ideas and have structural links with these parties. These associations, which can be described as Islamic given their religious base, are today also excluded from the partnership with the EU. They can however play a useful role in intercultural initiatives promoted by the EU, especially by relaying Euro-Mediterranean programmes for a culture of peace and dialogue in mosques, Koranic schools and religious associations. Including them in the EuroMed Non-governmental Platform would allow them to develop networks with other non-Islamic NGOs in the region. In return, the EU could reflect on how Islamic precepts could serve as a resource to protect the most vulnerable populations. In the framework of the United Nations, initiatives have been carried out together with Islamic charitable associations from the Arab world, tasked with raising awareness about reproductive health, greater responsibility for fathers in the family, the use of drugs by young people, the protection of isolated women and condemning the use of violence in Islam. The aim is not to islamise the social problems of these societies but to consider these Islamic actors on the ground as a complementary, rather than monopolistic resource, in developing the EU’s partnership with the region.

5) The security question

Legalised Islamists are often in favour of the positions on matters of security policy taken today by the EU and their governments. Whilst this security imperative is a reality, this common view between the EU, governments and Islamist parties must not hide the repercussions that the war or terrorism have in the first instance on populations, and security concerns must not remain the business solely of the political elite (of which Islamists are also a part today). Civil society must also take part in debates on conflicts, terrorism and radicalisation.

The youth sections of Islamist parties could be invited at a Euro-Mediterranean level to express themselves on the fears generated by insecurity in the region and to offer solutions drawn from their daily experience.

Audiovisual EuroMed cooperation can also play an important role, especially by organising training seminars for the Arab and European press on dealing with questions of Islamism, terrorism and conflicts.

6) Cooperation with civil society (young people and women)

Islamist parties are now faced with the emergence of new types of activists, especially among young people and women, a challenge they do not always know how to meet. Growing in numbers at grass root level, they are largely in the minority in the representative bodies of parties or parliaments. So there is an internal reform needed in the parties to give young people and women a more central role. The second area for work is to include these young people in the EuroMed Youth Platform and to raise the awareness among women of European programmes with a gender aspect. The third area concerns the current transformation of Islamist networks, especially with the emergence of new groups of “business leaders” of associated trade unions. EU programmes should also encourage their participation in the EuroMed Economic Forum and Trade Union Forum. The renewal of Islamist elites via these new networks will surely have an important effect on the structural and ideological transformation of Islamist parties in the next ten years.

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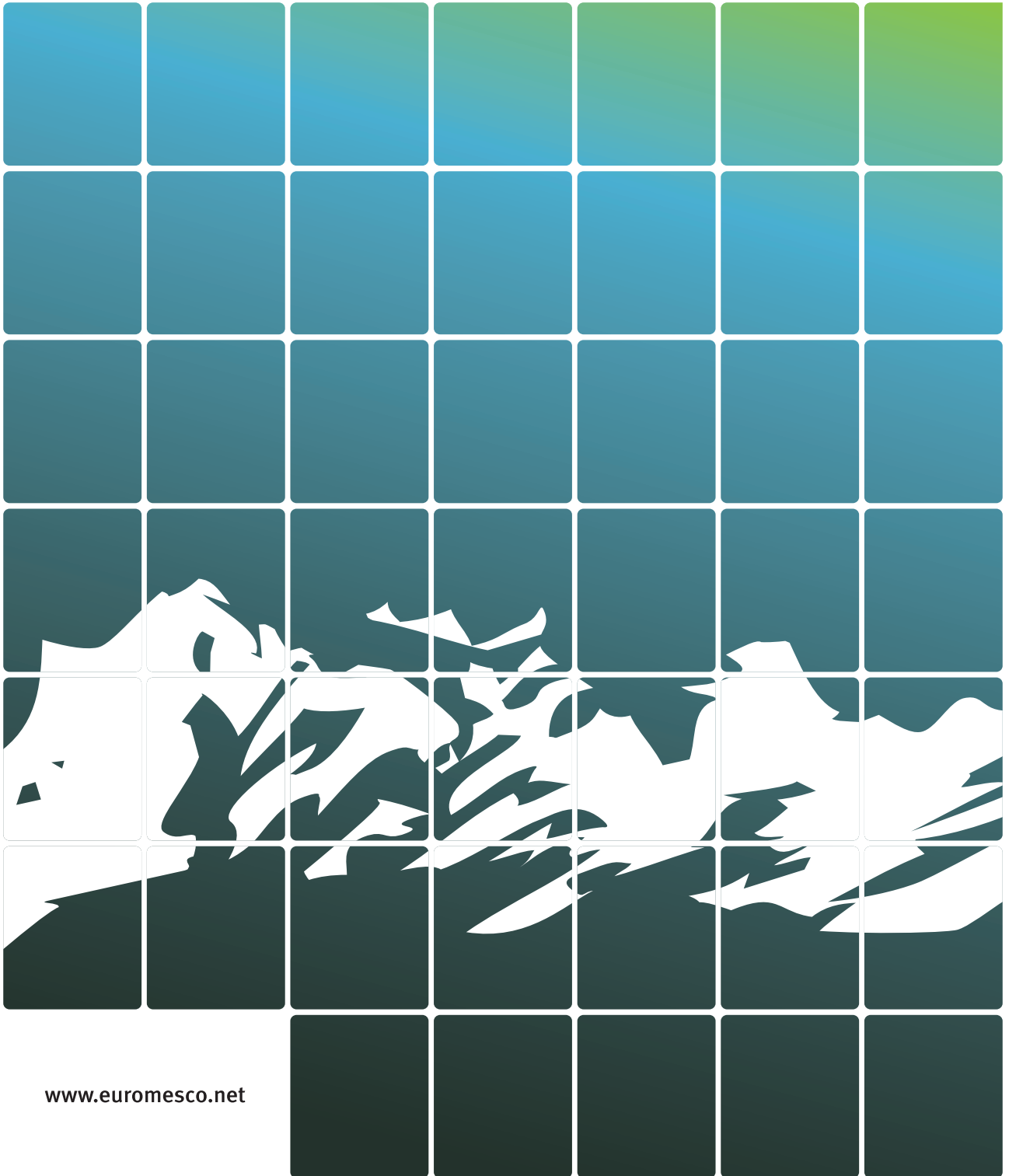
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