The Movement for Unicity and Reform:

Between *da^{c}wa* and Dissent

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the roots and emergence of the 'Movement for Unicity and Reform' ('MUR'), one of the largest Islamic political movements in Morocco. The objective is to outline the movement's history, ideological outlook and structure in order to present a complete picture of MUR's objectives.

The empirical section of this thesis is based on fieldwork, consisting of interviews with senior members of the movement, activists, PJD MPs, academics and former members, observations of the movement's activities on the ground, movement documents, literature and newspapers.

The first chapter presents MUR's history, from its roots in the revolutionary Chabiba Islamiya, through to the various ideological reforms undertaken by the different strands which subsequently make up the MUR. It looks at both the internal and external pressures on the movement's leaders which led them to re-examine their outlook and ultimately opt for a unique form of critical support for the monarchy.

The second chapter outlines the ideological roots of the MUR in the Salafiyya reformist trend, in particular through the influence of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, but also subsequently through the integration of critical perspectives, as well as local intellectuals. Finally, it examines the movement's core documents, its charter and its publications to present the MUR's idealised conception of the state and its distinct strategy for change. In particular, it examines how specific religious aspects of the King's legitimation are re-worked and wielded to seek to create formal mechanisms of accountability between the King and the people and ultimately create a measure of the King's 'performance' as a ruler, based on the very ideals he premises his legitimacy on.

The third chapter looks at the MUR's activities in society and is broken into two sections, the first on the MUR's 'specializations', its network of social and cultural organizations which operate at the grassroots level, providing services branded with the

MUR's ethos. It examines how the MUR's particular conception of *da^{c}wa* manifests in its outreach and creation of alternative solutions to social problems.

The second section looks at the MUR's view of the political sphere and in particular, its evolving relationship to the PJD, a party which initially grew out of the MUR's political specialization, but which has since developed an autonomous identity. The MUR's political ideals as laid out in its literature are far more subversive than those of the PJD and point to inherent tensions between the MUR's project and the PJD's current incarnation.

The thesis presents a detailed and comprehensive understanding of the MUR, both to inform a better understanding of the gradual, grassroots change being undertaken in view of achieving a particular vision of society, but also ultimately to resituate the PJD within a much broader project for change, of which formal political activism is merely one of several avenues for achieving the MUR's vision.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ORGANIZATIONAL NAMES

ADFM: Association democratique des femmes du Maroc

al-Ikhtiyār al-Islāmī: the Islamic Option Group

AKP: Party of Justice and development (Turkey)

Ḥizb al-Nahda: al-Nahda is the Islamist movement founded by Rachid Ghannoushi in Tunisia

BASMA: BASMA foundation for social development (MUR's social network)

bayʾa: allegiance, given annually to the Moroccan King by officials

Chabiba Islamiya: the Islamic Youth Organisation

AZZAHRA: Forum Azzahra pour la Femme Marocaine, Maroc (MUR's women's network)

Jamaa Islamia: the Islamic Group

Jamaa Tabayoun: initially a stance of refraining from taking a position and then a movement in its own right (MS Ar. Jamāᶜa Tabayūn)

Jamaa Tabligh: a predication movement with roots in the Indian subcontinent

Jamaa Tawḥīd: the Party of Unicity

Jamᶜiyya al-Islāmiyya bi'l-Qaṣr al-Kabīr: the Islamic Association of Ksar al Kebir

Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās: The Predication Organisation of Fes

Jamāᶜa al-ᶜadl wa'l-Iḥsān: 'Justice and Spirituality', Moroccan Islamist association, founded by Cheikh Abdesslam Yassine

Jamᶜiyyat al-Shurūq al-Islāmiya: The organisation of the Islamic Sunrise

LIF : The League for an Islamic Future (Rābiṭat al-Mustqabal al-Islāmī)

Makhzen: The elite circle surrounding the King, a form of deep state

maqāṣid al-sharīᶜa: The Higher Intents of the sharia

MB: The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood

MRR: The Movement for Reform and Renewal (Ḥarakat al-Tawḥīd wa'l-Iṣlāḥ)

MPDC: Popular Democratic and Constitutional Movement (Mouvement populaire démocratique et constitutionnel)

MUR: Movement for Unicity and Reform (Ḥaraka al-Tawḥīd wa'l-Islāḥ)

ORCF : Organization for the Renewal of Women's Awareness (Organisation du Renouveau de la Conscience Féminine)

OREMA: Organisation du Renouveau Estudiantin au Maroc (the MUR's student wing)

PI: The Istiqlal Party

PJD: The Party for Justice and Development

Rissāliya: term coined by the MUR to describe acting in a manner consistent with the message, in both content and form, of the Prophet Muḥammad

al-Tabayūn: The "clarification" (a position, later a movement)

Ṭalāʾiʿ: an slamic group led by ʿIṣṣām al-ʿAṭṭār, a former Syrian Muslim Brotherhood activist

taqqiyya: the concept of dissimulation

UMT: Moroccan Workers' Union (Union Marocaine du Travail)

UNEM: The National Union of Moroccan Students

UNTM: The National Union of Work in Morocco ('al-Ittiḥād al-Waṭṭanī li'l-Shughl bi'l-Maghrib')

USFP : Socialist Union of Popular Forces, a social-democratic political party in Morocco

INTRODUCTION

When the Party for Justice and Development (PJD) won the most number of seats in the Moroccan general elections in 2011, taking 107 out of 395, the victory was hailed as the latest Islamist take over in a region in which Islamist parties have, over the last two decades, emerged as strong contenders in national politics, from Tunisia to Palestine via Kuwait and Egypt. It was also viewed with some surprise by those who believed Morocco to be the 'monarchical exception'[1] in North Africa to the broader popularity of Islamist politics. The Moroccan King's incarnation of both spiritual and political authority had often been regarded as the bulwark against such movements, but with the Arab uprisings creating waves from early 2011 across the MENA region, the party was seen by many as a concession to a simmering discontent.

The party itself was also viewed as somewhat 'exceptional', branded as a "moderate"[2] Islamist group in the press. Their political victory was the culmination of years of negotiations between the Islamist activists and the authorities both over the shape and extent of their engagement in the formal political sphere, with the PJD agreeing to field a limited number of candidates to avoid collision with the authorities and seemingly 'holding back' its true political weight. According to Willis, the Islamist activists were able to persuade the authorities to allow them to enter the formal political sphere because they convinced them that "they presented no immediate challenge to the existing political order,"[3] while the authorities for their part gained an outlet for channelling Islamist support into a party which, unlike al-ᶜAdl wa'l-Iḥsān, the largest Islamist movement in Morocco, formerly under the leadership of Abselam Yassine and committed to a form of Islamic republicanism,

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1 Daadaoui, M., "A Moroccan Monarchical Exception?", *foreignpolicy.com*, 14/12/2012, http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/12/14/a-moroccan-monarchical-exception/

2 Karam, Souhail, "Moderate Islamists claim Moroccan election win", *Reuters.com*, 25/11/2011, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-morocco-election-idUSTRE7AO1U520111126

3 Willis, Michael J., Between *alternance* and the *Makhzen: At-Tawhid wa Al-Islah's* entry into Moroccan politics' *The Journal of North African Studies* 4:3 (1999), pp. 45-80., p. 72

did not seek revolutionary change. Some even alleged the new party was a creation of the deep state, also known as the 'Makhzen',[4] to undermine support for the main political opposition of the time, the Leftist 'National Union of Popular Forces' (USFP).[5]

The PJD grew out of a wider social movement, the Movement for Unicity and Reform (MUR), founded in 1996. The MUR was itself the fruition of a union between 5 much older Islamic groups, with roots dating back to the 1970s, which included one largely political trend and one associational or educational trend, which came together to better advance their goal of 'Islamizing' society. With this objective in mind, the united activists devised a multi-pronged approach to seek to affect this holistic change. This included different avenues of work – educational, social, cultural – but also, political. In its charter, the MUR states:[6]

> The objectives of the movement don't stop at the realisation of the individual piety (spirituality) in its isolated meaning, its objective is to move from the resurrection of the religion, from the individual, and the general level (i.e. society, government) to found a humane civilization.

It is this holistic vision of 'reform' which this thesis seeks to outline in order to better situate the PJD within the broader strategy for change initiated by the MUR. By understanding this multipronged approach and the ideas underpinning it, the thesis aims to contribute to a better understanding of Islamist activism and its objectives, which extend far beyond success at the ballot box.

Existing literature:

Notwithstanding widespread academic interest in the phenomena of Islamic movements since the 1960s, the focus of contemporary studies has been primarily on their political dimension, despite the political actors, or organizations, typically emerging from a

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4 In Morocco, meaning the elite circle surrounding the monarch.

5 Willis, Michael J., Between *alternance* and the *Makhzen: At-Tawhid wa Al-Islah's* entry into Moroccan politics', *The Journal of North African Studies* 4:3 (1999), pp. 45-80, p. 74.

6 Ḥarakat al-Tawḥīd wa'l-Iṣlāh, *al-Mīthāq* (1998), p. 57.

social movement, defined by Tarrow "as collective challenges [to elites, authorities, other groups or cultural codes] by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interactions with elites, opponents and authorities."[7] Islamic movements have tended to be studied on the basis of their political interactions,[8] while interest in their socio-cultural output has often been limited to interest in the degree to which it has helped bolster electoral support, as in the case of the Palestinian Hamas, or to explain their pervasiveness, as in the case of the FIS in Algeria. Few movements have been studied from the Social Movement Theory (SMT) perspective, which considers political activism within the broader study of a holistic social movement: "If scholars of Islamic activism have only recently begun to harness the analytic power of social movement theory, social movement scholars have yet to devote systematic attention to the Islamic groups."[9] Notable studies of Islamic social movements include Quintan Wiktorowicz' study of the Islamic Action Front in Jordan, *The Management of Islamic activism*, and Carrie Wickham's *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt*.

Studies of Islamic movements tend to focus on the political dimension of what are typically holistic movements, and this out of concern for the political implications of Islamist victory at the polls. Yet, the focus on the political has often led to a skewed perception of Islamic movements as merely political actors, vying for power using popular rhetoric, ignoring the social dimension and the implications of the movement's action in various other fields (social, cultural, spiritual). In addition, the overemphasis on the political dimension of Islamic movements, combined with a concern over the 'real' objectives of such groups has meant that developments in Islamic thought have been largely ignored or dismissed as a form of political pragmatism. This thesis aims to focus on the broader social movement of

7 Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Collective Action, Social Movements and Politics* (1994).

8 Notable examples include: Esposito, *Islam and Politics* (1984); Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam will Shape the Future* (2007); White, *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics* (2002).

9 Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism and Political Change in Egypt* (2002), p. 4.

the MUR, in order to highlight the far wider stakes of the Islamic movement as regards societal change, and as a means of relativizing the importance of electoral politics for such movements, in light of their greater objectives.

As Lynch argues:[10]

> Researchers tend to be primarily interested in the political motivations for charitable work, but that doesn't mean that politics are actually motivating the social service providers. Abdullah Al-Arian warns that the obsession with vote buying "limits our understanding of these institutions solely to their relevance in the political sphere, rather than the broader social function that they provide."

In fact, charity networks and service provision centres in Egypt have facilitated constant exchanges between Muslim Brotherhood (MB) MPs and large swaths of the Egyptian population, particularly in impoverished areas:[11]

> This, (…) has made it possible for the MPs to detect direct incidents of corruption, to take note of the concrete impacts of social and economic policies, and to shape a narrative that builds political support for their parliamentary activities."

Despite this over-emphasis on political activism among Islamists, most Islamic political parties have emerged out of a social movement organization of which political activity is only one of many facets of their work. These social movements – the MUR included - are often given more leeway than their political counterparts and are typically very active in the fields of education and social work. Many of the MUR's social and educational organizations were, for example, active long before the MUR's creation as a formal body in 1996 and found it easier to acquire legal permits for cultural and educational work.

In addition, Islamic social movement organizations without a political branch, have been seen as fostering a climate of broad based support for Islamic political movements,

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10 Lynch, M., "Islamists and their charities", *Washington Post*, 15/10/2014, http://www.washington post.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/10/15/islamists-and-their-charities/.

11 Brown & Hamzawy, "The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood: Islamist Participation in a Closing Political Environment", *Carnegie Papers* 19: March (2010), accessed via: http://carnegieendowment.org/files/muslim_bros_participation.pdf, p. 17.

even when there were no direct links between them.[12] According to Wickham, the vast network of Islamic institutions in Egypt in the 70s and 80s provided the infrastructure and resources for the mobilization of the youth by the Muslim Brotherhood. Such networks thus play an essential role in providing 'non-political' active or passive support for Islamic political actors. This thesis will examine how the MUR's work aims to work in symbiosis with that of the PJD, both preparing the ground for reception of its policies, but also using the official status of the party as a means of buttressing the legitimacy of its own ambitions and ideals. Ultimately, as the distance has grown between the party and the movement, the movement has emphasized its role as a sort of 'incubator' for individuals who carry its '*risāliyya*' ethos (*risāliyya* understood as carrying the message of the Prophet Muḥammad), both within the party, but also in another party and in all other walks of life.

Enquiry into the broader social works of Islamic movements provides a deeper understanding of the motivations, ambitions and philosophy which drive their members and visionaries. It also provides insight into popular support for the movements and a deeper understanding of their contribution to society beyond the political. Wickham notes that one of the areas lacking in the study of Islamic activism is mobilization structures, which are essential in explaining citizen activism in authoritarian settings and moving beyond a grievance-based analysis of Islamic movements, be it through cultural or political economy explanations[13]: "….the rise of Islamic activism in Egypt – and, by implication, in other settings – was contingent on a deliberate process of mobilization initiated and sustained by

12 In his study of Islamic movements, Antony Shadid notes that support for the Islamic movement does not necessarily come directly from social activism by the said movement. Institutions do not have to be run by the Islamic movement but rather foster an Islamic environment which provides a pool of potential support. The line between institutions run by Hamas or on its behalf is, he states, very blurry: "…religiously orientated institutions feed into the general Islamic orientation and provide a conducive context for a popular and influential Hamas within the country." Shadid, Anthony, *Legacy of the Prophet: Despots, Democrats, and the New Politics of Islam* (2009), p. 131.

13 "Grievance-based explanations of Islamic activism are not wrong, but they are incomplete. Even under the most extreme conditions of human misery and exploitation, the emergence of collective protest is not assured." (Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam*, p. 7).

Islamic counter-elites.[14]" Ben Elmostafa also points to the lack of attention to the spiritual ambitions of Islamic movements and to other-worldly aspirations, despite their centrality to the movement's message. In the case of the MUR, a focus on their core ideology provides important insight into the sorts of virtually imperceptible change, that the movement has been involved in on the ground and which ultimately, this thesis will argue, is more substantive and profound than decisions taken within a capricious political sphere, dominated by the monarchy. In its charter, the MUR outlines its objective as a 'resurrection' of religion at every level from the individual, to society and even civilization, through multiple manifestations of *daᶜwa* (or, preaching): "The resurrection (*iqāmat*) of the *dīn* (holistic understanding of Islam) is the perfect word to describe the objectives of the movement."[15]

What is more, Islamic movements in North Africa have remained largely under-studied compared to their Middle Eastern counterparts.[16] Studies have focused primarily on the Algerian case since the late 1980s, due to the FIS' success through the democratic route and the bloody aftermath which ensued following the military take-over.[17] In Tunisia, the MIT movement and its leader Rashid Ghannoushi, also received academic attention due to Ghannoushi's stated commitment to Islamic democracy long before the spread of the concept in Islamic political circles.[18] Morocco was somewhat neglected, initially perhaps because the Islamic movements took far longer to emerge into mass movements than they had in other parts of the Muslim world. In Morocco, studies have focused primarily on the

14 Wickham, "Mobilizing Islam", p. 8.

15 Ḥarakat, *al-Mīthaq*, p. 39..

16 Notable examples include: Hamzeh's *In the Path Of Hizbullah* (2004); Wiktorowicz' *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach* (2003); Tamimi's *Hamas: Unwritten Chapters* (2006); etc.

17 Willis, *The Islamist Challenge in Algeria: A Political History* (1999); Ruedy, *Modern Algeria: the origins and development of a nation* (2005).

18 Tamimi, *Rachid Ghannouchi: A Democrat Within Islamism* (2001); Hamdi, *The Politicisation of Islam: Essays on Democratic Governance* (2000).

anti-systemic movement of Sheikh Abdesalaam Yassine's al-ᶜAdl wa'l-Iḥsān.[19] The movement has attracted attention for its oppositional stance to the monarchy, but also for its original structure and charismatic Sufi-inspired leadership, whose appeal extended beyond Morocco to Europe and the USA.

One movement in Morocco that has received comparatively less attention is Ḥarakat al-Tawḥīd wa'l-Iṣlāḥ, the Movement for Unicity and Reform. This study will provide a historical, ideological and organizational analysis of the MUR in order to contribute to the detailed studies of specific Islamic movements. Such studies will improve understanding of Islamic social movements, how and why they emerge, their structures and what their objectives are. Detailed case studies such as these will prove useful in developing theoretical frameworks for the emergence of Islamic movements and provide clarity on their actions and intentions.

Partly initially inspired by the model of the Muslim Brotherhood, the MUR had both an explicitly political outgrowth, the Party of Justice and Development (PJD), which has since become a legal political party and officially, an independent offshoot, and an associational branch, which spreads the message of faith whilst managing networks of charitable institutions in different spheres (social, cultural, etc.). The MUR central body works on the three areas of predication (*daᶜwa*), education (*taᶜlīm*) and training (*takwīn*), and out-sources its other areas of work (women, youth, Trade Unions, social work, etc.) to more or less independent bodies. Yet, study of its work in these domains has been largely neglected. The few works[20] that do exist of the MUR focus on the political outgrowth of the movement and offer a cursory discussion of the original movement from whence it emerged.

So far, there are ten notable studies which make a more or less extended reference to the MUR. These studies are Francois Burgat, *Islamic Movements in North Africa* (French:

19, Burgat and Dowell, *The Islamic Movement in North Africa* (1993); Maddy-Weitzman, "Islamism, Moroccan-Style: The Ideas of Sheikh Yassine", *Middle East Quarterly* Winter (2003) pp. 43-51.

20 See below.

1995; English: 1997); Emad Eldin Shahin, *Political Ascent: Contemporary Islamic Movements in North Africa* (1997); Mohamed Tozy, *Monarchie et Islam politique au Maroc* (1999); Mohamed Darif, *Al Islamiyoun al maghariba* (1999); Ahmed Charaani, *La mouvance Islamiste au Maroc: du 11 Septembre 2001 aux attentats de Casablanca du 16 mai 2003* (2004); Malika Zeghal, *Les Islamistes marocains : le défi à la monarchie* (2005); Wegner, Eva, (2006) *The Inclusion of Islamist Movements into the Political Institutions: The Case of the Moroccan 'Party of Justice and Development* [PhD Dissertation]. Florence: European University Institute; Mohsine El Ahmadi *Les mouvements Islamistes au Maroc* (2006); Okacha Ben Elmostafa, *Les mouvements Islamistes au Maroc leurs modes d'action et d'organisation* (2007); Mohamed Darif, *Monarchie marocaine et acteurs religieux* (2010); Youssef Belal, *Le Cheikh et le calife: sociologie religieuse de l'islam politique au Maroc* (2011). All the studies share in common a primary interest in the MUR's political activity, over its social and educational work, and refer to the MUR as part of a historical assessment of the emergence of the PJD.

None of these studies have as their focus the MUR specifically. Burgat's study offers verbatim responses by some of the key ideologues of the Islamic movements, both the al-ᶜAdl wa'l-Iḥsān and the MUR, but offers little historical discussion of the movement's emergence and development, focusing instead on whether the discourse of these Islamic figures could be said to reflect any more than anti-colonial discourse in the cultural sphere. One of the most extensive studies of the movement to date is that by Emad Eldin Shahin, which offers a comparative analysis of Islamic movements in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. Shahin's focus is the political aspect of the movement and his interest lies primarily in the efforts to create a political party by the Jamaa Islamiya, later renamed the Movement for Reform and Renewal (MRR), one of the two main trends which later merged with the League for an Islamic Future (Rābiṭat-al-mustaqbal al-Islāmī)[21] to form the MUR.[22] His

21 Itself made up of four other movements from across Morocco which united under this umbrella.

Political Ascent was published in 1997 and therefore does not cover the transition from the Movement for Renewal and Reform (MRR) to the Movement for Unicity and Reform (MUR). Neither does Mohsine El Ahmadi's study, which maps the continued evolution of the movement's political activities with a focus on the Party for National Renewal but does not consider other branches of work (social, cultural, etc.) or the mergers which would eventually lead to the PJD.

Eva Wegner also discusses the MUR in her thesis, although her main focus is also on the PJD. In her fourth chapter, she discusses the relationship between the PJD and the MUR, noting that there are too few studies that go beyond interviewing the core leadership of the MUR or using secondary sources. Wegner studies the PJD through the political science approach with a focus on theories of democratization and Islamist inclusion into the formal political process, namely the factors pushing Islamists towards accommodation with the institutional norms of the system. Specifically, in her study of what factors contribute to compromise with the authorities and ruling parties, she considers the relationship between Islamist political parties and their founding organization: "…an analysis of the founding organizations role for and impact on the party is an important factor for making sense of the party's choices."[23] Wegner also notes that there is a gap as concerns the study of the material support provided by Islamist organizations, to corroborate the view that they provide socio-economic incentives for electoral support, through social welfare provisions not guaranteed by the state.

Both Charaani and Tozy offer a historical assessment of the PJD, linking it to the Islamic Youth Movement (Chabiba Islamiya) of Abdelkrim Mouti. Although both discuss, albeit briefly, the contribution of the MUR to the social/cultural sphere, the interest is

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22 The political wings of the two Islamic trends, Jamaa Islami (JI) and the Rābṭtat al-Mustaqbal al-Islāmī (LIF), each sought, in the early 1990s, to create a political party. This was denied and so in 1996, the trends merged into the MUR and in the same year joined Abdelkrim Mouti's MPDC party, which later became, the PJD in 1998.

23 Wegner, *The Inclusion of Islamist Movements into the Political Institutions*, p. 46.

directed by the need to explain popular support for the PJD, at a time when political participation in Morocco is at an all-time low. They are therefore interested in the way in which the PJD has instrumentalized the MUR's social work for electoral gains, an issue Wegner also broaches in her thesis. Mohamed Darif also looks at the political use of the associational base of the MUR in helping the PJD's political success. He compares the various stances of the Islamic political actors[24] towards the monarchy as a means of ascertaining their broader political strategies following the transition from Hassan II to Mohamed VI. He also presents the regime's efforts to maintain its monopoly over the religious discourse through its interaction with Islamic movements in his most recent publication.

Both Youssef Belal and Okacha Ben Elmostafa examine the religious scene in Morocco. Belal traces the evolution in Islamic activism and discourse in the Kingdom, and presents a section on the MUR which culminates with the creation of the PJD. Similarly, Ben Elmostafa discusses some of the history of the MUR in a section aimed at explaining the roots of the PJD. But this thesis will argue that such a focus skews the understanding of the PJD as the culmination of the Islamist project rather than recognizing it as merely one of multiple roots for change, as understood with the MUR central organization, the ideological locus.

Despite representing the base of the Justice and Development Party, hailed as a pioneer in the development of democratic Muslim politics and whose Secretary-general, Saaaedine al Othmani, was awarded Muslim Democrat of the year in 2006,[25] the MUR has been largely unstudied. There are at present no studies looking at the social, cultural, or educational MUR initiatives at the grass-roots level and their specific approach, nor how they fit into the MUR's larger objectives.

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24 He compares the stances of the MUR, Al Badil al Hadari, al Oumma party, the Chabiba Islamiya and al-ᶜAdl wa'l-Iḥsān.

25 He was awarded Muslim Democrat of the year during the seventh annual conference of the Centre for Study of Islam and Democracy (CISD) in 2006.

The MUR, like other Islamic movements can be dubbed 'political'[26] in that its ambitions extend to the modification of aspects of the public sphere, including institutional aspects. But in the narrower sense of 'politics,'[27] the MUR's interests appear to extend far beyond an attempt to acquire or exercise power in government, or the public affairs of the state, to seeking a far more profound societal change, including spiritual change.[28] In fact, considering the limitations of the Moroccan political system and the limited scope for influence over policy direction within parliament, it is worth reconsidering the MUR's work in the political field as perhaps primarily symbolic, compared to the real change they seek to affect on the ground. Daadaoui[29] notes that political actors in Morocco do not actually take elections seriously, but rather view them as a way of mitigating the state's authoritarianism. He argues that "participation in these limited elections is a strategy pursued by political parties in order to position them to contest the rules of the game within the political system."[30] This confirms the contention that the PJD, at least in its earliest incarnation, was designed to act as another vehicle through which to exercise pressure on and gain proximity to the King, the ultimate centre of power and religious epicentre.

The social work of the MUR points to broader ambitions than merely political power and suggests the conception of Islamism as primarily a political ideology neglects the ambitions Islamist organizations exhibit for modifying other spheres of life: social, cultural, intellectual, educational and spiritual. Reflecting on research into Islamic movements undertaken from the political or socio-economic approach, Ben Elmostafa states: "these

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26 Politics might be defined broadly here to include "*all collective challenges to constituted authority*". Armstrong and Bernstein. "Culture, Power, and Institutions: A Multi-Institutional Politics Approach to Social Movements", *Sociological Theory* 26:1 (2008), pp. 74-99.

27 Understood as the practice or profession of conducting political affairs within or in view of political government.

28 Okacha Ben Elmostafa notes that the spiritual dimension of Islamic movements has been neglected by social and political scientists who seem to ignore this crucial dimension of their work and discourse.

29 Daadaoui, M., *Moroccan Monarchy*.

30 Daadaoui, M., *Moroccan Monarchy*, p.110.

researchers only see the political and extremist aspect of Islamism and neglect the spiritual side."[31] This dearth of academic interest into the associational work of the movements, which in the case of the MUR is the primary work of the movement, can lead to a distorted image of Islamic movements and their ambitions. It also fails to assess the ways in which such movements seek to modify the conception of religiosity, in the MUR's case as part of a power contest with the authorities over the foundations of religious legitimacy.

Very little is known about the movement at the grass-roots level beyond the fact the MUR is linked to several charitable networks (Basma, Azzahra, Amal al Toufoula, etc.). By creating institutions and organizations with an 'Islamically' inspired societal project, the MUR appears to be forging a competing cultural project, in that it seeks to offer what it considers to be 'authentic' solutions to Moroccan problems, which it claims have mostly been tackled by NGOs with a secular, Leftist assessment of the solutions, inspired and at times supported by, foreign charities. Most scholars of Islamic movements agree that it is these networks of charitable initiatives that buttress passive support for Islamic political parties,[32] by filling the void created by the retreat of the state or its inability to cope due to socio-economic crises. In conjunction with demographic and social challenges, charities provide the opportunity to engage with the population and present their message alongside often much needed support.[33] Greater clarity on the type of work being undertaken at the grass-roots level and its localised impact may contribute to a more detailed understanding of Islamic social movements, their strategies and modes of implementation.

The predominance of the inclusion-moderation hypothesis[34] which argues that "political praxis shapes political ideology and determines what interpretation religious-

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31 Ben Elmostafa, *Les mouvements Islamistes au Maroc*, p. 15. (My translation.)

32 Social services and political Islam in South East Asia: two failures, Thomas Pepinsky in "Islamist social services" (2014) POMEPS 9 http://pomeps.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/POMEPS_Studies_9_SocialServices_web.pdf p. 28

33 While figures for support of the MUR currently appear to be non existent and although this thesis seeks to clarify the profile of MUR adherents, acquiring hard data may not be achievable.

34 See Schwedler, *Faith in Moderation: Islamist Parties in Jordan and Yemen* (2007).

political entrepreneurs will ultimately attribute to their religious traditions"[35] has according to Driessen "generally failed to take stock of the full influence of religious ideas and religious actors on the public life of a religious democracy over the long run."[36] Driessen argues that although political calculations undoubtedly affect the decisions of religious actors, "transformed religious goals and ideas will continue to have a life and influence of their own,"[37] and advocates analysis of the interaction and evolution of strategic calculations alongside political theology.

As regards the charitable associations through which the MUR branches out into various sectors of society, Tozy states that they are "as active as badly known".[38] These alternative institutions, NGOs, charities, centres, etc., are themselves interesting in that they seem to provide an alternative model for societal development to that typically offered by either the government or Leftist inspired organizations. This in itself may represent a development in Islamic thought from mere critique of 'Western models' to concrete theorizing on alternative solutions.

With the exception of a few scholars, research on Islamic activism has not fully engaged the broader theoretical and conceptual developments that have emerged from scholarship on social movements, revolutions, and contentious politics. My research is situated within a trend which has emerged since the late 1990s, whereby a number of Islamic movement specialists have sought to bridge this gap. The underlying premise of this trend is that Islamic activism is not sui generis, and that rather than emphasizing the specificity of Islam as a system of meaning, identity, and basis of collective action, one should focus on commonalities rooted in process[39]. Focusing on shared mechanisms of contention rather than

35 Driessen, , *Religion and Democratization: Framing Religious and Political Identities in Muslim and Catholic Societies* (2014), p. 4.

36 Driessen, Michael D., *Religion and Democratization*, p. 5.

37 Driessen, Michael D., *Religion and Democratization*, p. 5.

38 Wegner, *The Inclusion of Islamist Movements* [Thesis], 2006.

39 Wiktorowicz, 'Conceptualizing Islamic activism', *ISIM Newsletter* 1:14 (2004) pp. 34-35.

the uniqueness of Islam, allows researchers to steer away from more politicized readings of Islamic movements in order to develop in-depth knowledge of these movements, independently to the security lens which often clouds judgments pertaining to them.

In addition, Moroccan Islamists look set to stay. The PJD is now an integrated and integral part of the country's political make-up and enjoys close relations with the Palace, described by some commentators as "les Islamists du Roi", although the relationship is far from stable.[40] The MUR itself has a semi-legal status, having never received approval from the Ministry of Interior validating its request for a formal status. Many of its regional branches have however received legal recognition and the movement's mouthpiece, the newspaper *Attajdid*, has now become a regular contributor to national debates.

Morocco has experienced terrorist attacks,[41] carried out by domestic Islamic extremists, whilst a number of Moroccans have been implicated in Al Qaeda inspired networks.[42] This means the Kingdom is on the front line when it comes to the development of moderate Islamic voices capable of absorbing substantial public discontent generated by issues of unemployment, corruption, poverty and drug abuse. The MUR regards itself as a bulwark against such trends, dubbing itself 'the middle path', not least as a means of distancing itself from accusations of extremism. But this is also a tactic aimed at forging a space for the movement as a necessary ally to the authorities against extremism, the movement presents itself as having the sort of religious legitimacy which can draw people away from extremist paths and offer them alternative means for voicing their concerns, whether political, cultural, social or theological.

The PJD is often compared with the ruling Turkish AK Party and is heralded by some commentators as the latest case of what are sometimes dubbed 'Muslim democrats', understood in contrast to 'Islamists', with the former understood as prioritising democracy

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40 There are regular clashes between the PJD and the authorities, notably around the election period.

41 March and April 2007 in Casablanca; May 16th 2003, in Casablanca;

42 Including in the Madrid bombings of March 2004 and amongst European al Qaeda cells.

above certain injunctions of Islamic law. The party enjoys close ties with a number of foreign embassies, and gained the largest number of votes in the 2007 elections[43] and again in 2011.[44] A deeper understanding of the base organization of the PJD will be of use to political scientists examining ideological pragmatism of Islamists within institutional politics. As Wegner points out,[45] dependency on the social movement from whence the Islamist parties emerge is often an important factor in determining compromise with the political process and authorities, and the degree to which this relationship is maintained, influences the ideological outlook of the party.

In addition, greater insight into the MUR will provide a further contribution to our understanding of Islamic social movements in general and of the specificities of Moroccan movements in particular. Figures pertaining to the support for Islamist movements are lacking and the compilation of such data is complicated by a number of factors, including regime unwillingness to provide transparent information, fear of reprisal amongst Islamic activists and a general distrust regarding the extraction of data. What data does exist seems to suggest an increasing trend of support for Islamic movements in Morocco, from Munson's estimate of 30% in the 1980s, to a survey conducted by Nachtwey and Tessler in 1996 and 1997 of 1000 households in Rabat, which suggests just under half supported an Islamist platform. As recently as 2006, a survey conducted by Mohamed Tozy and colleagues found that 44.5% of Moroccans polled thought that politics ought to be governed by religion.[46] In her thesis, Wegner suggested in 2006 that it is not possible to determine exactly either the strength of the Islamists or support for a particular organization, but there is a gap between active involvement and sympathy for Islamist movements. Wegner suggests passive support

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43 Despite receiving the highest number of votes (10.9%), the electoral decoupage gave it the second highest number of seats behind the Istiqlal party.

44 It won 107 seats.

45 Wegner, *The Inclusion of Islamist Movements* [Thesis], 2006.

46 Tozy, *L'Islam au quotidien*, Editions Prologues (2007), p. 162. (Also accessible online via: http://www.fes.org.ma/common/pdf/publications_pdf/islam_qut_gr/islam_qut_gr.pdf).

for the Islamists could translate to as much as 50%[47] of the urban population. Rising support for the PJD at the polls suggests Islamist ideas, however diluted to fit the formal political frame, continue to hold some traction. Given such figures and the limited number of in-depth studies of Islamic movements, further research should help shed light on what remains a murky, albeit increasingly popular trend.

Modern Islamic political thought has been marked by certain key ideologues or intellectuals[48] whose ideas tend to have a trans-national appeal and have influenced Islamic movements from Malaysia to Sudan. The MUR is no exception, but recent trends have shown movements moving to internal references and as such, the development of country specific intellectual trends. In the case of Morocco, Ahmed Raisssouni, former President of the MUR and a main intellectual figure of the movement, has been working to resurrect the tradition of *maqāṣid al-sharīᶜa*, drawing on the works of 14th-century scholar, Imām al Shāṭibī.[49] This trend for the revival of the higher objectives and intents of the Sharia is a growing intellectual trend in the Muslim world. Understanding the direction in which Moroccan Islamic thinkers are moving tells us something both about the development of Islamic political thought and about the trends gaining momentum in Islamic intellectual circles. This offers some insights in the broader political project and the idealized 'Islamic state' which such movements seek to create.

Finally, the literature on case studies has argued that the accessibility of a case can be a legitimate criterion for case selection (see, for instance, Stake[50] (2000, p. 446)) and in the case of Islamic movements, the lack of detailed case studies has been widely criticized as a factor contributing to the misunderstanding of these movements. The willingness of the MUR to speak to researchers and the accessibility of their material (publications, website,

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47 Wegner, *The Inclusion of Islamist Movements* [Thesis], 2006. p. 83.

48 Al Afghani, Mohamed Abdu, Hassan al Banna, Mawlana Mawduddi, Sayid Qutb, etc.

49 An Andalusian Sunnī scholar of the Maliki *madhhab*.

50 Cited in: Wegner, *The Inclusion of Islamist Movements* [Thesis], 2006.

newspaper, etc.) render it a good candidate for study and make this a unique opportunity to delve into the unique features of an Islamic movement whilst contributing to the broader discourse surrounding this phenomenon: "In short, from a theoretical perspective, the Moroccan case is as promising as the other ones whereas its practical advantages make it perhaps even more promising than the other ones."[51]

Structure

The thesis is divided into three main parts, the movement's history, the MUR's ideology and the MUR in society.

The history section is broken down into four parts, the history of the revolutionary Chabiba Islamiya, the political trend of the Jamaa Islamia – MRR, the cultural/ educational trend of the League for an Islamic Future and finally the political history of the MUR.

The second section focuses on the MUR's ideology and outlining its general outlook, its roots in the Salafiyaa reformist trend, and its own, original vision for the holistic reform of society, with a focus on its unique conception of *daᶜwa*.

Finally, the third section looks at the MUR's outreach in society. In the first part, through its networks of associations, known as the 'specializations', presenting the main work undertaken within these and the relationship to the broader MUR project. And in the second, through the PJD, highlighting its emergence initially as the MUR's political project, through to its gradual distancing and the new relationship of two, largely independent entities.

Methodology

Research for this thesis has relied heavily on first hand, unstructured interviews with members of the MUR and its predecessor movements. These were undertaken during a series

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51 Wegner, *The Inclusion of Islamist Movements* [Thesis], 2006.

of field trips to Morocco between 2008 and 2010, lasting from one week to two months at a time.

This time was dedicated to interviewing members of the movement, seeing the movement's work on the ground through its various grass-roots organizations and gauging the movement's relationship to other actors active in social work.

During these trips I established contact with leading figures in the movement and interviewed a number of them, including MUR President Mohamed Hamdaoui, Abdelillah Benkirane, Mustafa Ramid, Mohamed Yatim, MP Bassima Hakkaoui, ideologue Ahmed Raissouni, Abdullah Baha, Khadija Moufid and others. I also established strong contact with a number of the lower-level, grassroots activists who enabled me to witness some of the movement's work on the ground, including student seminars, demonstrations and access the movement newspaper (*Attajdid*) headquarters.

The majority of the interviews were semi-structured. According to Blee and Taylor[52] (2002) semi-structured interviews are especially appropriate for research that explores issues for which it is difficult to gather data through structured questionnaires, field observations, or document analysis. Data acquired through these means is analysed in conjunction with other sources and/or methodologies, including participant observation, given the danger noted, of reading convenient interpretations into case studies.

There are inevitable limitations to constructing a historical narrative based on first hand interviews, not least conflicting historical recollections, issues of self-censorship and a desire among interviewees to read history backwards. Burr notes that people are "actively engaged in the creation of their own phenomenal world,"[53] meaning the construction of a narrative by a participant inevitably speaks to a degree of their current sense of self and place in the world. One example of this is the extent to which all interviewees played down their

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52 Cited in: Wegner, *The Inclusion of Islamist Movements* [Thesis], 2006.

53 King and Horrocks, *Interviews in Qualitative Research* (2010), p. 214.

involvement with the revolutionary Chabiba Islamiya and typically presented their involvement as either based on ignorance, or youthful misguidance.

I sought to avoid some of these through asking the same questions to several different sources in order to merge the different accounts into a single historical narrative. Where possible, I also compared this with existing historical descriptions in the literature.

While the majority of interviewees seemed very cooperative and open, this may reflect the movement's desire to appear transparent and non-threatening to any external onlooker. Aside from checking the validity of my student card, the MUR central office allowed me to proceed with interviews on my own terms, meaning, not solely based on their recommendations, but also based on my own request to speak to various 'non-official' sources independently. As a Muslim researcher working on Islamic movements, the movement appeared to trust my ability to understand their ideals and convey them accurately, having voiced concern about other researchers and journalists whom they felt lacked requisite religious literacy. With that said, a Muslim researcher researching Islamic movements also inevitably brings personal biases to bear, not least with regards to individual conceptions of religiosity. To avoid the pitfalls of this, I have, as much as possible, sought to convey the MUR's conceptions directly, based on first hand interviews or primary sources (literature, websites).

There was also a tendency with interviews with official members of the MUR for them to keep to the official line. I sought to counter-balance this through informal interviews with activists and by speaking with 'dissidents', either former members or more critical members willing to share their critique of the movement.

One needs to be aware of the limits of generalizations from case studies but conscious of their intrinsic value in contributing to the understanding of a phenomenon. According to Eckstein, generalisations on the basis of case studies are "unlikely to constitute

more than a clue to a valid general model".[54] This dissertation seeks to present a case study to further the understanding and knowledge of this single case, but will nevertheless, seek to contribute to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon at hand, in this case, Islamic social movements. Wickham notes that "…the main advantage of in-depth case studies is that they facilitate 'causal process tracing,' that is, allow us to specify the nature of the linkages between initial conditions and outcomes with greater precision than is possible in larger, quantitative studies."[55]

Finally, this thesis will also aim to contribute to broader literature on Islamist movements. Stake distinguishes instrumental from intrinsic case studies.[56] An instrumental case study is one that aims to provide insights into something different from the particular case. The intrinsic case study is one that is "undertaken because, first and last, the researcher wants better understanding of this particular case […] because, in all its particularity and ordinariness, this case itself is of interest."[57] The MUR offers a good example of an intrinsic case study, with broader potential for cross-cultural comparisons. However, one needs to be aware of the limits of generalisations from case studies and the degree to which they offer knowledge useful for the construction of theoretical paradigms. Indeed, generalisations on the basis of case studies are "unlikely to constitute more than a clue to a valid general model".[58] Certainly, studying just one case makes it almost impossible to go for inductive generalisation. This dissertation is a case study that gives priority to the understanding and interpretation of the single case, but that nevertheless, seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, through a vertical study of one movement.

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54 Eckstein 1975: 104, quoted in Wegner, Eva; The Inclusion of Islamist Movements into the Political Institutions: The Case of the Moroccan 'Party of Justice and Development'; thesis, Florence, February 2006

55 Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam*, p. 20.

56 Stake, "Case studies", art. in Denzin & Lincoln (eds.), *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry* 2nd Edn (2003), p.136.

57 Stake, "Case studies", p.136.

58 Gomm, Hammersley and Foster (eds), *Case Study Method: Key Issues, Key Texts* (2000), p.137.

Sources

Alongside first hand interviews, both with movement activists and Moroccan academics or journalists, I have sought to draw heavily on first hand MUR sources.

The MUR publishes a paper, *Attajdid*, and has published a number of books used by its members to fully integrate the movement's message and ideological outlook. These include pamphlets on its vision for calling to the faith (*daᶜwa*): *al-Ruʾya al-daᶜwiyya*; for politics: *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*; and for education: *al-Ruʾya al-tarbawiyya*; a brief introduction to the movement, books on the message, its thinking and its plan; an outline of the movement's thinking over the last ten years: *ᶜAshara sanawāt min tawḥīd wa'l-islāḥ*; MUR president, Ahmed Hamdaoui's publication: *al-Risāla fī'l-ᶜamal al-islāmī* ("The Carriers of the Prophet's Message in Islamic work") and others. While when I began my research these were all available online, I have since noted that they are no longer available in the same e-format which I accessed many of them in and new versions have also been published in hard copy. In some cases, the pamphlets do not contain page numbers and in others, newer versions of the publication had different page numbers to those with which I began. I have sought, where possible to indicate such discrepancies.

Whilst accounting for the often polemical treatment of Islamic movements in French language Moroccan publications, I have also drawn on newspapers, magazines and journals, from 1997 to the present.

I have drawn primarily from the official MUR literature and pamphlets in Arabic which I either received in person or which could also be found on the MUR's official website, alislah.com

Finally, I have drawn on some of the theoretical literature on Social Movement Theory (SMT) (Charles Tilly[59], Sidney Tarrow[60], Charles Kurzman[61], etc), as well as those

59 Tilly, C., *Social movements: 1768-2004* (London, New York: Routledge, 2004).

60 Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (1998).

SMT works focused on Islamic movements such as: Quintan Wiktorowicz' *Islamic activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach*; Asef Bayat's "Islamism and Social Movement Theory", Third World Quarterly 26:6 (2005), pp. 891-908; Wickham's *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism, and Political Cchange in Egypt*, , and others.

I have also sourced publications in French and English online as well as from newspapers and academic research. In addition, I have drawn on the works of scholars of Political Islam, namely contributions by John Esposito, Abu Rabi, John O. Voll, Francois Burgat and those who focus specifically on Morocco, such as Emad Shahin, Malika Zeghal, Mohamed Tozy, Mohamed Darif and others.

Conclusion:

This study of the MUR aims to highlight its relative importance compared to the PJD, which has so far attracted significantly more attention. I argue that this misrepresents the true weight of the PJD relative to the movement and ignores the much wider social, educational and cultural change which the MUR seeks to and is undertaking with relatively little attention to this gradual process.

The MUR is far more than the electoral machine of the PJD – it sees itself as forming a new elite, capable of delivering its vision in various spheres, from the political to the social. But more than this, it aims to channel public discontent through its organization, by offering non-violent and non-revolutionary Islamic channels of activism for those inspired by the Islamist vision. In so doing, it seeks to present itself as a natural ally to the regime. But in exchange, it seeks to re-shape the religious parameters of the state and infuse the religious symbolism underpinning the King's religious legitimacy with methods of accountability which would force a level of reciprocity between the public and the monarch. In this subtle game of 'critical support' for the monarchy, the movement deploys a multi-

61 Wiktorowicz, *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach* (2004.)

pronged strategy for change which forces the regime into a largely unspoken negotiation over the normative understanding of Islam in Morocco.

1. HISTORY OF THE MOROCCAN ISLAMIC YOUTH MOVEMENT

Founded in 1969, the Moroccan Islamic Youth (Chabiba Islamiya / al-Shabība al-Islāmiyya) is often regarded as the earliest incarnation of the present-day Movement for Unicity and Reform (MUR, Ḥarakat al-Iṣlāh wa'l-Tawḥīd). Indeed, many contemporary critics of the MUR point to the background of some of its leading members in the revolutionary Moroccan Islamic Youth as evidence of the MUR's alleged 'dark under-current'. Certainly, many of the MUR's key figures – Abdelilah Benkirane (ᶜAbd al-Ilāh Binkīrān), Mohamed Yatim (Muḥammad Yatīm), Abdullah Baha (ᶜAbd Allāh Bahāᶜ) as well as others – began their activism within the Moroccan Islamic Youth's ranks during the 1970's. As shall be argued below, the experience of the Moroccan Islamic Youth significantly contributed to the MUR's outlook, but primarily as an experience in how not to operate.

An analysis of the major developments in the history of the Moroccan Islamic Youth offers crucial insights into the MUR, particularly when focusing on how the ideals and strategies of Moroccan Islamic Youth members' evolved over the 1970's in reaction to government crackdowns and internal turmoil. The Moroccan Islamic Youth's historical evolution shaped the outlook of the MUR's main ideologues and represents the beginning of an engagement between tenors of the Islamic movement in Morocco (understood here as those who identify with an international trend for Islamic renewal) and the Moroccan regime. This initiated an ongoing symbiotic relationship between 'Islamic movements' and the Moroccan state, one that nonetheless involved a continuous power struggle over the definition of the 'Islamic' nature of the state. Youssef Benkirane argues that a study of the Moroccan Islamic Youth can inform our understanding of the main doctrinal and political questions which have confronted Moroccan Islamic movements over the past decades. These include the mechanisms through which a movement can evolve from the socio-religious sphere into the political sphere and the emergence of a new type of intellectual who challenges the authority of the traditional bastions of religion, the religious scholars

(ᶜ*ulamāʾ*).[1] More specifically, it will be argued here that the experience of the Moroccan Islamic Youth influenced not only the ideological outlook of major actors in today's MUR, but also the MUR's distinct organizational structure and most critically its approach towards realising 'Islamic reformism' through co-operation with the Monarchical Moroccan regime.

The chapter shall begin by looking at the background to the emergence of the Moroccan Islamic Youth especially within the context of the rise of Leftist politics in Morocco, the emergence of the Islamic Salafist reformist trend with a particular focus on the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwān al-Muslimīn), and the dynamics of an initial co-option of the latter by an increasingly 'Islamised' and authoritarian monarchical power. The subsequent focus of the chapter shall be an examination of the significant features of the Organization of the Moroccan Islamic Youth, particularly in terms of its structures, recruitment, organizational spread and finance, through the recollections of its ex-activists. This includes, notably, disparities regarding the ideological outlook of the Moroccan Islamic Youth. The chapter will then delineate both the Moroccan Islamic Youth's legal and underground activities. The eventual disintegration and end of the Moroccan Islamic Youth shall follow with particular reference to the ideological and organizational failures of the movement as described by its ex-activists. It shall then proceed to examine the emergence of the Jamaa Tabayoun (Jamāᶜa Tabayūn), the birth of the Jamaa Islamiyya (Jamāᶜa Islāmiyya) and the cultural and militant trends that ex-members of the Chabiba followed after it's dissolution.

1. 1 The Emergence of the Moroccan Islamic Youth

1.1.1 The formative years of Mouti

The main ideologue of the Moroccan Islamic Youth, Abdelkrim Mouti (ᶜAbd al-Karīm Muḥammad Muṭīᶜ al-Ḥamdāwī), represents a formative face of revolutionary Islamic

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1 Benkirane, Youssef, 'La normalization politique de l'islamisme dans le royaume chérifien. Généalogie et pratiques du Parti de la Justice et du Développement', *Revue Averroes*, pp. 18-33, accessed 5 February 2011. http://revueaverroes.com/2009/06/08/la-normalisation-politique-de-l%E2%80%99islamisme-dans-le-royaume-cherifien-genealogie-et-pratiques-du-parti-de-la-justice-et-du-developpement.

opposition in the Moroccan context. Part of his appeal to a younger generation of Moroccans lay in his personal prestige and charisma. A former resistance fighter and of noted lineage, Mouti was trained in the classical religious sciences, marrying religious knowledge with his political activism. The key ideologue of the Moroccan Islamic Youth during its most noted era, Mouti was both spiritual and political revolutionary guide to his predominantly young followers. Personally organizing the movement even to its most minute instance, his own lectures and writings were amongst the gamut of readings for members of the movement, yet it was also this very centralized hold on power which ultimately catalysed the Moroccan Islamic Youth's disintegration. Nonetheless, the impact of the Mouti's ideas and modus operandi were to have a lasting effect on the Moroccan Islamic Youth and subsequent Islamic movements which emerged from its ambers.

Abdelkrim Mouti was born in 1936 in the Souss Valley in Southern Morocco to the scholarly family of the Hamdaouis.[2] The family are attested to have possessed the charismatic quality of being *Sayyid*s, their lineage tracing back to the Prophet Muḥammad. Abdelkrim Mouti's uncle, Muḥammad al-Ḥamdāwī was a respected Salafi scholar in Casablanca and Mouti further benefited from this illustrious familial link. Mentored by the prominent religious scholar and Head of the Association of Scholars in Souss,[3] Muḥammad al-Mukhtār al-Sūsī,[4] Mouti was over his formative years schooled in both classical Islamic sciences (including Arabic, Qur'anic studies, *ḥadīth* and jurisprudence) as well as in the modern curriculum. In time, this attribute of classical training, coupled with his personal

2 Shahin, Emad Eldin, *Political Ascent: Contemporary Islamic Movements in North Africa* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1997), p. 181. Note Mouti's family name should not be equated with the current MUR President, Mr Hamdaoui.

3 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p. 181.

4 Adnani describes al-Sūsī as "both a scholar and a politician, a traditionalist and a modernist" who "played an essential role in shaping the Arab-Muslim orientation of the national movement" (Adnani, J.E., 'Regionalism, Islamism, and Amazigh Identity' *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 27:1 (2007), pp. 41-51 (pp. 41-42)). He was a pan-Arab and Pan-Islamic thinker who drew on Islamic reformism as a basis for national renewal and whose ideas significantly influenced Islamist movements.

charisma, were to render him an attractive figure to the youth who admired his ability to draw on the language of Islam as part of a revolutionary political message.

Mouti also benefitted from the prestige of having fought in the independence movement. Aged 12, he is attested to have joined the resistance to French colonialism. During the occupation, he joined *l'Action Nationale*, and Mouti's experience in fighting with the resistance movement (as was the case with Kamal Ibrahim (Kamāl Ibrāhīm), later Mouti's number two in the Moroccan Islamic Youth), later contributed to the sense of credibility and leadership he held in the eyes of peers and younger disciples. During this period, Mouti's mentor, Mukhtār al-Sūsī had been placed under house arrest in Casablanca for fomenting anti-colonial feeling and Mouti's own political career entered a new stage in 1954, when he was arrested by the French authorities for his part in the opposition struggle. Eventually, Mouti ascended through the ranks to become a member of the Istiqlal party at independence in 1956.[5].

Following independence, Mouti became a secondary school teacher serving sixteen years as an inspector in the Ministry of Education, during which time he was elected to the post of Secretary-General of the Union of Education Inspectors.[6] He subsequently joined the Union National des Forces Populaires (UNFP)[7] led by Mehdi ben Barka, and there he met Kamal Ibrahim. The association between Mouti and Ibrahim was to be instrumental in the foundation and development of the Moroccan Islamic Youth. Crucially, the experience of political activism from the years of resistance to those of post-independence party membership had a lasting influence on Mouti's conception of tactics and opposition, and came to mould the Moroccan Islamic Youth's earliest organizational outlook.

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5 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p. 181.

6 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p.181.

7 The UNFP was born out of a scission with the Istiqlal in 1959 and represented a conglomeration of left-wing former members of the Istiqlal, trade unionists, resistance fighters and dissident members of smaller political parties. It thus represented different and even divergent currents - Islamists, leftists, nationalists – although the general character of the party was Leftist (Pennell, C. R., *Morocco Since 1830: A History* (London: Hurt & Company, 2000).

Fifteen years passed between the independence of Morocco in 1954 and the formation of the Moroccan Islamic Youth in 1969. Over that time, Mouti had remained a member of UNFP, before irrevocably breaking with the left in 1965. It was during this phase that Morocco witnessed a number of major social and political transformations. These included the growth and radicalization of the Left and the influence of Nasserism; the processes of 'Islamisation' and move to authoritarianism of the Moroccan monarchy and crucially the emergence of Islamic reformist tendencies. Each was critical in shaping both the ideological outlook and organizational structure of the Moroccan Islamic Youth, as well as being influential trends in the upbringing in many of the Moroccan Islamic Youth's earliest cadets, now members of the MUR.

