COLLECTION OF THESIS

Gergely Hudecz
Democratisation Theories and Experience:
A case study on Morocco
Ph.D. thesis

Supervisor:
Dr. Zsolt Rostoványi
Dsc, University Professor

Budapest, 2008

Institute of International Studies

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Contents

I. Abstract

Existing theoretical approaches to the democratisation process are compared with recent observations in Morocco. In the first section, the basic tenets of the transition literature, including a set of procedural and structural characteristics are outlined. Based on these the paper raises three questions:

1) Whether there has been a transition (i.e. democratisation and liberalisation) pattern in Morocco in the period of 1989-2006.

2) What factors affected the process and explained its outcome? The paper investigates in particular the relationship between state, nation and democracy.

3) Whether the Moroccan observations fit into the general transition and democratisation literature.

It appears that there are two distinct spheres of contestation: on one hand, in the formal political sphere previously described transition dynamics seem to prevail, while on the other hand the notions of 'stateness' and 'civil society', which are widely associated with the democratisation prospects of a country, have different characteristics in the Moroccan context.

II. Background

Our first question is whether Morocco is in transition. If we look at various indicators we find that some changes has been going on. The voice and accountability index of the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) stood at 27 in 1996 and rose to 40 by 2002, but then sunk back to 28 in 2006 (out of 100 being the best).[1] The Bertelsmann Transformation Index worsened from 5.1 in 2003 to 4.6 in 2005 (out of 10 being the best).[2]

Gellner discusses the transition of Muslim societies in a broad sense examining how familial bounds are replaced by legal constraints (Gellner [1981]). Others look at the process as distancing from authentic ways of life and adapting to modernisation and globalisation (Zartman [1985]). Alternatively, from an economist's perspective, most recent changes arose from strains on the internal distribution systems, which had been stimulated by rapidly growing populations, and external pressures (Spencer [1998]).

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[1] Worldwide Governance Indicators, Country Data Report for Morocco, 1996-2005, Development Research Group and the World Bank Institute, World Bank, 2006

[2] Hartmann, Hauke: Bertelsmann Transformation Index, Presentation Outline for the "Comparative Democratization" Graduate Class, Nuffield College, 27th February 2007

In this assessment we look primary at the changes affecting the political system, which, however, cannot be detached from the broader structural factors cited above. Thus, we examine liberalisation and democratisation as the outcomes of a process, which is, at least partly, determined by social and economic transformation (Linz-Stepan [1996]).

Our second question is what factors affect the transition process. First we investigate the relationship between state, nation and democracy, second the political system at the beginning of transformation, third the different actors in the process and finally the decisive role of Islam and its socio-economic context.

We also endeavour to conciliate two distinct strands of literature: on one hand the civilisational approach elaborated by Huntington arguing that cultural differences explain differences in polities; on the other hand the rational-institutional approach of Western politology.

III.Methodology

In the beginning of the twentieth century comparative politics focused on studying the constitutional and institutional arrangements of Western European and North American polities, and little scholarly attention had been dedicated to economic, cultural and historical differences between various entities. That changed partially in the twenties when the analysis of public attitudes gained ground with the emergence of mass movements. However, the most substantial change came in the fifties and sixties when new polities emerged around the world through the advance of decolonisation, which triggered the revision of the classic analytical and methodological framework of comparative politics.

The thesis endeavours to summarise the impacts of economics, sociology, psychology, anthropology and history in particular to broaden the understanding of politics and enable the identification of cultural impacts on the polity in the case of Morocco.

The case study relies heavily on global indicators and uses formalised rational choice models to describe the interactions of political players in order to assure that its elementary findings remain comparable to other works in the field. In the meantime, these means also enable to point out where the Moroccan case diverges from previous observations, and at what points previous theories fail to explain dynamics in Morocco.

At these points of divergence, methods of historical, economic and anthropological analysis are used to explain why developments in Morocco might fail to live up to the predictions of previous theories of political transition and democratisation. These methods are supported by interviews with local experts, journalists, student activists and policy makers, while the assessment of local news papers and school text-books also plays an important role in exploring the social context of political changes.

IV. Key findings

Liberalisation. Investigating liberalisation Freedom House scores for civil liberties improved from 5 in 2002 to 4 in 2006 (out of 7 being the worst), and 60% of the population believed that the freedom of expression were improving in 2004 according to a survey carried out for the UNDP Arab Human Development Report. These indicators reflect changes in the personal status law, the party law, the establishment of the Equity and Reconciliation Commission and an ease of state control over opposition journals.