1.1.2 On the eve of the Moroccan Islamic Youth (1): The 'Leftist Threat'

The Moroccan Islamic Youth emerged against the backdrop of the Cold War and the radical leftist fervour that was sweeping the Arab world. As post-independence regimes across the Maghreb failed to integrate aspiring elites and opted for increasingly staunch repression to subdue them, the Left in Morocco became increasingly radicalized with the emergence of radical Marxist, Leninist and Maoist movements, looking to the USSR, China and Communist revolutions for inspiration. By the early 1960s, they challenged the Moroccan monarchy's totalitarian hold on power. The Moroccan Islamic Youth's birth occurred within this broader revolutionary atmosphere in which the Left had become an increasingly important part of the political landscape, and where an aspiring intellectual elite, many of whom had been trained and educated in France's own Leftist ebullition of the 1960s, returned to Morocco with the hope of playing a part in steering its political future.

Increasingly left out of power-making institutions as the King tightened his hold on key institutions and centralized power, the Left became the King's most vocal and threatening opponent. By 1963, hostility climaxed such that the security services uncovered a Leftist plot against the regime involving combat cells in Morocco that had been armed in Algeria. The monarchy used the opportunity to arrest 5,000 members of the UNFP and the

Communist Party, 200 of whom were condemned to death. The same year, Algeria's constitution defined the country as a socialist state, as it sheltered exiled Moroccan Leftist dissidents.

From the 1950's onwards, Far Leftist influence became particularly prominent in university campuses. Secularist and at times anti-religious ideas were increasingly pervasive from the late 1960s and through the 1970s among a disgruntled, but educated youth, who clashed with the authorities on issues of constitutional return, social inequalities and individual freedoms. They also clashed with the traditional, religiously informed outlook of the majority of the population. On campuses throughout Morocco, Leftist currents openly sought to challenge many established practices of Moroccan Muslims. Some initiation rites into universities encouraged breaking the fast of Ramadan and individuals recall being mocked for holding a belief in God. Such incidents actually led a number of students to join the Islamic movement as a reaction against these tendencies and as the result of a personal re-assessment of their religion, which such clashes had provoked. According to MUR president Mohamed Hamdaoui (Muḥammad al-Ḥamdāwī), "…there was a leftist movement which really impacted the schools. People stopped fasting, teachers told students there was no God, (…) the '60s was a period of real strength for the Left".[8] Some members of the Moroccan Islamic Youth began their political life as radical Leftists, as was the case of Abdelatif al Sedrati (ᶜAbd al-Laṭif al-Sedratī) who joined a Maoist movement whilst at secondary school. His shift in perspective occurred under the influence of an Arabic teacher who encouraged the youth to explore their religion.

As the cold war raged on, the Middle East and North Africa became a battle ground for competing ideological projects of the USSR and the USA, with Soviet support for Egypt and Algeria. In addition, nationalism was sweeping the Middle East as post-colonial societies sought to manage their newly independent states. The post-colonial societies of the

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8 Hamdaoui, M. (MUR President 2002-2014). Interview by Emilie Francois. In person. Rabat, Morocco, 11/2009.

Maghreb struggled with economic impoverishment and increasing social unrest and in this context, the revolutionary, socialist and populist rhetoric of national liberation and social revolution held sway.

Despite Abdullah Ibrahim's (ᶜAbd Allāh Ibrāhīm's) five-year plan, economic growth did not materialise in Morocco, as foreign investors withdrew. Combined with the state's inability to absorb the increasing number of graduates, tensions led to the Casablanca riots of March 1965 which saw the harsh repression of teachers, students, the unemployed and the poor, in uprisings which occurred sporadically up until 1990. Later that year, in the midst of political unrest, the King suspended the constitution, announcing a state of 'exception' which would last for five years.

Deepening contradictions within the Left and the rise of increasingly militant elements were causing the regime serious concern. In particular, 1969 witnessed the development of a Marxist-Leninist trend opposed to political parties which was elected at the 13th congress of the student union, the 'Union nationale des étudiants du Maroc' (UNEM), under the name 'Front des Etudiants Progressists'. This show of force by an anti-systemic Left led to a crackdown by the authorities and eventually led to the ban of the National Union of Secondary School Students (Syndicat National des Lycées), at the time a secret organization of communist orientation, created in 1971-72.

It was in this cauldron of mass discontent that the ebullition of the radical Left found its drive and it was within this same disaffected youth that Mouti would recruit young men from traditional backgrounds, who whilst opposed to the political injustices, failed to identify with the language of the Left. Most importantly, it was within the same period from the 1950's to the beginning of the 1970's, which while seeing the rise of Leftist politics, simultaneously witnessed the emergence of an Islamic Reformist trend, often in convergence with attempts to counter-leftist influence by an increasingly 'Islamic' authoritarian monarchical state.

1.1.3 On the eve of the Moroccan Islamic Youth (2): The catalysis of the Islamic Reformist Trends

Following Morocco's independence, competing currents within the country vied for prominence in the direction of the country's identity and politics. For the monarchy, the threat of the Left was to be countered through an alliance with religious movements which simultaneously however forced the regime to adopt a more overtly religious mantle. But as the influence of revolutionary Islamic political movements began to grown, the Islamic idiom became a language of political contestation and from this, emerged the Moroccan Islamic Youth, dedicated to radical change and inspired by the Islamic movements from the East, not least the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.

In addition to concerns over Leftist opposition, the Moroccan King eyed the overthrow of the British-dominated regime of Egypt's King Farouk by Nasser and the Free-Officers in July 1952 with great suspicion. Nasser's anti-imperialist, nationalist and third-worldist credentials helped inspire revolutions in neighbouring Algeria, Libya and Sudan. His anti-royalist rhetoric and advocacy of Arab socialism were viewed by the Moroccan King as a threat in the post-independence tension over political power in the midst of economic inequalities. In seeking to counter both the leftist threat and that of Nasserism, the King initiated a major strategic initiative, namely, the promotion of Islamist tendencies. As Howe argues, "…as early as 1964, King Hassan II had developed a new religious policy based on the encouragement of Islamism to counteract the Arab nationalist dimension of Nasserism".[9]

Arguably, the implementation of this policy was not one unique to Hasan II alone, and was echoed by other regional rulers. According to Mohamed Darif, the Islamic reform trend would receive discreet official support as leaders across the Middle East and North

9 Howe, M. *Morocco: The Islamist Awakening and Other Challenges* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p.126.

Africa sought to counter the Leftist threat, including from secular politicians such as Egypt's Anwar Sadat and Tunisian leader, Habib Bourghiba.[10] In actualising the strategy, the Moroccan King entered into a marriage of convenience with figures from organizations and movements, which though sharing his anti-Nasserist and anti-Leftist aims, were distinct in their visions for society, namely those of the Salafist trends and particularly that of the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwān al-Muslimīn).

1.1.4 The emergence of the Salafist trend and the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood.

When seeking to counter Nasser's influence through the promotion of Islamic revivalism, Hassan II accepted to shelter the symbols of Egyptian Islamism, including some leading figures from the Muslim Brotherhood. Many were subsequently named as teachers in Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ḥassaniyya, a university of Islamic higher education, created by Hassan II in February 1964, and were to forge the next generation of Moroccan Islamic leadership.[11] In Morocco, the Brotherhood's influence was not limited to social movements, but extended to many leading Moroccan intellectuals who took inspiration from their Islamically inspired call for cultural rejuvenation, political independence and social activism in the midst of widespread social and political unrest.

The organization of the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in Egypt in 1928 by Ḥasan al-Banna (d.1949), pioneered a new mode of organization drawing on Leftist social movements and applied it to its mission of proselytisim, developing the first mass Islamic movement. As Esposito notes "They (The Muslim brotherhood and the Jamaat Islami) are indeed the

10 Darif, Mohamed (Law Department of Mohamediya University). Interview by E. Francois. In Person. Casablanca, Morocco, 13/10/2009.

11 Among them, Fārūq al-Nabhānī from the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood was the first director of the Dār al-Ḥadīth and he himself helped to train dozens of Moroccan *ᶜulamāᵓ*. By 1967, the graduates of this school had formed Jamāᶜa ᶜUlamāᵓ Khayriyya Dār al-Ḥādīth al-Ḥasaniyya and began to criticise the regime through the influence of Muslim Brotherhood ideas.

trailblazers or architects of contemporary Islamic revivalism, men whose ideas and methods have been studied and emulated from the Sudan to Indonesia."[12]

In Egypt, al-Banna's objective had been to create a new generation of believers who could provide the basis for a rejuvenated Islamic society, free from foreign domination. This discourse and its more radical version vocalized by Sayyid Qutb (d.1966), held much appeal for the Moroccan student population seeking to define itself in the midst of ebullient revolutionary Leftist thought, state repression and questions of cultural redefinition.

According to Esposito, the Muslim Brotherhood[13]

> … emphasized the failure of both the West (capitalism) and the East (Marxism) as models for development in the Muslim world. It denounced the Westernization and secularization of Muslim societies, the divisiveness of nationalism, and the excesses of capitalism, as well as the materialism and godlessness of Marxism

And encouraged the adoption of the 'Third Way' of Islam, as an alternative model and system.

Darif states that from 1934 to 1998 the Muslim Brotherhood tried to create sections in the Arab world, including in North Africa.[14] The mission was successful in Algeria and Libya but ultimately failed in Morocco. According to Mitchell, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's 'Section for Liaison with the Islamic world' focused on 6 geographical regions, one of which was North Africa, in view of potential unification with Islamic movements there.[15] As various Islamic currents across the world met with Muslim Brotherhood dignitaries, they exchanged materials and ideas, and students at Egyptian universities were urged to export Muslim Brotherhood ideas back to their home countries.

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12 Esposito, John L. *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.128.

13 Esposito, *Islamic Threat*, p.130.

14 Darif, Interview, 2009.

15 Mitchell, Richard P., *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 173. This was in view of spreading the message of the Muslim Brotherhood, assessing problems in the Islamic world and notably, discussing the rules and regulations by which the various Islamic groups across the world governed themselves.

Already by the 1950's, the seeds for the growth of Salafist revivalism in Morocco had already been sown. Notable in this sowing is the influence of the Lebanese Salafī author and activist Shakib Arslan (d.1946), whom Charaani identifies as a central figure in relaying many of the early Salafī reformist ideas to Morocco.[16] As argued by Martin Kramer, Arslan's ideas 'came to exercise a vast influence in North Africa' and in Morocco, his name is best known in relation to his agitation against the Berber dahir,[17], and his warnings of the dire threat to Islam in Morocco.[18]

It was in the 1950s that, according to Darif, the head of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood *Majlis Irshād* (Guidance Council) Ṣāliḥ Abū Raqīq visited Morocco and sought to form a Muslim Brotherhood base there.[19] Abū Raqīq was an Egyptian Islamic intellectual living in the Northern region of Morocco, under Spanish control at the time. Inspired by the Salafi Reformist movement and by the ideas of figures like the aforementioned Shakib Arslan in particular, Abū Raqīq sought to create a Muslim Brotherhood affiliate in Morocco. Like Shakib Arslan, Ṣāliḥ Abū Raqīq was influenced by the ideas of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and Muḥammad Abduh, and the concept of Pan-Islamic policies as a means for the Muslim world to extricate itself from foreign subjugation.[20]

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16 Chaarani, A., *La mouvance islamiste au Maroc* (Paris: Khartala, 2004), p. 405. The author here also argues the important influence of Arslan's ideas on the Moroccan nationalist movement, both on al-Fassi and the Istiqlal leadership, as well as on the Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires (USFP), through one of its founding figures, Mawlay Muṣtafā Belᶜarbī al-'Alawī. Arslan's closeness to Sidi Aḥmad Belbashīr Haskouri, the right-hand man of the caliph of Spanish Morocco, may have facilitated the spread of his ideas and those of other Salafi intellectuals, through easy access to Egyptian universities with which Moroccans had contact.

17 A *dahir* (decree) created by the French protectorate in Morocco on May 16, 1930 which divided Moroccans between Arabs and Berbers, causing mass public opposition.

18 Kramer, Martin, 'Review of William L. Cleveland, Islam Against the West: Shakib Arslan and the Campaign for Islamic Nationalism.' *Middle Eastern Studies*, 23:4 (1987), pp. 529-533; http://martinkramer.org/sandbox/reader/archives/the-arab-nation-of-shakib-arslan/

19 Darif, Interview, 2009.

20 In the mid-1990s, it was again Ṣāliḥ Abū Raqīq, a close friend of Dr Abdelkrim Khatib (ᶜAbd al-Kārīm Khaṭīb) who recommended to the Palace veteran an association with the MRR (Movement for Reform and Renewal) activists, who were desperately seeking a political party).

To fulfil his aim in forming a Brotherhood branch in Morocco, the Egyptian Abū Raqīq sought alliance with an indigenous Moroccan political leader of the Islamic trend. Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Wazānī was a reformist Salafī intellectual who in 1934 had been jointly responsible for the creation of a political party[21] and then founded the 'Parti démocratique de l'indépendance' (PDI).[22] He had notably penned a number of articles on the relationship between Islam and politics calling for an accession to modernity, without renouncing Morocco's 'Arabo-Islamic tradition'.

Ultimately, the joint attempt by the Egyptian Abū Raqiq and the Moroccan al-Wazānī failed to complete the objective of founding a Muslim Brotherhood branch. However, while the Muslim Brotherhood's influence at an organizational level failed to produce the desired results, the ideological influence was far more pervasive. This was manifest most notably in 1964, in the creation and staffing of Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ḥasaniyya, which Hassan II selected to form the Muslim scholars (*ᶜulamāᵓ*) of Morocco. The Salafist and Brotherhood influence further reverberated across intellectual and political circles.

Nonetheless, the question of the scale of the Brotherhood's reach in Morocco has been contested, with the debate oscillating between those affirming an actual tangible organizational presence in the country, and others arguing instead for only an ideological influence.

Shahin affirms the presence of the Muslim Brotherhood group in Morocco in a clandestine form.[23] Yet this assertion has been widely disputed by others, including Darif who asserts that the Brotherhood never had an institutional presence in Morocco.[24] Instead, he argues the ideological outlook was internalized by an array of public figures, including

21 Al-Wazānī was responsible with Allal al-Fassi (ᶜAllāl al-Fāsī) for the creation of the 1st political party in 1934 (Istiqlal).

22 Following the breakup of the Kutla in 1937 and a fall-out with al-Fassi, he created Ḥarakat Qawmiya, which in 1943, became Ḥizb al-Shūra wa'l-Istiqlal (later the PDI).

23 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p.178.

24 Darif, M., *Monarchie marocaine et acteurs religieux* (Casablanca: Afrique Orient, 2010), pp. 144. This is despite acceptance of the presence of pockets of supporters of the Brotherhood.

leading politicians like ᶜAllāl al-Fāsī to carry its message. The idea of figures 'carrying' the Salafist influence is echoed by Esposito, who argued Islamic reformers like ᶜAllāl al-Fāsī "were among the founders and leaders of early nationalist organizations and parties which emphasized independence and a national identity based upon an Arab-Islamic heritage…"[25]

It is of no little consequence that, according to Darif, of the major political parties created prior to independence, both the Istiqlal, founded by ᶜAllāl al-Fāsī and the Parti Démocratique de l'Indépendance (PD) of al-Wazānī, were heavily inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood. In fact, the Muslim Brotherhood considered the Istiqlal an Islamic party which could form the organizational basis for the Muslim Brotherhood branch in Morocco.[26]

Although ultimately he was not formally connected to the Muslim Brotherhood, al-Fassi was nonetheless part of the reformist trend which included the Muslim Brotherhood in it's embrace. Further, al-Fassi and many of his contemporaries drew on Muslim Brotherhood literature, and shared their thematic assessments as to the problems facing Muslim majority countries.[27] According to Hassan Benaddi, al-Fassi considered the colonial threat to be primarily of a religious nature, thus requiring a religious response:[28]

> …the objective for al-Fassi, of national economic and political liberation…became the objective of safeguarding the religion and its preservation (…) Political action was merely a means at the service of this objective.

But a major milestone in the influence of the Brotherhood arose precisely on the back of the Moroccan monarchy's attempt to counteract leftist and republican tendencies. Support for the Muslim Brotherhood was accentuated when, according to Darif,[29] faced with the persecution of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt from the early 1960s, Moroccan

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25 Esposito, *Islamic Threat*, p. 62

26 Darif, Interview, 2009.

27 Al-Fassi published many of Sayyid Qutb's books, including the seminal *Maᶜālim fi'l-Ṭarīq* (Milestones) in its first ever edition in Morocco in 1966.

28 Benaddi, Hasan, 'Mohamed Allal Al-Fassi Le Penseur et le Combattant' in *Penseurs Maghrebins contemporains* ed. by M. Y. B. Retnani (Casablanca: Editions EDDIF, 2008), pp. 13-41 (p. 17).

29 Darif, Interview, 2009.

religious authorities responded with increased support for the Islamic movement on three main fronts.[30] The first was in increased support for Islamic missionary (*daᶜwa*) initiatives, which saw the Tablīghī Jamāᶜā receive legalization of their status in 1964. The second was in support for the literalist Salafī tendency through the figure of Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī, whilst the third was through the creation of an institutional framework of scholars (*ᶜulāmaᵓ*), in the form of Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ḥassaniya, founded in June 1967 and which included a number of Muslim Brotherhood figureheads.

The repression of Egyptian Islamists under Gamal Abdel Nasser in the 1960's catalysed the process, with many of them seeking refuge in other countries in the region, including Morocco. In light of the Arabization policies in force at the time in Morocco, many were welcomed into the field of education that required the import of trained Arabic teachers from across the Middle East.[31] There, they were encouraged to be active counter-weights to the Leftist and Trade Union forces, dominant at the time.

Schools and universities were grounds where the Muslim Brotherhood had proven successful in spreading its message both in Egypt and in Jordan. In the 1960s, Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood members had entered Egypt's educational system in an effort to counter secularizing tendencies in the curriculum and by the 1970s, they had begun taking over campuses. Notably, this pattern was to repeat itself in Morocco in the mid-seventies with the Chabiba. With the execution of Sayyid Qutb in 1966, anger shot through Salafist leaders and leaders of Islamic reform parties of Morocco.[32] The 1970s thus saw a degree of complementarity between the *ᶜulamāᵓ* and the representatives of Islamic currents, with ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood and other trans-national Islamic movements gaining currency within Islamic intellectual circles. Pierre Vermeren suggests this cross-pollination of ideas,

30 The 'Islamic movement' here understood in the more general sense of a movement for a greater assertion of Islamic principles in the public sphere.

31 Vermeren, P., *Maghreb, la démocratie impossible?* (Paris: Fayard, 2004 ed.), p. 233.

32 Note for example Allah al-Fassi's personal involvement in the affair by addressing a personal letter to Nasser asking him to spare Qutb.

particularly given the influence of Sayid Qutb on Chabiba ideology, may have spawned the earliest forms of Islamic political movements in the region.[33]

The Muslim Brotherhood's influence specifically on the Chabiba, was central in forging its outlook and organization, and must be understood within a broader context of the links that many Islamic movements and intellectuals had to Muslim Brotherhood ideologues, whether formally or informally. Indeed, as shall be later discussed, the movement of the Chabiba drew explicitly on the ideas and literature of Muslim Brotherhood ideologues in their debates against the Leftist currents.[34] This sense of a broader Islamic revival movement is critical in understanding why the Chabiba activists were not tied to a 'movement' per say, but would, after its disintegration, consider alternative models and ideals for the same overarching objective of Islamic renewal.

The rising popularity of Islamic movements was further compounded by the defeat of the Arab states in the Arab-Israeli war of 1967. Today, leaders of the MUR point particularly to this as an event which drove support for the Islamic trend in their formative years. According to senior MUR activist and former member of the Chabiba, Abdullah Baha (ᶜAbd Allāh Bahāᵓ) "there was a feeling there was a need for a return to Islam – an Islamic awakening occurred, the '*Sahwa*'."[35] Hamdaoui further emphasizes the consequences of the Arab defeat, "if 1948 showed the defeat of liberalism, the 1967 war showed the defeat of socialism", in a society where the Left had enjoyed considerable support.[36] The shock of the Arab defeat became for Brotherhood supporters and affiliates a serendipitous link to a major

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33 Vermeren, *Maghreb, la démocratie impossible?*, p. 193

34 For example, Amin Boukhubza (Amīn Būkhubza) is introduced to the ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood between 1971-1974 by his uncle, Mohammed Boukhoubza (Muḥammad Būkhubza). The latter was encouraging young men to delve into Brotherhood literature and thinking without however establishing an affiliated Muslim Brotherhood branch. Concepts and tactics deployed by the Brotherhood were viewed as an essential tool in the struggle against Marxist and other Leftist forces. See Talidī, Bilāl, *Dhākira al-Ḥarakat al-Islāmiyya al-Maghribiyya* (Part 2. Rabat: Top Press, 2008), p. 14.

35 Bahā, ᶜAbd Allāh (PJD MP, MUR senior figure). Interview by E. Francois. Rabat, Morocco, 9/11/2009.

36 Hamdaoui, Interview, 2009.

milestone in their history, namely their release out of Egyptian prisons in the early 1970s. Consequently, their increased literary activities coincided with a public increasingly dissatisfied with the Left. Baha recalls the start of Muslim Brotherhood books being published in this period: "We published '*Da*ᶜ*wa*' (or 'mission') which was widely read in Morocco".[37] Abdelatif al-Sedrati (ᶜAbd al-Laṭif al-Sedratī) recalls having access to a library filled with Muslim Brotherhood books which he describes as playing "an important role in introducing Muslim Brotherhood ideas to us".[38]

There was yet another critical development in the 'Islamisation' trend over this period, namely that of the adoption of 'Islamic' symbols of legitimacy by the Moroccan monarchy. This 'Islamizing' of the monarchy itself needs to be contexualized within the emergence in this period of one of the most influential Islamist reformist movements of Morocco, namely the Chabiba Islamiya of Abdelkrim Mouti.

1.1.5 The formation of the Chabiba

By the late 1960s, the leftist UNFP was experiencing internal turmoil. Disconnected from the general population through its Francophile orientation, the student wings broke away in 1967 as an increasing number of members decided to leave. Included amongst them was the figure of Kamal Ibrahim (Kamāl Ibrāhīm), who had once risen through the ranks of the UNFP having become disillusioned with the Istiqlal party's capacity, post-independence, to fulfil the ambitions of the masses, but who also left the UNFP in 1965. Shortly after and in the same year, another figure left the UNFP, the young Abdelkrim Mouti. Soon after, Mouti and Ibrahim would stand as the leading figures of the Chabiba.

For Mouti, the revolutionary ambitions of the Left were unproblematic, rather the idiom in which the call for social change was being expressed was lacking in 'authenticity' and needed to reflect the Arab-Islamic identity of Morocco.

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37 Bahā, Interview, 2009.

38 See Talidī, *Dhākira*, p. 64. The library was owned by by either Ahmed Raissouni or Mohamed al-Dhakali.

Upon his return from the pilgrimage to Mecca, in the wake of the perceived failure of Arab nationalism in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and still disgruntled with the stance taken by the UNFP, Mouti decided on a new course – he would found a clandestine social revolutionary movement with an Islamic reference. This would draw influence from similar movements of social change based on an 'Islamic lexicon', most notably the Muslim Brotherhood. Some suggest links forged by Mouti with the Muslim Brotherhood during his pilgrimage to Mecca, were maintained through figures already present in Morocco.[39] However, though there is no clear evidence of contact with the Muslim Brotherhood during Mouti's trip to Saudi Arabia, the wide-ranging influence of Muslim Brotherhood ideas have been described above, and their writings became axiomatic in the ideological development of the movement.

Driven by an idealized vision of the moral order that reigned in the national movement, Mouti and Ibrahim's motivation in establishing the *Shabība al-Islāmiyya al-Maghribiyya* was particularly driven by the desire to combat atheism, starting with the world of education: "The creation of the Chabiba was a means of renewal with the a 'mythical' Muslim society."[40] Mouti's primary objective was to counter Leftist influence and forge a new generation of Islamically orientated individuals, following his disillusionment with the UNFP's progress in alleviating social and economic ills due primarily, to "its preoccupations with the rules of political participation set out by Hassan II".[41] He also accused the party of Communism and Atheism, while he opposed the political Right for being bourgeois and reactionary.[42] Despite this ideological agenda, detractors have argued Mouti was more inspired by a desire for personal success. They state that Mouti lacked real political

39 Darif, Interview, 2009.

40 "Dans son recit concernant la periode du protectorat, il insiste plutot sur le role salvateur de la religion et donne une vision idealisee de l'ordre moral qui etait en vigueur grace a l'action du movement national." Cited in Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*, p. 113.

41 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p. 181.

42 Howe, *Islamist Awakening*, p. 127.

conviction and was very ambitious, but his failure to move up the ranks of the UNFP lead him to consider alternative ways to make his mark in the political field.[43]

As has been highlighted, the Chabiba's birth occurred within a broader revolutionary atmosphere in which the Left had become an increasingly important part of the political landscape. Despite parting ways with the left, Mouti and his Chabiba Islamiya shared with Leftist movements a commitment to revolutionary regime change and armed struggle.

The Chabiba was created in 1969 in Casablanca by Abdelkrim Mouti and Kamal Ibrahim. It soon came to consist of a small group of teachers, professors and school inspectors, meeting in clandestine educational circles. The association was initially dedicated to politics and *daᶜwa* (predication), although it later received formal recognition as a youth association in 1972, and youth focused activities became the primary focus of its work. As the movement grew, it expanded across the country through underground groups, all answering to Mouti. Initially dedicated to developing an understanding of Islamic revivalist thought, these circles also studied revolutionary change, which would become the key focus for its leader.

Elahmady traces four main phases in the Chabiba's organizational life.[44] The first, from 1969 to 1972 was the embryonic stage. This stage consisted of the following: formation of a legal association, 1972 to 1975 was a phase of structuration and mobilization, 1975 to 1989 was a phase of gradual disintegration following the murder of Leftist leader Omar Ben Jelloun, while the final phase, from 1989 to 1994 was a phase of reconfiguration abroad until the attack on the Atlas-Asni hotel in Marrakesh in 1994.

43 El Ahmadi, Mohsine, *Les Mouvements islamistes au Maroc* (Casablanca: Najah el Jadida, 2006), p. 63.

44 El Ahmadi, *Mouvements islamistes,* p. 63.

A brief overview of the major milestones in the Chabiba's history is as follows:

1969	The Chabiba is founded clandestinely and expands
1970	The underground wing is established.
1972	An 'Official' wing of the Chabiba is legalised
1973	Benkirane joins the Chabiba[45]
1975	Leftist Intellectual Omar Ben Jelloun is murdered, the Chabiba are blamed.
1975	The Chabiba movement is outlawed, falls into disarray and Mouti goes into exile.
1975-76	The Chabiba disintegrates; emergence of the Jamaa Tabayoun (initially as a stance)
1982	Formation of the Jamaa Islamia

1.1.6 A Royal Alliance?

The attempted *coups d'état* against Hassan II in 1971 and 1972 reflected a period of monarchical instability. They ushered in an only slightly reformed constitution, in 1972, following the legalization of the state of emergency in July 1970. However, in conjunction with a security approach which sought to eliminate the extreme Left through the legal route of outright bans, the authorities also developed an ideological approach. This has been identified by Darif as an 'objective alliance' with the then nascent movement of the Chabiba Islamiya, which would last until 1975.[46] Indeed, according to Benkirane, the armed wing of the Chabiba was specifically devised to counter the activism of the leftist National Student's Syndicate.[47]

During this period of change and uncertainty, King Hassan II sought to bolster his symbolic credentials by playing on the religious dimension of his claim to authority. It was in the early 1970s that he reintroduced Qur'anic education and the the '*jihād*' for the Western Sahara was launched. Recognition of the King as *amīr al-muʾminīn* ('Commander of the Believers') was furthermore set as a precondition to the legalization of any

45 El Ahmadi, *Mouvements islamistes*, p. 94.

46 Darif, Interview, 2009.

47 Benkirane, 'La normalization politique', pp. 18-33.

organization. The use of the title was particularly poignant, it being the absolute prerogative of the early Muslim Caliph's between the 7th and 12th centuries signifying unrivalled temporal and religious authority.

In the same vein, social Islamic initiatives were seen by the state as mechanisms that could bolster the King's credibility in light of the Leftist threat. This use of a 'counter-presence' was felt most acutely on university campuses, where Leftists strongholds soon began to be taken over by the Chabiba Islamiya, leading at times to conflicts on campuses.

In 1972, three years after its unofficial creation, the Chabiba received legal recognition in accordance with the law of November 15th 1958, related to the legal status of Islamic non-political organizations. Elahmadi notes that 1972 coincided with Hassan II's official call for a return to Islam and the earliest emergence of his encouragement of outward signs of official religiosity, including the building of mosques, the training of preachers and support for charitable acts.[48] Ben Elmostafa (Ben al-Muṣṭafā) further attests this official sanction of the Chabiba as a reaction to Leftist advances. He notes that the Chabiba received its legal recognition in the wake of the Marxist movement *Ila'l-Amām's* increasingly radical activism, pointing to the use of the Chabiba as a counter to its popularity, in particular amongst students.[49]

Shahin emphasises that the period from 1965 to 1973 was a tumultuous one in which political uncertainty and social unrest were ever present and Hassan II was in confrontation with various political forces.[50] In April 1973 the regime revised the code of public freedom of 1958. July of the same year saw the trial of 80 Far Left militants in what were known as the 'Casablanca trials'. For students, 1973 was also the year the UNEM, the representative

48 El Ahmadi, *Mouvements islamistes*, p. 64.

49 Ben Elmostafa, O, *Les mouvements islamistes au Maroc leurs modes d'action et d'organization* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007), p. 64.

50 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p. 167

student body, was suspended and its President and vice-President arrested, following increased tensions between revolutionary Leftists and the authorities.

The testimony of Dr Mohammed Rida Ben Khaldoun (Muḥammad Riḍā Ben Khaldūn), deputy Mayor for Rabat, confirms that the growth of Chabiba's membership was in direct correlation to the 'Leftist threat'. However he also notes that while ostensibly primarily anti-leftist, the anti-regime seeds within the Chabiba were nonetheless still prominent. Khaldoun recalls being recruited by Mouti to the Chabiba in 1973 at a time where he claims university campuses were dominated by Leninism, Marxism and other revolutionary currents: "Our main enemy was the Marxists, who were offending our religion, were against our creed (Ar. *ᶜaqīda*) and represented a danger to Islam, our second enemy was the regime."[51]

The growth of the Chabiba in the early 1970's testifies to the emergence of one of two main strategies designed to confront both the threat of Nasserism and of the Left across the Maghreb. The first strategy, as manifest in Tunisia, encouraged apolitical Islamism and secular patriotism.[52]

The second, as exemplified by the Moroccan regime, encouraged the developments of Islamic currents by opening its doors to various Islamic tendencies and reinforcing an understanding of its legitimacy as grounded in an Islamic dimension. According to Mohamed Darif support for the Chabiba was a deliberate attempt by the authorities to encourage Islamism as part of this strategy.[53] King Hassan II decreed that 1973 would be the year of the Islamic Renaissance (*al-Baᶜth al-Islāmī*). Measures initiated including mandatory prayers in schools, the building of mosques and increased liaising with the *ᶜulamāʾ*, as well as the decree of Arabization in University Humanities departments. Alongside its own

51 Khaldoun, M. B. (Mayor of Rabat-Agdal, MUR activis), Interview by E. Francois. In person. Rabat, Morocco. 11/2009.

52 Note for example Bourghiba's encouraging of 'secular patriotism' (*qawmiyya al-ᶜilmāniya*) Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p. 36.

53 Darif, Interview, 2010.

initiatives in the formal Islamic sphere, the regime is said to have encouraged the development of the Chabiba as a counterweight to Leftist agitation[54] in the midst of rising inflation and increasing external debts which were crippling the country,[55] as spontaneous protests threatened regime stability.

The Leftist trends were not however passive in the face of the growth of this counter-current. Between 1973-74 clashes between the Leftist and Chabiba students in high schools and universities were frequent, as were attacks on philosophy teachers. The Association of Philosophy Teachers issued a statement in the Communist Party's outlet, '*al-Bayān*' ('the Manifesto') as well as in '*al-Anbāʾ*' ('The News') denouncing the threat of Islamic extremism.

While Islamic reform movements can be traced prior to the 20th century,[56] the Chabiba must be situated within the very specific trend of Islamic revival which emerged in the context of European expansion, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.[57] In addition to both the political and cultural threat posed by colonialism, a perceived spiritual crisis was felt acutely within Muslim majority countries: "The fundamental spiritual crisis in Islam in the twentieth century stems from an awareness that something is awry between the religion which God has appointed and the historical development of the world which He

54 "..accused of working with the islamists to break the Moroccan Left, very powerful during the years 1960-1970." http://www.telquel-online.com/264/maroc5_264.shtml (El Azizi, Abdellatif, and Abdelkrim Motiî, "Le dernier des exiles" (archive), *Tel Quel*, no 264, 10 mars 2007).

55 Pennell, *Morocco Since 1830*, p. 327.

56 Through figures such as the Mahdi in Sudan 1848-1885, or the Sanusi's in Lybia 1787-1859 or the Wahhabi movement in Saudi Arabia 1703-1792.

57 Esposito defines revivalist movements as a return to the sources, "emulating the example of the Prophet Mohammed, revivalist movements transformed their societies through a religiously legitimated and inspired socio-political movement." (Esposito, *Islamic Threat*, p. 48).

controls".[58] As a response to this perceived crisis, four main Islamic outlooks emerged: Rejection; Withdrawal; Secularism and Westernization; and Islamic modernism.[59]

According to Esposito, this latter trend called for a synthesis between the best of Islamic and modern western thinking, a renewal of *ijithād* and an Islamic rational in order to revitalize Muslim society.[60] For these thinkers, the Islamic renaissance was an essential component of national independence. In North Africa, the Salafiyya trend inspired by Afghani and Abdu, was closely allied to the struggle for national independence, uniting and mobilizing society across Berber and Arab lines and spearheaded by national heroes like al-Fassi.

Although situated within this trend, the specific outlook of the Chabiba reflects the juncture in which it emerged, as both a product of a broader Islamic revival, but also largely influenced by Leftist revolutionary analysis and tactics. But this perception of themselves as part of an international Islamic revival movement, connected to other movements globally through a sense of Islamic identity as providing the true realization of a nation's autonomy was to have a lasting impact on Chabiba activists. Today, the main ideologues of the MUR may deny any official links to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood or other movements internationally, but they continue to perceive themselves as part of a cosmic struggle for the emergence of an idealized society conceived in terms which present Islam as an alternative, cultural reference to rival Western supremacy.

1.1.7 The Organization of the Chabiba Islamiya

Despite seeming a single entity under a unified leadership**,** the Chabiba Islamiya had within three years of its inception been divided by its founders into a movement consisting of two very distinct sections. By 1972, the Chabiba became organizationally divided

58 Smith, Wilfred Cantwell, *Islam in Modern History* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 41 as quoted in Esposito, *Islamic Threat*, p. 49.

59 Esposito, *Islamic Threat*, p. 50.

60 Esposito, *Islamic Threat*, p. 50 The Islamic modernist trend here includes figures such as Jamal al-Din al Afghani, Mohamed Abdu, Sayyid Ahmed Khan, Allal al-Fassi, and others.

between a clandestine militant movement on the one hand, and a legally sanctioned movement of social reform on the other. The first was an underground structure within which Mouti openly called and strategized for the overthrow of the regime. The second was the formal 'apolitical' *daᶜwa* association. It advocated reform and non-violence as means of preserving Islamic values and challenging the Left. The revolutionary group was known as 'al-Shabāb al-Muslim' ('the Muslim Youth') while the term 'Chabiba Islamiya' referred to the formal name of the legal association, according to former Chabiba member Nouredine Dhakir (Nūr al-Dīn Dhākir).[61] The leadership of the secret group was unclear to many who adopted its outlook, whilst it was widely known that Mouti headed the legal branch.

Despite some overlapping roles, it seems Mouti sought to maintain a distinction between underground and legal movements, and that members involved in the latter may not have been entirely aware of the former. Bilal Talidi (Bilāl Talīdī) himself a MUR activist and author of a history of the movement (*Dhākira al-Ḥarakat al-Islāmiyya al-Maghribiyya*) suggests:[62]

> The main organization was the secret organization which practised the real activities of the Chabiba. The legal association was just a front (…), but the teachers were not integrated into the real activities of the Chabiba. They gave some services, like teaching circles, lessons, etc, but they were not integrated into the real work of the Chabiba, its political goals. Mouti tried to distinguish between the ideas that he gave to teachers and those he gave to the secret movement – there were two different orientations.

The following sections shall examine the recruitment process instigated by Mouti to gain members for the Chabiba Islamiya, and the organizational structures of both movements as they had evolved by 1972. It shall focus particularly on looking at how the rigidly hierarchical and increasingly centralized structure of the organizations were factors both in the eventual dissolution of the Chabiba, and more importantly, as negative factors in the experiences of those members who subsequently proceeded to form the MUR.

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61 Talīdī, *Dhākira*, Part 1 p. 128.

62 Talidī, Bilāl (Attajdid journalist). Interview by E. Francois, In person. Casablanca, Morocco, 18/10/2010.

1.1.7.1 Initial Recruitment into the Chabiba

Following the foundation of the Chabiba in 1969, Mouti's initial recruitment drive focused solely on secondary school pupils. These formed the majority of initial recruits. They were later supplemented by a number of working class, high-school 'drop-outs'.[63] Mouti, who had served for 16 years as an inspector in the Ministry of education drew on his networks there initially, expanding gradually.

Very soon after in the early-1970's the second stage of recruitment began. This was marked by an expanded target, to include teachers, as well as their pupils, whilst the third stage included university students. Geographically, the majority of recruits were from Casablanca, followed by Rabat and Mohamediya.[64] According to Bilal Talidi among the preferred recruitment techniques was to attract members from other Islamic organizations, particularly those who could be identified as pious and committed to their faith.[65] The final stages of recruitment sought to incorporate workers and then finally, women.[66]

For the first three years from 1969 to 1972, while the Chabiba still operated as a purely clandestine movement, Mouti focused mainly on recruitment, developing a cell-based organizational structure and on the socialization of his young recruits, alongside his cover of respectable work with senior figures from the field of education. Mustafa Ramid (Muṣṭafa Ramid) joined the Chabiba in 1973 and recalls the activities in the early days of the movement:

We focused on working in high schools, we were very successful in bringing people into the movement and limiting the influence of the Left. Thanks to our readings, we were empowered to have big discussions and debates with the Leftists. Secondly, we worked in

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63 Munson, Henry, "Islamic Revivalism in Morocco and Tunisia", *The Muslim World* 76: 3-4 (1986), pp. 203-218 (p. 204).

64 El Ahmadi, *Les mouvements islamistes*, p. 87.

65 Talidī, Interview, 2009.

66 Khadija Moufid (Khadīja Mufīd) was one of a small number of female members of the Chabiba. See Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*, p. 251.

the mosques. Imams in a lot of mosques were with the Chabiba, this helped them have a lot of circles there and we would spot regulars at the mosque and would ask them to join; Thirdly, we undertook work in the neighbourhoods. In most of our neighbourhoods, we would find at least one or two people from the Chabiba, we had meetings, circles (…). Mouti and Ibrahim Kamal, would visit us in the circles, sometimes until very late into the night due to the secrecy.[67]

Although the Chabiba attracted members recruited primarily from Mouti's network in the field of education, including teachers and students at both school and university level, it never achieved the mass appeal of other Islamic movements across North Africa, despite a support base which cut across social classes, due to the equalizing nature of the main recruitment locations (mosques and schools, where social class and those of different professions were more likely to mix). In fact, according to Shahin, students remained the largest proportion of Mouti's followers within the association, some 40%,[68] although workers made up the largest percentage in the group implicated in Ben Jelloun's assassination and secondary school students, of those on trial following the January 1984 riots.

Due to the informal nature of the loose networks in which the Chabiba operated throughout Morocco, some members claimed to have not been aware of their membership in the Chabiba until long after they had joined its educational circles. Many were members of small, secret, educational circles but failed to make the connection with the larger movement until after the murder of Ben Jelloun in 1975 when the movement's structure was exposed.

67 Talīdī, *Dhākira*, Part 4, p. 97.

68 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p. 182.

Moukri Abu Zaid (Mukrī Abū Zayd) explains how he didn't realise he was attending Chabiba circles until the murder of Omar Ben Jelloun and the internal discussions which ensued on whether to remain with Mouti:[69]

> …in Rabat I met Amin Bou Khoubza (Amīn Bu Khubza) and Azzedine Toufiq ('Izz al-Dīn Tawfīq) and began having educational circles and at first, I didn't know it was an organized thing, no-one said the name of the organization or of Mouti, because it was purely educational at first."

Such negtive experiences of secrecy within the movement influenced the desire among the leadership of the MUR to later foster a more open working environemnt where transparency was considered essential.

The movement was initially male-only, both due to the assumption that the risks involved in participating in the movement were too dangerous to involve women, but also, as Ben Khaldoun (Ben Khaldūn) conceded, due to the 'philosophical view of women' which predominated at the time.[70] However, a number of female Chabiba sympathisers were known to exist on the margins of the movement, despite the fact, according to Mohamed Yatim (Muḥammad Yatim), "We were revolutionaries on the political front in the Chabiba, but regarding women, we were 'Salafist', we were very conservative."[71]

1.1.7.2 The 'Islamic Study-Circles' As Locus of Recruitment

Many of the young men who joined the Chabiba in this early period had already participated in similar educational circles, whether under the leadership of a local scholar or an otherwise respected individual. These pre-existing study circles and networks became fertile recruiting grounds in the early history of the Chabiba. Importantly, the varied origins and outlooks of the types of people who led these different 'Islamic' study circles, whether traditionalist Wahhabī scholars in the one instance or nationalist leaders who had served

69 Talīdī, *Dhākira,* Part 4, p. 76.

70 Ben Khaldoun, Interview by E. Francois. In Person. Rabat, Morocco, 2009. This was namely that women should remain within the home as care givers, homemakers and mothers.

71 Yatim, Mohamed (Head of the UNTM), Interview by E. Francois. In Person. Rabat, Morocco, 11/2010.

under the monarchy in the other, highlight the multiplicity of types of 'Islamic reformist students' the Chabiba reached out to in its earliest years.

One such example were the circles led by the leading Moroccan Wahhabi[72] scholar, Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī[73] whose classes at a mosque in Meknes were regularly attended by Chabiba members. There they sought both to recruit from new members from the class and drew on Hilāli's articles and cassettes in their circles.[74] Hilāli's circles and other purely educational classes differed however from the Chabiba circles, the latter's being marked by their revolutionary nature. Instead, these traditional learning sessions focused on matters of creed and *da*ᶜ*wa*, while integrating a typically quietiest, literalist-Salafi inspired conception of politics.

Other circles targeted by Chabiba recruiters included those run by the Islamic Research Association. According to Amin Bou Khoubza (Amīn Bu Khubza) he and other students would sporadically attend informal educational sessions in the early 1970s run by this association headed by Ismāᶜīl al-Khaṭīb.[75]

'Circles' of recruitment for the Chabiba further included those led by 'Islamic' figures who were deeply embedded with the monarchical regime. Some Chabiba members had notably once also been attendees of lessons given by Mehdi Ben Aboud (Mahdī Ben 'Abbūd), a nationalist leader and former Moroccan ambassador to Washington and

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72 Understood here to mean inspired by the brand of Salafi literalism that emerged out of Saudi Arabia under the theological influence of Muḥammad b. ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb.

73 Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī was a controversial figure in Meknes, where his Wahhabi outlook conflicted with the outlook of other local scholars on the finer details of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and on creedal beliefs (*ᶜaqīda*). Vocal in his belief in the non-violent route for reform, his teachings focused on the importance of the Qur'an and Sunna, on the way of the 'Pious Ancestors' (al-Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ)', the importance of the Arabic language and open, rationalist, dialogue with other components of the Moroccan scene, including Marxists, Western elites, etc. However it was al-Hilāli's opposition to Sufism in Morocco, and in particular his denunciation of the Ṭarīqa Tījaniyya, of which he was a former member, as having deviated from orthodoxy, which earned him his controversial reputation.

74 Yatim, Interview, 2010.

75 Currently member of the "conseil local des oulémas de Tétouan". Mentioned in a document on the Moroccan government's official website for Islamic affairs, "No Title", *No Title*, accessed 6/10/10 http://www.habous.gov.ma/fr/detail.aspx?id=1836&z=161&s=156? .

representative to the UN. Despite being a career diplomat who had lived in Europe and the USA, Ben Aboud was said to have been critical of 'western civilization': "He strengthened our trust in our creed and our civilizational heritage. The problem is our understanding of religion and of the Qur'an and its rules and not the religion itself."[76] Ben Aboud shared his experiences and perspective with the young men through sessions in Islamic associations[77] and became a mentor to a young Amin Bou Khoubza.[78] His sessions were a fertile recruitment ground for members of the Chabiba who would encourage those present to attend other circles, namely those run by the Chabiba itself. It also confirmed a sense among the young activists that there were figures working from within the system itself who shared their sense of pride in Islamic civilization and their desire to reassert it. Critically, figures like Ben Aboud undoubtedly contributed to the later acceptance in the decades that followed by ex-Chabiba figures that their activism could continue, post-Chabiba, more openly and in negotiation with elements of the regime.

The culmination of this 'open-recruitment' policy of students from universities and Islamic study-circles was a membership body of the Chabiba that had been drawn from a variety of backgrounds. As a representative example, a figure like Saaedine al Othmani (Saᶜd al-Dīn al-'Uthmānī) came from the preaching '*daᶜwa*' movement, the Jamāᶜa Tablīghī. Another like al-Sedrati had once been influenced by the Salafī trend under Ibn Ashar al Dhoukali (Ibn Ashar al-Dhukalī).[79] Other members had been former radical Leftists.

1.1.7.3 The spread of the Chabiba

The recruitment of members to the Chabiba was realized through a mixture of organic growth from lower-members and direct targeting initiated by those higher in the

76 Talīdī, *Dhākira*, Part 2, p. 19.

77 Such as Jamāᶜa al-Baᶜth al-Islāmī and Jamāᶜa al-Tawzīᶜ al-Islāmī.

78 Talīdī, *Dhākira*, Part 2, p. 19. Reference is made to an association named after him on the MUR website, accessed 02/2011: MUR, http://www.tanmia.ma/article.php3?id_article=22539

79 al-Dhukalī was a former student of the Nationalist leader al-Alaoui.

organization. Organic growth was realized by initiated members seeking out potential recruits amongst their strata of society, whether other students, workers, teachers or professors. This method was incentivized in that those responsible for recruiting and forming circles of their own were promoted to leadership positions. Simultaneously, leading figures like Mouti himself often directed members to go to new locations and seek out new recruits.

In the beginning, the Chabiba was limited to Casablanca. The movement then spread through its students to Rabat, Marrakesh, Tetouan, Agadir, Fes, and further afield in Morocco. As secondary school graduate members headed off to universities across the country, they would spread the message there and to the cities beyond. Once new university students were recruited and had graduated, they returned to their hometowns and founded Chabiba circles there, successfully expanding the reach of the organization.

Noted figures in prominent positions often became centres of gravity for new recruits. In 1977 for example, Abdesalam Belaji (ʻAbd al-Salām Belaji) ,a former Chabiba activist, was working as a professor in Rabat. Students from across the country came to Rabat to study and this influx meant the city became a particular target for spreading the Chabiba message.[80] At the same time, others members were sent specifically by Mouti to Fes and Tetouan to spread the message there.

When students graduated, becoming professors and civil servants, they spread the Chabiba message spread to these stratas as well. The final stages sought to incorporate workers and then finally, women. It was this growing base of support that led to a division of the organization by Mouti into different socio-professional sectors to better manage them, as shall be discussed below.

The Chabiba was an elite movement and was based on a membership system which required an invitation from existing members to join, although ultimate membership depended on acceptance from the highest ranks of the movement, namely Mouti and Kamal

80 Amongst those involved in this targeting of Rabat as a *daᶜwa* objective were Belaji, Benkirane, Mouattassim, Abdallah Baha and others.

Ibrahim. Membership of the Chabiba required very little formal process aside from knowledge of the basics of the religion and a desire to enter the Chabiba.

Secrecy was instilled from the onset in the recruitment process. Members never spoke explicitly about their orientation, choosing instead to form small, secretive ideological groups. Many of the members of the movement were unaware of who other members were, due to the secretive atmosphere Mouti cultivated, let alone of the existence of a paramilitary wing.[81] According to Amin Bou Khubza[82] parents were unaware of their children's outlook and spouses ignorant of their partner's activities.

1.1.7.4 Finance

As regards the financing of the movement, members made mandatory contributions, each student donating a monthly portion of their state-funded bursary, which at the time represented the salary of a civil servant. New members joined who were civil servants and who contributed to financing the activities, thus providing a new source of funding. According to Abderrahim Lamchichi, the movement benefited from additional financial support from Saudi Arabia, as well as solidarity from Islamist organizations in Egypt, Lebanon and Syria.[83]

1.1.8 The Evolution of Structures in the organization of the Chabiba Islamiya

A year after the foundation of the Chabiba in 1970, Mouti created the clandestine, paramilitary movement that would hereafter function as a distinct and covert part of the organization . Made up primarily of youths, it was a separate organization and functioned in parallel to the main association. According to Youssef Belal whilst Kamal Ibrahim dedicated himself primarily to predication and teaching Islam within the group, Mouti was the founder

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81 Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009 and Dialmy, Abdessamad, 'L'Islamisme marocain : entre révolution et intégration', *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, 110 (2000), pp. 5-27; accessed 16 February 2010http://assr.revues.org/index20198.html, p. 5.

82 BouKhoubza, Amīn (Senior MUR activist). Interview by E. Francois. Rabat, Morocco, 11/2009.

83 Lamchichi, A., 'L'Islamisme s'enracine au Maroc', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 06/1996, accessed 11/2014, http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/1996/05/LAMCHICHI/2764.

of the shadowy parallel organization whose objective was to undertake attacks against the Left.[84] The members of the formal association often interacted with many of the youth from the clandestine wing, at times leading activities or classes for them. Yet many remained ignorant of their underground activities and political objectives. Others however were involved in both the formal and informal activities and would, after Mouti's exile, become the leaders of the Chabiba.

According to El Ahmadi, the secret group attracted around three hundred militants.[85] The two strands, the (eventually) legal association and the underground movement, had dual activities and organizational tactics. As in the case of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, as tensions with the regime increased, so did secrecy and the radicalization within the clandestine movement, which by the early 1980s, would switch the target of its violence from the Left to the state.

But two years later in 1972, according to Dialmy, the movement's failure to realise its objectives through an informal group led Mouti to transform the main body of the Chabiba into an official organization hoping to partially realise the organization's objectives through negotiation with the regime as a formal, legal association[86]. The legal association was known formally as 'The Islamic Youth association', or the Chabiba Islamiya and informally the *muᶜallamīn* (teachers), in reference to those running it.

If this is indeed the case, it represents the earliest indication of the negotiated emergence of the Islamic movement, in communication with the state apparatus. This negotiation with the regime over the place and direction of the movement's activities would remain an enduring feature of the Moroccan Islamic movement.

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84 Belal, *Le Cheikh et le calife*, p. 114.

85 El Ahmadi, *Les mouvements islamistes,* p. 64.

86 Dialmy, "L'islamisme marocain", p. 5

Shahin suggests however that the creation of the legal association was in fact a front for the deepening of the movement's clandestine activities.[87] Indeed, Mouti used the legal association as a façade to distract the authorities from the movement's real objectives and actions. It is also possible Mouti was working on both options, in order to determine which would be most effective.

Critically however, this experience of openness to negotiating with the regime and working within its parameters as a strategy for change was critical for the younger generation of Chabiba activists, including Abdelilah Benkirane who would lead subsequent movements, including the Jamaa Islamiya (*Jamāᶜa Islāmiyya*) and the Movement for Reform and Renewal, as well as the MUR, to accommodate official requests in return for a stake in the system. While many critiques of the MUR regard this strategy as part of a historically successful delegitimization of oppositional movements by the state, through their integration within its apparatus, the MUR continues to view this strategy as risky but the only viable avenue for meaningful change.

How did Mouti seek to justify the dual-structure of the movement? His answer primarily lay in the necessity of both social reform to build a base of support and the ability to take physical action when necessity arose. In a study he wrote for circulation in the group's underground cells in 1970, Mouti described Moroccan society as passing through a "critical historical transition, due to the pressure of social, economic, political and cultural interactions"[88] which were reflected in uneven growth and social inequality amongst a deprived majority and a wealthy minority, political divisions amongst opposition and loyalist parties and a multiplicity of ideological orientations, contributing to the hopelessness and disorientation of the Moroccan people. Through a comparative analysis with other periods in Moroccan history, Mouti predicted imminent political collapse, even hinting at the possibility of foreign intervention. In addition, he predicted impending conflict between the

87 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p. 182

88 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p. 184.

Left and the nascent Islamic movements, and the authorities. In response to this he claimed to have created active cells to undertake the task of mobilization, socialization and control. It was from this period, the movement began to focus on recruitment and socialization, whilst simultaneously Mouti began preparing its armed wing.

1.1.8.1 The Structure of the Chabiba Islamiya

The Chabiba was extremely hierarchical, with no clear institutions and a strong head, in the form of Mouti.[89] "It was not a structured movement. There was a head and the base and there was no consultation between them. The system was secret. Each member only knew the members of his cell or members from their school".[90] Members would meet in circles to discuss readings and ideas. The cells had no contact between them and were told not to engage with other Chabiba members if they became aware of them: "The organization of the Chabiba was based on this notion – someone who was in a cell must not get in contact with others who are not in his own cell. The link was straight to the top only"[91]

In terms of its organization, the Chabiba was inspired in its structure by both the Muslim Brotherhood and the Moroccan Socialist Youth. Mouti's experience in the UMT (Moroccan Trade Union) shaped his conception of the Chabiba's structures and was reflected in its division into branches according to different professional sectors, with sections for professors, teachers, students, workers, artisans, referred to as *shuᶜab* (branches) and in different neighbourhoods, known as sections.

Each branch was composed of cells referred to 'families' (*usar*, sing: *usra*), open only to those militants convinced by the revolutionary project, with a minimum of seven members in each cell.[92] Induction into cells typically occurred within secondary schools, university or the

89 Belaji, A (former Chabiba Islamiya activist). Interview by E. Francois, In Person. Rabat, Morocco, 04/2009.

90 Belaji, Interview, 2009.

91 Mechtalli,Ahmed (former MUR member and Chabiba activist). Interview by E. Francois, Rabat, Morocco, 11/2010.

92 Nourredine Dhakri (Nūr al-Dīn Dhakrī) as cited in Talīdī, *Dhākira*, Part 1, p. 128.

mosque.[93] The head of each 'family' was called a '*naqīb*' ('captain') in a set up which directly mirrors the organizational set up of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. The *naqīb*s were grouped into councils, presided by one or more '*ruqabāʾ*' (lit. 'sergeants' but here meaning local managers). Mechtalli states that the local leaders were referred to as *masʾūl*, since the term *amīr* (leader/commander) was restricted to Mouti alone.[94] The movement's local leaders, or managers, were known by the cells in the different areas, although there was no interaction between the different cells. These leaders were grouped into a committee known as the 'Committee des Responsables' (Committee of Heads). To become a local leader, members had to recruit a certain number of people to the movement. Once responsible for 3-4 circles (*jellasāt*), the individual would be promoted to be a member of the 'Committee des Responsables' of that area. The 'Committee des Responsables' was headed by a section head (*masᶜūl*)) who themselves had their own committee, at the level of the cities. Local managers obeyed the orders of the section leader and met under the aegis of the regional heads. The section leaders were themselves regrouped under the authority of the '*amīr*' of the movement, Mouti himself, also known as the '*murshid al-ᶜām*'.

According to El Ahmadi, given the five branches, there were most likely five regional *leader*s, following the geographical division of Morocco into 5 main regions, grouped under the leadership council (*majlīs amīrī*) which represented the political office of the Chabiba.[95] It is from within this council that someone could be elected or designated for the position of 'Grand Amir' or National leader, a position Mouti held throughout the Chabiba's existence. This marker of internal authoritarianism under Mouti was to have a lasting impact on former Chabiba activists as they began to conceive of the internal organization of subsequent movements after the Chabiba's disintegration, not least thorough a recourse to democratic

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93 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p. 182

94 Mechtalli, Interview, 2009.

95 El Ahmadi, *Les mouvements islamistes*, p. 68.

internal mechanisms within the MUR to counter the potential of a repeat of the Chabiba's model.

1.1.8.2 The Structure of the Revolutionary Section

It seems that Mouti's belief in an impending clash between the authorities, the Left and the Islamic movement was the impetus behind his decision to create a special branch (*niẓām khāṣṣ*) of the movement, namely secret paramilitary units. Inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood structure and its distinction between the main movement and the special branch, the *niẓām khāṣṣ* had no organizational link to the main legal structure of the Chabiba and limited contact with individual cells.

According to Darif, the '*niẓām khāṣṣ*' was created in 1970 and headed by Abdelaziz Noumani (ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz Nuᶜmānī) under Mouti's guidance.[96]

Noumani was a shady character whom some allege was working with the secret services.[97] It is claimed he was aware of the plan to assassinate Omar Ben Jelloun in 1975 and may have masterminded it. Noumani was a known figure in the Chabiba prior to 1975, although Mouti made contradictory statements about him, at times tasking him with the leadership of certain cells, whilst telling others to steer clear of him. According to Bilal Talidi,[98] Mouti tasked Noumani with a very specific role within the Chabiba, suggesting he was preparing him to lead a paramilitary organization based on the format of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.[99]

The para-military structure was organized into urban militias called '*katāʾib*' (sing. *katība*) for the purpose of discretion, which operated independently to one another. Each of the '*katāʾib*' was made up of different '*faṣāʾil*', each of which was named after a famous

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96 Darif, *Monarchie marocaine*, p. 44. Also el Othmani (ᶜUthmānī) refers to this group in his interview with Bilal Talidi (see Talīdī, *Dhākira,* Part 4, p. 61): "There was a group of young people, yes men, close to Mouti, called the "secret system (*niẓām khāṣṣ*)".

97 Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

98 Talidi, Interview, 2010.

99 Where the main *tanẓīm al-ᶜām* was run separately from the *tanẓīm al-khāṣṣ*.

battle or commander in Muslim history, e.g. Badr, Uḥud, ᶜAlī. Each *fāṣṣil* was made up of between three and five commandos, each with the name of historical warriors (*mujāhid*).[100]

1.1.9 The Ideology of the Chabiba islamiya

The Chabiba took ideological inspiration from the two most influential Islamic movements of the time, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and the Pakistani *Jamaat Islami*, which themselves were situated within the current of the revivalist tradition which "…self-consciously reapplied Islamic sources and beliefs, reinterpreting them to address modern realities."[101] The Chabiba shared their anti-imperialist view of the West and their belief that it posed both a political and economic, as well as an even more serious and enduring cultural threat to Muslim societies. The necessary response was an all-encompassing, self-sufficient ideology which sought to develop Islamic alternatives to Western notions and concepts.

Although Mouti's outlook was indebted to the ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood in general, it was his discovery of Sayyid Qutb, and the radical trend within the Muslim Brotherhood, and his subsequent belief in the alliance between politics and a revolutionary reading of Islam, which formed the ideological underpinning of the Chabiba. This basis of the Chabiba was particularly indebted to Qutb's infamous 'Milestones', in which Qutb dubbed the ruling Egyptian regime of the 1950s and the society over which it ruled as belonging to the '*jāhiliyya*'. The term was one with deep connotations in Islamic history and doctrine. Meaning literally a state or age of 'ignorance', *jāhiliyya* in classical Muslim literature referred particularly to the state of 'ignorance' that the pre-Islamic Arabic's lived in prior to the onset of the mission of the Prophet Muḥammad in the early 7th century. By definition it was a phase that lacked 'knowledge', a failing characterized by idolatry and superstition, where societies ruled unjustly and in ignorance of Divine law, manifest by the upholding of a tribal ethos and following of base desires. With commencement of the

100 According to Mohsine El Ahmadi, the leaders of the para-military wing were A. Noumani, M. Uzgla, S. Ahmed (Aḥmad), M. Kharaj and M. Mustakim (see El Ahmadi, *Mouvements Islamistes*, p. 69).

101 Esposito, *Islamic Threat*, p. 130.

Prophet's mission and crucially the offering of Divine knowledge and guidance through the Qur'an, the 'age of Islam' was born and the 'ignorance' relegated to history.[102] In his *Milestones*, Qutb's crucial reinterpretation of the notion of *jāhiliyya* was to bring this 'age' into the 20th century, and cast its shadow over the contemporary Egyptian society that Qutb lived in and the regime that ran it. By labelling particularly Egypt's leaders as *jāhilī*, Qutb excommunicated them from the Muslim body politic, and not only impelled the necessity of reform but also the necessity of migration (*hijra*) away from these societies of impurity. He argued for Muslims to combat their impious leaders to establish an Islamic state, ruled by Islamic law alone.

The influence of Qutb's writings and ideas were primordial in the movement. Ahmed al-Mechtalli (Aḥmad al-Meshtallī), a former Chabiba member, recalls the reading material used in the Chabiba circles being dominated by literature by Sayyid Qutb:[103]

> We studied *Maᶜālim fi'l-Ṭarīq* (*Milestones*), *Fī Ẓilāl al-Qurᵓan* (*In the shade of the Qur'an*) and '*al-Yawm al-akhīr fi'l-Qurᵓan*' (*The last days in the Qur'an*) and letters by Hassan al Banna and other books by Sayyid Qutb, especially *Shabahāt Ḥawl al-Islām* (*Misconceptions about Islam*)".

But Qutb's *Milestones* seemed to have a central position. "Our 'bible' was *Maᶜālim fi'l-Ṭarīq* by Sayyid Qutb, it represents the doctrine of Chabiba."[104]

However, since the Chabiba consisted of many cells revolving around a local leader, local leadership had an important influence on the outlook of the individual cells and the importance afforded to different sources. This opened the door for a great variation in outlook and references, making for a diverse movement, as shall be discussed below. However, Qutb's articulations of the necessity of reform and armed action seems to have been a constant source of inspiration across the different cells.

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102 For an authoritative treatment of the idea of "ignorance" in early Islam see Rosenthal, Franz, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

103 Talīdī, *Dhākira*, Part 1, p. 92.

104 Mechtalli, Interview, 2010.

According to Bilal Talidi, there was no consistency within the educational circles in terms of reading material, despite one constant source, the literature of the Muslim Brotherhood which provided general ideas on the future of Islam, the role of the Islamic movements and the duty to build a strong Islamic group. Nonetheless, he notes that "*Maᶜālim fi'l-Ṭarīq* ('Milestones') was the sole book present in all the circles because it represented what the Chabiba wanted to undertake (…) It was the ideological theory of the political goals of the Chabiba".[105]

Qutb's formulations were furthermore instrumental in conjoining the idea of *Jihād* as a necessary aspect of political reform. According to Mechtalli, the Chabiba believed in a holistic conception of Islam as presented in the literature of the Muslim Brotherhood. This meant incorporating Islamic teachings relative to all spheres of life into the Chabiba's education, and was importantly manifest by the foregrounding of the importance of *Jihād* into any political program. An 'Islamic' political program and Jihād were therefore inextricable. As Mechtalli states, "I remember in the circles, there were texts on Jihad, Qur'anic verses, *ḥadīth* on *jihād* – Jihad was a part of this doctrine which we saw as the doctrine of Islam."[106]

Qutb had advocated the development of an Islamic vanguard, "a group (*jamāᶜa*) of true Muslims within the broader corrupted and faithless society" and this group should use *jihād* to implement an Islamic government.[107] He regarded the Westernized elites of the country as a threat to the society's identity and encouraged combating them. He also regarded all those who were not part of the Islamic movement as '*jāhil*' (ignorant), who were outside the fold of Islam and further advocated the necessity of missionary invitations (*daᵓwa*) to return them to the straight path.

105 Talidi, Interview, 2010.

106 Mechtalli, Interview, 2010.

107 Esposito, *Islamic Threat*, p. 137.

The influence of Qutb's terminology and vision permeated the Chabiba. Similarly, the Chabiba conceived of those outside the movement as '*jāhilī*', and recommended 'converting' them back to Islam: "At the time we made a distinction between Islam and *Jāhiliyya* – we saw non-practising people as '*jahilūn*' who must be convinced and converted to 'real' Islam".[108]

Ultimately however, this polarized worldview between 'true believers' and *jāhil*'s or infidels (*kāfir*s) became a major cause of contention both internally in the Chabiba and in terms of it's relationship with the regime. Former Chabiba members critiqued and rejected some of the *takfīrī* language (*'takfīr'* denoting the act of labelling others infidels) as well as ideas coming from other groups internationally and locally.

The reliance on the literature of the Brotherhood and the emphasis on Qutb is a further source of criticism. Former activists later criticized the educational program of the Chabiba as lacking in depth, something which would drive the activists to emphasise the importance of a wider Islamic education and need to forge broader sources when later developing the MUR's educational programme: [109]

> When we were in the Chabiba, there was no scientific side, we were revolutionaries, we read Qutb, but we couldn't distinguish a real *ḥadīth*, we didn't know terms in the Qur'an, hadn't read the big philosophers of the Islamic Renaissance like Rashid Rida, Mohamed Abdu, Qawkibi – in the Chabiba we just inspired ourselves 100% from the Muslim Brotherhood.

However, other former members have indicated that there was a more eclectic mix of sources and influences on the Chabiba. According to Saaedine al Othmani,[110]

> … at first, the Chabiba had a lot of different intellectual sources, they were very influenced by the Left, since Mouti used to be part of the *Ittihad Wattani wa Chaabi*; Fqih Hamdaoui, he was in Mouti's family. We also had a Salafi influence, since Fqih Hamdaoui was one of the icons of the Salafiya – Taqiyadeen Hillali was also a big influence. The fourth source of influence was the Jamaa Tabligh, who were very active in Morocco. And finally, the culture of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, we were very influenced by the books and writings of Sayid Qutb, Mohamed Ghazali and

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108 Mechtalli, Interview, 2010.

109 Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

110 Talidi, *Dhākira,* Part 4, p. 68.

Hassan al Banna – all these sources were mixed in the Chabiba – for the members, the influence was different for different people, more or less influence from each of these sources.

Therefore it seems that while the influence of Muslim Brotherhood ideas were pervasive, other currents may have also impacted the development of Islamic thought amongst the Moroccan youths of the Chabiba. As noted above, Tablighi Jamāᶜa, a *daᶜwa* movement from the Indian sub-continent, had been present in Morocco, since 1967 and had successfully expanded its predication across the country. Furthermore, the Talaa'i, a Syrian group founded by a dissident Muslim Brotherhood member ᶜIṣām al-ᶜAṭṭār had recruited a number of Moroccans while they studied abroad, mainly in Germany. According to MUR President, Hamdaoui, the Talaa'i had a branch in Morocco in the 1980s, and were amongst the voices engaged in discussions over the future of the Islamic movement in Morocco, despite the fact they operated on a clandestine basis.[111] The impact of these movements on the Chabiba and Moroccan Islamic reformist thought however was dwarfed by the Brotherhood.[112]

It can be asserted therefore that the ideological basis of the Chabiba was formed around two interrelated authors. Foremost, and laying the totality of the ideological edifice, were the ideas of Sayyid Qutb, in particular his infamous books *Milestones* and *Islam and Capitalism*. Secondary but nonetheless also crucially influential, were the articles Mouti himself had written. Inspired by Qutb, and signed with a pseudonym 'ᶜAbdū', Mouti's own literary output also had a great impact on the ideology of the Chabiba.[113]

The studies penned by Mouti aimed to explain the need for paving the way for an Islamic revolution and the type of society the group was working to establish. In a book published by the Chabiba in 1984, after its disintegration, it claimed that the reasons for the emergence of the group were the "general political, social and economic conditions resulting

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111 Hamdaoui, Interview, 2010.

112 It was worth noting for instance that by 1993, the Talaa'i had all but disappeared.

113 Talidi, *Dhākira*, Part 1, pp. 112-113.

from ideological deviations in the different institutions-the individual, the family, society, and the structures of the state-and the lack of commitment to the teachings of Islam”. These causes were in addition to the alleged apathy of the population, as well as Mouti’s despair of the possibility of reform through the system and the absence of an Islamic movement to lead an insurrection.[114]

Mouti’s rhetoric retained much of the anti-imperialist zeal from his Leftist days, denouncing ‘American imperialism’ and ‘the Islam of the oil merchants’, he called for the ‘authentic Islamic revolution’ which could “liberate the people to bring them back to the Islam of Muhammed…”[115] In defining the group’s outlook, Munson states they were more inclined towards combating foreign domination and social injustice than purely theological matters.[116]

Mouti’s targets of criticism were both the monarchy and the Left (although in practise, it was only the Left that was directly targeted in attacks). Mouti’s renunciation of working within the regime’s boundaries appears to indicate that his revolutionary approach represented the result of a failure to operate within the said institutional boundaries. But for his disciples however, who were left to deal with the fallout from his subsequent call to violent action, the possibility of working from within became increasingly attractive as the movement came under pressure from the regime, something which would be reflected in Benkirane’s decision to seek a legal association for further activism from the early 1980s.

Ultimately however, in the memories of ex-members, the ideological underpinning of the Chabiba was at best an ‘Islamised’ Leftism, with the Chabiba remembered as a movement situated within the broader current of Leftist revolutionary movements, popular in the 1970s, that sought regime change, although it presented its ideas in an Islamic idiom. The

114 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p. 182.

115 Dhaouadi, Zouhaier and Amr Ibrahim, “Documents”, *Peuples Mediterraneens*, 21 October-December (1982), pp. 57-58 as cited in Munson, “Islamic Revivalism”, p. 204.

116 Munson, “Islamic Revivalism”, p. 205.

critique of the Chabiba which emerged after the movement's disintegration alleged that the movement had failed to offer a distinctive assessment of the solutions from the rival Left it claimed to combat, with former members such as Moukri Abou Zaid (Mukrī Abū Zayd) accusing Mouti of retaining a Leftist methodology coated in an Islamic veneer: [117]

> There was no fundamental change from the ideas of the Left – they criticized the Left for a lack of faith, social behaviour, etc – using the words of the Left who were atheistic or not traditional, but as concerns the political theory, or concerning the regime, we had the same ideas without noticing it. We thought we were an alternative to the Left, but we weren't really.

1.1.10 The Objective of the Chabiba Islamiya

When the Chabiba received its formal recognition in 1972[118] following protracted negotiations with the authorities,[119] its statutes defined it as a pedagogic association, not as a religious one. According to Darif this emphasized its non-interference in political affairs.[120] Olivier Carré notes that the Chabiba organization functioned more along the lines of an Islamist lobby, rather than through the modes of insurrection or political participation that were used in other Arab countries.[121]

The organization's formal objective was to contribute to "the social construction of Moroccan society, spreading moral values and encouraging Moroccan citizens to enjoin righteousness, virtue, and reform through the implementation of Islam".[122]. The group called

117 Abou Zaid, Moukri (Senior MUR activist), Interview by E. Francois. L'Oasis, Morocco, 10/29/2009.

118 Munson, "Islamic Revivalism", p. 205

119 El Ahmadi, *Mouvements islamistes*, p. 64.

120 Darif, *Monarchie marocaine*, p. 42. It is important to note however that Shahin contends the Chabiba received legalization as a "religious society" (Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p. 183).

121 Carre, Olivier and Gérard Michaud, *Les frères musulmans (1928-1982)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002); pp. 205-206.

122 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p.184.

for the banning of alcohol, the elimination of prostitution and the introduction of Sharia law.[123]

According to former members of the Chabiba, the objective was to "transform society into an Islamic society",[124] but the instruments through which this was to be undertaken were unclear. Mouti seemed to alternate between two distinct strategies. Although the mood of Mouti's educational circles were combative and he advocated the overthrow of the regime, he would also advocate more mainstream strategies within the main body of the movement, based on his experience in the political field, namely the need to limit the spread of atheism and to halt the process of secularization at work in political parties.[125] From the Muslim Brotherhood , the group also took its modus operandi, including providing Islamic education, combating illiteracy, organizing summer camps, public health campaigns, athletic activities, etc. This would remain an enduring feature of the activists' vision for social change.

According to the Chabiba's own statutes, its overt aims were the "moralization of society, including the banning of alcohol and other forms of 'depravity', like prostitution, the Arabization of education and the implementation of Islamic law".[126] These were to be realized through *da^{c}wa* to the youth, social work, outings for members, and other social activities.

As noted above, Mouti's unstated objectives however were to undermine the Left and take power. The Chabiba adopted the Muslim Brotherhood's hostility to hereditary rule and the monarchy. Despite some early interaction with the Egyptian King[127], the

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123 Pargeter, Alison, 'Localism and radicalization in North Africa: local factors and the development of political Islam in Morocco, Tunisia and Libya', *International Affairs*, 85:5 (2009), pp. 1031-1044 (p. 1040).

124 Belaji, Interview, 2009.

125 El Ahmadi, *Mouvements islamistes*, p. 64.

126 Munson, *Islamic Revivalism*, pp. 203-218.

127 Records indicate al-Banna was invited to attend a Royal banquet in 1947. See Mitchell, *Society of the Muslim Brothers*, p. 41.

Brotherhood opposed hereditary rule based on the movement's attachment to what Mitchell dubs the "traditional Islamic views of fealty (*bayᶜa*) rather than hereditary rule as the source of kingly authority."[128]

The anti-monarchial stance of the Chabiba, as inspired by the Brotherhood, would however be subsequently re-assessed by former Chabiba figures. Instead, they argued for the historical legitimacy of the 'Alawī monarchy of Morocco, inline with the official narrative, but argued that the substance of the religious legitimacy underpinning the monarchy was wanting. In time, this became one of the focuses for the MUR's reform project.

The learning sessions within the circles (*jalalsāt*) included a variety of articles and Salafī perspectives. These included those of the Reformist trend like Mawdudi and the Muslim Brotherhood trend through the writings of al-Banna, al-Hudaybī, Muḥammad and Sayyid Qutb. The perspectives within the circles further extended through to North African intellectuals such as Sayid Hawa, Malek Bennabi to thinkers from the East like Hizb ut-Tahrir ideologue al-Nabahānī through to more Saudi-Salafi inclined texts, like *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* (The Book of Monotheism) by Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb. Mouti also prescribed Shiite thinkers including the Iraqi Twelver scholar Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr.

But according to Chabiba veterans, what seemed on the surface an eclectic body of readings were all in fact united by a common theme, that of the 'means of changing power. Mouti seems to have been willing to integrate the thinking of ideologues whom he might otherwise have opposed from a doctrinal perspective. The ex-Chabiba member Amin Bou Khoubza noted:[129]

> There is a difference between what is theoretical and what is practical. We have the theory – Islamic thought in its historical evolution, the conflict between Sunni and Shia, between Islamic *fiqh*, amongst the great philosophers, Avicenne, Ibn Toufel, Ibn Rushd, but at the heart of the Chabiba, we were studying something else. We were pre-occupied with changing power, to establish Islamic rule and the Sharia.

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128 Mitchell, *Society of the Muslim Brothers*, p. 40.

129 Boukhoubza, Interview, 2009.

The members of the Chabiba were also encouraged to study western philosophy to understand the ways in which it had impacted their culture and the dominant intellectual outlook of Moroccan society, both theoretically, and practically, in terms of modern laws, economics and politics. The underlying theme was a search for the solution to the problems plaguing society through a return to the faith and a study of the Sharia: "We always said, why don't we seek the solution to our problems in Islamic law, in the Sharia, in the mode of governing society through Islam itself."[130] This belief that Islamic teachings contain within them the means for cultural renewal would remain with the movement's activists and is an enduring legacy from the Chabiba ethos.

The group had a motto which summed up their ideological ideal: "We said at the time in the Chabiba that you must have the education of Jamāᶜa Tablīgh, the creed *(ᶜaqīda*) of the Salafī's *Tawḥīd,* the organization of the Muslim Brotherhood , and the thinking of Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr". [131] Concretely, this meant a strong grounding in '*daᶜwa*', a hostility to Ṣūfī trends, a strong organizational framework and a commitment to resurrecting the Caliphate (*khilāfa*). Elements of this would remain with the contemporary MUR's leadership, but would be adapted to the limitations placed on the activists by the regime's red lines.

1.1.10.1 The Move to Militancy.

The ideological vision of Sayyid Qutb was firmly entrenched within the Chabiba Islamiya. They adopted his exclusivist believer/unbeliever dichotomy in relation to those in or out of their own movement, and were instilled from the onset with the aspiration of 'Islamic' reform of Moroccan society and the overthrow of the regime. Yet how this 'vision' was to be practically realized seems one that was quite opaque, especially to the lower-ranking members themselves, and maybe even with Mouti himself. The practical 'methodology' of the Chabiba seems to have been continuously evolving. What seems clear however is that from 1970 to 1980, there was a gradual shift towards an increasing emphasis

130 Boukhoubza, Interview, 2009.

131 Boukhoubza, Interview, 2009.

on the necessity of militant confrontation with the state, one manifest both in Mouti's thinking and in the role given to the paramilitary wing. An important question remains however. Was the move to the 'militant' trend by Mouti an exceptional shift in outlook that caused splits with other members, or was the necessity of militancy ever-present from the foundations of the Chabiba. For ex-Chabiba figures and current MUR activists, the answers they provided were firmly in the former. The period between 1970 and 1980 is certainly shrouded in conflicting versions of events. It is important to note that the present-day MUR's 'official' stance allows it to present itself as having never been involved in violent struggle against the regime directly

The influence of literalist Salafism in Morocco was driven by Saudi Arabia, which Hassan II had called upon to help in its struggle against the Left in the 1960s. In exchange, the Saudis were given a free reign to import their brand of Islam. From the 1960s, Wahhabi inspired scholars and their followings grew in Morocco, as did religious schools funded by the Saudi government and propounding its outlook. Shaykh Mohamed Maghrawi (Muḥammad Maghrawī) was one of the leading Saudi-Salafi scholars who in the mid-1960s, was welcomed at the university of Attaif in Medina through the mediation of Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī, a leading figure of Moroccan Saudi Salafism. There he received a certification to teach and returned to Morocco where in 1976, he established the Association for the Call to the Qur'an and Sunna and became a professor in the Humanities department at Marrakesh University. His influence would be an enduring one in the development of Saudi Salafism in Morocco. This formed a backdrop against which the monarchy would be increasingly competing against other claims to religious authority, from rogue preachers and self-appointed scholars, and alternative understandings of Islam, some of which challenged the foundation of the monarchs religious and thus political authority. It is within this context that former Chabiba activists would gradually discern a 'niche' in the market, an organization – the MUR - which while calling for reform and inherently critical of the political status quo, could do so from a position of support for the monarch, as a religious leader, thus become

useful to the regime, protecting itself from repression and gaining access to the centres of power considered crucial for change.

The ethos of the Chabiba was officially one of non-violence and advocacy of reform. Yet like the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, Mouti's underground structure professed more radical aims and objectives. In these secret classes, lessons were prepared either by Mouti or taken from the books of the Muslim Brotherhood, especially those published in Egypt and Lebanon.[132] According to Shahin it was here that Mouti propagated a radical stance against the regime, calling for its overthrow.[133] According to Belaji the state was aware of these activities but didn't want to confront the Chabiba because it acted as a counter to the Left, choosing instead to make what it considered an advantageous political calculation.[134]

Mouti taught the young men that the Islamic movement would gradually entice more and more of the population and would eventually spread to the whole of society. Once this had occurred, he informed the group they would revolt against the regime and establish an Islamic state. But the later memories of members recall a Mouti who was very vague on how to achieve this or even what shape the new state would take. As Belaji notes:[135]

> We suffered from 'simplism'. We were very naïve. We didn't ask what the Islamic state would be like, what the place of non-Islamists would be, is the Islamic state, a civil or a religious state, control over the leadership, representatives – we had no clue how to answer these questions or what, after the victory, the Islamic state would be like.

In the circles, Mouti propagated his anti-regime stance, criticising various aspects of Moroccan life as having deviated from the Islamic ideals and developing ways to overthrow the regime. Much like Qutb's own sense of urgency regarding the pivotal period Egypt was facing, Mouti had diagnosed Morocco in the early 1970s as at a crossroads and predicted an impending collapse, foretelling the coup attempts which would subsequently rock the

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132 Influences included Sayyid Qutb, Muḥammad Qutb, Hassan al-Banna, Fatiya Khan (Lebanese), Aḥmad al-Rāshid, etc.

133 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p. 184.

134 Belaji, Interview, 2009.

135 Belaji, Interview, 2009.

regime. He argued that Moroccan society had fallen into '*jāhiliyya*', the aforementioned 'period of ignorance'. The use of this term also denotes the fact that aside from those considered as working within the Islamic movement, the rest of society was not considered Muslim. Those who left the movement were denied the Muslim greeting of 'peace' (*salām*) and members were instructed not to return their greetings or fraternize with them, gestures which became in effect *de facto* acts of religious 'excommunication'. Indeed Mouti considered anyone who was not a member of the Chabiba as working against the movementand required all members to give him an oath of allegiance (*bay*^{c}*a*).[136] This necessity to giving the 'oath of allegiance' not only mimicked the process within the Muslim Brotherhood , as well as mirroring that of royal protocol, but harkened back to early Islamic precedent wherein Muslims would render their allegiance to the Caliphs. Whether Monarch, Brotherhood, or the Chabiba, in calling for the '*bay*^{c}*a*' all purposely sought to call on archetype of the very first Muslims who gave Prophet Muḥammad their 'oath of allegiance' (*bay*^{c}*a*). The solemnity of the ritual *bay*^{c}*a* was ultimately attested in the Qur'anic scripture. The 'shared' act not only highlights the competition for Islamic symbols between the movement and the monarchy, but how Mouti consciously sought to recast ideas such as 'party membership' as legitimized by being reflections of a primordial Muslim model.

Mouti also encouraged members to be suspicious of everyone, including other Islamic currents: "There were other currents which existed at the time of Chabiba, like Raissouni's association from Ksar el Kebir,but it was forbidden to entertain links with others, we had to be suspicious of them."[137] He was also very controlling, refusing to divest authority to anyone and ensuring all decisions passed through him, reinforcing the view of him as a figure who should not be questioned. According to Munson, in some cases, his followers had to seek his permission to marry or travel.[138] The authoritarianism of his

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136 Talidi, Interview, 2009.

137 Mechtalli, Interview, 2010.

138 Munson, Henry, "Morocco's Fundamentalists", *Government and Opposition* 26:3 (1991), pp. 331-344, p. 341.

leadership would represent an element of the Chabiba which subsequent movements would seek to buttress against in their organizational set up.

According to Shahin, Mouti intentionally kept much of the ideological side of his organization quiet, focusing instead on its social work as means of gaining respectability.[139] This seems to have caused confusion amongst the rank and file as to the Chabiba's actual position on a number of issues. According to Belaji, while members were aware of the anti-state stance, what type of oppositional movement the Chabiba actually was, remained unclear even to Mouti's followers:[140]

> What are we? Opponents? Militants? Soldiers? It was not clear because the president did not discuss anything with members or the medium leadership, who mediated between the base and the leadership. They didn't know anything about the orientation of the President.

For Mouti, the Chabiba had always been a revolutionary movement, as he himself argued in his book 'The Islamic revolution is the guaranteed destiny of Morocco' (*al-Thawra al-Islāmiya qadr al-Maghrib al-rahn*).[141] Former members on the other hand, like Saaedine al Othmani (Sa^{c}d al-Dīn al-^{c}Uthmānī?), have claimed the revolutionary mentality was not initially present in the Chabiba, but emerged as a consequence of tensions with the authorities and even then, that not all members were conscious of the new directives:[142]

> In the early years, the Chabiba didn't have the revolutionary, (*inqilāb*) coup mentality, that wasn't the way of seeing things, it just wanted to change the circumstances and not the system of the government. In the late 1970s, the brothers started to become intellectually divided and after the murder of Ben Jelloun, they started having problems with the authorities. Everyone knows when there is this kind of tension, some new ideas begin appearing, especially extremism. For the Chabiba, it wasn't strategic, it was like a reaction to what happened.

What is certain however is that although revolutionary in his discourse, Mouti's violent ambitions were restricted to a limited group of individuals in the organization of the Chabiba. It seems that the 1975 murder of Ben Jelloun divided the movement, separating the

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139 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p. 182.

140 Belaji, Interview, 2009.

141 Publication not available, not in circulation. See Shahin, *Political Ascent*, who cites it at p. 199.

142 Talidi, *Dhākira*, Part 4, pp. 58-59.

minority who supported the paramilitary modus operandi in the *Niẓām Khāṣṣ* from the remainder of the movement.

Tozy argues that the murder of Omar Ben Jelloun in 1975 revealed the very existence of a structured group, with a paramilitary wing based on martial arts and ideological and religious indoctrination, led by a majority of high school students, a view confirmed by MUR activist and author of the movements history, Bilal Talidi.[143]

According to Bilal Talidi,[144] prior to this however, attacks on Leftist figures, including Ben Jelloun, had been aimed at 'punishing' perceived enemies of the movement, as part of their opposition to the Left, but neither the use of weaponry nor targeted assassinations was a feature of the main circles: [145]

> Prior to the killing of Omar Ben Jelloun, there were some circles who tried to punish some Marxists, but those circles did not have a jihādist approach, they used violence only to punish certain Marxists who insulted the Prophet or abused the Qur'an.

Talidi presents the radicalization of the Chabiba as having occurred in only the final stages of the movement's existence, a view largely confirmed in the narratives he himself collated in a series of books about the early stages of the Moroccan Islamic movement.[146] Talidi claims that the focus of this paramilitary wing shifted after the murder of Ben Jelloun and that it only adopted the Jihadist outlook from the 1980s: "In the circles before 1980, there are no jihadist points of view, no military training."[147]

Talidi further states that the violence advocated within the Chabiba prior to 1975 was 'defensive' and aimed not at killing, but 'punishing' opponents. It was only after 1980 that the strands which were to launch attacks against the regime emerged. Most notably, this

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143 Tozy, M., *Monarchie et Islam politique au Maroc* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1999), p. 231.

144 Talidi, Interview, 2010.

145 Talidī, Interview, 2010.

146 Talidi, *Dhākira*, Part 1, p. 10 onwards.

147 Talidi, Interview, 2010.

accompanied the radicalization of Mouti's own outlook as displayed in the radical publication '*al Mujāhid*':[148]

> Katiba Badr, Fassila Jihad, etc - they emerge after 1980. At that time, there was a big change in the theory and practise of Mouti. The Chabiba was full of problems, in '78, the 'Tabayoune'[149] split, in 1981, Jamaa Islamia split, other leaders and figures left (…) like Moattasim, Marwani, Ramid, so the Chabiba was at the time in crisis.

This period is certainly shrouded in conflicting versions of events and the MUR's "official" stance allows it to present itself as having never been involved in violent struggle against the regime directly.

1.1.11 Activities of the Chabiba islamiya

In the 1970s, Mouti began his activities amongst students at secondary schools of which there were 2 main types:

1.1.11.1 Legal and Formal activities as part of the Chabiba islamiya

Students were organized into educational circles (sing. *jalsa*) which undertook Qur'an and *ḥadīth* recitation and learning sessions. The content of the circles varied considerably between regions and even between cities, depending on leaders and their own personal orientation. Although educational circles were not illegal, the group operated in a clandestine fashion and lessons were undertaken in mosques or at universities with the utmost discretion:

> We thought it was a secret work, but it was just Qur'anic exegeses (*tafāsīr*), Prophetic traditions (*ḥādīth*), the laws of ritual worship (*fiqh al-ᶜlbādāt*), Prophetic biography (*sīra al-nabawiyya*) these were traditional lessons, but we learnt them discreetly, watching if anyone was checking up on us.[150]

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148 Talidi, Interview, 2010.

149 One of the groups which emerged out of the disintegration of the Chabiba – it initially emerged as a position within the Chabiba (the position of trying to decipher the truth of the various allegations surrounding the Chabiba at the time and Mouti's actions), but subsequently developed into a distinct group by the same name.

150 Abou Zaid, Interview, 2009.

Members also set out on outings, travelling, social work in poor neighbourhoods, especially in the poorer parts of Casablanca, undertook Qur'an studies, recitation, reading the exegesis (*tafsīr*) of Ibn Kathir and others, and extensive study of Sayid Qutb's writings. According to Shahin, its activities included "offering Islamic education, combating illiteracy, organizing summer camps and public health campaigns, and socializing youth through educational, religious artistic, and athletic activities."[151]

1.1.11.2 Underground activities of al-Shāb al-Muslim

The main body of the Chabiba, known as *al-Shāb al-Muslim,* was dedicated to holding educational circles, based around revolutionary themes and activities at schools, campuses and mosques to counter the Leftist movement. It would also in its later years launch punitive expeditions against Leftist militants and symbols. Its initial targets were secular politicians, Leftist figures, atheists and feminists, and violence was manifest through clashes with Leftist students and professors on campuses. According to Mustafa Ramid in the early 1970s, Mouti opposed demands from some of the more zealous members to learn to use firearms, restricting their actions to physical skirmishes.[152] During questioning, Kamal Ibrahim told the authorities "the association of the Islamic youth was created to physically eradicate political figures and intellectuals".[153] However, as noted above, former Chabiba members claim that as tensions with the authorities increased over the years, so did the radicalization of this branch's outlook and it was only from the 1980s, that it became implicated in increasingly violent action against the state. Indeed, Shahin states that it was

151 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p. 184.

152 "Once we were in Mouti's house in Benjedia and we told him about the necessity of learning to handle a gun, for the revolution against the political system – he asked us where we wanted to do the training and we said in the mountains. Then Mouti told us it would be an easy way for the system to find us and bomb the mountains(....) This was a very severe answer which made us feel never to raise the issue again." Mustafa Ramid interview in Talidi, *Dhākira*, Part 4, p. 97.

153 Balta, Paul, *L'Islam dans le monde* (Paris: La Decouverte, 1986) p. 140 as cited in Ben Elmostafa, *Les Movements Islamiques*, p. 65 (my translation)

"the assassination of Omar Ben Jelloun" which "ushered in a phase of confrontation between the regime and al-Chabiba."[154]

1.2 The Disintegration of the Chabiba Islamiya

While the Chabiba may initially have provided the regime with a useful counter-weight to Leftist opposition, as the weight of the movement grew and its focus shifted from the Left to the regime itself, the state was forced to devise methods to contain and limit its threat. Chief among the tactics were infiltration and mediation from senior figures who encouraged dialogue, alongside pressure from the security services, in order for the group to consider working in the open, legally and within the regime's red lines.

From the early 1970s, the authorities had become increasingly suspicious of the movement and were monitoring its activities and leading members. According to Darif, the regime sought to weaken the movement and one of the strategies devised to dismantle it was infiltration.[155] He states that the authorities tasked Baha Eddine Al Amiri (Bahāᶜ al-Dīn al-ᶜĀmirī/al-Amirī?), a Syrian living in Morocco with known Muslim Brotherhood sympathies and a professor at Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ḥassaniya, with infiltrating the movement as part of a mission on behalf of the King. Al-Amiri was instructed to use his links and the lustre of his past membership in the Muslim Brotherhood in the East to gain the trust of senior movement leaders and provide reports to the secret services and Ministry of Interior on Mouti's activities. His daughter is even alleged to have joined the women's wing to help acquire more information.

Belal confirms this in his account. He alleges that Baha Eddine al-Amiri was then working for the Moroccan royal cabinet and points to another figure, Abdelkrim Khatib (ᶜAbd al-Kārim al-Khaṭīb). Together, al-Amiri and Khatib (Khaṭīb) served as intermediaries for the authorities to keep informed of Mouti and Noumani's (Nuᶜmānī's) activism. While it

154 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p. 186.

155 Darif, *Monarchie Marocaine*, p. 46.

is unclear the full extent of Khatib's role in the 1980's, is noteworthy that Khaṭīb retains this intermediary role between government and Islamic movements, well after the dissolution of the Chabiba and into the 90's. Belal describes Abdelkrim Khatib as a "key man in the dialogue between the Palace and the participationiste Islamic movement in the 1990s"[156]. It is clear however from testimonials of various figures within the Islamic movement that Abdelkrim Khatib was a key intermediary figure for the emerging Islamic movement from its outset.

1.2.1 The Assassination of Omar Ben Jalloun in 1975

The assassination of Omar Ben Jalloun in 1975 was a major watershed in the history of the Chabiba Islamiya, an event whose memory long resonated and even became cause of a public letter by Chabiba members as recently as 2005. As a prominent public intellectual of the Moroccan left, an activist, journalist and trade unionist, Ben Jalloun represented a threat both to the Moroccan regime and the worldview of the Chabiba. On December 18th, while going for a walk outside his home in Casablanca, Ben Jalloun was set upon by assailants and killed. Whether actually ordered by Mouti or not, the consequences of this killing for the Chabiba, both internally and in its relationship with the regime, were monumental.

Shahin notes that the murder served the regime on two fronts, simultaneously weakening the Left through the loss of an important leader, and weakening the Chabiba through its association with violent extremism and the subsequent crackdown which emerged. From this moment forward, the Chabiba could no longer aspire to operate as a legal association and its activists would be force to publicly subscribe to the regime's red lines in order to escape imprisonment and more broadly, to continue any form of Islamic activism.

Elements of an informal relationship between the government and the Chabiba seem to be exemplified in the Ben Jalloun affair, with accusations of direct-government

156 Belal, *Le Cheikh et le calife*, p. 118.

involvement. Nonetheless, it was also precisely this affair that prompted (or at least gave justified cause for) the government to begin to move against the Chabiba organization as a whole. While accusations of Chabiba involvement in violence had first surfaced following the attempted murder of Communist militant and professor of Philosophy, Abderrahim El Meniaoui (ᶜAbd al-Raḥīm al-Maniawī) at the lycee Moulay-Abdallah in Casablanca in 1972 in which the Chabiba were suspects,[157] it was the Ben Jalloun affair that was pinned to Chabiba and Mouti.

Belal relays testimony of regime involvement for the murder. He states that the authorities sought to rein in the Left and specifically halt the creation of a potentially powerful trade union, the CDT (Confédération démocratique du travail – the trade union linked to the Socialist party) through use of the Chabiba. He quotes former Moroccan secret service agent, Ahmed Bokhari (Aḥmad Bukhārī)[158] as stating that Mouti received significant financial compensation for the execution of Omar Ben Jelloun, which he divided amongst the members of the cell. If true, this suggests that the negotiations between the regime and members of the Islamic movement over the shape and tenor of their activism may well have predated the disintegration of the Chabiba.[159]

According to Talidi, while Mouti did give the order to 'rough Ben Jelloun up', he did not give the order to kill him:[160]

> The mission they'd been given was to punish him – to beat him, to send him a strong message 'if you insult the Prophet, we are here to defend the religion'. (…) Witnesses say they saw him being beaten up. I think that there are many question marks, because it is probable that another actor participated in this, finished off the mission.

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157 Benkirane, "La normalization politique", p. 2.

158 Interview with Ahmed Bokhari in November 2004, quoted in: Belal, *Le Cheikh et le Calife*, p. 118.

159 The suggestion there were negotiations between Chabiba figures and the regime is also alluded to an article by Tel Quel about Ben Jelloun's murder. Tel Quel, "Enquete la verite sur l assassinat de Omar Benjelloun", accessed 04/2013, http://telquel.ma/2012/07/19/Enquete-la-verite-sur-l-assassinat-de-Omar-Benjelloun_531_3631.

160 Talidi, Interview, 2010: "At this time, the authorities were angry with the actions of Omar Ben Jelloun. Not saying they were responsible, but this was a very foggy issue."

In March 2005 however, seven former members of the Chabiba issued a statement in the Saudi Daily, al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ denouncing Mouti as the perpetrator.[161]

The murder of socialist leader Omar Ben Jelloun sent shock waves through the Chabiba. According to Darif, the authorities had previously sought to recruit Kamal Ibrahim and during meetings with officials even made offers to Mouti to convince him to abandon his activism.[162] Confronted with a refusal to cooperate, the authorities had resorted to arresting and incarcerating Mouti, while seeking to use infiltrated members to involve the group in illegal activities. But when rumours of Chabiba involvement in the murder of Ben Jelloun on December 18th 1975 began to circulate, the authorities banned the group.

Mouti told his followers he was a victim of a government conspiracy and claimed the state was seeking to rid itself of the Left and Islamist opposition all at once, causing confusion amongst the ranks. While the USFP accused the government of instrumentalising the Chabiba to rid itself of Leftist opposition, claiming the government had authorized the killing and facilitated Mouti's escape, Mouti pointed to a series of prior cordial interactions with Ben Jelloun, during which the men had agreed to a public debate on their respective ideological outlooks as proof of his innocence: "It (the Chabiba) argued that by eliminating him, the government reaped a double benefit: it managed both to weaken a radical wing within the left by direct assassination and to liquidate the Islamic opposition by arrests and trials.[163]

Shahin notes that the king was granting a degree of freedom to political actors, a freedom which,[164] coming from either radical Leftist or radical islamists, could have been

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161 The Saudi Daily *al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* published a letter signed by seven former members of the Chabiba in 1988 designating Mouti as responsible for instigating the murder of Omar Ben Jelloun. See La Gazette du Maroc, "Le Mouvement islamique s'en prend à 'Achark Al Awsat'", *La Gazette du Maroc*, n° 410:7 (March, 2005).

162 Darif, *Monarchie Marocaine*, p. 46.

163 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p. 187.

164 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p. 187.

destabilizing. Meanwhile, the authorities accused the Chabiba of responsibility and began a wave of arrests and interrogations.

1.2.2 Mouti's departure from Morocco

In 1977, the Moroccan regime held trials for the murder of Omar Ben Jelloun. Seventeen members of the Chabiba, including Mouti, received life sentences, two received death sentences and two, including Kamal Ibrahim were acquitted. By this point however, Mouti was no longer in Morocco.

Soon after the murder of Omar Ben Jalloun, Abdelkrim Mouti left Morocco. He fled, initially to Saudi Arabia in 1976,[165] and then Kuwait,[166] where he made contact with Islamic movements there. Over the next few years, Mouti travelled to Iran and Libya, before seeking refuge in Europe. According to Talidi [167], Mouti's outlook during this period wavered depending on where he found himself. Talidi claims that during his stay in Iran, he made overtures to the Iranian regime and this coincided with the emergence of Shiite literature in Morocco. After complications in Iran, he moved to Libya in the 1980s where he adopted a pro-Ghaddafi outlook which was to prove the final straw for his remaining loyalists in Morocco.

During this period in exile, Mouti was also twice sentenced to life in prison in absentia, first for the distribution of anti-monarchy tracts in 1981, the second time in 1984, for distributing pro-Khomeini material and sending armed commandos to Morocco to overthrow the regime. In 1984, an attempt was made at kidnapping him in Brussels where he had been publishing the radical *al-Mujāhid* magazine.[168]

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165 Chadi, T., "La galaxie intégriste" *Maroc-Hebdo*, 23/5/2003, accessed 21/02/10 http://www.marochebdo.press.ma/MHinternet/Archives_559/html_559/lagalaxie.html.

166 Talidi, Interview, 2009. Note however conflicting narratives of Mouti's time in exile.

167 Talidi is a journalist at Attajdid, the movement's historian and an active member of the MUR, writing the movement's history in a conscious effort to forge its identity: "The Islamic movement in Egypt wrote 25 books, reviewing their position, now I'm doing it for the Moroccan movements."

168 Burgat, F., *L'islamisme au Maghreb* (Paris: Karthala, 1988), p. 206.

Mouti's departure from Morocco opened for the first time in the history of the Chabiba the space for other senior leaders of the movement to operate beyond Mouti's direct control. On the eve of his departure, he seems to have appointed a so-called 'Committee of Six' to stand in charge of the Chabiba in his stead.

It was within this leadership committee that suspicions concerning Mouti's involvement in the Ben Jelloun murder began to arise. According to Mohamed Rida Ben Khaldoun, the murder was condemned by a majority of the members who, despite viewing society from the Qutbian perspective, did not condone murder: "In the educational circles, we learnt the foundations of Islam and we could still discern. The murder was badly viewed in the group, aside from a small group in Casablanca."[169]

One of the immediate consequence of the murder of Ben Jelloun was the tension created between the movement's two wings, which gradually led to a reassessment of violence as a means of instating an Islamic state. The murder of Ben Jalloun and Mouti's departure became a significant catalyst in the disintegration of the Chabiba, but was not the only one. Crucial in this regard was also the issue of the Western Sahara, and Mouti's stance therein.

1.2.3 The Chabiba Islamiya, the Green March and the Western Sahara

It seems consensually agreed that 1975 was critical in the history of the Chabiba, and marked the moment of its rupture. While this year saw the killing of Ben Jelloun, it also saw major disputation within the movement regarding the nationalistic outlook of the Chabiba. 1975 thus saw both the horizontal and vertical rupture of the movement. Both Shahin and Francois Burgat locate the root of the movement's breakdown in Mouti's anti-nationalist attitude, in particular his stance on the Western Sahara, long considered a red line for the regime.[170]

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169 Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

170 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p. 187 and Burgat, *L'islamisme*, p. 206.

Control of the region of the Western Sahara, bordering the Atlantic Ocean on the southern borders of Morocco, has been contested between Morocco, Mauritania and the region's native 'Sahrawi' population since the onset of Spanish decolonization in the 20th century. Remaining until the 1970's under Spanish rule, 1973 saw the formal constitution of the Polisario Front (the Spanish abbreviation for Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro), a Sahrawi rebel movement of national liberation seeking an end to Spanish occupation. Throughout however, control of the region had been contested by the Moroccan monarchy, who claimed that historic ties of allegiance of the tribes in the Western Sahara had rendered the region a constituent part of Morocco. Mauritania, as well as many of the native Sahrawi's, contested the Moroccan claim. A ruling by the International Court of Justice in 1975, initiated by a demand from the Moroccan monarchy, held that despite historic ties between some tribes and the Moroccan Sultanate, Morocco held no right of territorial sovereignty over the region and rejected it's demand for annexation. Instead, it held for the right of self-determination by the natives of the land.

In October 1975, King Hassan II called for the 'Green March', a military intervention presented in patriotic terms designed to reclaim these southern territories from former colony Spain. In so doing, he placed Algerian and Sahroui claims to the territory before a *fait accompli*, leading to tensions with Algiers and the Polisario. The 'Green March', while clearly a military intervention, was couched by the monarchy as a popular national movement and infused with Islamic symbolism. Following mass propaganda calling for the Green March, more than 350,000 Moroccans gathered on the city of Tarfaya in Southern Morroco. Accompanied by extensive military detachments, the marchers displayed Qur'an's, images of the King and Moroccan flags, and the Green appellation in reference to the 'colour' of Islam. By now, the Moroccan military had already prepared the way following a military operation in the North-Eastern region of the Western Sahara, one met with heavy resistance by the now established Polisario Front. Willis notes the importance of the Green March to the monarchy which was facing threats both from the military and

Leftist opposition: "…Hassan was able to seize upon the issue of Morocco's claim on the Spanish Sahara to forge a nationalistic cause that could unite the mutinous military and the political opposition behind him…" [171]

The conflict over the issue of the Western Sahara made the Chabiba the object of the regime's wrath, after it refused to participate in the Green March. Mouti claimed to have been personally invited to participate in the Green march by the authorities, but refused on the grounds that he considered the regime's stance to be erroneous, stating:[172]

> The question of the Sahara was never posed in terms of Islamic doctrine (…) or in terms of common interests and objectives with the Sahrawis; (…) it was only posed in terms of an attachment to the Alawi throne. In this sense, the official thesis is triply erroneous: historically, religiously and politically."

The regime interpreted this refusal as outright support for the Polisario.

Mouti's stance placed him squarely at odds with the official, national line as well as public opinion. Elahmadi points to the combination Mouti's expounding of anti-nationalist views, namely as regarding the Sahara, combined with the assassination of Ben Jelloun, as leading to the disintegration of the movement.[173] Whatever the links between the regime and the Chabiba, Mouti's refusal to accept the regime's red line would inevitably lead to conflict with the authorities, a lesson the Chabiba activists after Mouti were determined to learn from.

1.2.4 Internal conflict with the Chabiba and departures

Interviews with former Chabiba members have argued that the disintegration of the Chabiba was due to the ideological blindness of Mouti and his authoritarian behaviour as leader. According to former Chabiba member Abdesalaam Belaji, it was the strange orders emanating from the top which began to worry some, particularly with the lack of democratic or official instances in which those orders could be discussed or disputed.

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171 Willis, M., *Politics and power in the Maghreb* (London: Hurst & Co., 2012), p. 272.

172 Burgat, *L'islamisme au Maghreb*, pp. 203-204.

173 El Ahmadi, *Mouvements islamistes,* p. 65

A number of former Chabiba members mentioned being given strange, sometimes violent orders in the latter days of the movement, which they refused to undertake, an act of rebellion which led to them being expelled.[174] Al-Sedrati recalls returning to Rabat after the murder of Ben Jelloun only to find most of the activists had moved, fearing arrest.[175] This absence of a support network meant he himself stopped working within the movement for a year, as things settled.

From 1975 to 1980, a number of members left to join or establish other associations which would forge the next chapter of the Islamic movement in Morocco. Small groups began to take shape out of the ambers of the Chabiba including the '*Tabayyoune*', a group which sought to mediate between Mouti and the different factions by adopting a 'neutral' position, the *Jamāᶜa Islāmiyya* (JI), led by Benkirane and committed to a new modus operandi, the *Jamaa al-Shurūq al-Islāmī* (the Group of the Islamic dawn), a group which differed with Benkirane's new line but wished to remain active in daw'a, *Fassil al Jihad* (The jihad section) and other smaller violent groups.