Democratisation. In the meantime, there is no indicator that would suggest any democratic improvement in the recent years. The Freedom House score for political representation stands unchanged at 5, while 60% of the population believes that the accountability of the government is actually worsening. However, if we take a wider time-span, the picture may be different.

First, one might suggest that Morocco is in permanent transition since its independence in 1955 when the Franco-Moroccan Declaration of La Celle-Saint-Cloud declared that the country was to become a constitutional monarchy. Then, in 1956, Mohamed V spelled out in his throne speech that his "first objective is the constitution of a Moroccan government that is responsible and representative."

The second proposition could be to set the beginning of the transition around the early 70's when Hassan II, facing economic problems and public unrest, was forced to put forward a more liberal constitution (1972), allowed opposition parties to participate in the 1977 elections and met some of their demands.

The third possible starting date is 1989, when Hassan II announced plans to revise the constitution in his 1992 throne speech and invited opposition parties to join the government in 1993. We are now accepting this proposition, since there has been no major backlash in the process since, although some might argue that the transition has been stalled recently.

Stateness. The preliminary finding is that, despite the country's cultural plurality, Moroccans have a relatively strong sense of national identity. According to World Values Survey (WVS) data 98% of the population is proud to be Moroccan, 88% would go to war for the country and 61% considers national identity as being most important. This can be explained by the historical fact that Morocco's present territorial limits are not the legacy of imperialism, but were differentiated over centuries of progress. (Ruedy [1985])

> •However, the institutions of the royal court confound with those of the state. The French accelerated state formation by modernising the extractive and coercive capacity of the central administration. Although the royal court was initially distinct from the modern administrative structure, the difference abruptly disappeared after independence in 1956. As a consequence, even in modern times, the kingdom remained widely accepted as political framework, even in times of political crisis. (Hermessi [1985])

Political system.   The second factor we examine is the political system in place at the beginning of the transition.   According to Linz and Stepan's typology the Moroccan regime in the eighties was an eroding authoritarian system with some democratic characteristics.   Political pluralism had been limited, not responsive to public preferences, and the countries leadership was highly concentrated in the royal Palace.   The most democratic features had been the vivid party system, and the regular elections, while the ideology behind the King's power (as described above) had sultanistic origins.

> •Overall, if we look at the polity, we find that the legislative, the executive, the judicial, the military, the economic and the religious powers are all concentrated in the hands of the King, although some institutions of the democratic accountability exist.   Even if we assume that the dismantling of the King's economic and religious roles is not an element of an eventual democratisation process, the legislative, the executive, the judicial and the military remain.

Path to democratic transition. Considering the above-described regime the following changes to the polity could be considered as 'democratisation':

> •Ensuring that the elections are free and fair;
>
> •Increasing the ratio of directly elected MPs;
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> •The empowerment of the legislative parliament;
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> •Ensuring the accountability of the executive power;
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> •Ensuring the independence of the judiciary;
>
> •Ensuring civil control over the military.

•We distinguish three major groups in the transition process: the incumbent establishment (the *makhzen*), the traditional political parties and the Islamists.

•The key development of the democratisation process has been the opposition parties coming to power. Another aspect of the transition has been the erosion of the *makhzen* system.

Rising Islamists.   The third political factor, which affected the transition process was the emergence of Islamist movements.

> •Lust-Okar's explanation for the growing strength of Islamists is that the King allowed their movements to gain popularity in order to force opposition parties to co-operate;

> •an alternative proposition could be that the Palace agreed to make concessions to the opposition to counterweight rising Islamism in the country.

•Or to put it another way the underlying question is whether Islamist resurrection is a spontaneous or politically manipulated phenomenon. Despite the lack of reliable data on the change of support for the opposition and Islamists, it seems unrealistic to assume that that the strengthening Islamism was managed.

Structural factors. We also identify several impulses coming from the broader socio-economic environment of the political system ("structural factors"), which contribute to the strengthening of Islamism.

> •The first one is the low level of public confidence in political parties and the weakness of the civil society, in the classic Western sense. The role of the civil society is hence taken by Islamist movements**.**

> •The second trigger for Islamism has to do with the country's level of development. The ratio of urbanisation has seen an explosion, which was coupled by a jump in poverty and assured broad grassroots support for the Islamist's extensive social policy propositions.

> •Third, our observation concerning the rule of law in Morocco can also explain the relative success of the Islamist political agenda. The „rule of law" is weak, and something problematic in the country.

Conclusion. On one hand it is almost commonplace to argue that fundamentalist Islamist threat is an obstacle to democratisation, either for the unwillingness of the incumbents to co-operate with Islamists or for the undemocratic agenda of these movements. In Morocco's case both arguments seem unfounded.