The murder of Ben Jelloun had several concrete consequences for the Chabiba. The first was Mouti's exile (as well as Kamal Ibrahim's arrest), while the second was his loss of the leadership of the movement as it disintegrated into factionalism. According to Munson Mouti left Morocco three days after the murder of Ben Jelloun to attend a conference in Cordoba, but never returned.[176] Another consequence was that by 1976, the leadership of the Chabiba had moved into the hands of the youth.

The period between 1975 until the early 1980s was therefore a period of ambiguity for the Chabiba. Mouti had been exiled and leadership of the movement was a fraught matter. Former members refer to the period from 1977 as the '*fitna*' ('trial/ordeal'). The movement had been infiltrated by the state, a number of the movement leaders were in jail,

174 Belaji, Interview, 2009; Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

175 Talīdī, *Dhākira,* Part 2, p. 65.

176 Munson, "Morocco's Fundamentalists", p. 341.

others were in hiding, while some chose to abandon Islamic work and return to 'normal' life.[177]

As the members came to know one another, having previously been denied contact, diverging conceptions of the movement came to the fore:[178]..

> After this, the problems started. Who is the head? There was the question of organization, of the line to be towed, of a coherent educational program, many of the circles have their own educational programs. There was also the conflict with the Marxists which Mouti had fostered but which some were starting to question.

In a reflection of the ideational divergences in the Chabiba circles, while some wanted the Chabiba to be a purely Islamic educational movement, others were pushing for a political movement. Some wanted to pursue the choice of working through civil society while others preferred the military route. The question of clandestine activity versus legal work, of the attitude to the Sahara and of the relationship to other countries all became pivotal as the group began to dissolve into new directions.

As the movement disintegrated, Mouti created a leadership of six individuals, "the Committee (or group) of Six" composed of three men from Rabat and three from Casablanca.[179] According to Ahmed Mechtalli while Mouti had officially created the Group of Six to manage the movement, once they began to question his orders, he stopped trusting them and began creating 'lines' (*khuṭūṭ*), other leadership groups, in direct contact with him, and of which the Committee of Six were unaware.[180]

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177 Abou Zaid, Interview, 2009.

178 Talidi, Interview, 2009.

179 Talidi, *Dhakira,* Part 3, p. 125.

180 Mechtalli affirms that Mouti's objective with the 'second line' was to show up the Committee of Six in front of the members as a way of getting rid of them. Mouti began to circulate rumours concerning the Committee of Six, claiming they had "deviated" and were "no longer on the right path", marking the beginning of the period known as the "*fitna*" (Mechtalli, Interview, 2009).

In 1977, two members of the Chabiba accused the Committee of Six of disobeying the orders of the Amir.[181]. Others within the movement were wary of these accusations. As al-Sedrati recalls, confusion seems to have reigned across the movement: "…we didn't know who to believe, the leader we used to obey or the brothers who had raised us"[182]

Following the expulsion of the Committee of Six, the leadership moved to what was referred to as the 'second line' namely to that of the 'Teachers' (*al-Mu^{c}allamīn*) led by Moattassim and Birwayn.[183] This was however, according to Darif 'purely formal'. Their fate eventually became the same as that of the 'Committee of Six' as they were superseded. The 'teachers' were replaced by a 'third line', known as the Committee of Twelve and led by Abdelilah Benkirane. According to Yatim, during this period, Mouti would tell the 'Teachers' that the Committee of Six were 'extremists, revolutionaries' and to 'beware of them', whilst he was simultaneously telling another group, known as the Group of Twelve, that he was preparing them for the revolution since the time had come.[184] This period of profound confusion had a lasting impact on those who the former Chabiba activists who would subsequently place significant importance on questions of leadership, transparency and accountability.

The new group of Mouti faithful, the 'Committee of Twelve', led by Abdelilah Benkirane, took over the formal leadership of the Chabiba from late 1978.[185] Abdelilah

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181 According to al-Sedrati as cited in Talidi, *Dhākira*, Part 2, p. 65. The two were Ali Bahni and Ibrahim Bourja.

182 Al-Sedrati as cited in Talīdī, *Dhākira*, Part 2. p. 65. Furthermore, Mouti released a statement announcing the Committee of Six had been expulsed from the movement and stating they were "*bi'l-Khurūj*". The term had symbolic religious connotations (historically used to mean to have 'gone outside' out of obedience and therefore religion) and was used by Mouti to mean that the accussed had rebelled and 'gone outside' the fold of the faith and had been infiltrated. Naturally the committee itself rejected this.

183 Cited by al-Sedrati in Talidi, *Dhākira*, Part 2, p. 65.

184 Yatim, Interview, 2010. Yatim further adds that from 1979, Mouti was in touch with Libya, Algeria and the Polisario to acquire the necessary training for his followers in the view of the said revolution.

185 "In late 1978, I was in the leadership committee in Casablanca and there were also two brothers from Barnoussi in Casablanca, they were known as Bukhari and Muslim, there was Abderahim abu

Benkirane emerged as a prominent figure on the Chabiba scene in 1976, in the midst of the confusion following the Ben Jelloun affair, but was convinced by Mouti that he had nothing to do with the killing. Benkirane became a leading figure in the movement, riding to prominence when he joined study circles at a local mosque[186] where he rapidly gained a reputation for the strength of his lessons and his strong influence over people.[187] Mouti had heard from other members that a strong personality was leading some of the circles (*jallasāt*) and from 1977, he established close contact with Benkirane, asking him to travel to Mecca and then to Italy to meet with him, convincing him that he was innocent and caught up in a state led conspiracy. Until the early 1980s, Benkirane would remain Mouti's loyal contact within Morocco.

1.2.4 The emergence of the Jamaa Tabayyoun

The fallout between the Committee of Six and Mouti over accusations of complicity with the authorities led to a mutual rejection and formed the basis of the *Jamaa Tabayyoun*, the group of clarification.[188] Initially a position, rather than a group, the members of the 'tabayyoun' sought to clarify the situation with the Chabiba leadership and wished to remain neutral until such clarifications were available.[189] The men[190] based and named themselves on the principles set out in a particular verse from the Qur'an,[191] and the objective was to

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Naim (ᶜAbd al-Raḥīm Abū Naᶜīm), Abdelatif Bakar (Abd al-Laṭīf Bakkār), Mohamed Birwayn (Muḥammad Birwayn) and some others." Mustafa Ramid interview as cited in Talidi, *Dhākira*, Part 4, p. 99.

186 Namely the Mouhasinin (Muḥasanīn) mosque in the Yaqoub al Mansour (Yaᶜqūb al-Manṣūr) area

187 Dr Ahmed Mechtalli interview as cited in Talīdī, *Dhākira,* Part 1, p. 93.

188 According to Mechtalli (Mechtalli, Interview, 2010) this did not amount to "leaving the Chabiba Islamiya".

189 The Tabayyoun was made up of three sides: the group from Rabat, the group from Casablanca and the group from Ibn Ahmad. According to al Sedrati in: Talidi, *Tadhkira*, Part 2, p. 67)

190 Who included Mechtalli, Sedrati and led by Abdel Razaq al-Marouri

191 The name and attested principle stems from the verse (Qur'an 49:6) reading "Oh you who believe, if a wicked person comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth" (*Ya ayyuha'l-ladhīna āmanū in jāᵓakum fāsiqun bi-nabaᵓin fa-tabayyanū*). The men in this group included Mechtalli, Sedrati and were led by Abdel Razaq al-Marouri (ᶜAbd al-Razzāq al-Marūrī).

mediate between the Committee of Six and Mouti, to assess the truth of Mouti's accusations of insincerity against them.[192] In 1978, following the failure of attempts to reconcile with Mouti, Mouti formally excluded the members of '*tabayoun*' and what was once a temporary stance evolved into a group, the *Jamaa Tabayyoun*.

While 1976 marked the beginning of a crackdown on the Chabiba militants,[193] 1980 saw the trial of the Chabiba's leadership, including Mouti, Kamal Ibrahim and A. Noumani in Casablanca.[194] The group's base, led by Benkirane, responded by organizing demonstrations near the palace, causing further tensions with the regime, which because demonstrations are not permitted near the royal palace read the demonstration as a political message of affront to the King. At the protest, Benkirane claimed the Chabiba was innocent and requested that Mouti be allowed to re-enter Morocco. Remaining members of the Chabiba campaigned for the release of Kamal Ibrahim and an amnesty for Mouti.

The fourth consequence of Ben Jelloun's killing was the Chabiba's spread. According to Ahmed Mechtalli, prior to Mouti's exile, the Chabiba was located mainly in three areas: Casablanca, Fes and Rabat.[195] However, as news of the movement emerged following the murder of Omar Ben Jelloun, the Chabiba spread throughout all of Morocco, as people, including members of the USFP, PPS, and others, joined. "It was like free publicity," recalls Belaji.[196] Paradoxically, the murder of Ben Jelloun had contributed to

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192 As Mechtalli (Interview, 2010) states: "The trust we had in Mouti was through the Committee of Six – at the same time, we knew them well. We trusted them. We saw them as our role models. All of a sudden, we started hearing rumours about these people and they also, began hearing things, that Mouti had made mistakes – so we were in a situation of who to believe. Mouti, someone who was our emir, our model, or these people whom we knew well… We didn't know how to resolve this. We thought we should apply the directives of the Qur'an and Sunnah – if you disagree, then '*tabayanū*'- Try and seek out who is right."

193 Benikrane, "La normalization politique", p. 3.

194 "Condemnation de la Direction Historique de la Chabiba" in El Ahmadi, *Mouvements Islamistes,* p. 65.

195 Mechtalli (Interview, 2010): "When Mouti was exiled, Yatim was the head in Fes, three others were heads in Rabat and 3 others in Casablanca."

196 Belaji, Interview, 2009.

increasing the movement's profile and a number of leading figures joined during this period, including Moukri Abou Zaid, Amin bou Khoubza and Abdelilah Benkirane. Burgat notes that the movement's ranks were also swollen through the addition of former expatriated student members in Europe.[197]

Despite this growth in membership, from 1976, the Chabiba's presence on campuses diminished and its contribution was limited to defensive postures emphasising non-violence and its declared lack of connection to the killing of Ben Jelloun. However, at the local level, many members continued the movement's educational work and organized classes on Islam, camping expeditions in the summer, and other *daᶜwa* activities.[198] It was also during this period that a separate women's section emerged. According to Bilal Talidi, this operated in parallel to the men's section and which coordinated through the meeting of the top supervisors or via couples where both spouses were in the movement, with otherwise little to no interaction between the men and women.[199]

Another consequence of the murder was the emergence of conflict between the Chabiba youth leadership and Mouti, who seeing his influence dwindle, expelled the Group of Six in 1977. This was a period of confusion over the movement's leadership. Although in the early eighties Benkirane was a strong and leading figure, according to Bilal Talidi, the leadership of the Chabiba was not under the control of any single individual.[200] Referring to the feeling of lack of leadership between 1977 and 1980, a saying had become commonplace amongst the Chabiba veterans that "at one time in the Chabiba, we were all responsible and

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197 Burgat, *Islamism au Maghreb*, p. 206.

198 Amin Bou Khubza recalls (as cited in Talīdī, *Dhākira*, Part 2, p. 21) that following the murder of Ben Jelloun, he returned to university where he began leading independent (non-Chabiba) educational circles on campus. Around February or March 1976, he was approached by Benkirane who suggested he undertake his lessons within the framework of a movement, the Chabiba, convincing him that individual efforts would not yield success and that he ought to join the movement.

199 Talidi, Interview, 2009.

200 Talidi, Interview, 2009. As relayed differently by another former Chabiba member to Talidi: "everyone was a leader, so no one was a leader".

no-one was responsible."[201] This may well have contributed to the sense among Chabiba activists, that a single, unquestionable leader was no longer a desirable model, and empowered many to view themselves as leaders in their own right, a perception which would influence future organizations born out of the Chabiba experience.

The movement was in tatters and internally divided. From the early 1980s, orders to commit violent crimes were given, from at times, unclear sources. According to Othmani, "Initially, there were some orders to do violence, but the brothers were not convinced this was coming from the leader, but with time, they realized Mouti was manipulating them."[202] In its totality, the consequence of the regime's crackdown on the Chabiba after the murder of Omar Ben Jelloun led to Mouti's outlook becoming increasingly radicalized and for an increasingly vocal call to confront the regime.

1.3 The end of the Chabiba islamiyaand the birth of the Jamaa Islamia

During the period of the disintegration of the Chabiba from 1975 onwards, Abdelilah Benkirane began his rise to prominence as a skilled orator and charismatic leader. As it became clear the Chabiba had no future, Benkirane began his own steps to establish a movement from its embers, one which would reflect his willingness to adapt to concessions required by the regime, while seeking to maintain the underlying drive behind the Chabiba – an attempt to reform both Moroccan society and the state according to Islamic principles.

According to Yatim, the trial of Ben Jelloun during which Mouti was convicted, led to a shift in Mouti's political position: [203]

> Even before 1980, he had tendencies to make Chabiba a revolutionary organization – but when he saw the trial didn't exonerate him, he became radicalised. He began sending out tracts against the regime, inciting revolution.

Alongside Mouti's vacillating stance, the regime began a crackdown on the Islamic movement in Morocco. With the Iranian revolution in 1979 and the takeover of the Grand-

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201 Talidi, Interview, 2009.

202 Saaedine el Othmani (Sa^{c}ad al-Dīn al-^{c}Uthmānī) in Talidi, *Dhākira*, Part 4, p. 61.

203 Yatim, Interview, 2010.

mosque in 1980 in Saudi Arabia, revolutionary groups in the region were perceived as a growing threat, particularly by reigning monarchies. The regime responded by arresting many Chabiba activists and barring them from congregating in mosques. In 1980, Hassan II penned '*Risālat al-Qarn*', the 'message of the century', an open letter in which he declared an 'Islamic Renaissance', consciously drawing on the themes raised by the broader Moroccan Islamic movement. The letter is interpreted as marking a shift in the regime's focus from the Leftist to the Islamic threat, and an effort to "pull the carpet from under the Islamic movement."[204] Mass arrests of Islamic activists during this period enabled the regime to gather data and compile dossiers on key figures and groups. Realising the potency of the Islamic movement's opposition, the government devised a strategy to both undermine some elements, while incorporating others, as had been the traditional strategy of the Makhzen.

According to senior MUR leader Abdulla Baha, from 1978/79, the future leaders of the Jamaa Islamia came to head the Chabiba under Benkirane, who managed the remaining members faithful to Mouti.[205]

Mouti by now had sought to lead the movement from abroad, using the publication of *al-Mujāhid* magazine, made up of around 50 A4 pages in which Mouti tackled selected topics, as means of conveying his ideas and specific objectives through coded message and images. According to Talidi, these were to encourage his remaining sympathisers to move towards armed action, clarify the new organizational set-up, use the Western Sahara issue for political ends, blacken the image of the Moroccan regime in order to justify its overthrow and detail the arrests and trials of Chabiba militants in order to highlight Human Rights abuses committed by the regime.

Mouti sent a total of three issues of *al-Mujāhid* magazine to Morocco. In the publication, he harshly criticized the monarchy while calling for violence. *Al-Mujāhid's* first

204 Talidi, Interview, 2009.

205 Baha, Interview, 2009: "…the leaders of the Chabiba islamiya were the founders of the Jamaa Islamia."

two issues provided the platform through which Mouti announced his call for a violent overthrow of the regime. While the first issue of *al-Mujāhid* (1981) included a thinly veiled reference to jihad,[206], it was in the second issue (1982) where he called for revolution against the regime and described the rebels in the Western Sahara as '*Mujāhidīn*' which was considered particularly inflammatory. His depiction of the Polisario as fellow Muslims, performing ablutions (*wuḍūʾ*) and praying in the Sahara, was a line Mouti knew would have dire consequences for the remaining members in Morocco. This represented the first time that Mouti had publicly challenged the monarchy, having previously limiting his true beliefs to Chabiba circles.[207]

Arrests soon followed. Benkirane himself was arrested first in 1981, then again in 1982, leading to a three month stay in a Casablanca jail, during which Benkirane began to question Mouti's views. Among these were whether the regime was truly '*kāfir*' (i.e. infidel, having rejected Islam) and also reassessing the group's view of political parties, associations and the broader population. He also claims to have witnessed former members of the Chabiba abandon their religion under torture, which led him to a critical view of a movement he felt had emphasized the political side of change, at the expense of spiritual change and education: "It is logical after punishment and arrest to leave the Chabiba, maybe even to leave an Islamic association, but to abandon the practise of religion meant there was something fundamentally wrong in the Chabiba Islamiya."[208]

The spate of arrests led the new leadership, Benkirane included, to request a meeting with Mouti to clarify both their position within the organization and the direction Mouti envisaged. The men sent an envoy, Amin Bou Khubza to Spain, to meet Mouti, who was

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206 According to Talidi, Interview, 2009, the publication contains the sentence: "*Ya Khayl Allāh irkabī*", which might be translated as "Oh horses of God drive forth", where horses are used as a symbol of battle.

207 Dialmy, "L'Islamisme marocain", p. 6.

208 Talidi, Interview, 2009.

based at the time in Libya.[209] According to Bou Khubza, Mouti had shifted his allegiance to Ghadaffi, telling him that the Polisario, the Libyan regime and the Chabiba shared the same objectives of toppling the Moroccan monarchy and praising Ghaddafi's Green Book.[210] According to Bilal Talidi,[211] Mouti also told Bou Khubza that the Libyan regime was ready to support them financially and militarily in their opposition to the regime and encouraged some of the group's younger members to travel to Libya to benefit from military training.

In reaction to Mouti's anti-regime outburst, some members, led by Benkirane, held a general assembly in April 1981 to reconsider the movement's objectives. The men decided to cut links with the exiled leader and continue their activism without him. It was therefore on the 14th of April 1981that the Chabiba islamiya under Abdelilah Benkirane made it's decisive move to distance itself from Mouti and his revolutionary ambitions.[212] They announced an alternative organization, 'al-Jamāᶜa al-Islāmiyya', the Islamic Group.[213]

Following the announcement, discussions arose across Morocco in the various branches of the Chabiba, leading to further defections. Some continued to seek confrontation and saw the potential alliance with the Polisario as a means of gathering necessary weaponry. Others felt they were being led into a conflict they had no say in and began to

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209 Bou Khoubza had been selected as he was from Tetouan in the North of the country, formally under the Spanish protectorat, which meant he spoke Spanish, a skill which would make his travel easier at a time where acquiring visas was a difficult process for Moroccans.

210 Bou Khoubza, Interview, 2009: "Mouti told me, we in the Islamic movement, we want Hassan II's head, the Polisario and Ghadaffi want this too, so there is a common interest and an objective alliance. He said, there won't be any change while Hassan II remains on the throne. But the brothers didn't share his conclusions. This was the time of the cold war, we felt he was dragging us into an international conflict and Islam had nothing to do with this, so we decided to end our relationship."

211 Talidi, Interview, 2009.

212 See: Interview with Youssef Belal. Lahlai, Youssef, "Le professeur de sociologie politique Youssef Belal : "Il ne faut pas cautionner le préjugé occidental sur les mouvements islamiques en les associant à la violence"", *Liberation*, 3/2/2012, accessed 19/7/2012, http://www.libe.ma/Le-professeur-de-sociologie-politique-Youssef-Belal-Il-ne-faut-pas-cautionner-le-prejuge-occidental-sur-les-mouvements_a24876.html

213 Boukhoubza, Interview, 2009, notes that announcement featured in a couple of Moroccan publications, some Gulf papers, and in the Saudi Arabian paper *al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* (between 10-15th of July 1981) under the title "the Chabiba youth who'd cut with Mouti".

rebel against the group's hierarchical culture in which questioning the 'Sheikh' was not permitted and where orders were to be executed, not discussed:[214]

> This man wanted to guide us like sheep, we couldn't ask questions, if you did, he claimed we'd be punished by God, his orders were to be executed without question and without even having to provide proof from the Qur'an and Sunna. This path was not for us.

The distrust of unquestionable authority would have an enduring impact on the men who would seek to avoid its manifestation in subsequent organizational set-ups.

Today's MUR partly derives its sense of legitimacy from its ability to bring together a range of Islamic activists from different backgrounds working for the common cause of deepening religion within society. This sense of itself as representing 'the' Islamic trend, can be located in a history largely indebted to the Chabiba. Y. Benkirane[215] states that following the Chabiba's formal dissolution in 1976, the group divided. One strand, hostile to the former leadership, did not manage to unite and some of this group joined the group *al-Jihād*, a Chabiba splinter group.

A significant majority of the Chabiba members however, including notably the Chabiba's Committee of Six, joined another noted figure of Moroccan Islamism, Abdesalaam Yassine ('Abd al-Salām Yāsīn).[216] Having begun to gain a following from 1973 following his infamous letter to King Hassan II, '*al-Islam aw al-Ṭūfān*' ('Islam or the Deluge'), Yasīn had been released from a psychiatric ward in 1979, where he'd been sent as punishment. According to journalist Mohamed Benkhallouk, Mouti had once sought an alliance with Yassine to unite and expand the Islamic movement, but Yassine refused.[217] Testimonies of Chabiba members highlight the draw Yassine personally held. Abdelatif Al

214 Boukhoubza, Interview, 2009.

215 Benkirane, "La normalization politique", p. 4.

216 Al Sedrati was amongst a number of former Chabiba members including Dhakali and Mechtalli, who joined Yassine in the hope he could unite the Islamic movement. They attended his educational classes, promoting them broadly and circulating his magazine "al Jamaa" (al-Jamāᶜa) in Rabat.

217 Benkhallouk, Mohamed, 'La nébuleuse extrémiste' *Aujourd'hui le Maroc*', 207 (30-08-2002). http://www.aujourdhui.ma/actualite-details21922.html

Sedrati recalls encountering former 'Committee of the Six' member, Mohamed al Dhakali in 1974 and finding him distributing Yassine's letter with a young Ahmed Raissouni.[218] Mustafa Ramid, a future PJD MP and leading member of the MUR, attended Yassine's circles from 1980 to 1982, in Marrakesh. He was asked by Yassine to be one of the founders of a new association, al-Jamāᶜa al-Khayriyya, that Yassine was preparing to establish, after his failure to unite the different Islamic trends at the time.[219] Indeed, from the mid-eighties, Yassine had sought to unite the various groups and his views were one of the leading currents[220]. But it was the success of the Jamaa Islamia-Movement for Reform and Renewal - and ultimately, the MUR in doing just this, which cemented the MUR's own sense of legitimacy and ability to speak from across a spectrum of Islamic perspectives.

By 1982, as seen by both the creation of the Jamaa Islamia and the drift towards Yassine, Mouti loyalists were dwindling. In a likely attempt to shore up charismatic appeal, Mouti urged his remaining supporters to attack the regime. In 1984, the same year as the January riots, Mouti penned a book, entitled: 'The Islamic Revolution: the Actual Destiny of Morocco" which advocated violence.[221] This move was to prove the last straw for many Chabiba members who chose to leave the organization. This marked the final stage in the Chabiba's disintegration and the violent radicalization of some of its remaining adherents.

1.3.1 The post-Chabiba strands

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218 As noted in Talīdī, *Dhākira*, Part 2, p. 64. Note however that Raissouni had not been in the Chabiba

219 "He asked me to be one of the founders and I asked for some time to think. I was in a delicate situation, as I respected and liked Yassine very much. After my experience with the Chabiba, I wasn't ready to have the same experience again, so I didn't call him and I knew Yassine would take the hint." (Mustafa Ramid as cited in Talidi, *Dhākira,* Part 4, p. 105.

220 Despite criticism from more Salafi inclined groups that he focused too exclusively on preaching and education. See Munson, "Islamic revivalism", p. 206

221 Mouti, *La revolution Islamique: destin du Maroc actuel.*

1.3.1.1 The Jamaa Islamia and the Political Trend

Following the April 1981 assembly in which the Jamaa Islamia split from the Chabiba, the Chabiba itself split into several strands, a political strand represented by the Jamaa Islamia, a socio-cultural strand and a violent strand, *Fassil al Jihad* (Faṣl al-Jihād).

Furious at the Jamaa Islamia's act of dissension, on July 9th 1981, a day of national celebration led by the King, Mouti sent a band of youths from Belgium to distribute revolutionary tracts in mosques, cafes and other public spaces in Casablanca and Rabat just before the dawn prayer.[222] The tract entitled '*al-Jihād*', showed the Shah of Iran, Anwar Sadat, and Hassan II, and below these images were Qur'anic verses suggesting Hassan II would be the next to go. This led to a major crackdown on the Chabiba and on its off-shoots.

Due to the initially clandestine nature of the Jamaa Islamia's work, the departure of its members from the Chabiba was not entirely clear to the authorities who maintained some suspicion concerning the nature of the group. According to Baha it was its clandestine behaviour that led the authorities to arrest its leaders in late 1981 out of a mistaken belief they continued to lead the Chabiba organization.[223] In order to appease these concerns, Benkirane, who was twice arrested and detained, used the time between his arrests to release a statement on January 12th 1982 outlining a formal split from the Chabiba and the group's adoption of a new framework.[224] Following the regime's crackdown, the men realized clandestine activism was no longer viable since the regime was well acquainted with them. This marked the beginning of a strategy of greater openness, as the movement sought to determine how open it could be about its activities with the state, as part of what some former activists speculate was the beginning of negotiations with the state over an acceptable form of Islamic activism.

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222 Boukhoubza, Interview, 2009.

223 Baha, Interview, 2009.

224 Burgat, *L'islamisme au Maghreb*, p. 208.

Although the rupture with Mouti was immediate following the April 1981 declaration, the links between the Jamaa Islamia and the body of the Chabiba remained for a further few years as its members overlapped with emerging groups. The new formation sought to continue working in the field of Islamic activities, within the legal parameters of the state, denouncing Mouti's turn to radicalism and seeking legal recognition for the association. The *Jamaa Islamiya* trend focused on politics as the primary route for action, defining itself as a Moroccan movement, independent from foreign influence, in opposition to Mouti's decision to align himself with Iran and subsequently Libya.

The Jamaa Islamiya's founders travelled across the country seeking to convince the members to adhere to the 'new line' (*al-khaṭṭ al-jadīd*),[225] something which spurred accusations that Benkirane was in fact working for the state. The 'new line' stated that the men were not opposed to the regime and did not seek to combat it, and also included a re-assessment of their relationship to society.

Rida Ben Khaldoun, a PJD MP, recalls the absence of press coverage, or public knowledge of the organization and its fate, being a turning point in the outlook of some former Chabiba members, who considered the disconnect between the group and society a major fault.[226] In addition, other members noted that the clandestine route allowed mismanagement of the organization to go unnoticed by the majority, prompting them to conclude the necessity of having open institutions and clear decision making mechanisms:[227]

> The change from working on the margins to inside society was based on noticing that, after we'd left the Chabiba, there were problems of internal management. So it was based on management, not principles.

Following the frustrations the group had felt working under a single figure head, the *Murshid al-ᶜām*, it was decided all future decisions would be taken by the group and that leadership should be a collective affair. According to former Chabiba member Idriss Shahin

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225 Founding figures included figures like Lamrani, Yatim, Baha, Benkirane, el Othmani, Baha, Amin Boukhbza and others.

226 Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

227 Baha, Interview, 2009.

(Idrīs Shāhīn), what he dubbed the 'sacralisation' of the personality of the leader came to be regarded by the men as "the biggest disaster in the history of Islamic movements in Morocco."[228] Subsequently, a keen focus on elected leadership and the delimitation of power was taken from the experience.

The focus on elected leadership was partly due to the young age of the men whose experience and training could not match that of Mouti's and therefore did not render any particular candidate an obvious leader:[229]

> They were young students, they were not on the same level as Mouti and didn't think they could establish anyone from amongst themselves as an alternative to him. At that time, to them, he was the leader, a thinker, he had a substantial Islamic and political background, connections with Islamic movements around the world (…) no-one felt they could match this.

The group's reappraisal led them to recast the regime as an ally and an asset and emphasized the need to improve, not change, the nature of society (a more detailed discussion of this movement shall be found in the Chapter: Jamaa Islamiya).

Subsequently, members of the new movement members also sought advice from Islamic figure-heads whom King Hassan II had invited to attend his 'Ramadan circles', evening lectures at the Royal palace during the month of fasting. These included including Yousef al Qardawi (Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī), Hassan Turabi (Hasan Turābī), Abdellah al Anfisi (ᶜAbd Allāh al-Anfīsī) of Kuwait, Necmettin Erbakan from Turkey, Ahmed Deedat, Said Ramadan al-Bouti (Saᶜīd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī) from Syria, Jabal al Alwani (Jabal al-ᶜAlwanī), Rashid Ghanoushi, and others. The king's 'Ramadan circles were widely viewed as response to the growth in Islamic activism and an attempt to incorporate some of the appeal of Islamism into the King's own religious capital. The king's historical position as arbiter above the vagaries of politics was reflected in his hosting of various figures of international Islamism, alongside national figures with an interest in their ideas, in so doing disarming some of their oppositional value.

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228 Talidi, *Dhākira*, Part 3, p. 92.

229 Talidi, Interview, 2009.

Meetings between Benkirane's Jamaa Islamia movement members and Islamic intellectuals occurred mainly in Morocco, although some conversations were also undertaken in Europe, usually in France, or during the Ḥajj and ᶜUmra pilgrimages to Saudi Arabia. The thinkers advised the Jamaa Islamia activists to avoid confrontation with the regime and operate legally by establishing legal associations. They emphasized the opportunities afforded to them by the existing political system, namely through laws permitting civic action and extensive Islamic activism within society. They also emphasized the need to focus on women as a means of strengthening the movement and countering feminist groups. This would lead Jamaa Islamia members to pay particular attention to educated women who could actively campaign and represent the movement's ideals in public discussions over the status of women.

In addition, there was an evaluation of other Islamic movements throughout the world, in particular the different components of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, Syria, Egypt and the Tunisian An-Nahda. Their collective experiences were integrated into an assessment of what was best for the Moroccan context: "…when we left the Chabiba, there were other Islamic groups outside of Morocco to evaluate.… We didn't copy them, we studied and analysed and assessed what could be useful and what could be applied, because Morocco has its specificities".[230]

In Jordan in the 1980s, the Muslim Brotherhood had just begun its venture into politics, having previously limited its activities to charitable and then professional associations in the 60s and 70s. It opted for a position of critical support that allowed a relationship of mutual assistance to develop between the state and the movement. The group's loyalty to the state was rewarded with participation in governance and a freer rein in organizing their activities. According to Wiktorowicz "The movement has supported the state, and the state, in turn, has reciprocated by allowing the Brotherhood to organize

230 Baha, Interview, 2009.

effectively."[231] Such examples of a group providing political stability in exchange for greater influence was noted by the young Moroccan Islamists, looking for a way out of the confrontation with the regime and cognisant of events unravelling in neighbouring Algeria.[232]

1.3.1.2 The Cultural Trend

Unlike the Jamaa Islamia's more political stance, a second strand of former Chabiba dissidents opted for cultural rather than political activities and set up local associations dedicated to *daᶜwa* in the cultural and intellectual realms.

From 1977, the Chabiba activists who had adhered to the temporary stance of '*tabayoun*' evolved into a group, the *Jamaa Tabayoun*, which joined other cultural organizations to form 'The Third Way' in 1978. But the group was unable to agree on a political stance towards the regime and tendencies within it began discussions with other Islamic trends outside of the Chabiba, subsequently dividing into strands. One of these strands became 'Jamia Al Shourouq al Islami' led by Abdur Razak (ᶜAbd al-Razzāq) al-Marouri, founded in 1977.[233] This group later merged with another former Chabiba splinter group, *Mejmoua Tawhid* (Majmūᶜa Tawḥīd), created by Abdeslaam Belaji in 1979 and other Islamic currents,[234] to form 'Rabitat al Moustaqbal al Islami' (Rābiṭaṭ al-Mustaqbal al-Islāmī, the league of the Islamic future – LIF) in 1994:[235]

> We had a single ideological vision, as we both left the Chabiba because they didn't share the Chabiba vision. We had the same ideological bases as the other two groups, so we decided to constitute an Islamic movement that would insist on Islamic

231 Wiktorowicz, Q., *The Management Of Islamic Activism: Salafis, the Muslim Brotherhood, And State Power in Jordan* (New York: State University of New York, 2000), p. 109.

232 Bahā, ᶜAbd Allah (Interview, 2009) also affirms that the group surveyed the Turkish, Sudanese and Muslim Brotherhood experiences, as well as reading the Qatar based journal "*al-Umma*" which aired self-criticism of the Islamic movements.

233 Belaji, Interview, 2009.

234 Other strands within the LIF included "*Jamia Adawaa Ilallah*" of Fes, created in 1976, when the Chabiba was at its apogee, by Dr Abdeslaam Herrass and a group of teachers and the "Jamaa Islāmiya" of Ksar al Kebir, created in the same year by Ahmed Raissouni and a number of teachers.

235 Belaji, Interview, 2009.

education and especially on scientific, Islamic domains as well as other, cultural domains.

The timing of the creation of these groups, notably now existing in parallel to the Chabiba, has led some to view them as proof of the dissension of their members and founders from the views expressed by Mouti from an early stage.

1.3.1.3 The Militant Trend

The last strand, 'Fassil al Jihad' was a violent clandestine group composed of followers who remained loyal to Mouti after his exile and which began to target the state. This led to a crackdown by the authorities.[236]

By 1984, the regime was increasingly concerned about the threat of Islamic extremism, and 18 members of the Chabiba were arrested in Meknes[237] in a period of increased repression and co-optation. The authorities arrested several commando brigades, the largest, 'Katibat Badr' (Katībat Badr) was composed of 71 people and 26 militants.[238] In the same year, 71 members of the Chabiba received sentences from four years imprisonment, to death[239]. Upon arrest, the men claimed to be from Mouti's movement and stated their desire to set up an Islamic state. During the trial of the 26[240] members of the Chabiba, Mouti was again sentenced to death in absentia[241].

The period 1980-1985 is a very foggy one in the history of the Chabiba. The movement had split into various branches which adopted varying, and even contradictory

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236 According to Darif (2010), Monarchie Marocaine et acteurs religieux, Noumani left the Chabiba in 1980, and Mouti reformed the armed wing inline with his increasingly radicalized outlook, rebranding it "*Fassil al Jihad*" (the Group of Combat), as he sought to organize the remaining commandos under a single branch, the objective of which was continued armed opposition, p. 45

237 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p.188

238 El Ahmadi, *Mouvements Islamistes*, p. 45.

239 Henry Munson, "Morocco's Fundamentalists", p. 341.

240 According to Dialmy "L'islamisme marocain" there were 26. Munson, "Islamic Revivalism", p. 203) states there were 19 members of the Chabiba on trial in August 1985.

241 For the distribution of pro-Khomeini literature and for sending armed commandos to Morocco to overthrow the monarch

lines. According to Bilal Talidi,[242] this is partly due to the fact Mouti had assigned different members of society, different roles and responsibilities. Teachers were told to spread the message of Islam while students were instructed to overthrow the monarchy and establish an Islamic state.

Understanding what these differing lines were is further complicated by a lack of clarity and contradictions in the testimonials of former Chabiba members.[243] According to Benkirane, the Chabiba was a peaceful movement, but Mouti changed the line. Others like Yatim claim the Chabiba was a revolutionary movement, but certain decisions were taken without the knowledge or consent of members. Others still, like al Othmani, claim Mouti confused the interests of the *daᶜwa*, which is what members had subscribed to, and his own personal interests. Confirming the view that most members of the Chabiba were unaware of Mouti's real objectives, journalist M. Benkhallouk states: "This experience was a hard one for the members of this movement, the majority of whom were unaware of the organization's real objectives.[244]

According it is worth noting that the history of the Chabiba remains shrouded in darkness and contradictory testimonials. Mohamed Tozy contends that the remainder of the Chabiba actually split into 4 antagonistic groups: The revolutionary Commission, the Islamic Students Vanguard, the Movement of the Mujāhidīn and an anonymous fourth operating clandestinely in France.[245]

Whatever the truth, a small portion of the Chabiba were ultimately committed to undertaking violent actions against the regime and remained a threat long after the movement's disintegration.

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242 Talidi, Interview, 2009.

243 See for example the widely diverging nature of testimonies from ex-members of Chabiba in Talidi's books.

244 Benkhallouk, "La nébuleuse extremist".

245 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p. 187.

1.4 The Chabiba Islamiya becomes Ḥaraka al-Islāmiyya al-Maghribiyya

From the early 1990s, Mouti began making overtures to the regime, publishing a tract in 1999, following the death of Hassan II, denouncing violence and calling for a pact with the regime and the 'forces of the nation'. He announced the rebirth of the Chabiba to ensure its place on the map of the new era and continued to be vocal on developments in Morocco, through statements to the press or on its website.[246] From 1999, the group proclaimed a renaissance in a 'new era' through a rejection of violence and excommunication and the espousing of a more positive discourse concerning women. According to Darif, the Chabiba represents "the desire of the islamist actor to integrate the political field through self-criticism which might open the way to a national reconciliation.[247]" Mouti also expressed the desire to return to Morocco, but failed to receive the green light and remained in exile.

In 2000, Mouti published a tract, *Fiqh al-aḥkām al-Ṣulṭāniyya* (the Jurisprudence of power,[248] in which he renounced violence and called for a pact between the monarchy and the 'forces of the nation,' in the hope of being allowed to return to Morocco, but failed to ascertain royal approval. The publication represents a self-critique of the Chabiba and of the Islamic movement more generally, for seeking to instate an 'ambiguous political system.'[249] He also takes aim at the PJD for exploiting Islam for political ends, and accuses the party of

246 Darif, *Monarchie Marocaine*.

247 Darif, *Monarchie Marocaine*, p. 185.

248 Mouti here maybe consciously drawing on the title of the famous 11th century work of Islamic governance by Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Mawardī entitled "al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭaniyya" (The Ordinances of Government) which lay the constitutional framework for Islamic Sultanates of the early medieval period.

249 Darif, *Monarchie Marocaine*, p.186.

being a creation of the secret services:[250] "…these opportunists, these villains and these wranglers who use their religion for profit".[251]

In September 2004, the group now based in Oslo, renamed itself the 'Movement Islamique Marocain'[252] though the website has remained achabibah.com and Mouti figures prominently on the site, where he is described as the Spiritual guide of the movement. It establishes a distinction between the Chabiba as an organization and Abdelkrim Mouti, its founder, and emphasises its rejection of revolutionary ideology due to its association with violence. It also restates its innocence as regards the killing of Omar Ben Jelloun, describing the group's indictment as politically motivated in an effort to exclude it from the political scene.

According to several sources, the authorities entered into negotiations with Mouti over the possibility of his return to Morocco, but Mouti's fears concerning the sentences hanging over him, and reticence from certain sections of the political elite, thwarted these efforts, which included, according to Mohamed Yatim,[253] a visit from Driss Basri, then Interior Minister and the man in charge of mediating between the authorities and Islamic groups, to see Mouti in order to negotiate his return.

1.5 Conclusion

The history of the Chabiba tracks the evolution of a nebulous movement which many suspected had been encouraged, if not created, by the authorities to form a counter-weight to the political Left. As the movement's focus shifted from the Left to confrontation with the regime, it disintegrated as a result of pressure from the authorities as well as internal

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250 "Le PJD dans la ligne de mire de la Shabiba Islamiya", *La Gazette du Maroc*, 06/06/05, accessed 19/10/2010, http://www.lagazettedumaroc.com/articles.php?id_artl=6655.

251 La Gazette du Maroc, "La chabiba Islamya du Maroc: Mettre à profit les victoires des Frères musulmans " *La Gazette du Maroc*, 06/2/2006, accessed: 02/2014.

252 Darif, *Monarchie marocaine*, p.186.

253 Yatim, Interview, 2010.

chaos, only to produce new organizations which can broadly be divided into a cultural and a political trend.

The groups which emerged from the breakup of the Chabiba Islamiya continued to be viewed with suspicion by the state which questioned their commitment to a non-violent and non-confrontational *modus operandi*. One of the leading figures of the political trend, Abdelilah Benkirane, underwent a significant shift in his ideological outlook following time in jail, with some suggesting negotiations with the authorities motivated his shift in strategy. His movement, the Jamaa Islamia, later rebranded the Movement for Reform and Renewal, sought to operate within the state's legal boundaries and moreover supported the monarchy at a time when the dominant Islamic trends were profoundly opposed to monarchical rule.

The experience of the Chabiba Islamiya was an incubator for some of the MUR's leading figures, shaping their views and theological outlook, as well as informing their perception of what not to replicate. The organizational failures realized by a nebulous dual-party structure under the unquestioned authority of a highly secretive and contradictory leader facilitated a desire for clearly defined democratic hierarchies for some succeeding party organizations. The exclusivist binary worldview of 'believers' and 'infidels' instilled by Mouti was rejected for a more inclusive approach towards 'belief'. Most importantly, the experience of confrontation with the regime was one the former Chabiba Islamiya decided was too costly and ultimately detrimental to their objectives. Through a complex interaction with the regime, both through its security services, but also through a process of inclusion, the movement morphed into a non-confrontational movement for Islamic reform, which assessed the King as a key ally in the project.

1.2 The Jamaa Islamia (Jamāᶜa Islamiyya): 1981 - 1996

The demise of the Chabiba Islamiya heralded a new era for its former activists. Many took with them lessons in how not to operate as an Islamic movement and sought to forge new, fledgling organisations out of the Chabiba's embers. In the vacuum created by Mouti's exile, a new generation of young leaders came to the fore, not least a young Abdelillah Benkirane, whose leadership of the former Rabat branch of the Chabiba launched a new era of Islamic activism. This was marked by dialogue by Moroccan activists within the Islamic movement both in Morocco and internationally, as well as soul searching among many of them, producing a new organizational model and fresh outlook. From this would emerge the Jamaa Islamia, an organization committed to negotiating its place on the Moroccan political scene through discussions with the regime. Its stance marked a break with a generation of activists for whom the regime represented a form of iniquitous and even unlawful rule, through the willingness to concede the legitimacy of the monarchy as a means of forging a space for Islamic political activists within the political sphere.[254] Its gradual normalisation reflects the necessary concessions Islamic political actors were and continue to be required to make in order to both avoid repression and accede to centres of power.

1.2.1 The transition from Chabiba Islamiya

The Jamaa Islamia was established in 1981 following three years of discussions amongst the former members of the Chabiba Islamiya. The group made an immediate request for legalization.[255] According to Amin Boukhubza, it was founded by twelve figures, the eldest of whom was 25 years old, including Mohamed Yatim, Saadine al Othmani, Abdelillah Benkirane, Azzedine Toufiq (ᶜIzz al-Dīn Tawfīq), Aziz Boumart (ᶜAzīz Bumart), Abdelkaid (ᶜAbd al-Qāᶜid) and Amin Boukhubza, amongst others.[256] The first leader was

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254 For more on this, see Chaarani, *La mouvance islamiste au Maroc*.

255 Abou Zaid, Interview, 2009. Mohamed Tozy puts the date at 1982 (Tozy, 'Qui sont les islamistes au Maroc?', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 08/1999, accessed 15.02.10, http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/1999/08/TOZY/12315.html.

256 El Ahmadi, *Mouvements islamistes*, p. 73.

Mohamed Yatim, who headed a leadership committee, in an attempt to build a more democratic and transparent organization than that of the Chabiba Islamiya. The Jamaa Islamia effectively represented the transformation of the Rabat branch of the Chabiba Islamiya into a new organization. In time, other former Chabiba Islamiya branches across Morocco gradually began to follow its lead.

Varying accounts of the group's emergence have led to conflicting narratives regarding the reason for the creation of the Jamaa Islamia. According to Mohsine El Ahmadi, Benkirane created the Jamaa Islamia as the first step towards the creation of a political party, the 'Parti du Renouveau National' (Party for National Renewal) which would emerge in the early 1990s.[257] Marvine Howe claims the movement was set up to take part in the democratic political process and act as a counter-balance to Yassine's increasingly powerful group, Al Adl wa al Ihsan (al-ᶜAdl wa'l-Iḥsān), but was refused permission to form its own political party.[258] According to former members themselves, the Jamaa Islamia emerged out of a feeling of necessity of breaking with the legacy of the Chabiba Islamiya and of forging a new organisation which could function more productively by both recognising the regime's 'red lines' and by adhering to a legal framework of action.

According to Y. Benkirane, unlike other off-shoots of the Chabiba, the Jamaa made clear early on its willingness to compromise with the Makhzen. It undertook this through a dual strategy of occupying the field of Islamic movements through the use of communiqués, and by seeking to be recognised by the authorities as a privileged interlocutor. This was notably realised through participating in the *Sahwa* (Islamic awakening) universities which had been organised by the Ministry of Habous and Islamic Affairs from the early 1990s, as a means of engaging in dialogue with the Islamic movement and integrating it into its Islamic mandate and therefore undercutting its oppositional potential.[259]

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257 El Ahmadi, *Mouvements islamistes,* p. 95

258 Howe, *Islamist Awakening*, p. 128.

259 Benkirane, *La normalisation politique,* p..4.

According to Jamaa Islamia veteran Amin Boukhubza, former Chabiba members were faced with two clear choices as regards the future direction of the movement. Either the group could actually mobilize the resources necessary for a confrontation with the regime, something which other movements had attempted and inevitably ended in bloodshed, or instead take what he dubbed the 'Qur'anic' route, that of democratic, incremental change, referred to as *tadāfu*ᶜ: "*Tadāfu*ᶜ is a term found in the Qur'an, it means we put forward our stance, the Islamic way, and others put forward their way, the Western way".[260]

According to Boukhubza, the movement studied Islamic history and other Islamic groups in the East, to assess how best to respond to the critical juncture (this shall be discussed in further detail in Chapter 3 below). This convinced the group to avoid the route of confrontation, since this was seen as an impediment in achieving the ultimate objective of "raising society to a higher level".[261] The group thus established the Jamaa Islamia on the premise of non-confrontation with the regime and with the objective of being able to continue Islamic activism in a direction which would be decided by a group leadership. What exactly that direction would be would take the members several years to work out.

The group had broken links with the Chabiba as early as September/October 1980.[262] This followed the publication of *al-Jihād*, a fiery anti-regime review, published by Mouti in Libya and which had led to mass arrests of Chabiba and former Chabiba members.[263] This early break with the Chabiba is confirmed by Abdeslam Yassine (ᶜAbd al-Salām Yāsīn) in an interview in June 1987 in which he states that prior to the government crackdown on the Chabiba in the mid 1980s, a number of activists had left the organisation, judging it to be too dangerous. Instead, they set up alternative groups and publications that "continued to

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260 Boukhoubza, Interview, 2009.

261 Boukhoubza, Interview, 2009.

262 Belaji, Interview, 2009.

263 It is worth noting here that most of these publications were, for the most part, pamphlets / ciculars (informally printed as bound leaves of paper) that I have been unable to track down, yet activists in conducted interviews refer to them.

advocate a strictly Islamic polity, but refrained from any direct criticism of the government”.[264]

According to Mohamed Tozy, one can distinguish four phases in the evolution of the Jamaa Islamia.[265] The first period, from 1981, was that in which the group sought to manage its Chabiba heritage. This was an early clandestine phase in which the group continued to work in closed circles and propounded an anti-systemic discourse. Tozy claims that movement members during this period received paramilitary training, including in weapons handling and martial arts, and had to familiarise themselves with techniques of propaganda.[266]

The second phase, which began in 1984, was marked by the publication of ‘al-Iṣlāḥ’ and was characterised by a series of arrests.[267] Following this phase, the group renounced clandestine activities and sought to formalise its objectives. According to Tozy, the third stage in the evolution of the group was its decision, in 1992, to change its name to the Movement for Reform and Renewal (MRR), a decision he situates as a response to events in Algeria, where civil war was unfolding.[268] The fourth stage was the union of one part of the MRR with the *Mouvement populaire démocratique et constitutionnel* (MPDC/ Popular Democratic and Constitutional Movement), the political party of Dr Abdelkrim al-Khatib, a senior politician close to the makhzen[269]. The remaining movement’s subsequent decision to change its name to the Movement for Unicity and Reform (Ḥarakat al-Tawḥīd wa’l-Iṣlāh, MUR) in its union with the League for an Islamic Future (Rābiṭat al-Mustaqbal al-Islāmī, LIF) was its final evolution.

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264 Interview with Yassine (16th June 1987) as cited in Munson, “Morocco’s Fundamentalists”, p. 342.

265 Tozy, “Qui sont les islamistes au Maroc?”.

266 Tozy, “Qui sont les islamistes au Maroc?”.

267 As according to Tozy in, “Qui sont les islamistes au Maroc?”.

268 Tozy, “Qui sont les islamistes au Maroc?”

269 Term referring to the apparatus of the Moroccan state, both monarchical and traditional

From 1983, Benkirane began pressuring the leadership of the Jamaa Islamia, then under Yatim, to relinquish the clandestine nature of their activities. Despite having officially broken with Mouti in 1981, the group had maintained much of the outlook and ambitions of the Chabiba and Benkirane was vocal concerning the need for a change in the group's direction. The Jamaa Islamia was divided between a majority who wished to continue working in secrecy and a vocal minority, led by Benkirane, who wished to see the organization move down the legal route. According to Y. Benkirane, this division marked the beginning of the socio-political integration of Islamists, a process led by Abdelillah Benkirane who would use a variety of steps, from public denunciations of violence, distancing his ideas from the revolutionary arguments coming from the Orient and rapprochement to the Palace, as means of normalizing the Islamic movement and integrating it into the official, political landscape.[270]

The decision was taken to allow Benkirane to apply for legal recognition of the Rabat branch of the Jamaa Islamia as a test of the regime's position vis-à-vis the Islamic movements, whilst the remainder of the Jamaa Islamia branches continued to operate clandestinely. Many remained unconvinced by the legal line of action, either on principal or because they deemed the time not to be right. It was Benkirane's insistence which led them to agree to an experiment with a formal association based in Rabat, with Benkirane as its head:[271]

> …many Islamist movements which chose clandestine activity have no valid reason for doing so, because they are not terrorists, they are not planning to overthrow the state, they don't possess any weapons. They are only groups of religious youths who have erroneous representations of the state that they consider to be a police regime which monitors their actions and movements..

270 Benkirane, "La normalisation", p. 2.

271 Abdelilah Benkirane, 'al-Jamāᶜa al-Islāmiyya wa'l-fiqh al-ḥarakī (Les groupes islamistes et le droit (musulman) du mouvement (islamiste)', *al-Isslah* 15 (Casablanca, 18 March 1988), pp. 14-15 as cited in Dialmy, "L'islamisme marocain", fn28. (My translation) http://assr.revues.org/20198#ftn28

Benkirane led the Rabat branch of the Jamaa Islamia to seek institutional recognition under the name: 'Jam^c^iya al-Jamā^c^a al-Islāmī'[272] in 1983. The experiment was undertaken to test the regime's reaction to a legal association, despite the existence of other legal associations, with a non-political, often cultural or educational slant. Members of the Jamaa Islamia who were arrested were told to say they belonged to the Rabat branch in order to assess whether legalization held any concrete advantages and assess from there, whether the other branches ought to follow suit.

1984 proved to be a decisive year for the Jamaa Islamia, as the group was permitted to open it's first office in Agdal, an affluent area of Rabat. Despite tolerating its presence on the public scene, the state continued to test the group and remind members of their tenuous legal status. Although the application for legal recognition had not been contested, it had not received the legal permission from the Ministry of Interior which guaranteed state approval. For the regime, this period was an opportunity to test the group's declarations of working as an open, legal and pacific movement, something it would later learn was in fact not entirely the case, as a large portion of the Jamaa Islamia continued to operate in a clandestine fashion. Pressure was placed on the group to retain a low profile and opportunities were taken to remind members of their precarious legal position. In one such incident, the Rabat branch was pressured to remove the marble plaque which indicated the organisation's name from outside their office. [273]

From 1984, the Jamaa Islamia published a weekly paper '*al-Iṣlāḥ*' ('the Reform'), which was banned in 1990. It was later republished under the name '*Al-Sabīl*' ('The path') but this was again banned after just a few prints. The movement later began to print '*Al-^c^Aṣr*' ('the Age') which, when the fusion with the League for an Islamic Future occurred,

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272 The association of the Islamic group.

273 This situation of the authorities objecting to the organization's office bearing a plaque continued well into the 1990s. On May 21st 1996, Benkirane stated: "The state has not recognized the legality of our association … the state tolerates us … we are not allowed to put our name on our headquarters." as cited in Dialmy, "L'islamisme marocain", p. 7. (My translation).

was replaced by '*Attajdid*' ('al-Tajdīd', 'the Renewal'), the current official paper of the MUR.[274]

Following the 1984 Ruling of Meknes, a crackdown by the authorities in which members of Islamic movements across Morocco were arrested, the police uncovered the existence of the remainder of the Jamaa Islamia, which despite being separate to the Chabiba, as the group had stated, was still operating clandestinely. Interrogations thus brought to light the dual face of the movement, with the legal, open line led by Benkirane in Rabat and the secretive, underground line, across Morocco. This placed greater pressure on the movement to decide on its actual and official orientation.

1.2.2 The legal route

Following the arrests and subsequent discussions concerning the group's orientation, the Jamaa Islamia began to speak of '*al-khaṭṭ al-jadīd*' ('the new line') and the decision was taken to extend Benkirane's experiment to all branches. Indeed, the special treatment afforded to Benkirane and the Rabat branch during the arrests led many to conclude that the legal route was indeed beneficial and that compromise with the authorities might well yield concrete advantages. From 1984 other branches began to follow suit, although the process of convincing members to adhere to the new line was a lengthy and protracted affair. The second branch to seek legalization was that of Saaedine al-Othmani [Saᶜad al-Dīn al-ᶜUthmānī][275] in Casablanca.[276] In the Jamaa Islamia, he was pivotal in establishing women's work and in encouraging women to become active in the movement. To convince both the men and women of the laudability of this, he penned a small book, *Women and the*

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274 See Chapter 2 below.

275 Saadine el Othmani was a former member of the Chabiba who had been recruited from the Tablighi Jamaa annual conference in Casablanca around 1975-76. A calm, devout young man, he was recruited for his obvious attachment to his faith and began working on the student side of the Chabiba, in the department of Medecine at Casablanca University, where he was studying Psychiatry. He was credited with expanding the reach of the Chabiba to the south, namely to his home town of Agadir and Touwdens.

276 Dialmy, "L'islamisme marocain", p. 6.

Psychology of Totalitarianism and gave numerous talks and conferences to enable a change in mentalities in what remained a taboo area.

The decision to seek legal status required that the group seek to work within society rather than on the outskirts, as it had previously done as a clandestine organization. According to Moukri Abou Zaid, the group was gradually able to convince a number of well respected and established figures within the regime, including notable political figures, that the group did not represent a danger and was not the imported influence of the Muslim Brotherhood, driven by violence, the state was concerned about. In order to acquire legal status, the Jamaa Islamia had to convince the secret services to lift a ban on all Islamic movements with political ambitions. This was undertaken through extensive negotiations with the ministry of interior's DAG (Direction des Affaires Générales).[277] The group however failed to receive the confirmation from the Ministry of Interior which would have consolidated its status as a legal association, although its application was not contested. This suggests that while the regime was seeking to curb the threat posed by oppositional Islamic currents, it was not prepared to fully recognize them. Maintaining their unofficial status was, many activists speculated, a means of keeping them in-check if they ever began contesting the King's monopoly on religious authority.

In discussions with the Ministry of Interior, the state's interests focused on the group's identity, their position vis-à-vis the monarchy and the Mālikī school of law ('*madhhab*').[278] They further questioned the group's financing, as well as their relationship with Iran and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood. According to Benkirane, group members were

277 "The Direction of General Affairs (DAG) is charged with collecting information at the level of each province, prefecture and wilaya of the kingdom; (…) After conducting studies and cross-checking, the reports are submitted to the ministry of Interior's General Direction and to the central administration.". See 'DAG : Un rôle important', *Aujourd'hui le Maroc*, 23/5/2003, accessed: 13/6/10. http://www.aujourdhui.ma/une/focus/dag-un-role-important-29582#.Vq-LE_mLSUk

278 There are currently 4 main Sunni schools of law, with the Mālikī *madhhab* the dominant in North Africa..

initially arrested, even tortured by the authorities, and their publication was seized.[279] But the harassment ceased when they were able to convince the regime of their support for the King's authority. To do this, the group sent messages to the King whether through their publications or official communiqués, assuring him of their support for both himself and the state. Therein they reiterated their commitment to the legal and peaceful routes, and emphasized the Jamaa Islamia's commitment to working from within society using peaceful means.[280] Although the authorities maintained some reservations about the organisation, Benkirane was afforded a level of trust other former Chabiba 'outgrowths' were not.

It was during this phase that the leaders of the Jamaa Islamia movement and in particular Benkirane undertook an ideological re-assessment of the group's outlook and published a pivotal communiqué on July 31st 1985. In the Moroccan newspaper Al-ᶜĀlam they clarified the Jamaa Islamia's rejection of violence, secrecy, revolutionary ambitions and extremism. Their new path was that of renouncing revolutionary Islamic ideals, seeking instead to implement modest and incremental religious and cultural reform. That was reflected in the group's new slogan of 'Changing Mentalities', which would later become 'Culture before Society' based on a Qur'anic verse[281] The focus was on the nature of 'real' Islamic action with an emphasis on cultural change, followed by social and then finally political change.[282] The group also became aware of their precarious position vis-à-vis other actors in society and the need to pick their battles more astutely, as well as build coalitions within society.

On the 19th of November 1985, Benkirane sent a telegram to the king in which he asked for the normalisation of the Jamaa Islamia's status, followed by a message addressed

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279 As cited in Howe, *Islamist Awakening,* p.134.

280 Most publicly through Benkirane's July 1985 communiqué.

281 'Changer les mentalites' and 'La culture avant la societe' (El Ahmadi, *Mouvements islamistes,* p. 74). The verse was from Qur'an: Chapter 13 (*Sūrat al-Raᶜd*).

282 El Ahmadi, *Mouvements islamistes*, p. 74.

to the Royal Cabinet on the 29th November 1985 in which he committed the organisation to purely religious, apolitical activism:[283]

> This is a group of religious youths who aim to establish their future through a call to the renewal of the understanding of religion and of the precepts of the Qur'an and the Prophetic example (Sunna), in the framework of the unanimity of the nation around these values".

And in a letter to the Ministry of Interior on March 17th 1986, he criticised Mouti and stated his break with the Chabiba. In this, he also affirmed his commitment to the constitutional monarchy and its religious and historical roots.

According to Amin Boukhubza, by 1986, the entirety of the group had followed the lead of the Rabat branch and adopted the official stance that it no longer wanted to be an opponent to the regime. After years of discussing their stance, the majority came to affirm the religious and historical legitimacy of the monarchy and began advocating working alongside it, not in opposition to it. According to Darif, Benkirane reiterated his commitment to the monarchy, Morocco's territorial integrity and the Islamic nature of the state in an interview with the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Habous in March 1986, but remained critical of the "non-application of the Sharia".[284] This would mark a defining point of the movement's new line, one which the unified MUR would carry with it subsequently – support for the monarchy as the embodiment of the religious framework of the state, and as such a commitment to critical support of the King and his religious politics.

The decision was taken to begin working within public institutions in what the group describes as a shift from 'horizontal to vertical' work, entering universities and mosques more openly, in order to acquire popular legitimacy.[285] This move was greeted with suspicion by the authorities however, who continued to monitor their activities closely. In an

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283 Cited in Darif, *Monarchie marocaine*, p. 81 (My translation).

284 On the 17th of March 1982 as Darif, *Monarchie marocaine,* p. 82.

285 Boukhoubza, Interview, 2009.

attempt to reassure them, Benkirane addressed a message to the Minister of Interior on March 17th 1986 in which he stated:[286]

> We do not oppose the regime of the constitutional monarchy which is endowed with religious legitimacy and which represents the symbol of the historic tradition in our country. We thank God for giving our country freedom of worship which is lacking in a number of Islamic countries. We do not intend to oppose the choice of the nation relating to Maliki rite, which contributes to sealing the unity of Moroccans and to forging our identity. This is why we consider that priority must be given to cooperation in order to preserve the roots even as we may disagree on the branches.

This message and those which preceded it marked a clear and persistent attempt to resituate the movement in alignment with, not opposition to, the monarchy, and as a supportive element of the official discourse on the King's religious and historical legitimacy. It also represented part of an on-going attempt to obtain legal recognition, something the group continued to be denied.

1.2.3 Ideological change: From a revolutionary organisation to an organisation of the 'Message'

Benkirane and his colleagues, Mohamed Yatim, Azzedine Toufiq, Saadine al Othmani and others, toured Morocco, from 1981 to 1984, delivering hours of talks to convince other Islamic activists to adjust to the new perspective. The men were able to convince approximately a fifth of the Chabiba youth (according to their own estimates) to adhere to their new vision, including a young Moukri Abou Zaid, who credits his own transformation with the persuasive powers of Benkirane, notably his patience, his oratory skills and his charisma.[287]

To convince the activists of the theological merits of the legal route, Benkirane began with an innovative re-reading of the life of the Prophet Muḥammd (known as the *Sīra Nabawiyya*) in which he concluded that the movement could work within the system without necessarily conferring legitimacy upon it through such action (see further below in Chapter

286 Cited in Darif, *Monarchie marocaine*, p. 82 (My translation).

287 Abou Zaid, Interview, 2009.

3). But convincing the former Chabiba members to accept such a radical change of position towards the monarchy was an uphill struggle.

1985 was a pivotal year for the Jamaa Islamia. Efforts to convince the other Islamic activists of the merits of the legal route were undertaken by senior members, who gradually succeeded in spreading the new outlook across the country and encouraging members to forgo the route of clandestine activity. They undertook this through meetings, lectures, videos, cassettes and books, as senior members began to write Islamically referenced explanations for their new direction. They began to advocate '*tadarruj*' (or 'a progressive approach'), which Benkirane asserted was based on the example of the Prophet himself during his time in Mecca, when he did not seek to impose the faith, but rather to draw more adherents to it.

During this time, they also undertook an overhaul of the Chabiba's educational program to create a new program, specifically for the Jamaa Islamia. It focused on engaging potential sympathisers on the basis of expounding the essential elements of an Islamic education, such as the purpose of Islam, its characteristics and basic tenets. It also sought to undermine Mouti's outlook which they concluded was largely premised on his past as a militant Marxist, something which continued to colour his outlook, even as he adopted the language of the Islamic movement: "Mouti had no issues with lying to achieve what he considered to be in his interests, he had the philosophy that the ends justifies the means. But in Islam, the ends are as important as the means".[288] Two main figures, Azzedine Toufiq and Amin Boukhubza played a central role in reviewing the movement's educational program and devising a new curriculum, free of the baggage from the Chabiba era (see Chapter 3).

During this period of intellectual development, Benkirane emerged with a novel assertion: that the regime in Morocco was in fact already *Islamic*, but merely needed to be improved upon. The men outlined a detailed critique of Mouti's outlook, emphasising that

288 Talidi, Interview, 2009.

even the methodology he used was in fact a Leftist one, and they began to forge their own methodology based on readings of a range of Islamic sources. The benefit of this new stance was that it complied with the regime's 'red line' concerning recognition of the monarchy and the King as *amīr al-muᶜminīn* ('Commander of the Believers'). According to the new position, Morocco's constitution, which guarantees the Islamic nature of the state, represented an advantage that other Islamists had been desperately seeking. The state was already Islamic. What it really required was support to improve it and ensure it lived up to the ideal it claimed to represent. This allowed the organisation to move from working on the fringes of society, to one working within it, from a revolutionary organisation, to an organisation of 'Message', and from an oppositional group, to one which granted its support to the monarchy – with caveats however[289].

Discussions also emerged on civilizational change, and the group began studying the example of other Islamic movements throughout the world, leading to an important exegetical output and important ideological reform in three areas, namely the legitimacy of violence as a political instrument, the compatibility of Islam and democracy and the position of women (see Chapter 3).

1.2.4 The Political Route

In 1987, Jamaa Islamia leaders published a paper calling for political participation which caused controversy both within the broader community of Islamic activists and within the group itself. Many former Chabiba members regarded participating in the political game as playing directly into Hassan II's plan and refused to engage with the system:[290]

> The big problem was that for the brothers, practising something is to give legitimacy to it, we tried to explain that the Prophet tried to live his reality without giving legitimacy to it – he dealt with the tribes, with the mentalities he was against, but he had in front of him, a material state he couldn't deny.

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289 For more, see *ᶜAshr sanawāt min al-tawḥīd wa'l-iṣlāḥ* (Ḥarakat al-Tawḥīd wa'l-Iṣlāḥ, 2006), p. 11.

290 *ᶜAshr sanawāt min al-tawḥīd wa'l-iṣlāḥ*, p. 11.

The prevalent view was that the entire political game was rigged and that electoral success was near impossible. According to Darif, political participation was viewed as treacherous of the movement's ideals because it was seen as consolidating the system.[291] Benkirane's role in leading the movement towards this objective led to accusations of complicity with the regime and a public statement was issued by Ibrahim Kamal, co-founder of the Chabiba Islamiya, denouncing Benkirane as a government agent.[292] On the issue of political activism, there were two main trends amongst the Jamaa Islamia members. The first agreed with the leadership and supported the move to political action. The second argued that the timing was wrong for political participation, asserting that certain intellectual changes needed to be made considering the group was still emerging out of the Chabiba and that many members continued to retain its ideals.

The Jamaa Islamia members, led by el Othmani, Hamdaoui, Yatim and others responded pragmatically to arguments concerning the limitations of the system, which they too viewed as hindering any potential democratic success.[293] Governance was not necessarily the objective, they argued, real power is beyond the political game. They argued that while the real domain of politics may be played outside the formal political field, itself monopolised by the king, participation would offer other, more tangible, advantages. Explicitly, it would allow them to work more efficiently in the field of *da^cwa*, social work, legislative work and possibly root Islam within the political domain. This was also an opportunity, they argued, to reach out to other political tendencies with whom they might previously have had conflict. Basing themselves on the action of the Prophet, the objective was to seek common ground on Islamic issues, across the political spectrum.

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291 Darif, Interview, 2009.

292 "He left the Chabiba Islamiya of Mouti with a bang, at a time when it was in open conflict with the authorities. Ibrahim Kamal [also known as Kamal Ibrahim], the number two of the Chabiba, published a public communiqué denouncing Abdelilah Benkirane, (…) Until today, many militants continue to think he was an informer for the secret services." (My translation) http://www.telquel-online.com/331/maroc2_331.shtml also http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/2133

293 Mohamed Darif, Interview, 2009.

But this did not mean the Jamaa Islamia ceased to be critical of the system and much of the critique developed in the Chabiba remained. The change the Jamaa Islamia enacted was primarily how to deal with what they viewed as problems within society. One major change, which shifted the group's analysis, was its assessment of state and society from '*jāhilī*' ('un-islamic') as they were described in Mouti's teachings in the Chabiba, to '*inḥirāf*' ('deviant').[294] The new conception maintained that both state and society were Muslim but had departed from the 'correct' path. At the level of the state, the Jamaa Islamia assessed the state's deviance as based on its 'general politics and specific policies' according to Dialmy.[295]. Criticism extended to education where the movement criticised the secularisation of education, the slow pace of the Arabisation program and the widespread use of French. Other aspects, such as the limited instruction in Islamic sciences, the use of *riba* (interest) in banking, the acquisition of foreign debt, the spread consumerism, decreased buying power, the exploitation of workers and the replacement of Islamic law with positive law, the permission given for the selling of alcohol and games of chance, including the opening of Casinos by the Ministry of Tourism to encourage tourism, were to be remedied through the group's *daᶜwa* program which would act as a remedy and complement to the State's official actions.

The period had also given rise to renewed interest in the issue of governance as a potential means of resolving the very real bread and butter issues confronting the population. Faced with issues of unemployment, mounting poverty, the rise in the price of food staples, and other pressing issues, the group argued that through supporting the population in its day to day needs, it could use this opportunity to present a 'correct' view of Islam alongside arguing for people's political and social rights. It was felt that the moral take on politics the group hoped to contribute to the political scene could help appease the acute political

294 Dialmy, *L'islamisme marocain*, p. 9.

295 "...the deviance of the Moroccan state is imputable to the deviance of its general politics and specific policies." Ibid., p.10. (My translation)

tensions plaguing the country and in so doing, highlight the value of Islam in producing a superior mode of political governance. As Abou Zaid argued:[296]

> To present correct Islam to these people, you cannot go through the Friday sermon or cultural conferences, you must go where there is cultural conflict, to the house of representatives, to the Town Hall, where there is the management of people's problems. This is where you can meet people asking different questions, and ask, can Islam solve our problems, bring something new, contribute to our problems, can an Islamist who is less, if not, un-corrupted, be an added value for the political field, for the general welfare? (…) Our contribution is to try and bring some hope to people, to try and speak to them in another language than waffle.

Despite discussions and what appeared to be an improvement in relations between the regime and the Islamic movement, Mouti's continuous efforts at disrupting political life in Morocco, notably with the publication of al-Mujāhid magazine and the discovery of weapons at the border with Algeria, had negative repercussions on the Jamaa Islamia's relations with the authorities. It was also during this period that a number of violent groups are said to have emerged seeking direct confrontation with the regime.[297] The regime's lack of understanding of the various emerging and dissolving groups was complicated by the lack of information available about them and contributed to tensions with the Jamaa Islamia.

Direct communication between the group and the regime occurred through the King's nephew, Moulay Hisham, acting as an intermediary who met with the leaders on several occasions (2-3 according to activists).[298] Also present were Dr Abdelkrim Khatib who often hosted the meetings in his home, Driss Basri (Idrīs Baṣrī), then Minister of Interior and Mr Ben Souda who was an adviser to the King. The government officials requested further information from the group, its objectives, its vision and any documents

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296 Abou Zaid, Interview, 2009.

297 This is the period in which many clandestine groups, directed from abroad (France, Belgium, Lybia, Algeria) appeared: Groupe pour la vérité (The Group for Truth); Mouvement des Moujahidines du Maroc (The Movement for the Mujahideen of Morocco; publication: *Al Siyâssah*); Groupe du djihad (The Group of Jihad), Conseil des gens de Dieu (The Council of God's People; publication: *Al Mousslim al-Siyyassi*, since 1990); Jeunesse de la révolution islamique (The Youth of the Islamic Revolution), Iranian inspired. See Lamchici, "L'Islamisme s'enracine au Maroc", *Le Monde Diplomatique* (06/1996).

298 Boukhoubza, Interview, 2009.

the group might have available. They questioned as to whether the group had any international links, particularly with the Muslim Brotherhood and financial links to the outside world, both of which the group denied. In response to these discussions, the group claims the authorities applied a principle it applies to all potentially subversive currents, a dual system of partial absorption and containment. Efforts were made to absorb the phenomena into the official cadre, through the Summer Universities of Islamic Revival (Jamāᶜa Sahwa Islāmiyya), organized by the state to limit the discourse and spread of ideas through their official appropriation. The other strategy was to seek to integrate the Islamic movement into the official social, political and cultural fabric of the country. This was in recognition that the group did not have an allegiance to any outside figures or personalities and in knowledge that so doing would force them to comply with the rules of the mainstream, public sphere.

While the group was willing to integrate into the social and cultural spheres where doors were increasingly open, the movement continued to want to undertake political action, something the authorities resisted. The group maintained that Islamic actors must become less isolated and participate in political life. For many activists, this meant social and cultural undertakings were not enough to satisfy their objectives:[299]

> For us, there are several levels. We believe that Islam is holistic and complete – there is belief, politics, ruling, social work, education, training etc. – you cannot believe in one part and leave another. (Quotes Qur'an: '*Do you believe in some parts of the books and not others.*') We must believe in the Qur'an and all its verses completely, not divide it into different parts, this is the behaviour of the hypocrites (munāfiqūn).

Darif points out that while the group had been limited in expressing its political vision in order to conform with the regime's strict rules regulating the border between religious and political activity, political ambitions had never been far from the surface.[300]

The mid 1980s was a period of upheaval in Morocco with the cancellation of the 1983 elections in the midst of an economic crisis and tensions over the Western Sahara[301].

299 Boukhoubza, Interview, 2009.

300 Darif, *Monarchie marocaine,* p. 80.

Many activists describe a tense atmosphere and a feeling that the situation could not be maintained, leading some to speculate that change and possibly a democratic experience, might be on the horizon. In the event such an opening might arise, the Islamic movement did not want to be excluded from such a huge opportunity and efforts to convince the remainder of the activists redoubled.

By 1990, the notion that political participation would help Islamic movements spread Islam through the variety of vehicles it offered for *daᶜwa*, was widely accepted. Political participation, which had long been a contentious debate especially amongst the Salafis, who labelled participation as '*kufr*' ('disbelief'), came to be accepted as Islamically tenable within the movement.[302] Amongst the reasons given was that political work would give the movement access to a wider audience which would help it spread Islam though opening doors and better enable them to undertake *daᶜwa*:[303]

> The political participation we call for consists in spreading in the people, the hope of the possibility of reform and change towards Islam and this, in a pacifist manner, through the route to dialogue.

Drawing on arguments from the Qur'an and Prophetic traditions, including the edicts of a number of well respected ᶜulamāᵓ, which included Ibn Taymiyyah and Imām al-Shāṭibī,[304] the group claimed political participation was acceptable if it is deemed to be in the interests (*maṣāliḥ*) of Islam and set out a plan to begin political action. The first possibility was to establish a political party, but the group was conscious the regime may not allow this, so the leaders formulated secondary options. The second option was to have an alliance with another political party which shared their broad ambitions, the third possibility considered was to encourage independent candidates for Parliament, whilst the fourth, was to establish a

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301 For more, see Vermeren, *Maghreb, la démocratie impossible?*

302 Intended here to refer to Saudi-Wahhabi influenced activists.

303 Quoted in Communiqué of Abdelilah Benkirane, ex-président of the Jamāᶜa al-Islāmiya, , *al-ᶜĀlam* (Casablanca, 31 July 1985) as cited in Dialmy, *L'islamisme marocain*, fn28 (My translation).

304 For more, see Al-Raysuni, *Imam al-Shatibi's Theory of the Higher Objectives and Intents of Islamic Law* (2005) and Raissouni, Interview, 2009.

pressure or lobby group to further the movement' interests through the political field. Whilst some have argued that the Jamaa Islamia's objective had always been formal political action, the organization's theorising on the issue suggests that although the group did have clear ambitions for influencing the political sphere, this was both understood as taking a variety of potential organizational forms and did not represent the sole focus of the group's ambitions.

In addition, and despite the theorizing on political activism, the group's amended statutes in 1990 continued to omit any mention of political objectives. The statutes described the group's activities as: "calling for the application of Islam according to the precepts of the Qur'an and Sunna, combating ideas and theories hostile to Islam, contributing to orientating the Muslim Moroccan people and contributing to the promotion of social action".[305] And in a message sent by Benkirane to the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Habous on February 20th 1990, he stated that the maturity of the group occurred through its break with the Chabiba and that it had *passed from politics to religion.*[306] This represented the necessary shift required by the regime for the group to enter into the public sphere, accepting the supremacy of the King's religious authority as well as the imposed secular distinction between religion and politics.[307]

1.2.5 From Jamaa Islamia to the Movement for Reform and Renewal (MRR)

In a statement published in the newspaper *Ar-Raya* on February 10th 1992, Benkirane announced the group's latest metamorphosis, as it changed its name from the Jamaa Islamia to al-Iṣlāḥ wa'l-Tajdīd ('The Movement for Reform and Renewal', MRR).[308] This replaced the exclusivist and monopolistic former label, with the language of the modern Islamic political reform movements.

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305 Darif, *Monarchie Marocaine*, p. 78.

306 Italics my own. Cited in Darif, *Monarchie Marocaine*, p. 81: "…the maturity of the Jamaa was accomplished after the break with the 'Chabiba Islamiya' and it has passed from politics to religion" (My translation).

307 For more on the secular strategy of the Moroccan regime, see Darif, *Monarchie Marocaine*, p. 19.

308 Benkirane in *Ar-Raya* on 10/02/1992.

In the early 1990s, the group had come to the conclusion that despite its willingness to draw on the fruit of the experiences of other Islamic movements, it needed to reflect the historical specificities of the Moroccan context and clarify its stance in relation to foreign movements, most notably Mawdūdi's namesake organisation, the Jama'at Islami. According to Dialmy, the change of name was initiated by a desire to enter the political field, a move which could not occur with a party whose name had religious connotation.[309] El Ahmadi further contends that the title 'Islamic' (Islāmiya) was raised by the Minister of Interior, who claimed it represented an affront to religious and doctrinal unity, as a means of refusing administrative recognition of a political party founded on a confessional vision of society.[310] The decision to change the name was, he argues, motivated by a desire to ease the creation of a political party.

The development of the new MRR movement was a collaborative effort involving primarily Abdelillah Benkirane, Abdallah Baha, Mohamed El Yatim and Sadeddine El Othmani. As the organization grew, its structures became more formalised and a formal women's wing was recognised. The women, initially drawn from amongst sisters and spouses, became involved in decision making, contributing ideas and were very active within the organization, which now operated through joint work. It began integrating women into all levels of its structures and ensuring the group's outlook incorporated the perspective of all members, male and female, although in practise, women formed much of the grassroots activism and men formed much of the top tier leadership. Some of Morocco's leading female activists, including Khadija Moufid, emerged during this period and began espousing a discourse advocating active female participation in the public sphere. According to Malika Elbouanani, a MUR activist, a number of men in the movement initially opposed women's full participation in the workplace, but "they were in a minority".[311]

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309 Dialmy, *L'islamisme marocain*, p.4.

310 El Ahmadi, *Mouvements Islamistes,* p. 75.

311 Elbouanani, Malika, Interview by E. Francois. In person. Rabat, Morocco. 6/10/09).

Dialmy views the emergence of the Movement for Reform and Renewal (MRR) as confirming the Muhlmann hypothesis, whereby the ideological failure of the Chabiba to bring about revolution was replaced by an organization seeking political participation through a recognised association.[312] As early as 1989 in fact, the group deposited a request for a separate political party 'Ḥizb al-Tajdīd al-Waṭanī' ('The Party for National Renewal'), in conformity with the strict separation of religious and political action. This however failed to receive confirmation of its legal status from the Ministry of Interior. The group reiterated its request in 1992, as a separate organization, the Movement for National Renewal, but within one or two days, the party was refused.[313] At this time, the Movement for Reform and Renewal turned to Democratic and Constitutional Popular Movement party (MPDC) founder and palace loyalist, Dr Abdelkrim Khatib.

In May 1992, Mohamed Yatim, member of the Movement for Reform and Renewal's Interim Executive committee presented an extensive dossier to the authorities through the prefect of the district of Rabat-Sale. This contained a request for the transformation of a separate group 'the Movement for National Renewal' into a political party and outlined four key axes: The first was the group's founding text ("*loi fondamentale"*), describing its objectives and the means set to achieve them. The second was the organizational instances of the movement, the third was the identification of the President, and the fourth was a formal request to form a political party named 'Ḥizb al-Tajdīd al-Waṭanī' ('Party du Renouveau National'/ 'PRN'). This request was subsequently denied. The party was mentioned in the Movement for Reform and Renewal's founding text which sought to argue for the legal recognition of the transformation of the 'Mouvement du Renouveau National' ('Movement for National Renewal') into a political party, claiming both religious and judicial legitimacy for its request and emphasizing the party's conformity

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312 Dialmy, *L'islamisme marocain*, p. 7.

313 Ar-Raya, No. 23 (1st of June 1992) as cited in Benkirane, *La normalization politique,* p. 6. The party applied for legal recognition on May 2nd 1992 (Darif, *Monarchie Marocaine,* p. 85.).

with the Constitution and the Law, aside from those laws which "clearly contradict the spirit of Qur'anic law".[314]

Although technically a separate movement, the Movement for National Renewal was created solely for the purpose of establishing a base from which to request a political party and one which through the distinction with the MRR, might be seen to respect the strict laws forbidding the merger of religion and politics in Morocco.[315] Following the denial of the party, the front movement ceased to exist and all activities continued under the guise of the Movement for Reform and Renewal.

Unlike the revolutionary path of the Chabiba, the PRN's strategy was set out as "promoting a politics of gradual Islamicization" with two objectives.[316] The first was the undertaking of individual level *da*ᶜ*wa* and personalised recruitment to ensure the political training and religious education of new members. This was undertaken by the rigorous educational program that the movement ensured all members undertook, and which set out the ideal mode of conduct in all spheres of life. The exemplary life was based on a specific definition of socio-religious conduct and Islamic engagement or activism, which aimed to penetrate public spaces and "…reform aspects of Islam and life on earth and to renew the interpretation of Islam."[317]

The PRN's objectives as set out in its founding documents were the deepening of the Islamic identity of the Moroccan people, the defence of the Arabic language and support to campaigns of Arabisation, safeguarding national unity and completing the country's political

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314 El Ahmadi, *Mouvements Islamistes,* p. 101.

315 Aside from the King himself who embodies this union of religious and political authority. Darif notes how the regime operates a strict delineation of the spheres of politics and religion, prohibiting religious actors from entering the political scene as religious actors and forbidding politicians from venturing into the religious. For more, see Darif, M. *Monarchie marocaine et acteurs religieux* (Casablanca: Afrique Orient, 2010), pp. 20-21.

316 El Ahmadi, *Mouvements Islamistes*, p. 101.

317 El Ahmadi, *Mouvements Islamistes*, p. 101.

and economic independence.[318] It also outlined its position in support of the Sahara issue and asserted its commitment to the defence of the 'legitimate' rights of Moroccans, calling on the population to engage in the cultural and social activities of the Nation.[319] It also affirmed its commitment to democracy within the parameters of the Sharia. El Ahmadi notes that despite protracted polemical discussions over the compatibility of these two terms, the movement cites them together but without providing any real theoretical or theological explanation.

The group outlined its political strategy as one of gradualism and patience in the re-Islamicisation of society, which El Ahmadi remarks made them more of a pressure group or lobby than a traditional political party. It set forth a critical discourse denouncing the gap between the state's religious discourse and its allegedly secular actions, pointing to amongst others, the legal system which the group viewed as being unjust due to it being rooted in Western philosophical foundations, rather than in Islam. The latter, they claimed, provided the only real parameter for justice. It also criticized the selling of alcohol, of pork, tolerance of prostitution, mixed pools, bars etc. It further criticized the Ministry of Information for the diffusion of erotic films and nudity, gambling and others speculative games.

The group however reserved its toughest criticism for the public education system which it viewed as being overly influenced by French and secular values, pointing to the regression of religious education: "The heads of this movement have developed a number of arguments, religious or otherwise, to confront the Moroccan State with the gap between its religious discourse and its secular actions".[320]

In order to justify their political activism within a broader Islamic scene where political participation was either deemed unlawful or unwise,[321] one of the group's central

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318 El Ahmadi, *Mouvements Islamistes*, p. 103.

319 As cited in El Ahmadi, *Mouvements Islamistes*, p. 103..

320 El Ahmadi, *Mouvements Islamistes*, p. 104. (My translation).

321 Unlawful on the grounds the system itself was '*kufr*' and thus unlawful, or unwise because it meant accepting the parameters of the political game which many viewed as pre-determined by the King.

ideologues, the Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ḥasaniyya[322] trained Saeedine el Othmani was to provide a theological justification for political participation. He provided this on the eve of the 1997 legislative elections, with a pamphlet which drew on the thinking of Ibn Taymiyya entitled "Political Participation in the Jurisprudence of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyya". Yousef Belal notes that al Othmani chose to draw on a scholar known to be popular amongst more literalist strands of Islamic activists.[323] This may have been an attempt to ward off criticism of laxity in the group's practise or of having conceded too readily to the parameters set by the regime. In the pamphlet, al Othmani argues that the justness of a particular reign is distinct from the religious legitimacy of the ruler. This implied both that the regime's religious legitimacy is not a sanction of its actions, but also that, since a non-Muslim ruler can "also be a good governor and thus through this, escape the sanction for his impiety",[324] the religious inclinations of the King are independent of his ability to be an upright ruler. The new vision emerging from the Movement for Reform and Renewal clearly indicated that while the emerging movement was prepared to play within the rules of the game, it had not lost its contestatory edge and continued to challenge the regime's claim to religious orthodoxy.

The group's critique of the economic system denounced the excessive taxation of meagre salaries and Islamically prohibited goods, as well as the exploitation of blue collar workers and peasants, arguing instead for a model of an independent economy based on Qur'anic principles: "It is against the devastating effects of the capitalist mode of production and organization of society according to the Liberal model that they promote".[325] In fact, the group's lobbying succeeded in achieving the instauration in 1998 of a tax called 'Zakāt al-Fiṭr', based on a religious tax aimed at helping the poor, They also sought to move towards a ban on interest, private monopolies on public goods and services, such as water, electricity and teaching. Despite these specific prescriptions which formed the movement's program,

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322 A religious seminary

323 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife,* p. 223.

324 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*, p. 224.

325 El Ahmadi, *Mouvements Islamistes*, p. 105 (My translation).

no real theoretical work had been undertaken on an Islamic economy as such to suggest a coherent vision.

Research into the socio-economic background of members of the PRN, as compared with the Chabiba, indicates that whilst the majority of the Chabiba leaders were born in the 30s and 40s, those of the PRN were mainly from the 50 and 60s with activists composed of those mainly born in the 70s.[326] Data also suggests that whilst the Chabiba drew heavily on students and the lower-middle class, the profile of PRN members tended to be upper-middle class: professors, engineers, doctors and other liberal professions. Many had been through the Chabiba prior to joining the PRN. The party's social base was primarily made up of students in Casablanca and Rabat and there was a clear absence of the working class or farmers amongst its supporters.

According to Darif, despite conforming to the strict separation between the religious and political spheres in theory, the party's executive committee was made up almost entirely of leading figures from the Movement for Reform and Renewal, something the authorities claimed represented a contradiction between the theory of religious and political separation, and the practise. Meanwhile Darif asserts that the party was denied because the authorities did not want the association's appeal to diminish, as the state was in need of an Islamic organization to safeguard the balance of the religious field, rather than a new political structure.[327]

During this time, the Jamaa Islamia and the League for an Islamic Future (LIF), which also had political ambitions, were in discussions over a possible union. The LIF which was in contact with government officials, had been made aware that the time was not 'right' for the emergence of an Islamic political party and had seen its request for its party 'al-Ḥizb al-Waḥda' ('The party of Unity') denied. According to *Attajdid* journalist and MUR activist Bilal Talidi, the Movement for Reform and Renewal contacts were made aware that the

326 See table in El Ahmadi, *Mouvements Islamistes*, p. 117.

327 Darif, *Monarchie marocaine*, p.82.

regime was under pressure from Western allies over the crisis in Algeria not to allow the emergence of an Islamic party and so decided the time wasn't right for their engagement in the political process:[328]

> They said to the Islamic leaders that they didn't want to push western governments to pressure us. If they see us giving permission for a legal Islamic party, they will think the whole Arab Maghreb Union will be a stadium of Islamic movements, so at the time, the Movement for Reform and Renewal chose not to react.

According to Mohsine El Ahmadi, the PRN's objective following the rejection of their application for legal recognition, was to develop ties with a certain number of parties and sign coalition agreements, such as that signed with Dr Khatib of the MPDC. Indeed, following their failure, initiatives were launched to look for a party to join as they followed the second step of the political plan. The movement looked at three political parties as potential allies. The first was a coalition with the Istiqlāl, a conservative, nationalist party, negotiations for which were led by Abdelillah Benkirane and Abdullah Baha, but the initiative failed as the party requested that they join only as individuals and denied them any seats in the leadership committees. The second was the socialist National Union of Popular Forces (UNFP) and Abdullah Ibrahim, with Moukri Abou Zaid and Ahmed Abbadi as primary contacts, but this also failed due to a lack of progress in negotiations. The third option was to approach the 'Mouvement Populaire Démocratique et Constitutionnel' ('MPDC') of Dr Khatib, which began in 1995. Al Khatib was a natural ally for the Islamic movement.[329] A committed Muslim, he was a central figure in ensuring the primacy of the religious nature of the Moroccan system in the Moroccan constitution and had campaigned arduously for Islamic causes, including the Palestine issue. As early as 1973, he has requested Hassan II's permission to establish an Islamic party, 'Parti de la renaissance islamique' ('Party for a Islamic Renaissance'), a request subsequently denied. His Islamic

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328 Talidi, Interview, 2009.

329 "That Dr Khatib would become the 'tutor' of the Moroccan political Islamists is hardly surprising. All along his career, Abdelkrim Khatib never ceased to put forward his religious sensibility in political matters." (My translation), accessed 22/04/2013 via: http://www.telquel-online.com/341/maroc2_341.shtml.

sensibility combined with his unquestioned loyalty to the throne made him an ideal partner for the Islamic movement and a safe intermediary for the authorities.

Khatib placed three conditions on the partnership with the movement. The first was recognizing the legitimacy of the regime, the second was non-violence and the third was to accept the national pillars of Morocco, namely the Sahara, Islam and the Monarchy. As early as the 1st of May 1992, the MRR and the MPDC paraded together publicly[330]. Nonetheless, Dr Khatib refused to participate in the local or legislative elections set for that year, briefly halting the unification process until the 2nd of June 1996 when the MPDC extraordinary congress, consecrated the integration of the movement into the formal political process. Movement ideologue, Mohamed Yatim summed up the group's evolution as follows:[331]

> We've gone from being a project of change from the top, aiming to establish an exemplary Islamic state with all that is associated with this practically (secrecy, refusal to participate), influenced by the 'trial literature' of the East, to the instating of a new mentality, positive in its relationship to reality. Since 1985, the movement has elaborated its own doctrinal corpus and has overcome its Chabiba heritage (…) We are for all forms of political participation (…) the movement is capable (…) of contributing efficiently to political life and no party can pretend to ignore this".

1.2.6 Conclusion

The Jamaa Islamia grew out of the turbulent experience of the Chabiba Islamiya and took from it a desire to reform Morocco including the Moroccan regime, according to Islamic ideals. But its leaders also learnt from the experience that direct confrontation with the regime could lead to severe penalties and ultimately risk the very viability of the movement. Up against a generation of activists, many of whom regarded the regime as the enemy, the Jamaa Islamia leaders set about building theological arguments for the legitimacy of political participation in the system, while negotiating closely with the regime and its allies for a place in the public arena. The outcome was a movement which retained a strong critique of the Moroccan monarchy's practises but conceded critical aspects underpinning its

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330 Benkirane, *La normalisation politique,* pp. 18-33; p. 6.

331 Ar-Raya, No 18, 23rd of March 1992 as cited in Benkirane, *La normalisation politique,* p. 7. (My translation).

legitimacy. As such, the Jamaa Islamia marked the first, tentative stage in the integration of politicized Islamic activists into the public sphere. Its acceptance of the regime's red lines would pave the way for the union with the League for an Islamic Future, another Islamic movement composed of largely associational groups, and for the birth of the first normalised Islamic political movement and party in the shape of the Movement for Unicity and Reform (MUR and Party for Justice and Development (PJD).

1:3 The League for an Islamic Future ('Rābiṭat al-Mustqabal al-Islāmī')

'The League for an Islamic Future' ('Rābiṭat al-Mustqabal al-Islāmī', 'LIF') is one of the two movements, alongside the 'Jamaa Islamia' ('Islamic Group'), later known as the 'Movement for Renewal and Reform', which make up the 'Movement for Unicity and Reform' ('MUR'). Within the MUR, the LIF represents the cultural, or educational route of Islamic reform, having opted for official or semi-official status, relatively open activities and a focus on individual and societal change, rather than the political route favoured by the Jamaa Islamia.

The LIF, which emerged in the 1970's, comprises of several sub-groups. Established in 1994, it is however essentially the synthesis of three significant Moroccan Islamic movements, namely the 'Jamᶜiyya al-Islāmiya bi'l-Qaṣr al-Kabīr' ('The Islamic Association in Ksar El-Kebir', established in 1976 in Ksar El-Kebir), the 'Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās' ('Predication Organization of Fes', established 1976 in Fes), and the 'Jamᶜiyyat al-Shurūq al-Islāmiyya' ('The Organization of the Islamic Sunrise', established in 1986 by ex-Chabiba 'Tabayūn' members).

The LIF is a distinct trend of Moroccan Islamic reformist movements as compared to that represented, for example, by the Chabiba Islamiya. The distinctiveness of the LIF lies in the commitment of its constituent sub-groups to the 'Islamicization' of society. This is broadly understood as increasing the state of religiosity at each level of society, from the individual, to the family, community, society and the state. For the constituents of the LIF,

‘Islamiztion’ was to be realized through cultural and educational strategies, carried by local associations, as an alternative to than the ‘revolutionary route’ of the Chabiba Islamiya, or the politically focused ambitions of it’s successor movements (Jamaa Islamia, later known as the ‘Movement for Reform and Renewal’, ‘MRR’).

Although much like the Jamaa Islamia/MRR in terms of its aspirations for a ‘holistic reform’ of state and society according to Islamic ideals, LIF members opted for what I dub the ‘associational’ route for change, through the creation of local organizations dedicated to educational circles, and events aimed at reviving Islamic culture. Largely eclipsed by the attention afforded to Abdelilah Benkirane and MUR’s political foray, those drawn from the LIF’s branch of the MUR today have often expressed reservations over the political party (the Party for Justice and Development)-‘s direction and the importance afforded by the MUR to formal political activism, in the shape of the PJD. Such internal tensions have long roots within the movement and can be traced to the specific legacy of the LIF and the importance its sub-groups afford to the cultural and societal realms as the primary focus for ‘Islamic reform’.

The LIF emerged out of a trend known in Morocco as ‘*Ikhytiār al-thālith*’, ‘the Third Way’, referring to a distinctive stance among its adherents, in the 1970s and 1980s as compared with that of Shaykh Abdesalaam Yassine’s Ṣūfī inspired opposition and the political activism of Abdelilah Benkirane’s Jamaa Islamia. Unlike the Jamaa Islamia’s focus on political issues, ‘the Third Way’ activists preferred to focus on predication in the cultural and intellectual domain. And unlike Yassine, its’ affiliates were committed to democratic internal functioning and opposed leadership under a single figure-head. ‘The Third way’ would gradually evolve from a stance into a more coherent umbrella, comprised of three aforementioned main movements which came to form the LIF, although its initial informal nature as an alliance, meant a number of other groups identified with the trend of ‘the Third Way’ (sometimes also known as ‘the Third choice’).

The Third Way: Make up

By late 1978, an informal alliance had emerged between three major Islamic groups, working on educational and cultural Islamic issues. These were the ‘Islamic Association of Ksar al Kebir’ (‘Jam^{c}iyya al-Islāmiyya bi’l-Qaṣr al-Kabīr’), the ‘Predication Organization of Fes’ (‘Jam^{c}iyya al-Da^{c}wa bi-Fās’) and the ‘Jam^{c}iyyat al-shurūq al-Islāmiya’, the formal name of the ‘*Tabayūn*’ splinter of the Chabiba. Together they represented *Ikhytiār al-thālith* (‘The Third Way’ or ‘The Third Choice’). The nature of each of these groups would come to forge the emerging ethos of the League for an Islamic Future and divergences among its components highlight the limits of the group’s outlook.

1. The ‘Islamic Association of Ksar el-Kebir **(Jam^{c}iyya al-Islāmiyya bi’l-Qaṣr al-Kabīr)**

The ‘Islamic Association of Ksar el-Kebir’ was named after the town of Ksar el-Kebir, a small city in northwest Morocco. According to its founder Ahmed al-Raissouni [Aḥmad al-Raysūnī] the name of the association came to him during prayer,[332] and it received its legal validation in 1976.

The association was formed around the learned and charismatic figure of Ahmed al-Raissouni, born in 1952, who would become the leading theological guide within the MUR and whose theorising on Islamic principles has defined the very nature of the movement.

Born in 1953, Raissouni was raised in a devout and educated family and had begun to forge his Islamic education whilst a teenager, when he began to read up on Islam as result of Leftist criticism of the faith he was hearing at school. These readings led him to engage in discussions with individuals who had begun their immersion in the literature of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, in particular the works of Mohamed Qutb, Sayid Qutb, and Hassan al-Banna. During this period, he was also introduced by a schoolteacher to the Jamaa Tabligh, a devotional organization born in the Indian subcontinent and dedicated to predication, which had begun to make headway across Morocco. He joined Jamaa Tabligh and began engaging

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332Talīdī, *Dhākira,* Part 4, pp. 14-15.

in *daᶜwa* (preaching) activities, alongside his readings of the Muslim Brotherhood literature. This particular combination of apolitical, devotional and preaching activities, combined with a strongly activist and politicized understanding of Islamic precepts, would come to define Raissouni's outlook and the ethos of the movements he led.

Following an encounter with Abdelkrim Mouti, founder of the radical Chabiba, in a local mosque, Raissouni began a series of protracted discussions with the leader of the movement, starting in 1973. Mouti had sought to recruit Raissouni and other 'brothers' whom he saw regularly at the mosque, by discussing the threat of the Left and the need for an Islamic movement, frequently referencing Sayid Qutb's 'Milestones'. Despite sympathy for some of Mouti's ideas, Raissouni chose not to join the Chabiba. According to Raissouni, the main reason for his non-adherence was Mouti's criticism of the Jamaa Tabligh group, which Mouti accused of having been implanted by the British to render Islam secular.

Raissouni spent much of his young adult life attending *tablighī* seminars and was a regular in the talks the *tablighī* activists organized in his local mosque.[333] According to Raissouni, his respect for them and their ethics conflicted with Mouti's denunciation of them, leaving him uneasy about Mouti and his claims. Raissouni and his colleagues were also uneasy about Mouti's *modus operandi*, notably his focus on secrecy and fear, which was at odds with the public *daᶜwa* activities of the Jamaa Tabligh members. According to senior MUR member, Abdelnasser Tijani (ᶜAbd al-Nāṣir Tījānī) the men maintained some suspicion concerning Mouti:[334]

> Mouti undertook *daᶜwa* with purely political and militant notions, and we didn't accept this. He worked with fear – don't listen to this person, beware of this; don't tell everything to someone (very secretive) -we didn't find this very Islamic. We didn't have a very good opinion of Mouti.

In 1976, aged twenty-three, Raissouni along with a number of others was arrested as part of a wide-sweeping crackdown on Islamic activists, on suspicion of involvement in the

333 Zeghal, M., *Les islamistes marocains : le défi à la monarchie,* (Paris: Découverte, 2006), p. 216.

334 Tijani, Abdelnasser (President of Association Joudour), Interview by E. Francois, In person. Morocco, 7/11/2010.

Chabiba. After his release from jail, many in Raissouni's hometown began suspecting him of involvement in criminal activity. This spurred Raissouni and his friend Abdelnasser Tijani to establish a legal organization which could work openly and without incurring the wrath of the authorities or the suspicion of the community.

Both men were dedicated to the duty of predication, which they understood as primarily needed in the cultural or intellectual realm. They therefore decided to establish the association to undertake predication through Islamic cultural activities, such as the hosting of conferences, discussions, book fairs and other events.

This organization was to be the 'The Islamic Association of Ksar el Kebir' ('Jam^c^iyya al-Islāmiyya bi'l-Qaṣr al-Kabīr'). The founding members included fifteen core activists, the President, Ahmed Raissouni, Mohamed Dukkali (Muḥammad Dukkalī), Abdellatif al Marrakshi (^c^Abd al-Laṭīf al-Marrakashī) and Abdelnasser Tijani. The men's studies focused heavily on the book by Sa^c^īd Ḥawwā (d. 1989), a member of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, 'Jund Allāh' ('the Soldiers of God'). Notably, from 1978, this core group of activists came to be known within the association itself as the Jund Allah. Although the movement grew, only the founding members were identified by this title.[335]

The movement's objective was to bring about the Islamicization of the elites through a conscious attempt to provide clear and targeted knowledge about Islam to the educated and politically powerful classes. Specifically, in the face of an educated and powerful Leftist elite, the movement aimed to provide intellectual arguments to support the Islamic outlook, which they felt was threatened by Leftist rhetoric.

The Islamic Association was committed to the unity of the Islamic movement and instantly began dialogue with different trends on the possibility of forming a unified,

335 From the mid-1980s, the name caused some confusion amongst researchers as a small militant group calling itself Jund Allah emerged. This group was a violent off-shoot of the Chabiba Islamiya and was not connected to the Islamic Association of Ksar el-.Kebir.

national movement.[336] This trend towards unification, found across many different Moroccan Islamic movements, consciously leant on a central concept of the Oneness of God in Islam (*tawḥīd*), which many activists translated as necessitating the 'Oneness' of the Islamic movement, wherein multiple movements should ideally dissolve their differences to work together more effectively towards a common goal. The term *tawḥīd* in the sense of the 'unity of movements', or its variant *waḥda* ('unification') was widely articulated as a 'primary objective' across differing Islamic movements (note also its use in the title of the 'al-Tawḥīd wa'l-Islāḥ').

Although the founders of the 'Islamic Association of Ksar el-Kebir' had hoped these discussions with other groups would rapidly lead to a union, the objective was impeded as the debates over core precepts dragged on. Meanwhile, the Association began running activities, including bringing together the local youth in homes to listen to lectures, giving presentations in secondary schools and hosting conferences in the city's public halls. It expanded its activities through its members and students as well as its educational initiatives in the North of Morocco and neighbouring regions.

Their largest event was a cultural week, held every year, in which the group displayed Islamic books and invited scholars and prominent figures to address topical issues including freedom in Islam, Islamic economics, women in Islam, etc. According to Abdelnasser Tijani, the cultural weeks were an opportunity to celebrate Morocco's Islamic heritage and bring together Islamic associations throughout the country to share thoughts and experiences.[337]

> At that time, the *daʿwa* in Morocco wasn't very broad and there were no Islamic expos, or Islamic days – we were the second organization to establish these cultural weeks, after the association of Tetouan of Mohamed Wazzani (Muḥammad Wazzānī), which also organized Islamic cultural events.

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336 According to Ahmed Raissouni, the men contacted other trends on the Islamic scene, including *al-Baʿth al-Islāmī* in Tetouan, scholars in Tangers, Ali Raissouni, Mehdi Benouboud, a leading Islamic personality, and activists in Fes and began discussions. See Talidi, *Dhakira*, Part 4, p. 15.

337 Tijani, Interview, 2010.

This flourishing of Islamic associations from the early 1980s occurred in parallel to King Hassan II's policy of rapprochement with a number of conservative Gulf states as part of his international policy aimed at winning over international opinion concerning his stance on the Western Sahara. Reflecting this growing influence of the religious revivalist current, the Istiqlal party in April 1982 called for a return to the values of Islam,[338] just as Islamic associations across Morocco became increasingly vocal and visible.

Mohamed Wazzani was a leading intellectual, Salafī thinker, and figure of Moroccan national resistance who penned a number of books on the role of Islam in the development of Moroccan society. His work represented a call for reform and modernization grounded in Morocco's Arabo-Islamic heritage. Like him, the figures from the Islamic Association of Ksar al Kebir situated their efforts within a broader trend of Islamic reform, which felt Islam had an important role to play in national development and should remain an important component of national identity. The limits of the regime's acceptance of their activism were understood and largely internalized, meaning the activists opted for legal, cultural work, often with a shadowy under-current with a more political bent. However unlike Benkirane's Jamaa Islamia, the 'associational route' adopted by activists from the Association recognized the scope for work within the existing framework and broadly sought to remain within it.

The cultural weeks organized by the Association provided an opportunity for interaction with a broad array of movements across Morocco, including many current and former members of the Chabiba Islamiya. According to Tijani, members of other movements were shocked and suspicious of the fact the Association of Ksar al Kebir was working so openly, at a time where most other movements had opted for clandestine activities:[339]

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338 Vermeren, *Maghreb, la démocratie impossible?* p. 81.

339 Tijani, Interview, 2010.

> We worked in full view, in public, it attracted the *du^cāt* ('those working in *da^cwa*'), many of whom came to visit our book expos.[340] The brothers thought that in Morocco, this was forbidden – we were able to do it and undertake Islamic activities publicly – it was an experience which created many discussions, how have you managed to have these activities? Do you work with the regime? Are you really good brothers? Why does the regime tolerate you? We would tell them, it is important to be legal, abide by the law, have a bit of wisdom and adopt the middle road.

These interactions would counter the current, led by Mouti, which presented Morocco as a country where Islamic activism was repressed and only revolutionary action could triumph. Instead, the articulations and activities by members of the Association of Ksar el-Kebir presented a reality that was more blurry. Small local associations working in the educational realm were tolerated by the regime, but those which advocated a political role for Islamic activists were regarded as subversive.

As a small, local association, the Association's leaders had hoped to collaborate and eventually unite with an association bigger than their own and undertook their activities with this objective in mind. As negotiations dragged on however throughout the early 1980s, the Association of Ksar al Kebir transformed into a movement, which extended beyond the remit and geographical realm of the original Cultural Association of Ksar el Kebir, spreading towards several cities including Larsh, Tetouan, Tanger, Rabat, Fes, Meknes, Errachidia and Casablanca. By the late 1980s, at a meeting of the association, a decision was taken to create an organizational framework to manage the growing movement to reflect it's presence at the national level.

The 'greater' Ksar el-Kebir movement's committee had a president, a national executive committee and all the trappings of a national movement, operating beyond the town of Ksar el-Kebir itself. The movement thus had two heads at the time, an official side, the Association of Ksar el-Kebir with a declared office comprised of seven people, and a broad movement, which worked underground, made up of hundreds of youths, professors and traders in these cities, who met in groups to learn about Islam and absorb the

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340 Figures included Mr Zuhal from Casablanca, Mr el Othmani who was studying in Casablanca, Abdallah Chabbou from Tangers

movement's ideas, undertaking its cultural and social activities in the forums available, notably in schools, universities and mosques. The broader movement's members began creating cultural associations in their own cities, including in Errachidia, Meknes and Wazane, with different names and no formal links to the official association. Although the association and the movement were distinct, they shared the same objectives, which Tijani describes as: "an Islamic society and an Islamic regime – this was our greatest objective".[341]

Throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, members of the Islamic Association of Ksar el-Kebir continued discussions with other Islamic movements on the possibility of a union, which would ultimately culminate in 1994 in the League for an Islamic Future. Although there continued to be some disagreements, there was consensus on a number of issues, including the need to 're-establish' Islam in all spheres of life and a commitment to non-violence to achieve this:[342]

> When we joined with the others, they had the same objectives, there were no big divergences, aside from on the best way to achieve this (…) but no one proposed violence. There were some things we did agree on like the obligation to unite the Islamic movements in one organization, we agreed that the regime in Morocco was not a fully Islamic regime, we agreed that it was necessary to struggle against the communists, atheists, on the practise of Islam, the need to practise Islam in all domains, education, politics, and not leave it in the mosques, far from the daily life of the people"..