•The Palace did allow the PJD to enter the political race, and the PJD does accept the basic principles of democracy.

•Furthermore, the PJD does have two elementary electoral massages, which support democratisation: the independence of the judiciary and the fight against corruption.

•As for the polity, PJD challenges the regime in different ways than the traditional parties. While Istiqlal, UNFP and USFP struggled to increase their leverage on the executive power and tried to distance the government from the Palace, the PJD appear to opt for the weakening of the government and increasing the weight of the parliament.

IV. References

To highlight the international context of democratisation the different approaches to international relations are summarised including the essential readings of Samuel Huntington about the clash of civilisations and Francis Fukuyama on the end of history, which indicate two distinct approaches to the international promotion of democracy. In the meantime, realist, liberal and constructivist authors help to bridge the gap between the two diagonally opposing views: Edward Carr, Hans Morgenthau, Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski among the realists; Timothy Garton Ash, a key representative of the liberal school and French authors such as Raymond Aron, Fernand Braudel and Bertrand Badie also contribute to understanding the international relevance of democracy and democratisation.

In order to define the concept of democracy, different notions from different historical periods are presented including the works of Aristotle, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, James Madison, John Stuart Mill, Joseph Schumpeter, Friedrich Hayek, Max Weber, followed by an introduction to the thoughts of scholars whose publications dominated the academic discourse on

democracy in the second half of the twentieth century: Seymour Martin Lipset, Dankwart Rustow, Robert Dahl, Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter, Laurence Whitehead, Terry Lynn Karl, Michael McFaul, Adam Przeworski, Juan Linz, Alfred Stepan, Thomas Carothers and Larry Diamond. The long list of Western scholars is complemented by various Muslim intellectuals, such as Sayyid Qutb, Abdurrahman Wahid, Amien Rais, Talgat Tadjuddin, Rachid Al-Ghannnouchi, Shaykh Sha'ban, Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir Mughni, Hasan al-Turabi, 'Allal al-Fasi, Mohamed Talbi, Saad Eddin Ibrahim, Anwar Ibrahim and Vali Nasr.

The latest results and debates of democratisation studies are traced in relevant periodicals including Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, Journal of Democracy, Journal of Conflict Resolution, Comparative Political Studies, Comparative Politics, Journal of Peace Research, World Politics, as well as publications by the Francophone Institut francais des relations internationales (IFRI), by Centre d'études et de recherches internationales (CERI), and by the leading Spanish think tank Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE).

Among the sources on Morocco in particular, there are historical monographs by Ira Lapidus and Richard Pennell; sociological and anthropological studies by Ernest Gellner and William Zartman; political analyses by Guilain Denoeux, Abdeslam Maghraoui, Pierre Vermeuren and Elen Lust-Okar, as well as local news papers journal hebdomadaire (le journal) and TelQuel.

Evidently, Hungarian academics have also contributed a great deal to the related international academic discourse: Dr. Zsolt Rostoványi on Islam, Dr. András Lánczi on democrcacy, Dr. Péter Gedeon on the theories of comparative political economy, Dr. László Csicsmann on Islam and democracy, Dr. Tamás Szigetvári on economics in the Maghreb, as well as Dr. Gyula Gazdik, Dr. László Tüske and Dr. Erzsébet Rózsa N. on the Middle East and North Africa.

V. List of Publications

"Az amerikai és iszlám identitás sajátosságai"
Tudományos Diákköri Dolgozat,
Nemzetközi Kapcsolatok Szekció,
Budapesti Corvinus Egyetem, Budapest, 2002

"Franciaország és az arab országok kapcsolata"
Tudományos Diákköri Dolgozat,
Nemzetközi Kapcsolatok Szekció,
Budapesti Corvinus Egyetem, Budapest, 2003

"Az Európai Unió szerepe az arab-izraeli konfliktusban"
Diplomamunka, Nemzetközi Kapcsolatok Szak,
Budapesti Corvinus Egyetem, Budapest, 2004

"Economic Impacts of the Barcelona Process in Morocco"
UACES Student Forum 6th Annual Conference,
University of Oxford, UK, 2005

"Demokrácia és demokratizálódás"
Kül-Világ, IV. Évfolyam 2007/2.

"A marokkói demokratizálódás folyamata: Erõviszonyok a Makhzenen belül"
Kül-Világ, V. Évfolyam 2008/2.

"Democratisation Theories and Experience: A case study on Morocco"
BRISMES Graduate Conference,
London School of Economics, UK, 2008