By the early 1980s, Raissouni had begun working in Meknes and Abdelnasser Tijani took over as President of the Association. It is in this phase that closer-links between the members of the Association and those of the other two constituent parties of the LIF began to be forced. In the 1980's, while in Meknes and during travels to Rabat, Raissouni established links with a number of organizations, notably the Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās, then presided by Abdesalaam Herass (ᶜAbd al-Salām al-Harās).[343] In Rabat, he established close links with the Tabayūn trend which had emerged out of the disintegration of the Chabiba

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341 Tijani, Interview, 2010.

342 Tijani, Interview, 2010.

343 It also counted amongst its members, Saad Bouchikhi, al Amari and Filwati

Islamiya, including its leading activists[344], who from the late 1970s had cut their links with Mouti. These were the two central connections that would form the basis of the subsequent union of the LIF, becoming in time the second largest trend within the MUR.

2. The Predication Organization of Fes (Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās)

The Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās was one of the main influential trends within the League for an Islamic Future, not least thanks to the influence of its leading ideologue, Saad Bouchikhi (Saᶜdd Bushaykhī), a renowned scholar specialized in Qur'an and exegesis whose outlook, according to MUR leader Abdelrahman Chirhi (ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān Shirhī), greatly influenced the direction of the movement. [345]

The organization was established in 1976 and was centred around Abdeslam Harass, a figure with links to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Jordan and Syria, along with some leading scholars and academics[346]. Although Harass formally headed the group, the real ideologue behind it was Ahmed Bouchikhi, who ran a prominent institute for Qur'an studies within the Humanities department of the University of Fes and whose priorities were education and Culture. Amongst the group's members were many well-respected scholars including Ahmed Raissouni,[347] himself the head of the Association in Ksar el Kebir, and Farid al Ansari (Farīd al-Anṣārī) as well as renowned cultural figures, including university professors, like the poet Hassan Lamrani (Ḥasan al-ᶜAmrānī). The group conceived of itself as intellectual and could be described as more elitist than the Chabiba had been in its membership, since it deliberately appealed to an educated class of individuals.

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344 Ahmed Mechtalli, Bouzidi and Abdelrazaq al Marouri, although Marouri himself was never in the CI

345 Chirhi, Abdelrahman (senior MUR activist). Interview by E. Francois. In person. Rabat, Morocco. 10. 11. 2009.

346 See Darif, *Monarchie marocaine*, p. 69.

347 Ahmed Raissouni was supervised by Bouchikhi in writing his doctoral thesis

According to MUR literature, the Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās never cooperated with the Chabiba Islamiya.[348] The movement had reservations concerning Mouti and his movement, due to disagreements over methodology and vision, despite the fact Mouti had sought to convince Harass to join. Following the breakdown of the Chabiba Islamiya from 1975, the Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās sought dialogue with former members as part of its objective of unifying the Islamic movement nationally. It also began discussions with Ṣūfī activist leader Abdesalaam Yassine from 1980-81, following Yassine's first open letter chastising King Hassan II, in 1974, and his subsequent open critique of the monarchy. Following his internment in an asylum as punishment for the letter, Yassine was banned from hosting talks until 1978, when he began outreach to different Islamic trends. The letter was viewed as a courageous act by many Islamic activists and Yassine had not yet established his own organization, leading the Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās to suggest collaboration with him. However, negotiations proved difficult. According to Hamideen, himself a jurist, Yassine's Ṣūfī background and methodology clashed with the outlook of the trained jurists:[349]

> When they met him, they realized the big problem with him is that he is a Ṣūfī. They have the character of the *fuqahāʾ*, jurists, and historically, there was always a schism between *fiqh* and *tassawouf*. The tools of work for the Ṣūfī are irrational things, for *fiqh*, it is rationality. The jurists (*fuqahāʾ*) use *ishtiba*, *qiyās* (analogy) – they emphasise dreams, visions.

Negotiations were further hampered by complicated geographical logistics. Yassine was based in Marrakesh at the time and due to the sense of secrecy maintained by the Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās, communication proved complicated and discussions between them and Yassine petered out around 1989.

In terms of its organization, the Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās rejected the concept of an Islamic 'organization' (*tanẓīm*) preferring to refer to the movement as a gathering of likeminded individuals focused on developing their knowledge of the Islamic sciences. For

348 Ḥarakat al-Tawḥid wa'l-Iṣlāḥ, "ᶜAshara sanawāt min tawḥīd wa'l-islāḥ" (2006), p. 13.

349 Hamideen, P. (Professor of Political Sciences at Tangiers Law faculty, senior MUR activist) Interview by E. Francois. In person. Rabat, Morocco. 11/18/2009.

this reason, the movement also rejected the concept of elections as a means of determining leadership. Instead, the position was bestowed upon Bouchikhi as the member with the most extensive knowledge and experience. The Jam^{c}iyya al-Da^{c}wa bi-Fās favoured an organic ‘consultative’ leadership system. This was represented by a strong leader who, however, heeded advice through a process of ‘consultation’ (*shūra*) but was not bound by its outcome. The idea of a *shūra* (here literally meaning ‘consultative council’) was one with deep Islamic connotations, with strands of early Islamic political history infused with the idea that legitimate caliphs should be selected via a ‘*shūra*’ and who should heed their advice.[350] The Jam^{c}iyya al-Da^{c}wa bi-Fās seemed to have adapted it for their purpose: “…they also had different views on *shūra* - they saw it as informative for the leader, not obligatory (*multazim*)”.[351]

The focus of the Jam^{c}iyya al-Da^{c}wa bi-Fās was education and training, in order to forge an elite of Muslim intellectuals with a solid rooting in the Islamic sciences and *da^{c}wa*:[352]

> Jam^{c}iyya al-Da^{c}wa bi-Fās had a deep understanding of *da^{c}wa* – it had profound ideas on the priorities for culture, education, to form an intellectual elite which could live in the modern era, but on the basis of Islamic sources in all domains. This requires time, you cannot create a modern, Islamic elite in 10 years...

Bouchikhi’s vision was that the movement of The Third Way, which had grown out of the disintegration of the Chabiba Islamiya, would form men who would go on to become leaders at the heart of their society, not only in the Islamic movement, but on the political and cultural scene, and this required extensive and long term training. According to Darif, the group’s objective was to “fortify the conscience on the necessity of eliminating all expressions of depravity from society” and he locates their activities in the cultural and educational sphere.[353]

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350 See Bosworth, C. E., ‘Shūra’, *Encyclopedia of Islam,* 2nd edition (Leiden: Brill).

351 Chirhi, Interview, 2009.

352 Hamideen, Interview, 2009.

353 Darif, *Monarchie marocaine*, p. 69.

The group also published a magazine *al-Hudā* ('the Guidance') from 1982, aimed at an intellectual audience. According to Emad Shahin, the objective of the publication was to counter a perceived onslaught against Islam and it included articles on topics such as the need to reform the educational system in order to resolve the contradictions within it and reflect Moroccan and Islamic values, and on the "disorientating material broadcast on the state-controlled television, which demoralizes Muslims and lures them away from their indigenous values".[354]

Members of the Jam^ciyya al-Da^cwa bi-Fās followed a strict and structured education, focusing on the Qur'an and Sunna, with a focus on the memorization of the Qur'an and discussions surrounding its core themes: "…from 1976, we had long discussions so we could extract from the Qur'an the big lines of practise (the guiding lines)".[355] Such was the emphasis on adequate training within the Jam^ciyya al-Da^cwa bi-Fās, that the group even had a "training for trainers".[356] The focus was not on the achievements that that generation could accomplish, but rather on how to form the future generations in the hope that maybe their children or grand-children could. Although not apolitical, the group viewed political activism as fruitful only once the members had achieved a certain educational level and mastery of the religion, a process which could take decades. This view placed them at odds with Benkirane's Jamaa Islamia and its aspirations for immediate political participation. This division would remain once the organizations united within the Movement for Unicity and Reform in 1996, and would continue to cause friction between those with political aspirations and those who viewed politics as one of many routes for social transformation.

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354 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p. 177.

355 Hamideen, Interview, 2009.

356 Hamideen, Interview, 2009.

3. The ‘clarification’/ The organization of the Islamic Sunrise (al-Tabayūn/Jam^{c}iyyat al-shurūq al-Islāmiya)

Following the murder of Leftist activist Omar Ben Jelloun in 1975, the leader of the Chabiba Islamiya, Abdelkrim Mouti fled Morocco and confusion emerged over leadership of the Chabiba movement, in a period which came to be known as the ‘*fitna*’ (‘discord’). A group of Chabiba youths decided to suspend their activities in a position they dubbed ‘Tabayūn’ in Arabic (‘clarification’), until they could determine who had the authority to manage the movement in Mouti’s absence.

During this period of confusion, contradictory orders between Mouti himself and the initial ‘Group of Six’ whom Mouti first appointed to replace him but who he then accused of working for the authorities, paralysed the movement and a number of the young men decided to stop their work with the Chabiba until the issue was resolved.

The men gathered together in Rabat to determine what the Sharia had to say in the case of a dispute amongst Muslims.[357] Delving into the Qur’an for answers, they found a verse which read, “*Oh you who believe, if a wicked person comes to you with any news, ‘ascertain the truth’* (*tabayyanū*)” which the men took to mean, ‘seek the truth’, or enquire”.[358] Based on this, they adopted a position of ‘*tabayūn*’ (‘clarification’). The men had a close relationship with the ‘Group of Six’, many of whom were their former leaders and mentors. Their objective was to bring them together with Mouti for reconciliation. The ‘Group of Six’ had however rejected Mouti’s leadership of the Chabiba and was keen to take over the leadership itself. Despite this, *tabayūn* sympathisers persisted initially with a view to reconciliation between all parties.[359] This early impetus not to divide activists committed

357 The group consisted of Ahmed Mechtalli, Al Quoushayri [al-Qushayrī], Zerwalli, Sidi Bouzisi, Saleh Azzahra [Ṣaleḥ al-Zahra], Dr al-Wafi [Dr. al-Wafī], Shaykh Benhamad [Shaykh Ben Ḥamad] and a younger man known as AbderRahman

358 Chirhi, Interview, 2009.

359 As a first step, the *tabayūn* group sent a member to Saudi Arabia to meet with Mouti, but he never returned. Following this first attempt, in 1978, the men sent a second envoy to Saudi Arabia with a letter calling for an Islamically inspired mode of reconciliation between the Group of Six and Mouti,

to Islamically inspired change, despite divergences among them, would remain with these former Chabiba members and represent a driving force behind the unification of the movements which would make up the MUR in the 1990s.

By 1977, Mouti had called a group of twelve Chabiba Islamiya members to Saudi Arabia to meet him during the annual pilgrimage (ḥajj). Amongst them was Benkirane, the militant young activist who had been designated as the head of the Rabat Chabiba Islamiya section and who, from 1978, began to lead the national movement. Mouti made this 'Group of twelve' the official directing committee of the Chabiba Islamiya and issued communiqués denouncing the Group of Six as collaborators: "…for us, he (Benkirane) was unknown in '74/75, he only joined the Islamic movement later on, he had a very strong personality…"[360] Benkirane's late arrival on the Chabiba's leadership scene was greeted with some suspicion by some other longstanding activists and his charismatic leadership and strong views made him a divisive figure within the floundering movement. His subsequent volte face concerning the monarchy, from revolutionary opponent to staunch supporter, as well as his centrality to the shift in the strategy of the former Chabiba Islamiya movement, were used to cast doubt on his intentions, by those who saw in him a government agent[361] sent to redirect the energies of Islamic activists. Doubts cast on Benkirane culminated in 1977 with the Tabayoun cuting all links with the Chabiba Islamiya leadership.

4. From 'tabayūn' the position, to 'tabayūn', the movement

The Tabayūn initially represented a position within the Chabiba Islamiya, but with their expulsion from the group, the men were unclear which direction to take. Like many former Chabiba Islamiya splinter groups, the men had initially hoped to join another

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but Mouti refused, viewing their meeting as a rebellion against his authority, and accusing all involved of working for the Secret Services: "He was the 'zaᶜīm' (leader) and we must just follow him – he thought we were trying to create a new movement, it wasn't true at the time – it was just a position. At one point, the six brothers asked us, is your position *tabayūn* or *tawāquf*? We didn't agree with the six brothers, or with Mouti " (Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009).

360 Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

361 Chaarani, *La mouvance islamiste* , 2004, p. 164.

movement and had not intended on creating their own: "We didn't define ourselves as a movement; yes we met and had circles whilst we waited for a solution, but we always thought one would appear in the future".[362]

The position of '*tabayūn*', gradually evolved into a separate movement of young, former Chabiba Islamiya members, who no longer wished to be part of the group but wished to continue studying the faith and being active in *da^{c}wa*: "From when we were excluded, we thought we shouldn't stop our duty of *da^{c}wa*, we must continue, even outside of the Chabiba. So gradually, it became a movement."[363] Initially, the movement regrouped 25 members,[364] leaders from Rabat and Salé, who later became known as the 'Tabayūn of Rabat'. Around the same time the Rabat branch was forming, another group emerged. This constituted of six people in Casablanca, and then subsequently others in Fes, all of whom then joined the Rabat group.[365] Throughout 1977/78, clandestine branches of the Tabayūn were created out of former Chabiba groups across Morocco, as the Chabiba disintegrated.[366] The primary objective for these former members was the unification of the Islamic movement, understood by the former activists then to be exclusively Chabiba Islamiya. This was born out of a religious belief in the unity of Islam and thus of a common cause, but also through a desire not to lose the momentum forged by the Chabiba Islamiya in creating a movement for Islamic social change.

Although the Chabiba Islamiya had, by its nature, been dismissive of other Islamic currents, with its disintegration came a greater openness among former members to unification with all components of the greater Moroccan Islamic movement, including those

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362 Chaarani, *La mouvance islamiste* , 2004, p. 164.

363 Mechtalli**,** Interviw, 2010.

364 Including Ahmed Mechtalli, Abdel Razaq al Marouri; Abderahman Chetou (^{c}Abd al-Raḥmān Shetu], Abdelatif al-Sedrati and others (Ḥarakat al-tawḥīd wa'l-Iṣlāḥ, *^{c}Ashr sanawāt min al-tawḥīd wa'l-iṣlāḥ* (2006), p. 15).

365 Mechtalli, Interview, 2010. The group was thus made up of around forty or so former members of the Chabiba Islamiya from Casablanca (minority) and Rabat (majority) and a few from Fes.

366 In Safi, Casablanca, Benhmad, Rabat, Tangers, Fes, Settat, Bershid and Oujda

previously considered outside the fold. According to the Movement for Unicity and Reform's official literature, this period was marked by the establishment of a new *modus operandi* on the basis of "abandoning violence and extremism, (…) opening up to all classes in society and building bridges with other Islamic associations working in the political field…".[367] This desire to work across different trends lent itself to a more democratic internal culture as the emerging movement sought to accommodate a range of views and preferences. Subsequently, and as according to Ahmed Mechtalli, the content of the Tabayūn circles was ideologically very different to those of the Chabiba Islamiya:[368]

> In the Chabiba, we believed someone who was in the Chabiba was a real Muslim and all the others were just hypocrites. Dr Raissouni who wasn't in the Chabiba – we knew him when we were in the Chabiba and we were suspicious of him. The first thing we did in the Tabayūn was open up on the other currents.

But following the abandonment of an exclusivist perspective, defining the new ideological outlook for Tabayūn members, was a lengthy and negotiated process.

Following the group's increasing links with Raissouni and other similar figures who had been operating within formal, legal associations since the early 1970, the Tabayūn members began by abandoning the culture of secrecy. Links maintained with the main body of the Chabiba Islamiya under Benkirane's leadership, who then still represented Mouti inside Morocco, were severed. Nonetheless, despite being free from Mouti's strict regulation, the circles opened onto society, but continued to operate underground, away from the gaze of the authorities, Nonetheless, discussions about the possibility of creating a legal association mainly amongst the Rabat branch soon emerged.

It was in this same phase that the Tabayūn movement began to seek itself ideologically and attempted to carve out its own identity within the various currents present in Morocco:[369]

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367 Mechtalli**,** Interviw, 2010.

368 Mechtalli**,** Interviw, 2010.

369 Ben Khaldoun, Somaya (PJD MP, former MUR activist). Interview by E. Francois. In person. Rabat, Morocco, 03/2009.

> Within the Islamic identity, we sought our own identity, what is Islam to us– is it Salafism, is it Jihādism, Wahhabism, is it Yassine[370], Ṣūfism, etc –some tried out with the Salafīs of Marrakech, to see what they were doing, others went with the Tablighi Jamaa people, others with Sheikh Yassine, who had just left the Qadariyya *ṭarīqa*, to get his ideas. We would then meet in Rabat and discuss people's different experiences to form a group with its own vision.

Describing the Tabayūn's outlook and objectives, former leading MUR activist Soumaya Ben Khaldoun states: "We had a clear vision of what we wanted. Morocco is a Muslim country, but some know Islam well, others less well. Our objective was the resurrection of religion (*ᶜiqāmat al-dīn*)".[371] This marked a shift away from the Chabiba's narrow focus on revolutionary change to a more widely shared objective of emphasising the Islamic nature of Morocco's identity as part of a broader vision for Islamically informed reform of state and society.

From the outset, the Tabayūn was split into two main geographical branches, Rabat and Casablanca.[372] From 1981, the Casablanca branch of the Tabayūn group became increasingly close to Benkirane's Jamaa Islamia, the group Benkirane had established following his break with Mouti. By now, Benkirane had been released from prison, undertaken serious ideological reforms and following the establishment of the Jamaa Islamia aired his ambitions of legalising his organization. The Tabayūn saw an opportunity for unification and discussions began between the two movements. Tabayūn leaders decided however that the internal divide between its Casablanca and Rabat branches needed to be resolved first, before any union with the Jamaa Islamia, or any other movement, could be contemplated.

By the early 1980s, the two branches of the Tabayūn were seeking to resolve divergences. One particular divergence was on the issue of female participation, with the Casablanca branch not wanting women integrated into decision making processes. To this

370 Abdesalaam Yassine's Ṣūfī Islamic movement al-ᶜAdl wa'l-Iḥsān was not yet in existence at this time.

371 S. Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

372 The Rabat branch was initially led by Drissi Bouzidi, after which it was led by ᶜAbd al-Razzāq al-Marūrī, an Islamic intellectual who had never been a member of the Chabiba.

end, the group devised a strategic plan towards a complete synthesis of the two organizations and outlined a vision for their future work that was divided into three consecutive stages. This strategized merger of the organization would form a blueprint for the subsequent union of the other organizations that would come to make up the MUR and set a precedent for the successful unification of different trends.

The first stage of the unification process was the education and formation stage (*tarbiyya, taqwīn)*. The movement acknowledged that this stage would not see huge horizontal growth, but instead chose to focus on vertical growth or development, a strategy which would later be mimicked within the MUR itself. The primary task of the movement's leaders was organizing people in 'circles'. Subsequently, the strategy held that those people could move on after two years to form their own circles, and spread the movement's ideas. This stage was regarded as one in which leaders would focus on people with clear talent or qualities which could form the backbone of the movement. "This was to form a core with strong cultural, spiritual, educational basics and capacity to convey this."[373]

The second stage was the cultural and social stage, representing greater horizontal expansion. The movement's leaders decided they needed to create cultural and social associations to address people's day to day problems: "We are not a revolutionary movement, nor one that says, let things rot, like the Marxists do, so that there will be a popular uprising."[374] They identified a number of issues, including those of illiteracy, poverty, corruption and agreed on the need to contribute to a solution, whilst also taking the opportunity to teach people about Islam and their perception of its correct praxis - from teaching them how to pray, about *zakāt* (the obligatory Muslim charitable 'tax'), as well as lessons on the interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

The movement's leaders also identified the need to establish cultural associations in order to reach intellectuals and educated elites. This was part of their conception of an

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373 S. Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

374 S. Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

effective strategy for social change, a view which would later be reflected within the MUR: “We called on thinkers who could give us their ideas and so that those intellectuals could join our group, though they didn’t benefit from the same concentrated education we did”.[375] They also established women’s organizations. This was an important milestone in the development of the ‘Islamist’ women’s movement which arose in response to a sense that women were the target for an opposing, socially liberal, project for social change, driven by secular feminist organizations.[376]

The third and final phase elaborated by the movement was the *political stage*. The leaders realized that they could not affect all the change they wished through associational work and felt the need to engage politically once the two prior stages had been completed. “In 1984-85, when we put down this strategic vision, we knew we’d get to a political stage – we just didn’t know how and when.”[377] This blueprint for unification outlines the priority assigned to different levels of social change within the Tabayūn trend, in which political activism was the final stage of a much broader project for Islamically inspired change. This was at odds with the Jamaa Islamia’s outlook, in which Benkirane emphasized political participation as the primary mode of Islamic engagement to be prioritized by the movement.

Despite negotiations, the Rabat and Casablanca branches of the Tabayūn were unable to merge due to ideological divergences, notably as regards the issue of underground activism and women’s work.[378] Discussions with the Jamaa Islamia also floundered due to, according to Mohamed Ben Khaldoun, the premise Benkirane gave for the union being that

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375 S. Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

376 Somaya Ben Khaldoun referred me to Jamila Moussali’s PhD on the Islamic Feminist Movement (No Details).

377 S. Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

378 Mechtalli, Interview, 2010. Whilst the Fes and Rabat branches united, the Casablanca branch remained separate.

the Tabayūn join his movement, rather than a merger of equals. This was compounded as well as clear ideological differences:[379]

> We had ideological divergences, we were moderate, but we were very critical of the regime. We were also a secret movement. He was starting to be, not in connivance with the regime, but very close to the regime, and he opposed secrecy and hiding – he wanted to create an association, but we didn't want our names published - we didn't believe in the regime at the time.

From 1982, Benkirane began seeking the legal route, openly referring to the Islamic nature of the regime and advocating working alongside, not in conflict with the authorities. Many suspected his time in jail was responsible for this shift and accusations of complicity with the Secret Services abounded, further enflamed by the excellent relations Benkirane maintained with the Secret Service officer charged with overlooking his organization.

From 1985, despite being divided, the Tabayūn continued to spread across Morocco through the expansion of its educational circles. The association began its own publication, established close contacts with leading intellectuals, university professors and other public figures and continued its dialogue with other Islamic groups, in particular with the Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās and Ahmed Raissouni's Islamic Association of Ksar el-Kebir.

According to Abdelnasser Tijani, despite the opposition of the Casablanca branch, the Rabat branch of the Tabayūn was the first movement in Morocco to incorporate women into its structures.[380] It did so by creating an independent, parallel women's organization, fully run by women and of which only the top leadership had contact with the men's section. The feminine wing of the Tabayūn counted amongst its leading figures professors, doctors and other professionals.[381] The women's section had its own leadership committee, president

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379 Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

380 This partly explains why many of the leading women in the MUR came from the League for an Islamic Future, including Soumaya Ben Khladoun (PJD MP), Aicha Fadli (former LIF activist), and Aziza Baccali (Head of the MUR Committee of Specialization).

381 Such as Dr Aicha Hillali (ᶜĀᶜisha Hilālī), currently Professor at the University Mohamed V, Dr Aicha Fadli (ᶜĀᶜisha Faḍlī), Gynaecologist, Souad Hajwi (Suᶜād Hajwi), Milouda Sham (Milūda Shām) and others.

and financial independence.[382] Reflecting on why the other Islamic trends did not include women activists, or leaders, Tijani states: “We were from our society, which did not afford much importance to women being leaders in Islamic movements. This wasn’t in our tradition, neither in ours, nor in that of the Orient”.[383]

Islamic activist Abdelrazq al-Marouri is credited with providing the members of the Tabayūn with a greater opening on society, forging links with the political world, actors across civil society, including feminist associations and fundamentally altering the perception of women in the Islamic movement. Both senior MUR activists Khadija Moufid and Mohamed Ben Khaldoun point to him as a pioneering force in advancing the position of women in the Islamic movement, most specifically in the creation of a feminine wing within it: “It was thanks to him that the question of women in the Islamic movement was raised, he asked why sisters didn’t have circles, arguing that women should have the same status as men.”[384] His vision is often credited by MUR activists as having paved the way for their active participation in the contemporary movement and their presence – although limited and at times contested – in its highest ranks.

Somaiya Ben Khaldoun joined the Tabayoun through her brother, bringing with her friends from university and her local area, with whom she had set up study circles prior to aligning herself with the group. Despite the fact that a small number of women had been Chabiba Islamiya sympathizers, they were considered to be on the outskirts of the movement, and this was the first formal injection of women into the group which had prior to this, been composed entirely of men. As one of the first female Islamic activists, Soumaya Ben Khaldoun was responsible for educational circles in her area, led by Abdelrazq al-

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382 When it came time for the Tabayūn, as part of the League for an Islamic Future (LIF), to unite into one single movement (the MUR), the women’s branch resisted the incorporation of women into a single, united leadership and sought to maintain their parallel organization.

383 Tijani, Interview, 2010.

384 Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

Marouri:[385] "He had very developed ideas on women, compared to all the other movements, including Benkirane's movement".[386] He pushed women with reading, thinking and gave them the opportunity to talk publicly, helping to forge a generation of female public speakers such as S. Ben Khaldoun herself and thinkers, like Jamila Moussali, whose doctoral thesis focused on the development of Islamic feminist thought. "He was more advanced than we are now on women's issues".[387] As in the men's circles, the readings focused on by the women, were situated within the Islamic Reformist trend of the early 20th century and included authors such as Mohamed Rashid Rida. They were further exposed to a broad range of reformist material presented in other media such as Islamic poetry and films, including a TV series on Jamāl al-Dīn Afghānī.

Marouri was strongly influenced by the revolutionary ideas of Rashid Ghannoushi and Ḥassan al-Turābī and disseminated their ideas on women in his magazine *Risālat al-Usra* ('The Family's Epistle'), published in 1986, and on his radio show, 'Hadāᵓiq al-Shayik' ('the Garden of Poems'). In both, Marouri discussed women in Islam, female participation and equality issues. According to Mechtalli, the first issue in which Marouri wrote articles on women's work created a stir in Morocco. Indeed, a former disciple of his, Aicha Fadli, states that Marouri's belief in the equality of the sexes was a novel concept within the Islamic movement and was considered controversial:[388]

> For Marouri, women were equal to men. This wasn't something new for me, given my education, the ideas in my family, this was all normal for me. But compared to other movements, this was very unique.

Marouri also challenged the strict segregation of the educational circles, suggesting mixed circles could be held with curtains to provide the separation many still demanded, but hinting in his sermon that the dividers would soon disappear: "From 1978-79, he took the

385 He died in a car accident shortly after.

386 S. Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

387 S. Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

388 Fadli, Aicha (MUR activist). Interview by E. Francois. In person. Rabat, Morocco, 11/2010.

initiative to create the first circles (*jellasāt*) of women and he led them. At the time, men and women didn't meet in Islamic movements".[389]

In 1985, members of the Chabiba Islamiya were discovered bringing weapons into Oujda in a terrorism case dubbed the 'Haqiqi [Ḥaqīqī] affair'. Consequently, the authorities launched a general crackdown on Islamic activists across Morocco. The Tabayūn sought to reassure the authorities, telling them that they were members of an informal Islamic group that was seeking to spread the faith through preaching and assuring the regime of their respect for the monarchy. In order to further legitimise the group, Benkirane told the authorities that they were part of the Jamaa Islamia of Rabat, despite no real connection between the two groups. This afforded the Tabayūn a modicum of trust until the arrest of one of its members. A document was discovered by the authorities which presented the Tabayūn as far more than a predication society, one with political ambitions and one which viewed the regime as the enemy. During the investigation however, the group explained that the document, which had been penned years earlier, had since been annulled and had been replaced by a commitment to a legal *modus operandi*. According to Bilal Talidi, the document stated that the movement considered colonization the first enemy and the regime, the 'second face of colonization'.[390] A major crackdown ensued. It was when the men were in prison however that the developing women's wing came into its own. A woman temporarily led the movement in 1985, cementing their place within the Islamic movement.[391]

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389 Hamideen, Interview, 2009. This openness onto women's work in the Islamic movement was not shared by the Casablanca branch of the Tabayūn which continued to resist women's integration.

390 Talidi, Interview, 2009.

391 The female leader at the time has preferred to remain anonymous. (Talidi, Interview, 2009)

Following this episode and pressure from the authorities, the group changed its name and formally applied for legal recognition on December 3rd 1986 under the name The Organization of the Islamic Sunrise (Jamᶜiyyat al-Shurūq al-Islāmiya).[392]

4) The 'Third Way' and the other trends (Ṭalāᵓiᶜ, the Islamic Choice movement; Abdesalaam Yassine; The Islamic Group ; the Association of Unicity)

By the late 1970s, Tabayūn members were in discussions with many different trends on the Islamic scene concerning potential unification. Prospects included the Jamaa Tabligh, a predication movement with roots in the Indian subcontinent, Belaji's Association of Unicity (Jamāᶜa Tawḥīd), Abdesalaam Yassine[393] and some Salafī groups, including the Saudi Salafī organization, Jamāᶜa Sunna, based in Rabat. This final group, established by former Chabiba Islamiya members, was led by literalist Salafī Shaykh Ibn ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān al-Maghrawī. Al-Maghrawī expanded the influence of Saudi inspired teachings in Morocco, carrying the mantle of Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī following the latter's death in 1987. Al-Hilālī had been an active proponent of the literalist Salafī outlook with close links to Saudi Arabia, serving for a time as the Moroccan correspondent for the Muslim Brotherhood newspaper edited by Hasan al-Banna. Al-Maghrawī continued his work, opening several associations and schools under the banner of 'al-Daᶜwa li'l-Qurᵓan wa'l-Sunna' ('Predication for the Qur'an and Sunna').[394] The focus on strictly theological, rather than political knowledge in the literalist Salafī circles changed the perspective of former Chabiba adherents on Islam and expanded their understanding: "We had a new vision of Islam, it broadened our horizons, we discovered the science of *ḥadīth*, and so much that we didn't know".[395] This further led to a broadening of the activists' conception of *daᶜwa* to include non-political forms of activism

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392 However, they never received a confirmation of receipt, which would have afforded them a fully legal status.

393 Whose movement was known as "Al Jamaa Al khairira" until September 1987 when it took the name "al-ᶜAdl wa'l-Iḥsān" ("Justice and Spirituality").

394 Darif, *Monarchie marocaine*, p. 119.

395 Mechtalli, Interview, 2010.

stressing in particular the importance of education. This would mark out the associational trend within the MUR as one that emphasized the importance of long term, societal change, including education, as primary in the ultimate objective of transforming state and society. For the activists within this trend, the individual, rather than the State, required profound transformation before any type of political reform could be conceived.

The Tabayūn engaged with the different tendencies in an effort to forge its own outlook and was more or less influenced by different trends in different parts of the country. However two movements appeared to share a particular ideological affinity, the Islamic Association of Ksar el-Kebir and the Jam^{c}iyya al-Da^{c}wa bi-Fās.

As the Benkirane-led Jamaa Islamia emerged, the Islamic '*da^{c}wa'* scene of Morocco was divided into three main tendencies, the Ṣūfī-activist trend led by Abdesalaam Yassine, the legal-loyalist trend of the Jamaa Islamia and a Salafī-reformist trend represented by "the Third Way"[396] ('al Ikhtiyar al Thalith').[397]

From the early 1980s, Shaykh Abdesalaam Yassine, who'd recently been released following his controversial open letter to King Hassan II,[398] sought to unite the different Islamic trends under his leadership. He contacted the Jam^{c}iyya al-Da^{c}wa bi-Fās, the Islamic Association of Ksar al Kebir, the *Talā^{ɔ}i^{c}*, the *Tabayūn* and the 'Group of Six' and the former committee of the Chabiba Islamiya. He did not however contact Benkirane's Jamaa Islamiya, which Yassine felt was too exclusivist, given its label as '*The* Islamic group'. Following his letter to the King, Yassine had developed respect among other Islamic activists critical of the regime and used this kudos to try and unite the various trends. Based at the time in Marrakesh, Yassine had heard about the activists of the Third Way and asked them to meet with him to discuss the possible union. This national dialogue over a possible

396 The 'Third way' was not a formalized union but more like a loose association and how the three groups which shared a similar outlook, the Tabayoun, the Association of Ksar al Kebir and the Jamaa Dawa in Fes came to be identified.

397 Literally, the Third Choice

398 See Darif, *Monarchie marocaine*, p. 54.

unification of the entire Islamic movement attracted the attention of a variety of groups, including the Syrian trend known as the *Talāʾiᶜ* and an Iranian inspired group called the Movement for an Islamic Choice (IC), who joined the discussions.

The *Talāʾiᶜ* was led by ᶜIṣṣām al-ᶜAṭṭār, a Syrian former Muslim Brotherhood activist, living in exile in Germany. There he mentored a number of Arab students, including Moroccans, who had come to study. These students adopted his outlook and formed a movement upon their return. However, according to Abdelnasser Tijani,[399] the *Talāʾiᶜ* influence in Morocco was marginal, and included most notably a widely read publication and some audio cassettes of ᶜIṣṣām al-ᶜAṭṭār, but its influence did not outlast the 1980s. One of the main reasons for the movement's limited influence was that ᶜIṣṣām al-ᶜAṭṭār's supporters wanted to create a global Islamic movement, an idea resisted by many of the other activists whose focus was primarily national.[400]

Whilst the Jamaa Islamia had been sidelined by Yassine, it independently continued discussions with other trends, but tensions with the authorities over the nature of the movement's real objectives, as well as its loyalist outlook, kept it at the margins of discussions among the different Islamic groups. The 'Third Way' remained suspicious of its proximity to the authorities and contested its political priorities, at odds with its own educational and cultural focus. Some members of the Third Way also had a number of reservations concerning Benkirane, in particular his style of leadership and of management and had explicitly requested he be left out of negotiations. According to Belaji, discussions continued until 1982, when the Jamaa Islamia withdrew in order to reassess its orientation. The remaining four trends which would later make up the League for an Islamic Future

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399 Tijani, Interview, 2010.

400 This was partly also to do with the regime's strong opposition to internationalist trends, which it feared could speak opposition to the monarchy.

(LIF), Yassine and a few other Islamic personalities connected to the *Talāʾiᶜ*, remained in talks.[401]

In discussing the future of the Islamic movement in Morocco, Yassine advocated the 'Ṣūfī path' under the guidance of a spiritual leader (himself). A number of former Chabiba Islamiya members adopted his outlook, attended his conferences and talks, most notably, PJD politician and MUR activist Muṣṭafā Ramid. Yassine became increasingly explicit about his vision for the united movement and began to outline the profile of its leader, specifying a number of necessary qualifications and characteristics for the position. For Yassine, leadership was based on spiritual credentials and experience, a view which conflicted with the vision of the members of the *Talāʾiᶜ*, who insisted decisions be taken by consensus ('*ijmāᶜ*') by a group or committee. Meanwhile, the Third Way and the Jamāᶜa Tawḥīd emphasized their preference for decisions to be made through *shūrā* ('consultation') and advocated democratic internal functioning for the movement. They asserted that the leader should be elected by the members and all decisions ought to be taken by majority vote. Since this current formed the majority, the Tabayūn, the Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās, the Islamic Association of Ksar el-Kebir, Yassine and the *Talāʾiᶜ* trends left the negotiations. The unification floundered, and Yassine subsequently established his own association al-Jamāᶜa al-Khayriyya also known by the group's motto al-ᶜAdl wa'l-Iḥṣān ('Justice and Spirituality'). Although the union failed, according to Mechtalli, Yassine's thinking helped the Tabayūn affect an important and radical change in a decision to abandon the view of society as 'Jāhiliyya', or outside the fold of Islam, a view inherited from Muslim Brotherhood thinker Sayyid Qutb's writings: "There was a complete change. We saw society as Muslim but there are some people not practising, but not *kuffār* (i.e. 'infidel')".[402]

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401 Belaji, Interview, 2009.

402 Mechtalli, Interview, 2010.

The Third Way decided to focus on solidifying and formalising its union, which was soon joined by a small group, the Association of Unicity (Jamāᶜa Tawḥīd), led by former Chabiba Islamiya member, Abdeslaam Bellaji.

Amongst those desirous to join the Third Way was a small group al-Ikhtiyār al-Islāmī ('the Islamic Option') which briefly adhered to the Third Way loose association, around 1987-1988. Made up of former members of the Chabiba Islamiya, the Islamic Option was presided by Lahcen Daoudi (l'Ḥasan Dāwūdī), subsequently a PJD MP, and its Vice President was Mohamed al-Amine Ragala (Muḥammad al-Amīn Ragala), subsequently implicated in allegations of a terrorist network, known as the Belliraj affair.[403] Darif describes the movement as 'elitist' and as expounding an 'Islamized leftist' discourse, and whose political stance was close to that of secular democratic currents.[404]

Largely inspired by the Iranian revolution, and made up of former Chabiba Islamiya members, The Islamic Option helped push for the creation of a political party from within the Third Way in 1990, a request which was accepted by the movement based on the compromise that the party would not become a priority. But the group eventually parted ways with the Third Way for ideological reasons in 1991.[405] Militant and staunchly pro-Iranian, the group found it impossible to integrate into the Third Way's focus on cultural and intellectual work within a long term progressive time-scale: "They were young, wanted relations with Iran, they were … not anti-monarchical, but had very virulent language towards the regime. We were not like this. We wanted to form people, develop Islamic thought."[406] The group's militant outlook and dubious campus activities, including suggestions they were involved in '*taqqiyya*' ('dissimulation', i.e. concealing their real

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403 In 2008, Mohamed Moatassim and Mohamed El Amine Ragala were among 32 people implicated in a terrorist network, referred to as the 'Beliraj Affair'.

404 Darif, *Monarchie marocaine*, p.92.

405 According to Mohamed Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009, who added: "The famous Beliraj reunion was in 1992 – we no longer had relations with them." See f. 85

406 Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

intentions) as part of negotiations with the Left, put it in conflict with the traditional minded Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās which denounced its secretive activities:[407]

> …the brothers from Fes noticed that the Islamic Choice took inspiration from the ideas of the Chabiba Islamiya, which were more political, they were trying to move too fast, too hastily – there were rumours on the campuses, students noticed behaviour (…) inspired from by *taqqiyya*, they said it was a way to position themselves vis-a-vis the Leftist, who wouldn't accept the direct Islamic discourse (…) but for the Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās people and the others, you must be honest. There were people amongst them inspired by the Islamic revolution in Iran. The result was that they (the Third Way) didn't feel at ease with them.

Having failed to unite with the Third Way, which was in the process of establishing the 'League for an Islamic Future', the Islamic Option itself split in 1992 over the issue of formalizing the organization's status, on which its two leading figures Mohamed Ben Mbarek El Marwani (Muḥammad bin Mubārak al-Marwānī) and Mustapha Moattassim (Muṣtafā Muᶜtaṣim) disagreed.[408]

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407 Hamideen, Interview, 2009.

408 Moattassim had wanted to move towards legal work, but Marwani remained committed to a secretive mode of action. To this end, Moattasim created the association al-Badīl al-Haḍārī ("The Civilizational Alternative") in Fes in October 1995, whose publication was *al-Jisr* ("the Bridge"). The movement advocated greater pluralism and inter-societal dialogue to work towards the common good. Darif describes the movement as "modernist" and asserts that it sought to compete with the Leftist currents. Like the Left, it denounced class inequalities and called for constitutional reform based on the separation of powers, in addition to denouncing a state of both moral and religious degradation.

Marwani shifted his stance in November 1998, creating al-Harak min ajli'l-Umma ("The Movement for the Islamic community") with the objective of restoring the *umma* (i.e. the global muslim community) to power. The movement published a periodical *al-anbāᵓ* ('Information'). In 2001, Marwani closed the association and created a political party by the same name. The al-Umma party campaigned for a political party from 2006 until 2008, but was never afforded a legal status, due to its alleged unwillingness to publicly denounce its revolutionary outlook.

The Third Way* (1978-1992): *outlook and activities

The Third Way sought to carve an independent path, between the politically focused Jamaa Islamia/ Movement for Reform and Renewal led by Abdelillah Benkriane on the one hand and Abdesalaam Yassine's Ṣūfī inspired activism on the other. It organized meetings, conferences and camps throughout 1978 and the early 1980s and focused its energy on transforming its alliance into an established union.

The alliance placed a primary importance on the Qur'an in the life of Muslims, and favoured cultural action. A second area of prime importance for the Third Way was economics: "No movement can be solid or have a solid basis without an economic basis."[409] The group sought relations with businessmen, attempted to acquire land and increase its possessions, in the hope of providing a solid base from which, in the very long term, political action might spring. The group's slogan was 'move slowly,' a strategy which would come to define the emerging group's vision for change.

On the communications front, in the early 1980's the Third Way founded and edited *al-Hudā* ('the Guidance'), an intellectual review, led by Moroccan Islamic thinker, Mohamed Brissh.[410] From 1990, it began to publish *al-Sabīl* ('the Path') which ran for two editions before being shut down by the Ministry of Interior for publishing articles critical of the government.[411] *Al-Sabīl* proved to be a very popular publication, running a 40,000 / week print-run,[412] far more than the only competing Islamic publication at the time, *al-Rāya* ('the Banner') published by Benkirane's Movement for Reform and Renewal, which had a print run of around 10,000 copies a week.[413]

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409 Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

410 Belaji, Interview, 2009, states that the date was around 1982-1983.

411 The paper's editorial committee was made up of Raissouni, Bellaji, Marouri and other established figures, with Mustafa Ramid as editor, all of whom contributed articles.

412 Belaji, Interview, 2009.

413 As according to Belaji, Interview, 2009.

By 1994, the Third Way[414] had evolved from a loose conglomeration of groups, to a structured organization, with a hierarchy, forums and regular meetings, and a decision was taken to create an official movement with the hope of applying for legal recognition. This legal association would prioritise education and the training of members, both in the Islamic domain, but also in more secular domains. According to Belaji, the majority of the members of the movement were intellectuals from various domains, these including linguists, physicist, scholars of the sharia and economists.[415]

The group's conception was one of non-confrontation and cooperation with the state in order to be able to spread their educational outlook through the legal instruments available to them, notably through associations, publications, predication in mosques, etc. To this end, they created the Maktab al-Ishrāf ('Supervisory Office'), a leadership committee made up of two members from each of the four groups and two leading Islamic personalities, to overlook the group's activities and to begin organising their initiatives. They toured the big cities, giving presentations and talks in cultural centres in order to popularise the conception of the movement and in order to gain further adherents from amongst the intellectual elite, scholars (*ᶜulamāʾ*) and individuals interested in faith matters.

However one of the components of the Third Way, the Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās' stance towards internal democracy was a source of tension with other movements, who considered it a prerequisite to potential unification. Unlike the other components of the Third Way who were dedicated to internal democracy within the united organization, the Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās continued to favour leadership based on seniority and academic credentials. This led to conflict over authority between Raissouni, who headed the National office and Said Bouchikhi who continued to hold sway through his moral authority internally. From 1989-1994, activities stagnated as tensions over the issue of authority lingered, causing many within the group to seek out unification with Benkirane's Movement for Reform and

414 Also known interchangeably as the "Third Choice" by some activists.

415 Belaji, Interview, 2009.

Renewal, in the knowledge that his group was fully committed to it. Tensions also surfaced over the *modus operandi* of the Jam^c^iyya al-Da^c^wa bi-Fās. Although an official organization, the Jam^c^iyya al-Da^c^wa bi-Fās favoured keeping their activities discreet and not drawing the attention of the authorities to their work. The other components wished to take a more public stance. Despite lingering tensions, the Third Way took the decision to formalise its union and apply for legal recognition on April 4th 1994 as the League for an Islamic Future.

The League for an Islamic Future* (1994) *(Rābiṭat al-Mustqabal al-Islāmī)

Aims and objectives

The League for an Islamic Future (Rābiṭat al-Mustqabal al-Islāmī) represented an attempt at unifying five local religious associations.[416] These were namely the Islamic Association of Ksar el-Kebir, led by Ahmed Raissouni; the Jam^c^iyya al-Da^c^wa bi-Fās, led by Shahad Bouchikhi;[417] the Association of the Islamic Sunrise (Jam^c^iyyat al-Shurūq al-Islāmiya), led by Abdel Razaq al Marouri; The Group of Unicity (Jamā^c^a Tawḥīd), led by Ahmed Belaji; and The Line of Juncture of Oujda (*Khaṭṭ al-Munataf)*, an organization of university professors, linked to Benkirane's Jamaa Islamia.[418] The united movement would come to represent one of the two central trends which make up the contemporary movement for Unicity and Reform (MUR) today and its outlook had a defining impact on the new movement's identity.

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416 This figure is asserted by Darif (*Monarchie marocaine*, p. 69) who asserts the LIF emerged out of the Union of three trends: Jam^c^iyya al-Da^c^wa bi-Fās; the Islamic Association of Ksar al Kebir; and Jam^c^iyyat al-Shurūq al-Islāmiya. My research suggests the number was five initially and later two groups broke off from the union.

417 Wegner, Eva, "The Contribution of Inclusivist Approaches towards the Islamist Opposition to Regime Stability in Arab States: Case of the Moroccan 'Parti de la Justice et du Développement'", *European University Institute* RSCAS working papers 42 (2004), p. 7, accessed 8/09/2014. http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/812.

418 Talidi, Interview, 2009. The group also published a magazine called *al-Munaṭaf* ('The Juncture').

Following its application for legal status as the League for an Islamic Future, the group never received a confirmation slip. This is often the case when the government does not wish to officially recognize an organization – the application remains 'suspended' in a legal limbo where the organization's status is never officialized. Despite attempts at legalization, or perhaps partly due to its unsuccessful attempts at acquiring legal status, the LIF became a secretive group and details of its organizational set-up, number of members or ideological content were not public knowledge. In fact, according to Abdelnasser Tijani, the group continued to function on a dual basis, with both a semi- formal and informal structure functioning alongside one another.[419]

With the aforementioned four[420] organizations, the basis was formed for the League for an Islamic Future, following ten years of negotiations, during which the 'Third Way' had forged a unified stance on core issues and established a vision for the organization[421], enshrined in a paper entitled 'The Vision: Identity, Positions and *modus operandi*'. The fifth group, 'The Line of Juncture of Oujda' which had been part of the discussions, dropped out of the final union.

Drawing on the Tabayūn's strategy, the League for an Islamic Future divided its work into three phases, each of which entailed a particular area of focus. In the first phase, the focus was to be on education, in the second, on social welfare issues and in the third and final phase, on political issues.

419 Tijani, Interview, 2010. The formal group was officially headed by Abdesalam Herass, with Abdelnasser Tijani as his vice-president, while the actual movement was in fact presided over by Ahmed Raissouni, with Bouchiri as the vice-president.

420 Both Mohamed Darif and Khadija Mohsen-Finan claim the League for an Islamic Future was made up of three - not four - movements, the Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās; the Jamᶜiyyat al-shurūq al-Islāmiya; the Islamic Association of Ksar el Kebir, but omit to mention the Jamāᶜa Tawḥid .See Mohsen-Finan, Khadija, and Malika Zeghal, 'Opposition islamiste et pouvoir monarchique au Marocfield: Le cas du Parti de la Justice et du Développement', *Revue française de science politique*, 56/1 (2006), p. 28. The Line of Juncture of Oujda" left prior to the attempt at legalization.

421 Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

The objectives were, according to information published in *al-Sawha* magazine ('The Revival'), to consolidate the historical links of Moroccan society and its attachment to Islam and to its civilization, stating that Islam had historically been a unifying force over different societies and should be a central element of the country's renaissance.[422] This situates the group squarely within the Islamic reformist trend which, since the turn of the 20th century, has advocated drawing on Islamic principles as the means for societal renewal.

The group's articulated objectives thus covered a range of concerns which together come under the rubric of seeking societal (and ultimately political) reform through advocacy of Islamic precepts.

A central objective set out by the LIF advocated co-operation and unity amongst different segments of society, in likely reference to distinct cultural trends of Morocco. It therefore argued its objective of fostering "an atmosphere of understanding, cooperation and dialogue between different parts of society to enable the consolidation of its unity whilst respecting difference and differences of opinion and interpretation, but not allowing these to become a factor of conflict".[423] It also made clear its opposition to the conflict on the political stage, or what it dubbed the "lack of mutual respect which threatens the energies of the nation and hinder its progress".[424]

It further articulated its objective of advocating ethical principles of Islam primarily through education. Amongst its stated objectives therefore were: [425]

> spreading the faith to contribute to the nation's renaissance and message of Islam, develop balance and open education, take action against factors which have led to the decline of society, in particular illiteracy, individualism, nihilism, selfishness, egoism, lack of initiative, cultural alienation and despair.

It is worth considering that such ideals were not restricted to Islamic associations or groups. Vermeren notes that from the 1970s, the failure of Maghrebi states to deliver on their

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422 *Al-Sahwa* 38:December (1994) as cited in Darif, *Monarchie Marocaine*, p. 80.

423 Darif, *Monarchie Marocaine*, p. 70.

424 Darif, *Monarchie Marocaine*, p. 710.

425 Darif, *Monarchie Marocaine*, p. 71.

developmental promises undermined the very values underpinning them, leading to a broad ideological questioning and to the positioning of Islamism as the new, ideological reframing of the global South.[426]

The LIF further present 'Islamic values' as central vehicles wherein social and political crises of Morocco would be solved. It therefore presented as an objective the "spreading [of] authentic values and contributing to their consolidation in individual and collective behaviour, whilst asserting that political, economic and social reforms, cannot, alone, bring the solutions that society is entitled to expect".[427] The group went on to state that reforms should be accompanied by "measures to spread virtue in society in order to rid it of expressions of the degradation of its mores",[428] and contribute to elaborating approaches that could offer solutions which conform to Moroccan values and traditions, without becoming inward-looking: "Solutions must be drawn from within Islam which is our major point of reference and conform to our heritage before seeking to adopt adequate solutions coming from outside."[429]

According to its internal policy, the group's aims were to: [430]

> … improve the relations of the society with the traditions, especially the Islamic ones; create a spirit of constructive discussion and cooperation between all the components of the society. Work on solving the problems and the negative issues which are holding back our society; Finding scientific solutions to the problems in our society.

The culmination of the group's stated objectives, resembling a de-facto manifesto, placed its activities squarely in the non-confrontational, educational and cultural realm, away from the political field the authorities were most concerned about. Indeed, according to Darif,[431] the common factor uniting all the organizations was their desire to work in the

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426 Vermeren, *Maghreb, la démocratie impossible?*, p. 226

427 Darif, *Monarchie Marocaine*, pp. 70-71.

428 Darif, *Monarchie Marocaine*, pp. 70-71.

429 Darif, *Monarchie Marocaine*, pp. 70-71.

430 Ḥarakat al-tawḥīd wa'l-iṣlāḥ, 2006, p. 13.

431 Darif, *Monarchie Marocaine*, p. 71.

cultural realm. This also made them objective allies of the regime which had, from the 1980s onwards, sought to reinforce the Islamic legitimacy of the monarch's rule and emphasized his centrality to Morocco's religious identity and its preservation.

Members from the four groups which made up the League for an Islamic Future were present in its decision making offices, including the executive office, which was comprised of 20 individuals. Given the members' negative experience with a lack of accountability in the leadership of the Chabiba Islamiya, the group was determined to create clear, official structures. They thus founded a Majlis al-Shūra ('the consultative council'), and administrative offices. "We discussed all points and had a very detailed charter, our position, our strategic vision, how to evolve in time; we even established a strategic vision with stages."[432]

The group began publishing the review *al-Sahwa*, edited by Mustafa Ramid and Mohamed Ben Khaldoun and featuring contributions by theologian and activist Farid al Ansari, with the objective of becoming a more visible presence and for that presence to gradually become officialized. The League for an Islamic Future approached Ramid asking him to lead up its media venture and to help them establish a weekly paper, which would have the objective of disseminating the group's ideas within society, but also undoubtedly to make its views known to the authorities, in order to highlight its non-confrontational nature. Ramid was selected because most members of the LIF had some connection to him. Ramid was also reputed for his independence, and agreed to join the LIF and head the Majlis al-shūra.[433] Ramid had some experience, having published another review, *al-Sabīl* from 1990 in collaboration with Shahad Bouchikhi, Ahmed Bellaji and Abdel Razq al Marouri in the 'Third Way'.

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432 Mechtalli, Interview, 2010.

433 During his time studying for his law degree at the university of Casablanca, Ramid was part of a group calling itself the Independent Islamic Students, which had no official allegiances but was active on the *daᶜwa* scene.

In *al-Sahwa,* the group outlined its political and ideological line on issues including the regime, the monarchy and constitutional reform.[434] It was characterized by its strong first page and the last page usually consisted of poems by Farid al-Ansari criticising the social and political situation. It featured contributions by Ahmed Raissouni, Abdel Razq al Marouri, Ahmed Bellaji, the Chirhi brothers,[435] Farid al-Ansari and others. According to Ramid, although created by LIF the review was considered a 'voice' by all the components of the Islamic revival movement: "Since al-ᶜAdl wa'l-Iḥsān (Yassine's movement) had many problems with the government then, the LIF tried to defend them in *al-Sahwa*, so a lot of people assumed it was coming from *al-ᶜAdl*".[436] For the activists, it was an opportunity to air grievances about the social and economic situation in Moroccco and to express their critique of it within the framework of an Islamic revival which was deemed to have the potential to resolve tensions.

Although the LIF had not itself received legal recognition, the associations it established to work in the social and cultural spheres often did and thus the group had established some relationship with the authorities, who, according to Bellaji "respected us, they saw us as intellectuals, scholars and knew we didn't have a violent agenda".[437] The LIF's work was marked by what Mohamed Darif dubs "moderation"[438] and a call to acquire greater knowledge in order that the aspirations of Islamic activists to see change rooted in Islam might reflect an academic approach. Indeed, the group counted amongst its members a number of well respected figures from civil society.[439] Ahmed Belaji, a senior member in the

434 Al-Sahwa continued to be published until 1996, when it merged into *al-Rāya* and later *al-Tajdīd.* The line expressed in *al-Rāya* is very consistent with Ramid's current views as a PJD candidate.

435 First names unknown

436 Mustafa Ramid as cited in Talidi, *Dhakira,* Part 4, p. 107.

437 Belaji, Interview, 2009.

438 Darif, *Monarchie Marocaine*, p. 70.

439 Including Erdogan Bin Shakroun, President of the 'Conseil Scientific des Ulama de Casablanca', Dr Toujgani, an influential scholar from Tetouan, Dr Hassan Lamrani from Oujda, Professor of Arab Literature, and others

LIF, who had been an official in the Moroccan House of Representatives since 1980, also worked as a civil servant within the administration. He claims that despite not receiving legal recognition, the movement was on amicable terms with the authorities who visited Raissouni and declared that they were not opposed to the movement, stating they trusted it and understood its non-confrontational nature.[440]

From the 1990s, political openings within Morocco seemed to signal that Hassan II was open to the participation of Islamic political groups in the formal political process:[441]

> After the elections in Algeria in 1992, the Islamic issue was on the table. King Hassan II had invited Abassi Madani[442] (ᶜAbbāsī Madanī) and said that if he had been responsible in Algeria, he would have allowed them to rule, (…) so the Islamic movement in Morocco was preparing, we told our friends in the Third way, we cannot remain in hibernation

In addition to the opening of the political scene, there appeared to be a relaxation of the pressure on civil society. Overtures were made to the Left, the King founded a Human Rights Commission (CCDH) and the infamous Tazmamart prisoners were released.[443]

However, despite the possibilities the shifting parameters seemed to offer, divergences within the group over the issue of political participation soon came to the fore. The weight afforded to an Islamic political party within the broader movement was a contentious issue, particularly for the Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās, who were already known to be particularly conservative on the issue of political action and opposed the creation of a political party. Instead, they considered the movement's priorities as necessarily being education first and foremost, followed by culture and politics in a third phase. The Jamᶜiyyat al-Shurūq al-Islāmiya, notably the main ex-Chabiba strand present in the LIF, was however open to immediate political action. Comprised mainly of people from Rabat, the movement

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440 Belaji, Interview, 2009.

441 Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

442 President of the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria, a prominent Islamist movement.

443 The Tazmamart prison was a secret prison in South-Eastern Morocco which held political prisoners and came to represent Morocco's "years of lead", the period of repression following the two coup attempts against the King in the 1970s.

was ideologically close to Benkirane's politically inclined movement, and through rubbing shoulders with them, sympathized with their outlook. Despite the reservations of the Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās, in 1992, the movement formed a political party al-Waḥda wa'l-Tanmiya ('Unity and Development') with Abdesalaam Belaji as secretary general.

The League for an Islamic Future unites with the Movement for Reform and Renewal

Over a decade after the creation of the Jamaa Islamia, once some 'radical' changes had been affected inside the group, and by then renamed the Movement for Renewal and Reform, negotiations began once again for a merger between the League for an Islamic Future and the Movement for Renewal and Reform.[444]

The League had re-ignited discussions with the Movement for Renewal and Reform since the late 1980s, following the breakdown of its initial talks in 1982, due to the then Jamaa Islamia's request to be left out of unification negotiations in order that it might clarify its status vis-a-vis the authorities. However the League for an Islamic Future's tours and publications had drawn the attention of a number of high profile individuals and increasing requests began to come in from other movements to join, including from the Movement for Renewal and Reform.

The League had, throughout, maintained close relations with the Movement for Renewal and Reform, in particular through the Rabat based Jamᶜiyyat al-Shurūq al-Islāmiya group, in view of a potential eventual unification, although tensions lingered over Benkirane's personality and ideological divergences:[445]

> We thought of Benkirane at the time of the Jamaa Islamia, as someone who had the courage to cut links with Mouti – we thought at the time that Benkirane was very political and provocative in his harsh positions and not moderate. But we thought the unification could improve Benkirane and that is what happened, until he became the most moderate amongst us.

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444 These were initiated following a meeting in Meknes between Azzedine Boumart (ᶜIzz al-Dīn Bumart) and Amin BouKhubza.

445 Tijani, Interview, 2010.

By the early 1990s, despite reservations over Benkirane, attempts began to unify the two movements. The Movement for Renewal and Reform had begun to integrate women, was improving its educational program and had been publishing a review, *al-Iṣlāḥ (1987-1989)*, which would later become *al-Rāya (1990-1998)*. The result of this evolution of the Movement for Renewal and Reform was to possess an outlook and profile much closer to that of the League for an Islamic Future.

The rapprochement became even clearer when both groups discovered they had each applied for a political party around the same time, suggesting their analysis and conclusions were similar. While the League established al-Waḥda wa'l-Tanmiya in 1992, the movement eventually realized that, in parallel, the Movement for Renewal and Reform had taken the same initiative in the same year, with the Mouvement Du Renouveau National, with Mohamed Yatim as its secretary general. Both requests were however denied by the authorities.

According to Mustafa Ramid, a lawyer by profession, shortly after leaving the Chabiba Islamiya, he himself became convinced that Islamic movements should have the legal right to create political parties, a view influenced in no small part by the political openings of the early 1990s.[446] In response to the authorities' rejection of both applications, Ramid penned an article in *al-Sahwa* criticising the position of the Ministry of Interior, which caught the attention of a number of diplomatic offices, including the French. According to Ramid,[447] the French consulate rang the League requesting a meeting in 1994. Unsure whether attendance in the meeting without consulting the Ministry of Interior would be compromising, the League contacted Driss Basri, then Interior Minister, who gave his approval and this led to a series of meetings between the League and Basri himself.

The meetings of Ramid and Basri were held following a special request by King Hassan II, to provide a detailed report on the Islamic scene, as a precursor to allowing the

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446 Vermeren, *Maghreb, la démocratie impossible?*

447 Mustafa Ramid interview as cited in Talidi, *Dhakira,*Part 4, p. 109.

emergence of an Islamic political party. The different groups of Islamic activists were asked to submit reports to the ministry on two topics, namely their position on the Kingdom and on *Imārat al-Muᶜminīn*, the King's role as 'leader of the believers'. Ramid claims[448] that the series of meetings were an opportunity for him to air his grievances concerning the treatment of Islamic activists by the Justice system. In reply, the Interior Minister "Basri focused [questions] on their position (i.e. that of the Islamic movement in general) on the Kingdom and *Imārat al-Muᵓminīn*".[449]

With the Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās having already taken some convincing to unify with the other components to form the League for an Islamic Future, the group had serious reservations about uniting with the Movement for Reform and Renewal. However, in 1994, the same year the League was created, the Movement for Reform and Renewal held internal elections and Benkirane was replaced by Mohamed Yatim. Yatim was considered a more poised and moderate leader, who through his short books and series of articles gained respect by a wide range of Islamic activists. The democratic transition of leadership within the Movement for Reform and Renewal was an inspiration to many Islamic activists and was considered a pioneering move forward in Islamic organizational dynamics. Mohamed Ben Khaldoun published an article "The HATIM lesson"[450] in the League's review, praising the process and the maturity of any movement which could accomplish a democratic transition. The article was subsequently published in the editorial of *al-Rāya*, helping solidify relations between the groups and giving further impetus to the pending union.

Thus, from 1994, a dialogue was renewed between the League and the Movement for Reform and Renewal in view of a possibly union. However, the League's previously good relations with the authorities were strained by its secret discussions with the Movement for Reform and Renewal, due to lingering concerns among the authorities over the

448 Mustafa Ramid interview as cited in Talidi, *Dhakira*, Part 4, p. 109.

449 Mustafa Ramid interview as cited in Talidi, *Dhakira*, Part 4, p. 109.

450 The MRR was popularly known by a variant Arabic abbreviation *Ḥātim* (Ḥarakāt al-Iṣlāh wa'l-Tajdīd).

Movement for Reform and Renewal's real views given their legacy within the Chabiba Islamiya. Such emphasis on democratic internal procedures and the importance of transparent structures were to forge the emerging ethos of the MUR, as its predecessor movement struggled to overcome a legacy of authoritarianism, secrecy and conflict with the authorities.

In the mid-1990s, when the Movement for Reform and Renewal began talks with Dr Abdelkrim al Khatib's MPDC (Mouvement populaire démocratique et constitutionnel) party, a largely redundant party run by a palace confidant, the Jam^{c}iyya al-Da^{c}wa bi-Fās expressed serious reservations over the League for an Islamic Future-Movement for Reform and Renewal union, which would eventually lead to its decision to withdraw from the broader unification process:[451]

> …they were not against political action – they viewed it as necessary, but they opposed the way we undertook it – they felt maybe a political party ought to be organized completely independently from the movement to avoid any negative repercussions on the organization."

This same critique would subsequently plague the MUR as activists disagreed on the importance the movement should afford to the PJD and its relative importance proportionately to the MUR's overarching objective.

According to Ahmed Hamideen,[452] a central concern related to the political party for the *Jam^{c}iyya al-Da^{c}wa bi-Fās* was that it took attention away from the process of unification of Islamic movements across Morocco, stating that:[453]

> …Its big priority was the unification of the Islamic movement in Morocco. (…) They were not against the merger of the Movement for Reform and Renewal with the MPDC,[454] but they (…) were worried the party would swallow the organization. They let individuals choose, but within the association, they said "we are not interested in entering the MUR."

451 Chirhi, Interview, 2009.

452 Hamideen, Interview, 2009.

453 Hamideen, Interview, 2009.

454 Abdelkrim's political party, the Mouvement populaire démocratique constitutionnel (MPDC)

In 1996, the Congress of the League for an Islamic Future was held in Fes and a unanimous vote for unification with the Movement for Reform and Renewal occurred. In the same year, the Movement for Reform and Renewal was preparing for an extraordinary congress with the MPDC, of which, according to Mohamed Ben Khaldoun, the League had not been 'adequately' informed.[455] The unification process of the League with the Movement for Reform and Renewal was extensive and time-consuming, involving regional and local meetings, a process which many felt was disrupted by the integration of the main leadership of the Movement for Reform and Renewal into the MPDC party during the same period, including central figures such as Benkirane, Yatim and al Othmani. To critics of the prioritising of the political route, some of the movement's key thinkers and activists were investing their energies elsewhere when the feeling was their focus should have been building up the newly unified movement .

Meanwhile, none of the League's leadership was initially integrated into the MPDC, although individual members, like Lahcen Daoudi who had been listed as leader of the League's political party, did eventually join.

According to Mohamed Ben Khaldoun,[456] many at the grassroots found this joint process troubling and there were concerns the Movement for Reform and Renewal was seeking to transform the unified movement into a political party:[457]

> We wanted to unite, but for an Islamic movement, we didn't feel ready to integrate a political party – we already had the movement of the HATIM [i.e. the MRR] and there was the party with Daoudi, we didn't feel ready to integrate with Dr Khatib. This speeding up of things, made unity fail.

For many, the proposed merger was a trap, since the political system was deemed a risky domain in which the movement's reputation was at stake in what was viewed as a rigged system. The experience of the Left in power, not least its failure to deliver, was listed

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455 "…they said in passing, but it wasn't the right time" (Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009).

456 Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

457 Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

as a prime concern for keeping a distance from a realm in which the movement risked co-optation and ultimately, discrediting.

Following concerns and increasingly disgruntled opposition, the League held a second extraordinary congress in Rabat in 1996 to assess the situation. There was a fear the immediate move towards a political party would make the movement lose its substance, a fear felt acutely amongst the Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās and the Khaṭṭ al- Munataf of Oujda. Both feeling a contradiction between their long-term societal objectives and those of a political party, they vetoed the decision. The voting outcome was a six vote difference, in favour of the union, from among over 100 participants. Thus in July 1996, the union of the League for an Islamic Future and the Movement for Reform and Renewal was consecrated and the MUR (Ḥaraka al-Tawḥīd wa'l-Islāḥ) was born. According to Malika Zeghal, the new name reflected "the unification of one part of Moroccan Islamism, but also introduced a more explicitly religious term, that of *tawḥīd*, which makes a direct reference to Divine Unicity in Islam".[458]

Half of the Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās, including its leadership,[459] chose to stay out of the unification, returning to Fes, where the movement continues to work in the cultural and educational fields. Farid al Ansary, from the League's executive office, who subsequently wrote a pamphlet criticising the political direction of the Islamic movement, was torn between the Jamᶜiyya al-Daᶜwa bi-Fās, whose position he sympathized with, and political participation which he considered important: "He thought the Fes people were too slow, but gradually, he discovered weaknesses in Benkirane's movement of which he was very critical".[460] He eventually decided to remain in the union.

On August 31st 1996, the Movement for Reform and Renewal issued a communiqué announcing unification with the League for an Islamic Future to form the Movement for

458 Zeghal, *Les islamistes marocains*, p. 214.

459 i.e. Bouchikhi and Faḍl al-Wahi

460 Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

Unicity and Reform and calling upon people to respond to the Divine call for unity. This would mark the shaky beginnings of the Movement for Unicity and Reform, a birth marked by divisions over the movement's strategic priorities which would continue to plague the movement.

Conclusion

The difficult birth of the MUR offers some insight into the concerns held by some movement members from it's inception over the direction and strategy of the MUR, most notably in its choice to engage in the political realm through the PJD. The movements which came together to form the MUR were united by a common desire to reform society according to religious norms, broadly rooted in the Salafī reformist tradition. As part of this reform ambition, the movements sought to devise varied strategies that would be most effective at deepening the presence and force of faith, at an individual level, through *daᶜwa*, and religion, through the strengthening of the state's religious ethos. Many of these different strategies were incorporated into the MUR's outlook and came to form the core of its multifaceted ambitions for the transformation of the individual, society and the state. In the case of the League for an Islamic Future, its emphasis on the individual, as a unit of change through education, and on culture and society, would lead to strong emphasis within the MUR's curriculum on these areas, but an emphasis inevitably married to the political ambitions of the Jamaa Islamia trend.

1.4. The MUR: a political history

The creation of the MUR in 1996 was the culmination of years of negotiation between diverse currents across the Moroccan Islamic activist scene. The union represented a consistently articulated objective by a number of distinct movements in the previous decades to 'unify' efforts and work more coherently as part of a single movement, with aspirations that the strength garnered through unification would translate into greater influence in all spheres, including politics. Yet the avenue for political was one highly controversial for many activists, and the centrality of political work to the aspirations of Islamic reform still remains today a highly contested issue within the unified MUR.

Even prior to the MUR's formal establishment in 1996, leading figures in its two precursor movements, the Movement for Reform and Renewal (MRR) and the League for an Islamic Future (LIF), had taken steps to participate in the political sphere. From the mid-1980s, voices within both groups had pushed for political participation as one of the avenues for their *daᶜwa* work. However, until the early 90s, political participation had been widely perceived as a betrayal of Islamic ideals by many of the activists involved in the myriad forms of Islamic activism in Morocco, because it was seen as consolidating the system.[461] However, within the MRR, a number of key figures and in particular, Abdelillah Benkirane led many within the broader Islamic movement to reconsider this position by arguing that the King's adoption of an Islamic title rendered the state 'legitimate':[462]

> … we realised our leader was *amīr al-muᵓminīn* through the constitution, we needed to take advantage of this – since we are in a state where the leader says he is leader of believers, there should be no conflict between leadership and Islamic movement, there could even be a strategic relationship to fight the Left, to help him in international affairs.

Although not everyone accepted Benkirane's argument for the Islamic legitimacy of the state, his position was also buttressed by arguments in support of political participation in all

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461 Note this is the same position that the "Justice and Spirituality" movement (*al-ᶜAdl wa'l-Iḥsān*) founded by Yassine continue to hold today.

462 Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

political systems,[463] including non-Islamic ones[464]. Such argumentation opened a space for activists to support political activism regardless of their actual thoughts concerning the regime's religious legitimacy.

Initially, political participation was advocated primarily on the 'level of laws'. This meant both focusing on modifying legislation which was deemed to be impeding the movement's grassroots activities, and of legislating solutions, alongside the movement's social work, undertaken to encourage certain 'Islamic' behaviours. This was in line with the MUR's subsequently formalized perspective concerning working towards a reduction in all forms of 'corruption" (*mafāsid*) and serving the country's interests (*maṣāliḥ*).[465]

Gradually, despite concerns among some activist that participation in the formal political sphere could vindicate a system deemed to be inherently flawed, Abdelillah Benkirane's MRR adopted a policy of political participation.

Thereafter, a political party was considered the next step in the movement's development, reflecting the group's particular retention of a political focus throughout its evolution. According to former MRR activist, Somaya Ben Khaldun, "In 1984-85, when we put down this strategic vision, we knew we'd get to a political stage – we just didn't know how and when."[466]

For the LIF, the current wing of the MUR committed primarily to educational and cultural work, the possibility of forming a political party seemed fortuitous particularly in the 1990s. This was a period of noted developments regarding Islamic parties in neighbouring

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463 Saaedine el Othmani and Mohamed Yatim were just two of several figures who wrote pamphlets in support of political participation, drawing on religious argumentation.

464 See interview with el Othmani in Talidi, *Dhākira,* Part 4. El Othmani was one of a the old guard figures who in drawing a distinction between Prophet Muḥammad as a political and religious leader, created space for engagement with a wide range of political systems and specifically broadened the notion of Islamic political legitimacy.

465 Ḥarakat al-tawḥīd wa'l-iṣlāḥ, *al-Mīthāq* (Rabat, Morocco, 1998), Part 10, pp. 39-40.

466 Ben Khaldoun, S., Interview, 2009.

Algeria and Tunisia,[467] but more importantly was a time of a perceived climate of greater openness in Morocco, namely through improvements in human rights and constitutional reforms. However, for the LIF the formation of a political party was viewed as an important, though not a central element, of the group's broader *daʿwa* objectives.

With the announcement of local elections in March 1992, the MRR sought to translate the views of its base into a formalized political contribution and formed the National Renewal Party (NRP) (Ḥizb al-Tajdīd al-Waṭanī) in May 1992 with Mohamed Yatim as its secretary general. It subsequently sought legal recognition for the party as the political wing of the movement. The Party stated its commitment to constitutional democracy and adherence to the laws of the country. According to Emad Shahin, the NRP defined it's objectives as:[468]

> [R]easserting and deepening the Islamic identity of the Moroccan people; enhancing the status of the Arabic language and supporting the policy of Arabization; preserving the country's territorial integrity and enhancing its political and economic independence; supporting the democratic process in accordance with the components of the Moroccan society; participating in the socialization of the citizens and in defending their legitimate rights, participating in developing the society through encouraging (individual) initiative, legal gains and working on achieving social justice; enhancing social stability through the achievement of justice, cooperation and tolerance; reinforcing the historic role of Morocco in cultural achievement; supporting the tendencies of unity among the Arab and Islamic nation; advocating the causes of the Muslim national and supporting the freedom movements in the world.

The decision to form a political party was far more contentious among LIF members who considered political participation a step which ought to be taken much further down the line, based on a view of change which considered the transformation of individuals and society as essential prior to any political action. Despite the reservations however, in 1992, LIF leaders applied for the legal recognition of a political party, the Unity Party (UP) (Ḥizb al-Waḥda), with Ahmed Belaji as its secretary general. The move was considered more of a formality

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467 In the Algerian municipal elections of 1990, the Salafist-Islamist party *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS) garnered 4.3 million votes out of a possible 12.8 and in December 1991, the FIS captured 188 out of 430 parliamentary seats in the first round of the legislative elections. In Tunisia just prior, the Islamic reformist party Ennadha captured 17 percent of the vote in the 1989 legislative elections, before a crackdown on the group by then President Ben Ali.

468 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p. 192.

than an attempt to move into the political arena. They subsequently realised that, in parallel, the MRR had applied to form its own political party (the NPR*)*.

Despite the care taken by both movements to adhere strictly to the government's requirements regarding the formation of political parties, both the NRP and UP requests were denied legalization on the basis no distinction was apparent between the movement and the party.[469] Subsequently, the NRP publication *al-Rāya* was banned following its dissemination of a legal rebuttal to the ban.

While discussions were ongoing on a possible union between the MRR and the LIF from the early 1990s, the MRR began exploring different political avenues open to them. As the more politically active strand of what would become the MUR, the MRR from the mid-80's argued the time was right from the mid-80s for engagement in the political sphere and pushing for an 'entente' with the King:[470]

> They couldn't wait for the rain to fall, they must make the rain fall. They said, everything is happening now … it is the political decisions which trace our daily life, why let others do that, we have competent people, we mustn't wait internally, if we wait too long, we will regress, we may not even be around in 20 years, the world is changing - for them, there was a need to defend the regime because it isn't in the interest of the Islamic cause to weaken it, … they even wanted to have a relationship with the King by any means.

Subsequently, the MRR decided it had three potential options for engagement in the political arena: "When we tried to create the political party with the MRR, in 1990, we retained 3 options: one was to create a political party, if not, the 2nd was integrating an existing party and if not, 3rd, stay as a pressure group."[471].

Under Benkirane's leadership, the MRR had clearly taken a distinctly political bent and there had been some discussion over the possibility of the movement morphing into a political party. After some debate, it was decided that the formal and legal regulations

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469 This is the reason for the bans according to sources within the movement. Shahin states "…without any convincing reasons, the request by the founders of the NRP was rejected by the authorities." (Shahin, *Political Ascent*, p. 192.)

470 Benkhaldoun, Interview, 2010.

471 Baha, Interview, 2009.

(namely Article 4 of the Moroccan constitution)[472] concerning the distinction between political and religious work in Morocco might hamper the movement's political ambitions, confirming the need to distinguish the party from the movement. According to Mohamed Yatim:[473]

> There was a discussion over whether we would morph completely into the party, some people ask why the duality, why not melt into a single instance which would keep the cultural, political and *daᶜwa* together. It is a way of proceeding here, there are parties in Malaysia, Indonesia, and other places, that don't distinguish between *daᶜwa* and education – we opted for the distinction, because here in Morocco, the code of the political parties requires these distinctions, … in the party now, we do politics, not *daᶜwa*, of course we are a political party with an Islamic referential, but when we deal with what is religious, we try to control the actions of the government and the degree to which it applies the laws in the penal code, relating to morality, what is social, moral, etc.

Such comments suggest that the earliest distinctions between the MRR as a movement and it's political party was premised on an awareness of the potential risks of placing their ambitions primarily in the political domain. This was combined with an ideological commitment to the continued importance of other forms of Islamic activism (i.e. *daᶜwa*, education, social work) which could potentially be compromised if the political party was confronted with problems.

In 1992 the MRR decided to proceed unilaterally with fielding individual candidates in upcoming local elections, as a way of testing the waters. Given the authorities' refusal to permit the creation of an Islamic political party, the group were anticipating a possible crackdown on the movement for circumventing the barrier to political participation through the fielding of independents. According to a charismatic preacher within the MUR, and later MP for the PJD, Moukri Abou Zaid, the authorities called on the group to withdraw: "We started to get ready for the '93 elections, but we got some calls from some high level people to postpone and so we started thinking of cancelling."[474].

472 http://www.maroc.ma/en/content/constitution (sourced 26/09/2016).

473 Yatim, Interview, 2010.

474 Moukri Abou Zaid as cited in Talidi, *Dhākira*, Part 4, p. 90.

Despite pressure from the authorities, assumed to be grounded in fear related to the Algerian experience or pressure from France,[475] the group decided to press ahead with two candidates to test the reaction of the authorities. They fielded Abdallah Shababu (ᶜAbd Allāh Shabābū) in Tangiers and Moukri Abou Zaid in Oujda.[476] Furthermore, according to a testimonial from Abou Zaid , the MRR received support from within parliament from a former Islamic activist who sympathised with the group, Aḥmad Muqaddam, who provided the necessary recommendations for the fielding of candidates in three cities (Oujda, Tangiers and Temlet).[477] Although both men were defeated in the elections, and despite both claiming inconsistencies in the results, Abou Zaid recalls the movement's perception that merely participating was a success. The experience had enabled members of the movement to interact with the public and share their vision and outlook, which ultimately was deemed to be the objective of the political experiment:[478]

> It helped develop relations with regular citizens, connect with them, especially as even now, we have the same principles and speeches, until now, I use the same principles and campaign message as I did then – it is the same one. We never compromised our principles to participate politically. Connecting with people, giving speeches full of principles which others now use – this helped to serve the *daᶜwa*.

For the earliest advocates of political participation within the movement, this early manifestation of political action was deemed just another possible avenue for the exposition of the MUR's ideological principles and political results were deemed secondary to the

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475 "Maybe some people in the authorities had this same fear. Or maybe there was some international pressure, from France, I recall someone, Francois Mitterand, saying he would not allow what happened to Algeria happen in morocco." Moukri Abou Zaid as cited in Talidi, *Dhākira*, Part 4, p. 91.

476 Abou Zaid was fielded here despite him having no previous ties to the city. In subsequent years, tensions between the authorities and the PJD would lead to clashes in Oujda (see 2009 election).

477 Moukri Abou Zaid as cited in Talidi, *Dhākira,* Part 4, p. 90. He adds that a third candidate pulled out due to death threats.

478 Moukri Abou Zaid as cited in Talidi, *Dhākira*, Part 4, p. 91. Interestingly, this reflects very similar logic expressed by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. According to Lynch, Mark, 'Did we get the Muslim Brotherhood wrong? Nope. But it's time to revise our assessments' (Foreignpolicy.com: http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/04/10/did-we-get-the-muslim-brotherhood-wrong/, April 10/2013), then Deputy Supreme Guide Muḥammad Ḥabīb told him in 2009 that "the biggest mistake the Brotherhood had made in 2005 was in winning 88 seats. By doing too well, the brothers had frightened the Mubarak regime and triggered a nasty crackdown. Winning wasn't necessary to the Brotherhood, since they viewed participation in elections as its own reward, an opportunity to reach out to voters and spread their ideas.

interface with the population. It was also deemed an opportunity to gage the reaction of the authorities: “the brothers in the executive office, they didn’t focus on the results, as this wasn’t important, what was important was the direct contact with the citizens and we needed to establish a speech which was based on principles and calling for good ethics (*khuluq*).”[479]

At the same time, it had also become clear to many activists that their work as a religious organization, seeking to deepen religious practise among Moroccans, was severely compromised by social and political factors which required remedying before religious education could become truly effective. Jazila, an activist in a MUR affiliated women’s organization, noted that addressing issues of domestic violence often boiled down to tackling “three poles: education, health and economics” which were deemed to foster an environment in which domestic violence could develop: “When we work with them, we see (…) the real problems are not addressed.”[480] Other grassroots activists corroborated this perspective, suggesting that issues of alcoholism or violence within the home could not be remedied through religious education alone, since this could not resolve the underlying - primarily economic – problems, faced by the families in question.

The movement’s first engagement in politics, although technically a failure in that no candidates had been elected, emboldened the group. The MRR became convinced that its message had a receptive audience and that the barriers to participation were not insurmountable, despite accusations the authorities had sought to derail individual campaigns.[481] Unlike some of its neighbours, the Moroccan government had not eliminated the group nor arrested the candidates, despite allegations of tampering with the results.

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479 Moukri Abou Zaid as cited in Talidi, *Dhākira,* Part 4, p. 91.

480 Jazila (Surname Not Given) (MUR member and PJD member) Interview by E. François. In person. Rabat, 17/10/2009.

481 Abou Zaid subsequently penned a booklet detailing his experience and what he felt was a concerted effort to derail his campaign by the authorities. I do not have access to this work and think the title was to the effect of: *harakat-istitna[c] fī al intikhābāt al barlamānī: hikāyat majada fī intikhābāt* (Oujda).

Limitations placed on the activists' ability to establish a political party and even to participate in elections as independents, convinced them of the necessity of maintaining the associational movement as the centre of their work. For the members, this ensured at least some sort of formalised presence in the public sphere in case the political route was to become permanently blocked.

The decision to unite the two organizations (Movement for Reform and Renewal and the League for an Islamic Future) to form the MUR in 1996 strengthened a shared belief in political activism, despite persistent differences among members as to the importance afforded to it relative to other spheres.[482]

United in the MUR, the decision to enter politics was enshrined in the official documentation as one stage of the movement's overall plan, but sub-groups from the League for an Islamic Future, namely the Islamic Association of Ksar El-Kebir, exited the movement on grounds the political action was advancing too rapidly. Others, including senior LIF figure Farīd al-Anṣārī, subsequently wrote a strong critique of the movement's engagement in the political sphere which he judged too hasty and as compromising the movement's overall objectives:[483]

> Ansari … thought they [the MRR] were going too fast in the political field and gradually, our brothers, their religious heritage was beginning to dissolve and weaken, he sounded the alarm bell, because with time – two to three years is not problem, but in twenty years, it will be serious, we are first an Islamic movement, the politics must be just a branch, a way to express our ideas in instances of parliament and communal discussion, he feared the PJD would absorb all of our elites and executives.

Concerns regarding the pitfalls of political participation continued to be expressed within the movement, particularly in light of the experience of other groups internationally. This confirms an underlying theme across a number of Moroccan Islamic movements, namely, political participation was conceived of as merely one avenue for the advancement

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482 Generally speaking MRR members favoured an emphasis on politics and even considered morphing into a political party, while those of the LIF viewed political participation as one of a number of different avenues for *daᶜwa* and did not consider it a priority.

483 Benkhaldoun, Interview, 2010. Note however that a response to al-Anṣārī was written by Ahmed Raissoni, who had also emerged from the LIF trend, defending the movement's strategy.

of the Islamic movement's objectives. Many current and former members of the MUR had expressed concerns from the outset that political work could potentially derail the movement's core objective of spreading Islam.

However, following the MRR's early foray into politics, its members continued to deem political activism essential as a means of complementing their associational work. Due to the inability to form a legal political party, the Movement for Reform and Renewal was still in the process of seeking out alternative options for political participation, namely an alliance with an existing party, in the years leading up to a union with the LIF. The first party approached was the Istiqlāl, since it was considered the party closest to the Movement for Reform and Renewal's outlook. According to Abdullah Baha, the MRR had ambitions to 'recenter' it, considering it already contained the seeds of an Islamic identity, due to its roots in the Salafiyya movement of the early 20th century.[484] According to Benkirane, the Istiqlāl party represented "strategically … a formation close to the Islamist movements".[485] The movement believed it contained the elements necessary to pull it back towards an Islamic centred identity and program.

According to Willis, the merger failed due to the Istiqlāl's insistence that the members of the MRR would join the Istiqlal party as individuals and not as a group.[486] Moukri Abou Zaid added that Istiqlal's decision to enter into an alliance with the Left in 1990, in the form of the democratic bloc Kutla, ended any hope of an alliance. Hostility between Islamic groups and the Left throughout the 1980s and 1990s had quashed any chance of a possible union. The official implication of members of the Chabiba Islamiya in the 1975 murder of Omar Ben Jelloun, one of the founders of the main leftist party, the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP), ensured persistent tensions remained, particularly given the former adherence of the leaders of the MRR to the Chabiba.

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484 Baha, Interview, 2009.

485 Willis, "Between *alternance* and the Makhzen", p. 47.

486 Willis, "Between *alternance* and the Makhzen", p. 47.

However, following the breakdown of negotiations with the Istiqlāl and the rise of the Kutla in 1993, in which the USFP played a prominent part as the opposition, a reassessment of the Left was made by the MRR and the group proceeded to make overtures to the USFP party , although to no avail.[487]

It was only during the mid-1990s that the MRR's ongoing negotiations with political parties began to bear fruit. The group approached Abdelkrim Khatib, over an integration of the largely moribund party he led, the "Mouvement populaire démocratique et constitutionnel" (MPDC). Khatib was a former member of the Istiqlāl who founded the MPDC in 1967. A former member of the Istiqlāl, Khatib had been the first president of the Moroccan parliament in 1963 and had served in politics consistently throughout his life, assuring him strong ties with the monarchy, in addition to the familial links he already had to the Palace. In light of his long political career and close affinity to the palace, Khatib had the political kudos to carry the Islamic movement into the public arena despite widespread suspicion of Islamic movements amongst the political elite, particularly in light of neighbouring Algeria.

Abou Zaid describes Khatib's decision to found the MPDC as a reaction against elitist tendencies in the traditionally bourgeois Istiqlāl and as an attempt to mend a growing rift between Arabs and Berbers, following a break with his co-founder in the Democratic and Constitutional Popular Movement party (MPDC), Berber politician Mahjoubi Aherdane.[488] Some commentators have suggested that Khatib was working for the palace and it was orders from the Makhzen which saw him agree to the integration of members of the MUR into the MPDC from 1996. A longstanding member of government, who had lived through formal independence and continued to struggle for cultural independence, Khatib's profile was particularly well suited to the role of mediator. In his capacity as minister, he embodied the struggle for self-determination and cultural authenticity which was to characterize post-

487 Abou Zaid, Interview, 2009.

488 Abou Zaid, Interview, 2009.

independence struggles in Africa and the Middle East and as such, seemed a natural ally for the MUR whose own objectives can be understood within what Burgat terms the final stage of decolonization, that is cultural re-assertion.[489] Indeed, Khatib's own letter to the king in 1972 echoed many of the MUR's concerns.[490] Khatib himself appeared to have Islamist sympathies even prior to the meeting with MUR. In an interview with *Le Reporter* in February 1999, Khatib stated that he had founded the MPDC party with Mahjoubi Aherdane, on Islamist principles, which he had advocated since the 1950s. Khatib added that he had never hidden the MPDC's 'Islamic tendency' and that he shared much of the Islamists' desire to "moralise Moroccan society".[491]

According to Willis, contact was initially established via the MUR's newspaper *Attajdid* in 1992-93, leading to an MPDC extraordinary congress on June 2nd 1996.[492] Mustafa Ramid, a member of the executive of the MUR, described the union as "…not a question of integration, but rather a coalition founded on common interests and goals".[493] According to Benkhaldoun, Khatib had helped Tunisian students from the Tunisian Islamic Tendency Movement[494] enrol at university in Morocco during the 1980s, when Islamic activists looked at Ghannoushi as a model for moderate Islamic political participation, identifying him as sympathetic to their ideals.[495]As a precondition for integration into the MPDC, Khatib laid down three essential principles: Islam, the monarchy and the rejection of violence. The MUR's acceptance of the King as *'amīr al-muʾminīn'*, as well as the rejection of violence, had already been established within the movement by the 1990s, following the ideological reassessment which had flowed from the break with the Chabiba. Specifically,

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489 Burgat, François, *L'Islamisme en face* (Paris: La Découverte, 2002).

490 Zeghal*, Les islamistes marocains,* p. 235.

491 Willis, "Between *alternance* and the Makhzen", p. 49

492 Willis, "Between *alternance* and the Makhzen", p. 48

493 Cited in Willis, "Between *alternance* and the Makhzen", p. 48.

494 *Mouvement de la Tendance* Islamique (MTI), which later became known as the Ḥizb al Nahḍa ("Renaissance Party").

495 Benkhaldoun, Interview, 2010.

the movement had come to accept Morocco as an 'Islamic' country where all the necessary conditions for a 'true' Islamic state were in place,[496] but merely required a process of reform.[497] According to MUR activist Rashid Fallouli, "In Morocco, there is already the Sharia, we need only to preserve it."[498] The movement is officially committed to the institution of *'amīr al-muʾminīn'*, leader of the believers, the titled conferred upon the King, as a central aspect of the Islamic nature of the Moroccan state and view it as a symbol and a guarantee of the preservation and continuation of the Islamic nature of the state. Based on interviews with several activists, it is clear many consider its historical and legal grounding as leverage against secularizing forces within society.[499]

The political implications of this acceptance meant the movement found itself aligned with Khatib's premises. It also meant, according to Mohamed Darif, that "since they recognize this, they criticize disobedience to the *amīr* and oppose the separation of powers – they want *amīr al-Muʾminīn* to rule and guide."[500] This view was confirmed by MUR activist Rashid Faluli:[501]

> The king must have his prerogatives, in the Islamic political culture, there is no vision of the king rules but doesn't govern, either he is a king or he isn't – in general, the caliph has his political responsibility vis-a- vis the people, citizens, God and the other – you can't say he rules but doesn't govern.

The consequence of accepting the religious role of the Moroccan monarch placed the activists within the realm of 'critical supporters' of the political system who would not seek to challenge the king's overarching powers. What they would seek however was to redefine

496 Debates continued internally on whether the regime could truly be considered to be "Islamic", but the group concluded that political participation was a requirement in any context, even when Muslims might be a minority in the West which meant that participation in a Muslim majority context should certainly be deemed religiously lawful. See Talidi, *Dhakira*, Part 4, p. 67.

497 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya* (http://www.alislah.ma/images/stories/siyasi.pdf).

498 Falouli, Rachid (M member of the MUR's regional executive council). Interview by E. Francois. Rabat, Morocco. 9/2009.

499 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya* (http://www.alislah.ma/images/stories/siyasi.pdf).

500 Darif, Interview, 2009.

501 Faluli, Interview, 2009.

the significance of those powers and the consequent popular constraints placed upon the ruler.

By the mid-1990s, the MPDC was largely an empty shell which had been boycotting the elections throughout the 1990s in protest at what Khatib saw as electoral manipulation: "It had not had members elected to official institutions at the national level for nearly twenty years …"[502] The injection of MUR members into the MPDC reinvigorated the party, giving it a new lease of life at the polls where for the first time in years, it began to show increased support. The party's doctrinal platform was revised in collaboration with the movement and a wholesale restructuring of the movement ensued at the local, regional and national levels.[503] MPDC offices which had remained largely vacant, started to function once more and the MPDC began issuing statements on issues of domestic concern. But tensions with the old guard arose with the sudden influx of new blood. The increasing number of MUR militants caused a lack of homogeneity and some friction within the party, eventually leading to the MPDC co-founder Mohammed Khalidi's departure and his subsequent decision to form a new one 'Ḥizb Nahḍa wa-Faḍala' ('Renaissance and Virtues').

As the members of the MUR gradually took over the MPDC, discussions emerged over the possibility of changing the party's name, which was grounded in its history and did not accurately reflect the ambitions of the newer members. According to Mukri Abou Zaid, Khatib initially suggested 'the Party of the Islamic Renaissance' but concerns that the name resembled neighbouring Tunisian Islamists, Ennhada ('The Renaissance party'), something which could arouse suspicion of links between the two, prompted them to consider alternatives. Previous discussions with the authorities saw the latter objecting to the term '*islamiya*' as having exclusivist connotations and led members to consider an alternative: "we want justice and development, it is our objective now to establish justice to arrive at

502 Willis, "Between *alternance* and the Makhzen", p. 48

503 Enquête : PJD et MUR, histoire d'un mariage coutumier, 2012.

development."[504] Officially changing the party's name to the 'Party of Justice and Development' (PJD) in October 1998, the symbol of the lamp was chosen, designed to reflect the party's ambitions of being a 'light' in Moroccan politics, to guide and provide hope.[505] The party was funded through the contribution of 7000Dh/month by its parliamentarians and 2.5% of their monthly salary by other salaried members.[506]

The establishment of the PJD allowed for the political expression of the grassroots perspective the MUR drew its support base from and fundamentally altered the Moroccan political landscape through the integration of what henceforth came to be defined as Morocco's formal 'Islamist party'.[507] While many saw the integration of Islamists into the system as a form of co-option, the legitimising effect on the perception of Islamists would also unwittingly serve to legitimise the critique which their voice represents. This is all the more so when the ideological base of the PJD, the MUR, continues to espouse a more strident, less 'formally' constricted critique.

Social movements both affect and are affected by the structures within which they operate in a dialectical relationship which cannot be easily predicted. Della Porta notes that social movements should be understood "as both structured and structuring phenomena. They are, that is, both constrained in their action by the context in which they move, but also able, through their action, to change relations among and between actors."[508] While the king continues to exercise a hegemonic control over religious symbolism, the recognition of

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504 Abou Zaid , Interview, 2009.

505 According to Mukri Abou Zaid, it was they who inspired the branding for the party of Turkish party of Necmettin Erbakan's.Notably the 'spiritual' inheritors of Erbakan, namely the AK party, have their name also as 'Justice and Development' and whose symbol is also the light bulb. Abou Zaid, Interview, 2009.

506 Chankou, Abdellah, "D'ou vient l'argent des islamistes?", *Maroc Hebdo International*, No 482, 19-25th Oct 2001

507 Al-[c]Adl wa'l-Iḥsān representing the still "unofficial" Islamists who choose to remain outside of the political system.

508 In Della Porta, Donatella, "Mobilizing for Democracy: Comparing 1989 and 2011" (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp.15-17 (accessed via Oxford Scholarship Online).

Islamist's voices as legitimate ones' necessarily lends credence to the critique those same voices make of his exercise of power and religious basis of authority. Mohsen-Finan and Zeghal's description of the PJD as "a product of the regime, the PJD negotiates with the regime the modalities of its political presence, but also, to some extent, pushes the regime to transform itself"[509] corroborates this assessment.

The PJD Enters Parliament

The PJD put up candidates in only 43% of electoral districts in the legislative elections of 1997, making its entrance into the parliament with nine elected officials who gradually made their presence felt as the voice of 'critical support' to the Socialist led Youssoufi government. In October 2000, it entered into a 'constructive opposition'. The group experienced some initial difficulties in their access to the media and in allegations of rigging, as raised by the head of the party's parliament group and a lawyer by profession, Mustafa Ramid. The party initially fielded 140 candidates out of a possible 325 owing to, according to an official statement to the palace "its own abilities and the need for a serene progression in political life".[510] Owing to their small size and refusal to integrate other parliamentary groups out of fear of diluting their voice, the group was initially restricted to two oral questions a month. A parliamentary group was formed in October 1999.

According to Mustafa Ramid, the PJD's first parliamentary experience offered tangible results, allowing the group to gain experience and expound their ideas, to present a new form of political activism which represented transparency, accountability and discipline and to progressively reinforce the role of the Islamic movement in official decision making instances.[511]. Belal also notes that amongst the group's objectives was, in the words of

509 My translation "*Produit du régime, le PJD négocie avec celui-ci les modalités de sa présence politique, mais pousse aussi, dans certaines limites, le régime à se transformer.* (…)" cited in: Fernández Molina, Irene, *Le PJD et la politique étrangère du Maroc: entre l'idéologie et le pragmatism*. Série: Mediterráneo, No7, Editions CIDOB (Barcelona: Edicions Bellaterra, S.L, 2007); accessed 30/10/2014 via *www.cidob.org/content/download/5094/.../doc_mediterraneo_7.pdf*.

510 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*, p. 257.

511 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*, p. 258.

Ramid, to “normalise the political action of the Islamic movement, combat the prejudice and fear and to show its importance in the development project of the country,”[512] as well as to “move beyond the phase of general position taking and big slogans to that of operational and detailed propositions.” One activist explained that the political party had allowed the movement to ‘open up to society’ and credited political participation with privileged access to ministers on issues of concern: “You think the ministers would have called us up as the MUR? But as the PJD they call us up.”[513]

Just as Tuğal (2006) has documented how “the interaction between Islamist movements and lived Islam has created new negotiations, manifestations, and redefinitions of what it means to be a ‘faithful’ Muslim in Turkey”[514] the MUR views any opportunity for interaction between the movement and broader society as an opportunity to contest official representations of Islamic authority and to seek to redefine these in line with their own conception, as well of course as redefining what it considers to be a ‘faithful’ Muslim.

Conclusion

The emergence of the MUR’s formal political body in the form of the Party for Justice and Development (PJD) represents the culmination of the aspiration of its constituent bodies for the representation of Islamic movements in the political sphere, both in the MRR, as well as to a lesser extent in the LIF. Specifically, the MUR, as unified body, aspired to see its social and cultural model take on a political form within the PJD and complement some of the spheres of work the MUR was already involved in seeking to modify, according to its idealised model of Islamic reform. This initially led to criticism of the PJD for being a ‘moralising party’ which focused heavily on moral or cultural issues, over what were deemed more typically political issues. The normalisation of the PJD within the political sphere, as a party like many other, would involve the party’s gradual move away from this

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512 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*, p. 258.

513 Jazila, Interview, 2010.

514 As cited in Driessen, *Religion and Democratization*, p. 205.

‘moralising’ tendency towards a focus on the issues dictated by the formal political sphere, in the form of parliament and other parties in particular. While this was much lauded by party supporters as evidence of its ability to participate ‘like any other party’, for its grassroots movement it also involved a move away from the party’s original purpose, as the political expression of a social movement, and a break with the symbiotic relationship between the party and the movement, most strikingly evidenced by the PJD’s gradual distancing from the MUR from its creation in 1998. Tensions between the party and the movement have since largely revolved around the question of whether the PJD continues to represent the closest party to the movement’s aspirations for the political field.

2 THE IDEOLOGICAL OUTLOOK OF THE MUR

2.1 General Outlook - Introduction

The MUR can broadly be categorized as a Salafī-reformist movement which adapted aspects of its thought to the Moroccan setting and similarly incorporated boundaries set out by Morocco's foremost religious authority, the monarchy. As a movement made up of several strands, divergent in thought and methodology, and shaped by historical circumstances, its outlook defies easy categorization. Nonetheless, it can be situated within a broader reformist movement, in which its outlook reflects a conscious effort to adapt those principles to a setting dominated by the religious primacy of the King.

2.1.1 The MUR and the Question of Categorization

The ideological outlook of the MUR defies easy categorization as suggested by recent scholarship concerning 'Islamist', 'Salafī' and 'Modernist' movements in the contemporary Muslim world.

According to Euben and Zaman, a number of characteristics can be found to be common across movements defined as 'Islamist', that may be: "characterized as explicitly and intentionally political and as engaging in multifaceted critiques of all those people, institutions, practises, and orientations that do not meet their standards of this divinely mandated political engagement."[1] These shared characteristics include a rejection of mediation in accessing to primary sources (the Qur'an and Sunnah, i.e. textual traditions on the normative conduct of the Prophet Muḥammad) and with that a critique and even rejection of scholarly authority. Further commonalities include delineation of boundaries in religious practise, an attempt to purge Islam of corrupting forces which are blamed for its current quagmire, a distrust of human sovereignty as 'transgressive of divine law', a focus on the

1 Euben, R., & M. Q. Zaman, *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from al-Banna to Bin Laden* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 3.

establishment of an Islamic state and an aspiration to "establish sharia as the primary or sole source of authority."[2]

In their categorization,[3] they proceed however to distinguish Islamists from Salafīs, noting that while Salafī discourse tends to focus on intellectual elites, Islamist groups target the broader masses. Further, they assert that while Salafīs are primarily concerned with 'correct belief, the nuances of doctrine' and are uniquely hostile to Ṣūfism, the focus of Islamists has been more on the political sphere and the outlook has been more ambivalent toward Ṣūfism.[4] Euben and Zaman also distinguish Islamists from Ṣūfīs for the latter's favouring of a mystical approach to religion; from scholars (i.e. the *ᶜulamāᵓ*), who believe that "in the absence of Muslim political rule, religious knowledge, anchored in the foundational and other religious texts, was the best guarantee for the preservation of a distinct Muslim identity"[5] and from modernists, who believe that Islam needs to be "reinterpreted in order to meet the new challenges that confronted Muslims".[6] Critically, the authors nonetheless acknowledge overlap between the categories.

Drawing on this categorization, the MUR can be labelled an 'Islamist' movement in that it conceives of Islam as a holistic body of ideas, rooted primarily in the Qur'an and Sunna, applicable to all times and all places, and aspires to use those ideas for the transformation of society, at every level, in order to re-establish the ascendance of Islamic civilization, hitherto corrupted by Western territorial, political and cultural influence. The MUR can further be labelled in a broader sense as epistemologically Salafī, particularly for its commitment to an unmediated 'direct access' to the normative textual tradition of the Qur'an and Sunna. However, it importantly includes traditional bastions of religious

2 Euben and Zaman, *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought*, p. 3.

3 Different authors offer differing categorizations of Islamic movements, but Euben and Zaman's seemed most fitting with my understanding of the MUR.

4 Euben and Zaman, *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought*, p. 4.

5 Euben and Zaman, *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought*, p. 6.

6 Euben and Zaman, *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought*, p. 6.

authority (the *ᶜulamāʾ*) among its members, including its central ideologue, Ahmed Raissouni, as well as other independent scholars. Furthermore, the MUR has increasingly moved away from Salafī '*anti-madhhabism*' and has positively affirmed its adherence to the Mālikī *madhhab*, historically predominant in Morocco. The MUR's distinct emphasis on Moroccan 'exceptionalism' in its approach, imbued with nationalist ideals, is further strikingly anti-Salafī considering the Salafists general 'global' anti-nationalist attitude. MUR figures have also expressed respect for the Ṣūfī-influenced leader Abdalslam Yassin. In addition, the MUR can also be said to partake in the 'modernist' project of seeking to address the challenges facing Muslims in various spheres through new 'reinterpretations' to face 'modern' challenges, particularly as manifest by its promotion of a major reinterpretation of the methodological underpinnings of Islamic law through emphasis on the legal principle of the 'higher objectives' of the Sharia (*maqāṣid al-sharīᶜa*).

As such, the ideological outlook of the MUR can be tentatively located within a 'broader' Salafī trend, but one 'modernist' in methodology and Islamist in its political objectives. Thus while the MUR shares numerous features common across Islamist movements, a number of singular characteristics can be understood as comprising its specificity.

This chapter will therefore proceed to examine a number of the MUR's distinctive ideological characteristics, including its relationship to the authorities, its conception of an Islamic state and Sharia and its understanding of predication (*daᶜwa*). It will argue that the MUR represents a distinct and 'exceptionalized' version of Islamic reformist movements, which has drawn on broader Salafī ideals and doctrines, but has nonetheless transformed them in accordance with local contextual pressures to form a distinct 'Moroccan' model. These distinctions include an emphasis on stability, politico-religious continuity and critically an acceptance and even promotion (but only through reimagination) of the legitimacy of the Moroccan monarchy. Further distinctions include a prioritization of predication (*daᶜwa*) and education, over political activism.

2.1.2 The Ideological Outlook of the MUR: Necessarily Heterogeneous?

The MUR's ideological outlook can be defined as heterogeneous.[7] The causes of this heterogeneity are located in the MUR's 'hybrid' nature resulting from its historical foundation as a merger of distinct movements, and the related argument that the movement consequently always lacked a single ideological figurehead or dominant strand of thought. The following section will argue however that while the movement does in fact express broad boundaries in regards to its ideological approach, that two further causes of this 'heterogeneity' must necessarily be identified.

The first, in reference to Myer's notion of "identity works",[8] is that the MUR's ideological outlook is continuously negotiated and challenged internally by both members and organizational off-shoots, whose active participation in the construction of ideology result in a continuously evolving outlook, one that survives despite tensions resulting from internal disagreements and even contradictions. The second cause is the impact on the movement's ideological outlook emerging from the MUR's strategic concerns with broader perception, whether from society at large or from the regime. The authoritarian nature of the monarchy and its concerns with Islamist politics have meant ever-moving 'red-lines' as to officially 'permitted' forms of Islamist activism. The MUR in certain instances is thus forced to consciously shift its positions, or articulate more nebulous outlooks, for an essentially pragmatic purpose of remaining on the right side of legality.

The MUR as a hybrid organization evolving from multiple currents and organizations has been outlined in Chapter 1. To summarise, founding members of the MUR included participants of the political Chabiba Islamiya–Movement for Reform and Renewal current, as well as the more predication focused–League for an Islamic Future current. The result of these mergers on the MUR's overall ideology, particularly in view of the contested

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7 Zeghal, *Les islamistes marocains*, p. 228.

8 Reger, Jo, Daniel J. Myers, and Rachel L. Einwohner (eds), *Identity Work in Social Movements* (University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

negotiations that preceded, is that neither single individuals nor ideological outlooks remained dominant. Pruzan-Jørgensen argues that "…the movement has been constituted of a rather large group of prominent individuals and organizations who have come together in a hybrid organization over time. Accordingly, it is difficult to give a precise characterization of the ideology and frame of reference of the movement, which are the result of on-going negotiations and a synthesis of diverging internal differences."[9]

In a related but distinct vein, Mohammad Darif and Malika Zeghal allude to this hybridity by reference to the MUR's lack of a central ideological figurehead. They argue, despite the influence of Ahmed Raissouni, that the MUR's ideology "cannot be traced to a single intellectual figure or a homogenous line of thinking."[10] Youseff Belal argues similarly that the MUR has "no spiritual master and their leadership is collegial".[11]

An overarching and bounded ideological perspective is nonetheless apparent. This can be gleaned not just from interviews but from the MUR's own literature. These include pamphlets such as its Charter,[12] and its core texts including its political,[13] educational[14] and *daᶜwa* visions,[15] in addition to books authored by key figures such as MUR President Mohamed Hamdaoui including *al-Risāliyya fī'l-ᶜamal al-Islamī*,[16] Mohamed Yatim's "La mouvance Islamique et le changement civilizational"[17] and others, such as *ᶜAshra sanawāt min al-tawḥīd wa'l-Iṣlāḥ* ('Ten years of the MUR').

9 Pruzan-Jørgensen, Julie. E., *The Islamist Movement in Morocco: Main Actors and Regime Responses*. Danish Institute For International Studies Report (Copenhagen, DIIS, 05/2010). Retrieved from http://www.humansecuritygateway.com/documents/DIIS_Islamist_Movement_Morocco.pdf, 2010, p. 11.

10 Zeghal, *Les islamistes marocains*, p. 228.

11 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*, p. 233.

12 Ḥarakat, *al-Mīthāq*.

13 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*.

14 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-tarbawiyya*.

15 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-daᶜwiyya*.

16 Translation: "The Prophetic way in Islamic work."

17 Translation: "The Islamic movement and civilizational change."

Members of the MUR furthermore explicitly argued that theirs is a movement with clear overall coherent ideological vision. Throughout my interviews, leading figures were at pains to convince me that despite historical differences, the MUR's educational program has succeeded in blending all individuals into a single movement with a united vision. Individual activists on the other hand, such as Khadija Moufid, emphasized internal diversity: "Within the movement, there are different cultural tendencies, liberal, conservative, etc. because of the different educational pathways which impact on people's personalities (Francophony, Arabophony, bilingual)".[18] At the same time, Moroccan academic Mohamed Darif points to the merger of the LIF and the MRR[19] as having had enduring consequences on the MUR's ideological unity, which furthermore also impacted the PJD political party.[20]

The departure and expulsion of some members from the MUR point importantly to 'boundaries of acceptability' in terms of the group's outlook. Youssef Belal cites the examples of a group of students from Agadir, who were gradually marginalized from the organization for inviting scholars deemed heretical by the movement (namely Prof. Bouhandi, author of a book critical of the *ḥadīth* chains of transmissions), organizing mixed male/female gatherings and criticizing the theologian Ahmed Raissouni, then President of the MUR. Accused of being 'poorly educated' by leaders of the MUR, they were unofficially excluded.[21]

Similarly, the decision by members to formally operate outside the MUR further points to defined boundaries. In a notable instance, members including Khadija Moufid, Bassima Hakkaoui and other female figures from the MUR decided to establish the ORCF

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18 Moufid, Inteview, 2009.

19 "Many problems were created by this fusion of these two tendencies: Islamic activism in the shape of the MRR and an international, professional, militant cultural association (the LIF)." Darif, Interview, 2009.

20 According to Darif, PJD candidates tend to vote for people from the same lineage (MRR/LIF) as them, regardless of who is the better candidate for the position, causing tensions within the movement. Darif, Interview, 2009.

21 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*, p. 249.

(Organization for the Renewal of the Feminine Conscience) in 1994 in order to develop stronger positions on the issue of gender without the male resistance typically found within the MUR or PJD, leading to instances of conflict.[22]

As outlined above, an important factor in the MUR's heterogeneity is the continuous processes of internal negotiation. Although the ideology of the movement as expressed in its official documentation and through its outlets provides for a coherent outlook, MUR activists actively work to construct an identity which although closely interlinked with the formal ideology is one that is not static, but rather in flux and variable. Referring to this process, Myers suggests the concept of "identity works", in reference to the process whereby activists construct their identity through similarity and differentiation, from both opponents, targets and one another.[23] Thus, whilst participant interviews feed into the concept of ideology devised by the movement in its literature, they also at times challenge the movement 'orthodoxy' and contribute a view of the movement's ideology which reflects popular understanding amongst adherents more closely than its literature alone. Thus while 'official' MUR literature is a focal point of learning, discussion groups and even off-shoots (e.g. the aforementioned ORCF) ensure the movement's outlook is negotiated by activists who actively participate in its construction.

Furthermore, the impact of external influences and broader perceptions need to be taken into consideration. This includes both the perception of society at large, but crucially the perception of the Moroccan monarchy regarding the MUR. Myers notes "activists construct and present themselves with an eye toward the potential reactions of external audiences and also respond to the demands of the broader institutional environment and

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22 One such example of conflict between the vision of the MUR and that of the ORCF arose concerning the reform of the Mudawwana, whereby the ORCF proposed an amendment which sought to modify the idea that the wife must obey the husband so that the reformed text reads that wives must obey God. This is based on a reading of the scripture which the ORCF argues does not advocate women's blind obedience to men, but that the obedience referred to in the Qur'an is owed to God. However, neither the MUR nor the PJD supported nor advocated such an amendment.

23 Reger et al (eds), *Identity Work in Social Movements*.

structure of political opportunities."[24] This holds true with the MUR's own outlook. As a movement, the MUR represents an evolution in the ideological outlook of its founding figures who, in response to internal and external factors, forged a quietist political movement. Whilst critical of the status quo in a number of regards, the MUR evolved a political program that consciously seeks to pose no serious threat to the monarchy's legitimacy, and ultimately seeks to reinforce it. As Belal notes,[25] the movement sees no need to create an 'Islamic state', that already exists constitutionally – its job is to forge the religious community which can guarantee its perennity and authenticity.

What is more, unlike the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, the MUR has not had to contend with a need to remain faithful to the ideas of a particular founding figure, as is the case with Hasan al-Banna in Egypt.

It should be noted however that this ideological pragmatism is true of other Moroccan movements. According to MUR activist Faluli, the literalist Salafīs in Morocco have, since 2003 revised their thinking in order to allow them to engage with the state enough to register as legal organizations, in order to preserve them from repression,[26] while Abdeslam Yassine, who claimed to make no distinction between the political and religious spheres, created a distinct committee ('The Political Circle') dedicated to political affairs in the hope it might receive legal recognition as a party.

Beyond governmental perception, the MUR is similarly conscious and reactive to 'broader' perceptions in Moroccan society at large. This is clearly important to the movement. MUR president Mohamed Hamdaoui dedicated one of the three sections of his book to the question of perception,[27] and the movement has a media attaché, Sa'ad Ludiyi, a soft spoken, clean shaven professional who speaks fluent French and some English.

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24 Reger et al (eds), *Identity Work in Social Movements*, p. 3.

25 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*, p. 245.

26 Faluli, Interview, 2009.

27 Raissouni, *al-Risāliyya fī'l-ᶜamal al-Islāmī.*

It can be argued this 'image-management' reflects the MUR's desire to play to many different constituencies simultaneously, but as has been argued for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, it partakes in a struggle to be 'all things to all men', seeking to balance some of its reformist ideals with appealing to its more conservative supporters.

For some in the MUR, this heterogeneity is viewed as a distinct advantage. According to MUR ideologue Mohamed Yatim, "Our luck in the movement is in not having a sheikh. There is no single ideologue in our movement. Everyone must acknowledge that our ideas are a collective endeavour."[28] In addition, the movement states that its documents are in a process of continuous development, since they aspire to be governed by a process of renewal, based on an interaction with new factors and developments. Zeghal therefore has described the movement's outlook as 'pragmatic' due to its political trajectory, from its ideological roots in the banned Chabiba, through to attempts to become formalized through gradually recognising the regime's red lines, which should not be crossed.[29]

The MUR by 2011 therefore presented an ideological outlook as a result of more than two decades of incremental reassessments, owing to the influence of other movements, both nationally and internationally, as well as context related factors.

Nonetheless, there are clear ideological strands that are imbued within the movements that define both its boundaries and its overall trajectory, which will be the subject of the next section.

2.1.3 Locating the MUR within the Currents of Salafism.

The MUR can be located within the reformist, Salafiyya trend which emerged in response to contact and conflict with European powers in the 19th and 20th century. According to Hamid Enayat,[30] Sunnī political thought reached a turning point with the

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28 Yatim, Interview, 2010.

29 Zeghal, *Les islamistes marocains*, p. 228.

30 Enayat, H., *Modern Islamic Political Thought* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982).

abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924 and the rise of Arab nationalism, the latter holding the (Ottoman) caliphate to be a "mere subterfuge for perpetuating the Turanian hegemony, as well as the travesty of an office which by right belonged to the Arabs".[31] The early 20th century was marked by a period of questioning and reflexion on the roots of the degradation of the Arab world, which had left it open to Turkish and subsequently European domination and saw the emergence of new currents of thought including Arab socialism, Pan-Arabism, Arab nationalism and Islamic revivalism which sought to restore the 'lost grandeur'. Of these currents, the Islamic revival movement of the late 19th early 20th century has been described by Enayat as a type of 'fundamentalism',[32] the:[33]

> … meeting ground between the puritanism of the Wahhabi founders of Saudi Arabia, and the teachings of the *Salafiyyah* movement, which (…) preached a return to primeval Islam conceived as a religion in perfect harmony with the humanism and rationalism of modern Man.

The Salafiyya strand of the Islamic revival movement was to have an enduring effect. Over the 20th century, it spawned different currents, internally diverse in their responses despite considerable overlaps. According to Ramadan's classification, these currents can be situated into three broad categories.[34] 'Salafī Traditionalism' takes a literalist approach to the texts and refuses the mediating authority of the traditional schools of law (*madhhab*s) and the *ᶜulamāᵓ*. The 'Salafī reformist' current calls for constant *ijtihād* (literally 'individual reasoning'), emphasizes the aims and objectives of the law and of its jurisprudence and the place of reason in the interpretative process. Finally, the 'political and literalist Salafiyya' has been classified by Ramadan as a distinct off-shoot of the 'Salafī reformist' current. This strand "retained nothing of the reformism except the concept of social and political action which they married to a literalist reading of the Texts with a

31 Enayat, H., *Modern Islamic Political Thought*)Austin :University of Texas Press ,1982(, p. 56.

32 In the original sense of a return to the fundamentals

33 Enayat, H., *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, p. 69.

34 Ramadan, T., *To Be A European Muslim: A Study Of Islamic Sources In The European Context* (Markfield, Leicester : Islamic Foundation, 1999).

political entail concerning the management of power, the Caliphate, authority, the law, etc."[35]

The MUR's outlook arguably combines both the second and third currents in Ramadan's classification. It shares the outlook of the early Salafī reformist trend which regards the under-development of the Muslim world as being due to a departure from the 'true' values of Islam. However, it merges it with the political strand, echoing voices like that of the early 20th century Moroccan reformist Allal al-Fassi who conceived of the Salafiyya movement beyond merely theological discussions. Al-Fassi called for a reform of Islam which would focus both on attacking the causes of decadence and finding solutions to them, but also in preparing the people to receive those solutions and the primary route he advocated for this was education.

For the MUR therefore, an Islamic renaissance drawing on the example of the 'Salaf', the earliest generation of Islam, is regarded as the only real route to the emancipation of the Muslim world and a return to its former grandeur in all spheres and the tool in effecting this, is education. Although the group's reference to al-Fassi has been judged as tactical by some commentators, the overlap in perspective is striking. For al-Fassi, Islam is a "prescriptive religion, which offers clear rules to communicate with God and undertake one's devotions and regulates interaction between individuals within society,"[36] a view echoed in the MUR's writings: "Because Allah wants it to be the last religion, he made it complete and perfect and made it speak to humans in all domains, and ways, with no exception."[37]

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35 An offshoot of 'Salafī reformism', Ramadan, T., *To Be A European Muslim : A Study Of Islamic Sources In The European Context*)Markfield ,Leicester :Islamic Foundation ,1999(, pp. 241-243.

36 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*.

37 Ḥarakat, *al-Mīthāq*.

2.1.4 The MUR and the Refraction of Salafī Thought.

A major theme driving early Salafī thought in the early to mid 20th century concerned positing reactions to European colonial dominance, and the associated intellectual tide of 'modernist' thought into the Arab world, 'modernism' taken to mean the propagation of secularist, humanist and rationalist world-views. The two forces were rarely distinguished by Salafists, with modernist thought usually taken as an intellectual 'assault' on Islam driven through by a colonial Trojan horse. A consistent theme that began to dominate the Salafīyya reaction was the propagation of an essentialized conflict (particularly in the post-colonial period in the 1950s and 1960s onwards), between European colonial powers and the Arab world, and between modernist-thought and the Muslim faith. By an essentialized conflict, I mean Salafists articulated a world-view wherein the earlier French occupation of Morocco, the Italian of Libya, the British of Egypt, were all manifestations of a singular 'European' assault against the Arab Muslim world. Similarly, the proliferation of modernist thought into the Muslim world, was increasingly (though not initially) seen as part of this essential assault through the vehicles of 'secular' systems of education and 'westernized' elites. Crucially for this study of the MUR, this essentialization allowed for the creation of a 'shared grammar' between different Salafī reformist groups in different regions, amongst whom the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt in particular stood as a major (but not only source) of discourse relating to broader concepts of the reform of doctrine, 'revivalism', 'activism' and views of an 'ideal Islamic government'. The following sections will argue however that while the members of the MUR were initially inspired and borrowed heavily from the discourse and organizational archetypes of the Brotherhood, as well as from other Salafī and Muslim reformist movements, their subsequent articulation of Moroccan exceptionalism marks a significant rupture in this shared 'grammar'. Thus, as the ideological outlook of the MUR matured, it began to increasingly refract and reform, rather than reflect and adopt, broader Salafist discourse.

Euban and Zaman note that amongst the similarities which can be observed across Islamist movements are a conception of shared constraints, the responses to which may involve a cross-cultural dialogue amongst movements and ultimately reflect the different contexts in which answers are being forged:[38]

> In a world stamped by Western dominance and the consolidation of post-colonial authoritarian regimes, Islamists confront a common set of constraints and challenges. Inasmuch as such constraints and challenges have made Islamist thinkers (often reluctant) participants in conversations across both culture and history, their efforts to remake the foundations of collective life reveal a shared interpretive framework and common religio-political grammar.

The 20th century Salafī reaction to modernist thought occupied a range of currents, from acceptance and even admiration of 'rationalist' epistemological approaches that could be used to renew Muslim intellectual vigour, to whole-sale rejection of rationalist interpretation in the guise of pure literalism.

Modernism has been defined as a 'world-view' emerging in post-Renaissance and post-Enlightenment Europe "which revolted against religion in all the various areas of life and replaced it with humanism, rationalism, and secularism."[39]

Early Muslim reformist responses to modernism advocated integrating aspects of European thought, such as Rashid Rida's suggestion that constitutional government could be of great benefit to people of the Orient. Many in the subsequent generation however, including Hasan al-Banna, viewed Islam as a holistic outlook and rejected the integration of European influence as destabilising:[40]

> …Banna put an end to the duality and balance of looking both to Islam and to the West as sources of inspiration (…) The Muslim Brothers chose to seal off the vision of an ideal Islamic Society from the inroads of Modernism and Westernism.

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38 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*, p. 29.

39 Naeem, F. S., 'A Traditional Islamic Response to the Rise of Modernism', in J. E. Lumbard, *Islam, Fundamentalism, and* the Betrayal of Tradition: Essays by Western Musl*im Scholars*.)Bloomington ,Ind :.World Wisdom ,2004(, p. 80.

40 Rahnema, Ali, *Pioneers of Islamic Revival (Studies in Islamic Society)* 2nd edition (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, SIRD, Beirut, Lebanon, WBP, London, New York: Zed Books Ltd, 2005), p. xlvii.

The ideological outlook of the Muslim Brotherhood had significant influence on the ideological formation of the leading members of the MUR. There were nonetheless other related but distinct sources which influenced the vision of leading MUR members. According to Mohamed Errida Benkhaldoun,[41] Rached Ghannoushi's 'Islamic Tendency Movement' (MTI) in Tunisia had a pivotal influence, while Ahmed Mechtalli suggests the writings of Sudanese intellectual Hassan Turabi also helped shift the movement's view, particularly in regards to women's activism: "They had a vision of women's work which was revolutionary. This is where we got our initial ideas."[42]

Further influences on the outlook of the MUR can be traced to 'reformist-' Wahhābī-Salafism emanating from Saudi Arabia. Concerned with the rise of the Left, Moroccan King Hassan II had given free rein to Saudi inspired groups to develop across the country during the 1980s and 90s, where they established Islamic schools and study circles, preaching the literalist brand of Saudi Islam.[43] According to MUR activist Rashid Faluli, who himself emerged from the Salafī literalist trend, "at the time, the dominant Salafī trend was that of the Petro-dollar, influenced by Saudi Arabia."[44]

The nature of the influence of Saudi-Islam was itself affected by contextual factors. The Deployment of American troops on Saudi Arabian soil during the Gulf War (August 1990 – February 1991) caused outrage among some Muslim scholars who denounced their continued presence on 'sacred Muslim land'.[45] With the growth of the influence of Saudi scholars through petro-dollars, the more or less radical views of different scholars ignited debates in Morocco, like elsewhere among Muslims, and sprouted a variety of literalist-Salafī groups, some quietist following the lead of then Saudi Grand Mufti, Abdullah Bin

41 Benkhaldoun, Interview, 2010.

42 Mechtalli, Interview, 2010.

43 Vermeren, *Maghreb, Démocratie impossible?*, pp. 225-226.

44 Faluli, Interview, 2009.

45 Maisel, Sebastian and John A. Shoup III (eds), *Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Arab States Today: An Encyclopedia of Life in the Arab States* (2 vols. Connecticut, USA: Greenwood Press, 2009), pp. 228-229.

Baz,[46] some advocating *jihād* against American troops, some calling for *jihād* against 'corrupt leaders' everywhere, including Egypt and Algeria.

Between the Brotherhood, Ghannoushi, Saudī-Wahhābī thinking, as well the major influence of native Moroccan thinkers including Allal al-Fassi, the MUR thus had feeding into the outlook of its constituent members a panoply of ideological currents relating to Salafī reformism, modernism and anti-colonial thought. The following section shall examine therefore how, through a continuous process of negotiation, the MUR's ideological outlook integrated such influences and culminated in their own version of an exceptionalized Moroccan form of Islamic revivalism.

2.1.5 The MUR and the International Islamic Renewal Movements.

According to Esposito, central to the Salafī reformist perspective is the view there has occurred a "departure from true Islamic belief/ practise and the need for a return to Islam", through a process of reform (*iṣlāḥ*) and renewal (*tajdīd*).[47] The Salafī trend argues that Islam is both 'religion and civilization'.[48]

The civilizational drive behind core Salafist principles arguing for the necessity of reform to renew Islam is echoed in the writings of the MUR. MUR ideologue, Mohamed Yatim[49] and MUR president Mohamed Hamdaoui[50] expressed this 'civilizational' objective in the movement's Charter:[51]

> The objectives of the movement do not stop at the realization of the individual piety (spirituality) in its isolated meaning, its objective is to move from the resurrection of the religion, from the individual, and the general level, i.e. society, government, to found a humane civilization.

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46 Bin Baz famously emitted a fatwa legitimizing the presence of US troops in Saudi Arabian soil.

47 Esposito, J. L., *Islam and Politics* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1984).

48 Esposito, *Islam and Politics*.

49 In his book *La mouvance Islamique et le changement civilizational* (Details not available).

50 In his publication "*al-risāliyya fī ᶜamal al-islāmī*" (2003).

51 Ḥarakat, *al-Mīthāq*.

The MUR thus consciously identifies itself as part of an Islamic revival movement (*al-Saḥwa al-Islāmiyya*) alongside other Islamic groups globally which regard the under-development of the Muslim world as being due to a departure from the 'true' values of Islam.

As part of this 'global' movement, the MUR maintains links with Islamist groups across the world, including the AK party in Turkey, Islamist figures in Iran as well as Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood. It sits on the Brotherhood's international council[52] and despite a strong level of independence from the Egyptian Muslim Brothers, and a clear national focus, the movements have well-established ties.[53] This affinity with global movements was captured by the MUR's decision to print a special edition[54] of its newspaper '*Attajdid*' to mark the success of the AK Party in the Turkish elections in 2002.[55]

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52 "the International *shūrā* Council consists of 90 members from inside Egypt and 40 from outside, and it is they who elect the 'murshid-general'." Interview with Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood Supreme Guide Mohammed Mahdi Akef, in Global Muslim Brotherhood Daily. "Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood Leader Provides Details On 'International Organization'", 2009, 05 06. (accessed 15/11/2012), http://globalmbreport.org/?p=1451%E2%80%8E

The nature of the international organization is secretive but its likely existence is a testament to the MB's internationalist outlook. According to Parget, the international organization is most likely a decentralized, framework whereby different groups internationally come together to share experiences, ideas and tactics. Parget, A., *The Muslim Brotherhood: The Burden of Tradition* (London: Saqi Books, 2010).

53 Saaedine al Othmani attended a conference in Egypt in Match 2011 run by a movement affiliated to MB intellectual, Youssef al Qaradawi. "The International Forum of the Wāsatiya appears to be located in Jordan and headed by Marwan Fauri, identified above. (…) It should be noted that the concept of *wasaṭiyya* (moderation) is most closely associated with Global Muslim Brotherhood leader Youssef Qaradawi." "Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood Leader Provides Details".

54 Special edition of Attajdid, 5/12/2002. The front page featured a collage of Erdogan in the foreground, behind him Ahmed Raissouni and in the background Pakistani ideologue Syed Abūl A'ala Mawdudi.

55 The group has had regular contact with the AK Party and its ideologues, attending AK party congresses (and vice versa) and claims their Turkish counterparts drew inspiration in both their name and symbol, from discussions with the movement.

According to Moukri Abou Zaid, "… the brothers from Turkey came to visit us, we told them the meaning of our name, even our symbol of the lamp, they took the name and the symbol. They left the leader Erbakan and set up the Turkish PJD. It was Erdogan's disciples. (…) Othmani and Benkirane have met Erdogan, we frequently met Erbakan, when Erdogan was his disciple. He was invited for the Sahwa Islamiya conference organized by ministry of Islamic affairs and Habous, (…) when brothers visit Turkey, they try and visit them when they go" (Interview, 2009).

Yet the ideological outlook of the MUR has consciously and repeatedly sought to focus on its Moroccan aims and distinctly Moroccan provenance. This national focus distinguishes it from many Salafī movements, who do not recognise temporal authority or borders and think of themselves exclusively in terms of their religious identity, rejecting nationalism – and hence a national focus - as an aberration and un-Islamic. This tension between the MUR and more literalist strands is illustrated in the critique by former literalist Salafī and MUR activist, Rashid Faluli of literalist salafism which he dubbed 'overly obsessed with appearance', as he recounted an experience outside a mosque in which a:[56]

> Salafī brother, dressed in traditional 'Khamis' criticized another brother for wearing jeans to pray, describing the jeans as the clothing of unbelief. The brother in jeans responded that his jeans at least were made in Morocco, whereas the Salafī brother's 'Khamis', the label of which he then checked, was produced in India.

The MUR has been engaged in a nationalist appropriation of an internationalist trend, reflected in the fact the movement's focus and ambitions are directed primarily at Morocco and despite talk of the global Muslim community (*ummah*), the MUR's efforts are largely targeted at Moroccan issues. It also supports strictly Moroccan national issues such as Morocco's claim over the Western Sahara, as illustrated by one of the slogans chanted at the 2009 PJD youth conference: 'The Sahara is Moroccan.'[57]

It is in this same vein that the MUR seeks to assert its complete independence as a Moroccan movement from any external agents. Particularly, from the Muslim Brotherhood. According to Moukri Abou Zaid,[58]

> … there are no organizational links (with the MB). The MB never opened a branch here in Morocco, it was their conviction when they contacted us, saying you have the same outlook as us, why add another organization to the tendencies which exist, why divide the Muslims further. And it was a national conviction for us, to better work, more freely in the national framework without being constantly hounded by the accusation of being led by external links.

56 Faluli, Interview, 2009.

57 PJD annual youth conference, March 2009.

58 Abou Zaid, Interview, 2009.

In one of its pamphlets, the MUR states that it adopted the slogan 'Islam is the direction/guidance' rather than the standard slogan 'Islam is the solution'', the latter being a slogan typically associated with the Muslim Brotherhood. MUR leaders dispute the suggestion the MUR is a satellite of the MB, presenting themselves as influenced by a number of different movements, one of which includes the MB: "We were never part of the MB culture – the MB culture was one amongst many other sources, we weren't prisoners to this source, neither organizationally, theoretically or politically".[59]

This independence, doctrinally and organizationally, has allowed unique agency in determining its ideological outlook, one most apparent with regards to the limits of interpretation.

2.2 Straddling Reformism and Traditionalism: The MUR, Interpretative Authority and the 'Higher Objectives of the Sharīᶜa'.

In order to return Islamic civilization to its position of greatness, Salafiyya doctrine held a grand renewal of religion (*tajdīd*) was required. Critically however, this process could only be realized through reform of doctrine via independent legal reasoning (*ijtihād*): "True renewal was not based on blind imitation of tradition but was open to fresh interpretation to meet the needs of the community."[60] Thus, following core Salafiyya doctrine, the MUR advocates this interpretative reform (*iṣlāḥ*) of doctrine as a continuation of a process begun by the Prophet Muḥammad. This will bring about an Islamic revival, or a 'return to the origins'. Indeed, in its Charter[61]the group cites a *ḥadīth*[62] which refers to God sending people

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59 Yatim, Interview, 2010.

60 Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, p. 145.

61 Ḥarakat, *al-Mīthāq*.

62 A well-known tradition preserved in Abū Dāwūd's *ḥadīth* collection reports how the Prophet predicted that at the beginning of each century, God will send someone who will renew the religion of that century: *ᶜalā raʾsi kulli miʾati sanatin man yudjaddidu lahā. dīnahā* (…) (Wensinck, A.J. et J.P. Mensing, *Concordance et indices de la Tradition Musulmane*: *Al-Mu'djam al-mufahras li-alfāẓ al-ḥadīth al-nabawī* (8 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1992). Brill online. Vol. 1, p. 364). In modern times, the idea of a renewer for each century of the Muslim era has remained alive (Jansen, J. J. G. "Tadjdīd" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

every 100 years to renew religion, suggesting it views itself as fitting within this divine pattern of Islamic renewal.[63]

The hallmark of the Salafiyya reformist doctrine, seemingly implicit in the MUR's ideological outlook, is the view that interpretive authority in Islamic law and doctrine should not be restricted to the traditional scholars (*ᶜulamāᵓ*) but rather should be accessible to all. Critically however, in regards to interpretive authority the MUR has negotiated a middle-position between Salafīyya reformism and *ᶜulāmāᵓ*-led traditionalism. This is manifest most clearly in two ways. The first is in the MUR's tempering of its position on the issue of the Islamic Schools of Law (pl. *madhāhib*), despite the broader Salafiyya movement's historical rejection of adherence to a *madhhab* as ossifying Islamic thought. The second is its own distinct promulgation of the doctrine of *Maqāsid al-Sharīᶜa* ('the Higher Objectives of the *Sharīᶜa*'). Both, and particularly the latter, undergirded the MUR's entire approach toward the conception of the ideal Islamic state and society. Both features furthermore highlight the exceptional nature of the MUR's ideological outlook as compared to broader Islamic revivalist movements.

2.2.1 Return to within the 'red-lines'.

The MUR's tempered acceptance of the Mālikī school of Law denotes a distinct rupture in the shared 'grammar' of Islamic reformism, one seemingly forced by the MUR's local context and exemplifying the MUR's 'Moroccan' exceptionalism.

Traditionalist Sunnism generally sees four main legal-schools (*madhāhib*), all of which codified between the 9th and 12th centuries, as the only legitimate avenues through which Islamic law and ritual can be followed, each with a distinct vision of how the Qur'an and textual corpus (*ḥadīth*) of the Prophet's sayings can be approached to determine law and doctrine. Of these four, the Māliki *madhhab* historically dominated North African Sunnism.

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63 According to the group's understanding, God has sent prophets throughout time to guide mankind. The last prophet is believed to be the Prophet Muḥammad whose message is considered valid for all time and all places, and requires individuals and groups to 'refresh' it throughout history.

The wave of Islamic reformism in the early 20th century critically dismissed the necessity of following one of these four schools as an unnecessary innovation, though keeping regard for the leading scholarly figures of these schools. It denied the long-held necessity that law and doctrine could only be determined through recourse to the methodology of the four established schools. Instead, it advocated an opening of interpretative authority based exclusively on readings of the Qur'an and the normative traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad (the Sunnah). The Salafist opening of interpretative authority has been described as a challenge to what Darif[64] refers to as 'legal Islam', one regulated and framed by the state apparatus and which seeks to reconcile 'religion and politics' and replace it with a form of 'popular Islam', emanating from activists.

Furthermore, the opening of interpretative authority renders adrift the religious authority of the traditionalist *ᶜulamāᵓ*. As Ayubi notes, "'Islamists' selective appropriation of the Sharia and *fiqh* reflects deep distrust of both clerical and political authority."[65] The casting aside of the role and authority of traditionalist *ᶜulamāᵓ* was almost always concomitant with that of denying the necessity of the *madhhabs.*

The MUR's adoption of the Salafiyya position regarding the denial of the necessity of following traditionalist *madhhabs* is seemingly engrained. In the Charter of the MUR, the group states:[66]

> …some imams said that every Prophetic tradition (*ḥadīth*) that is valid (*ṣaḥīḥ*) is our *madhhab* (school of thought). We say that all that is fixed by the Book of God and in the Sunnah of His Messenger, these are our sayings and our school of thought (*madhabina*) and our Sharīᶜā.

This statement arguably represents a clear affirmation of the Salafiyya doctrine of legitimacy in accessing the texts and the Sunna directly without recourse to the four specific schools of law. In the same vein, in an interview MUR President Hamdaoui responded: 'We

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64 Darif, *Monarchie marocaine*, p. 29.

65 Ayubi, Nazih, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World* (London: Routledge, 1993). Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World, Routledge; 21 Oct 1993, Nazih Ayubi

66 Ḥarakat, *al-Mīthāq*.

have no *madhhab*”.[67] In this, the MUR might be dubbed ‘modernist’ in outlook in that it states that “there is nothing in Islam which stops people interpreting its norms according to the needs of changing times.”[68] As part of its eleven point educational programs, the movement thus seeks to equip all its adherents with knowledge of the core sources, understood as the Qur’an and Sunna, to allow them to contribute to the ultimate objective of resurrecting an Islamic society.

The MUR’s ‘democratization’ of interpretive authority has however placed the movement in conflict with the regime. Particularly following the Casablanca bombings of 2003, the monarchy began restricting the interpretive field by linking individual interpretations not grounded in traditional scholarly authorities to terrorist ideologies. Since 2004,[69] only the high Council of the Ulemas, headed by the King, is authorised[70] to issue fatwas (rulings/edicts), a measure justified by the rise in extremist edicts. This effectively sought to limit the field of religious interpretation and centralized religious authority. Any edicts pronounced outside of the council are officially considered mere ‘opinions’ of no legal consequence.[71]

Whilst the move by the monarchy may have been officially justified with reference to the terrorist attacks of 2003,[72] they were also a response to challenges posed to the King’s religious authority by the popularity of anti-systemic groups like Yassine’s al-ᶜAdl wa’l-Iḥsān, but also by the MUR. Ideologues of the MUR who, though supportive of the King in

67 Hamdaoui, Interview, 2009.

68 Euben and Zaman, *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought*, p. 7.

69 Following the Dahir of the 22nd April 2004

70 “The Superior Council of the Ulema is the only institution authorized to emit fatwas” (Toufiq, Ahmed, Le Maroc a organisé le domaine des Fatwas d'une façon qui préserve les intérêts de la Oumma. (2012, 2 08). Retrieved11 01 ,2012 ,from Aujourd'hui le Maroc : http//:www.aujourdhui.ma/maroc-actualite/actualite/ahmed-taoufiq-le-maroc-a-organise-le-domaine-des-fatwas-d-une-facon-qui-preserve-les-interets-de-la-oumma-97059.html).

71 “Outside of this institution, these are merely individual opinions that are not discussed or commented on.” Ahmed Toufiq, "L' inertie de l'Etat laisse le champ libre aux «fatwas» sauvages", art. in *La Vie Eco* (16/11/2007).

72 These were a series of suicide bombings on May 16, 2003, in Casablanca, Morocco.

theory, crucially premise this support on their own articulation of legitimate religious authority. It is on this basis that the MUR has often questioned the religious basis for given official reforms, including the official promulgation of various reforms of the Moroccan personal status code (*Mudawanna*).

The question of interpretative authority is thus both highly sensitive and politically volatile. In 2003, in a further example of the ideological 'red-lines' that the MUR need always be conscious of, this precise question led to the departure of the then MUR president, Ahmed Raisouni. In that year, Raissouni questioned, in an interview with newspaper *Aujourd'hui le Maroc*, the King's ability to issue a fatwa: "Given his training, he cannot take on the prerogative of issuing fatwas."[73] The ensuing backlash against his views, considered by detractors as criticism of the inviolable figure of the King, led to his resignation as MUR president and his self-exile to Saudi Arabia. Consequently, in response to this narrowing of the field of religious authority in which the MUR stakes its claim, the movement has sought to align itself, where possible, with new measures and highlight the extent to which it is supportive, and indeed an ally of the King, in his call for 'moderate' Islam.

Thus, despite its implicit affirmation of Salafist reformist principles in its Charter, and further highlighting heterogeneity in the MUR's ideological outlook, the MUR has since it's foundation officially accepted the validity of *madhhab*s. In response to a speech by the King in 2004 in which he linked the Mālikī *madhhab* to Moroccan identity, stability and moderation, the MUR reacted by issuing a statement affirming its commitment to the Mālikī school of thought. This was subsequently reflected in the movement's decision to teach recitation of the Qur'an according to the *warsh*[74] method despite suggestions by some MUR members that this was the most challenging to learn.[75]

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73 Dahbi, Omar, "Éditorial: Fatwas" in *Aujourd'hui le Maroc* 17/11/2005, accessed 22/9/16, http://www.maghress.com/fr/aujourdhui/41433

74 One of the recognized and accepted canonical readings of the Qur'an, whose spread has coincided, to some degree, with the spread of the Mālikī *madhhab* in North Africa. MURs insistence to further their local/regional-canonical reading in favour of Ḥafṣ which has seen a wide geographic spread from

2.2.2 *The Maqāsid al-Sharīᶜa*

The MUR's theological negotiations concerning legitimate interpretative authority saw it adopt and even promote the doctrine of the 'Higher Objectives of the Sharīᶜa', a perspective on Islamic law which allows the movement to steer away from literal interpretations and provides for some leeway in accommodating official stances as religiously legitimate.

The methodology in theory allows the group to become suppler in its approach to law and doctrine based on the fact that it is not limited by restrictions devised in previous eras and which might be deemed to be out of sync with the modern context or as running counter to society's current interests. The potential it affords for open-ended interpretation has arguably been the major avenue through which the MUR was able to 'religiously' legitimise its distinct approach towards activism, reform and its conception of the state's religious legitimacy. Furthermore, it re-establishes the function of the 'scholar' in face of much early Salafiyya doctrine.

Salafiyya doctrine was arguably always beset by an internal contradiction. On the one hand, Salafī thinkers called for reform and renewal based on an open interpretative authority of the texts of the Qur'an and Sunna as a way of bypassing a stagnant clerical class who preside over an ossified tradition in order to 'renew' Islam for the modern age. On the other hand, the impetus within Salafī thinking restricted any possible interpretation of the fixed canon of texts to a literalist reading focused entirely on exoteric positivist law, resulting in calls for a re-imposition of the Sharia as it looked 'in the 7th century'.

To reconcile the contradiction, reformists particularly in the 1980s onwards 're-discovered' medieval Muslim arguments concerning the 'Maqāsid al-Sharīᶜa' ('the Higher

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the 20th century and beyond, in part due to the distribution of Saudi printed Qur'an and the *daᶜwa* efforts of their religious ministry, highlights a desire to avoid conflict with and emphasise support for the regime set 'red lines'.

75 Rimmal, A. (President of the regional executive office for the region Qarawiyine and at the MUR Central Office(Bureau central) ,in charge of the dossier for the elaboration of education and formation for15 20 year olds). Interview by E. Francois. In person. Rabat, Morocco, 11/2010.

Objectives of the Sharīᶜa') as articulated most influentially by the 14th century scholar Imam al-Shāṭībī. A Sunnī scholar of the Mālikī *madhhab*, al-Shāṭibī developed an understanding of the 'higher objectives and intents of the Sharīᶜa'. He argued that every legal ruling in Islam in the *sharᶜī* texts had a function and an aim which may be explicit or implicit, and an intention which it seeks to fulfil in order to benefit human beings or to ward off harm or corruption. The duty of the scholar, according to al-Shāṭibī, is to extract this intention behind the law in order to remain faithful to the spirit of the law. Critically therefore, for proponents of this doctrine, so long as the higher-objective of a legal ruling found in the Qur'an and Sunna is maintained, how this is reflected in current positive law on the ground can be adjusted with regards to contemporary contexts.

The *maqāṣid* approach gained currency amongst some Islamic movements from the early 1980s, including in Morocco and Tunisia, where Ghannoushi drew extensively on al-Shāṭibī's concept of '*al-maṣaliḥ*' (pl. of *maṣlaḥa*, an idea evoking that of the 'common good') and his theory that the objective of the Sharia is to protect faith, life, mind, progeny and property.[76]

According to Belal,[77] the earliest thinker within the MUR to take an interest in the concept of the *maqāsid* was Saaedine el Othmani, who penned a number of related articles in the late 1980s and in particular, used the theory of *maqāṣid* to argue for internal democracy within the movement based on the classical Islamic concept of *shūrā*.[78] Al Othmani and others also used *maqāṣid* principles to argue for political participation at a time, during the

76 While the theory of *maqāṣid al-sharīᶜah* predates the work of al-Shāṭibī himself, his work represents a leading contribution in the field. Note for instance Auda's comment that, "Al-Shāṭibī used, more or less, the same terminology that al-Juwaynī and al-Ghazālī developed." Auda, J., *Maqasid Al-Shariah as philosophy of Islamic law* (London, Washington: IIIT, 2008).

77 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*, p. 224.

78 In an interview with Bilal Talidid, Othmani discusses how he published a book on the importance of *shūrā* and described it as "one of the *maqāṣid al-Sharīᶜah* and how a lot of regulations in the religion came through by *shūrā*.". Talidi, Interview, 2010 and his *Dhākirat*.

late 80s and early 90s, when many of their fellow activists considered participation in the system to be ‘un-Islamic’.[79]

However, neither Al Othmani nor Abdelillah Benkirane possessed the theological clout to cement the *maqāṣid* perspective amongst the group’s members and it wasn’t until Ahmed Raissouni[80] joined ranks with the men in 1996, as part of the union with the LIF, that the movement obtained the religious capital necessary to cement the *maqāṣid* outlook and legitimize its use: “They found in the thinking of Raissouni (…) the best theological backing of their pragmatism.”[81]

For the MUR, the most ardent propagation of the *maqāsidī* approach was provided by its leading ideologue and former president, Ahmad Raissouni. Drawing heavily on the work of al-Shāṭibī, Raissouni advocated a focus on the spirit behind given Islamic injunctions in the Qur’an and Sunna, as a means of overcoming context specific rulings and remaining true to ‘the Higher Aims of the Sharia’.[82] Raissouni argues that the objectives of the Sharia are to establish the wellbeing of believers on earth and in light of the hereafter and therefore, all Qur’anic stipulations have this as their objective. According to Raissouni therefore, the *maqāṣid* “are the purposes which the Law was established to fulfill for the benefit of

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79 Indeed many groups considered democracy and Islam to be incompatible, arguing as in Egypt and elsewhere, that “sovereignty belonged to God, not the people.” Bayat, A., *Making Islam Democratic* (Stanford, California: Stanford university Press, 2007), p. 187.

80 Raissouni also delivered a sermon on “*maqāṣid* based jurisprudence” to King Mohamed VI during the annual Ramaḍān sessions in 1999.

81 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*, p. 229.

82 “…Maqasid ash Shar’iah is to Shar’iah what the soul is to the body.” and "Without Maqasid ash-Sha'riah, Fiqh is not fiqh and the scholar of fiqh is not a scholar of fiqh". (Rios, Y. "Without Maqasid ash-Sha'riah, Fiqh is not fiqh and the scholar of fiqh is not a scholar of fiqh" by Dr Ahmad Raysuni. from www.suhaibwebb.com: 2/7/2008, accessed 06 3, 2011, http://www.suhaibwebb.com/islam-studies/without-maqasid-ash-shar%E2%80%99iah-fiqh-is-not-fiqh-and-the-scholar-of-fiqh-is-not-a-scholar-of-fiqh-by-dr-ahmad-raysuni-h/).

humankind".[83] These purposes are then categorized by different scholars and achieving those objectives leaves considerable scope for human reason.

This shift towards the concept of *maqāsid* meant although the MUR continues to promote adherence to the Sharia, effectively, what it understands the Sharia to mean, how and when it should be implemented, has evolved drastically since the 1970s. From a literal application of punishments through a state imposed Islamic regime, the movement shifted its view to societal reform through social initiatives, motivated by an ideological reassessment of the centrality of the state in the process of Islamic renewal. Critically, this shift allows for considerable scope on how to achieve abstract ends, in accordance with context, culture and public perception.

Furthermore, the *maqāṣid* perspective places greater emphasis on scholars, as necessary intermediaries of the text, rather than the direct relationship to the text advocated by earlier Salafiyya thinkers. For Raissouni, the scholars are essential to enable the deciphering of the higher objectives, since it is their theological explanation which provides religious legitimacy, rather than the literal textual prescriptions or prohibition. Concretely, this requires Raissoni's stamp of approval for any initiatives undertaken by either the MUR or the PJD, or the risk of incurring accusations of not complying with Islamic doctrine. Belal notes that Raissouni's contribution to the movement as a 'religious entrepreneur' is a double-edged sword:[84]

> On one hand, the pragmatism of the politicians of the movement is legitimized by the powerful theological tool which constitutes *fiqh al-maqāṣidī*. On the other hand, Raissouni is driven by an ethic of conviction and as such, will "feel, as wrote Max Weber, 'responsible' for the need to ensure the flame of pure doctrine in order that it not extinguish itself.

Salafist in inspiration and increasingly pragmatic, the MUR's evolving perspective has allowed for the emergence of a fluid identity, which cannot be posited as in direct

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83 Al-Raysuni, *Imam al-Shatibi's Theory of the Higher Objectives and Intents of Islamic Law* (London, Washington: IIIT, 2005).

84 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*, p. 239.

confrontation with the regime, yet aspires to an ideal premised on a form of purification of Moroccan religious practise, with implicit critiques of the governing system.

2.3 The MUR, Decolonization and Islamic Revivalism.

The MUR considers the 19th and early 20th century colonial period was one that led to the marginalization of Islam. Its literature proclaims "Morocco was utterly Muslim until we were invaded by foreign occupation which benefited from the knowledge acquired by crusaders."[85] This marginalization was manifest by the disregard of the Arabic language, the implementation of laws reflecting the colonizer's values and control of the media as a tool to spread its culture.[86] According to MUR literature, "Colonialism is responsible for the downfall of Islam today."[87] This suggests the group's actions might be viewed in light of what Francois Burgat dubs "the third phase of the rocket of decolonization,"[88] whereby Islamism represents the third stage in a struggle for independence, following the first two stages, the winning of political independence and the subsequent implementation of economic modernization.

For Burgat, Islamism emerges due to dissatisfaction with the post-colonial state expressed through a critique of its likeness with the colonial state. This a view echoed in MUR intellectual output. For the MUR, Western, post-enlightenment, liberal values are viewed as posing a continued threat to the Islamic nature of Morocco. The movement views Islam as under attack and in a state of regression, primarily because in the earlier colonial period Moroccan society's ills were blamed on the Muslim religion. The view of society's problems as rooted in religion is indebted, according to the movement, to post-enlightenment thinking, imported from France and internalized by the westernized elites. According to the MUR's media representative, Saad Loudiyi, "The French elite hold Islam responsible for all

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85 Ḥarakat, *al-Mīthāq*, p. 2.

86 Ḥarakat, *al-Mīthāq*, p. 3.

87 Ḥarakat, *al-Mīthāq*, p. 3.

88 Burgat, *L'islamisme au Maghreb*, p. 71.

our backwardness, we say it could be the source of the solution, not the problem."[89] Contrary to this prognosis, the movement considers that the lack of religiosity in society is in fact to blame for many of its problems and offers a remedy: "many say the cause of the problems of the Moroccan woman is religion, we say no, we say she suffers mainly because her husband comes home drunk, so it is the lack of religion."[90]

Much of the anti-colonial rhetoric in the MUR was clearly inspired by similar rhetoric emanating from the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Al-Banna's outlook was profoundly shaped by anti-imperialism, in light of the British occupation of the Suez canal and events in nearby Palestine. He argued that the departure from pristine Islamic values was linked to colonialism, as part of a broader attack on Islam, with roots in the crusades. This view was echoed by subsequent movements, including the MUR: For al-Banna, as for the MUR, colonialism is viewed first and foremost as a cultural invasion and is considered to have led to the decline of Islamic civilization.

The broad contours of the ideological outlook in the MUR's literature can therefore be situated within the current of Islamic revivalism and "the attempt of a variety of Muslims in different parts of the world to mobilize the energies of their constituencies to continue the process of decolonization and the creation of a viable, modern, independent Islamic society."[91] According to MUR literature, Islam is a holistic system for every facet of life: "Islam, with its concepts, ethics and system is the only thing that is capable of making humankind happy, of making it rise and follow the right path and capable of making them live a good, just life and make them build a balanced civilization."[92]

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89 Loudiyi, S. (MUR media representative), Interview by E. Francois. In person. Rabat, Morocco, 11/10/2009 & 20/10/2009.

90 Hamdaoui, M. (MUR president 2002-2014), (E. Francois, Interviewer). In person. Rabat, Morocco, 3/2009, 9/2009 and 11/2009.

91 Haddad, "The Revivalist Literature and the Literature On Revival".

92 Ḥarakat, *al-Mīthāq*, p. 5.

Full independence is conceived of in terms of a 'return' to an idealized Islamic past where the basis of society was the Qur'an and Sunna, which are alleged to have shaped all aspects of Moroccan life: "Our problem is not with any particular ideology or political party, it is with the retreat of religious values."[93] The path to 'full independence' is to be found through 'resurrecting the faith', which the MUR defines as "restoring trust in it, in its morals and its rulings and all that flows from this (…) in all aspects of life."[94] The overarching objective is to resurrect an international Islamic civilization which the MUR asserts "will surpass all the negative aspects and deviances upon which modern Western civilization is built,"[95] starting with a national renewal which aims at ensuring Islam is abided by in all aspects of people's life.

Haddad affirms "revivalists seek to appropriate the ethos of the original model and to apply it to contemporary circumstances so as to affirm Islam as vibrant and relevant to modernity."[96] In line with this return to the sources in search of new answers, the MUR considers religiously based reform the essential means of achieving the ideal society, one which is considered holistically compliant with Islamic precepts:[97]

> The objectives of the movement don't stop at the realization of the individual piety (spirituality) in its isolated meaning, its objective is to move from the resurrection of the religion, from the individual, and the general level, i.e. society, government, to found a humane civilization.

The movement therefore calls on people to 'obey God and His Messenger' in all aspects of their life, not just in the mosque, but also in the 'cinema' and on 'the beach' as a means of countering the secularism it blames for distancing people from their religious heritage. While early revivalist were primarily concerned with military or political

93 Hamdaoui, Interview, 2009

94 Ḥarakat, *al-Mīthāq*, p. 6.

95 Ḥarakat, *al-Mīthāq*, p. 6.

96 Haddad, "The Revivalist Literature and the Literature On Revival", p. 4.

97 Ḥarakat, *al-Mīthāq*, p. 4.

intrusions, contemporary revivalism is concerned with cultural penetration of what are deemed to be corrupt Western values, at odds with the Islamic ethos.

Central to this 'truly' independent identity is a defence of Arabo-Islamic identity, as reflected in the MUR's discourse. In 2011, the MUR issued a statement declaring that the revision of the constitution represented an opportunity to "consolidate the position of the Arabic language"[98] and reaffirmed the centrality of Islam to Morocco's identity: "the Islamic referential is one of the foundations of the Moroccan state" and represents its 'specificity'.[99] In addition, PJD secretary general, Abdelillah Benkirane threatened to vote against the reformed constitution if it modified the Islamic referential contained therein and accused the Mennouni Commission responsible for the reforms of being 'agents of colonialism'.[100]

2.2.2 The Islamic Awakening: A Response to 'Westernized' Elites

According to Malika Zeghal, amongst colonialism's long term effects are that it "pushed Moroccans to imitate 'Western' modes of consumption and behaviour and deislamicized the mode of functioning of their economy."[101] Furthermore, as Hourani notes, in most countries in the Middle East, power, post-independence, tended to remain in the hands of ruling families or educated elites, who "did not on the whole (…) possess the skill and appeal needed to mobilise popular support in the new circumstances of independence…"[102] This left the way open for "new movements and ideologies, which would blend the elements of nationalism, religion and social justice in a more appealing fashion."[103] What is more, receptiveness to such revivalist ideas can partly be explained, according to Haddad, by the mass urbanization of rural people, which she contends "re-

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98 Jâabouk, M., "Les Mises en guardes du MUR et du PJD", *Le Soir- Echos* (2011).

99 Jâabouk, M., "Les Mises en guardes du MUR et du PJD", *Le Soir- Echos* (2011).

100 Jâabouk, M., "Les Mises en guardes du MUR et du PJD", *Le Soir- Echos* (2011).

101 Zeghal, *Les islamistes marocains*, p. 234.

102 Hourani, *A History of The Arab Peoples*, Chapter 24.

103 Hourani, *A History of The Arab Peoples*, Chapter 24.

affirm the traditional values of Islam over against the so-called middle class westernized pseudo-Europeanized culture."[104]

With the appeal of the Istiqlal party waning post-independence, despite its own early Salafiyya influence, the MUR and its political counter-part the PJD might be understood in this light, as a new movement which sought to challenge the existing social order by drawing on popular themes. But unlike the Muslim Brotherhood under Hasan al-Banna, for whom all concepts derived from European thought were judged subversive, the MUR integrated subsequent critiques of this perspective, both by non-MB intellectuals and the MB itself, which in the 1990s, had made a pro-democracy turn and revamped its views on women's rights, parties, political pluralism and morality.[105]

In its ideological outlook, the MUR has expressed opposition to a powerful westernized elite viewed as destructive through its influence in society, echoing the views of the Egyptian MB who consider that "secular elites constituted indigenous, domestic colonizers, responsible for the westernization of Muslim society."[106] The consequence of which, the MUR argues, is a cultural schizophrenia, according to which elites perpetuate the values of the colonizers.[107]

In line with this perspective, the MUR states that, despite acquiring political independence, a group of individuals which it calls the 'colonizing force',[108] those who have integrated the colonizer's outlook, remained. These westernized domestic elites are deemed to have a nefarious influence in their propagation of materialism and secularism which the MUR understands as undermining morality. The MUR considers that this 'colonizing force'

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104 Haddad, "The Revivalist Literature and the Literature on Revival: An Introduction", p. 10.

105 El-Ghobashy, M., "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 37 (2005). pp. 373-39.

106 Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, p. 141.

107 A similar assessment was made previously by religious scholars (*ᶜulamāᵓ*) including Abdelkrim Khatib, in his letter to the king in 1972; Zeghal, *Les islamistes marocains*.

108 *al quwwa al istiᶜmāriyya*, Ḥarakat, *al-Mīthāq*

is being challenged by the 'Saḥwa Islāmiyya', the Islamic awakening, of which the group considers itself a part, and which is struggling for independence in 'every field' and "until the Islamic umma returns to its rightful place".[109]

The MUR's project thus represents an alternative accession to modernity which grounds its credibility in what it considers to be the shared traditional values of the masses, while nonetheless harnessing the technological prowess of the educated elite. The editor of the MUR's official newspaper, Mustafa Khalfi, affirmed this view, stating:[110]

> Some are saying, embrace modernity and ignore the Islamic reference, we don't accept this. Our views represent the majority of society but some in the elite use the opposition in the media to defend their views and challenge ours. This is not representative of broader society, we represent the views of average Moroccans.

Average Moroccans here are contrasted with the secularized elite perceived as socially, economically and crucially culturally disconnected from the masses and hence perpetuating a form of neo-colonial rule.

In other words, the 'Islamic' society and state are considered to represent 'true' independence, since they are deemed to be indebted to 'authentic' values and not subservient to Western interests or ideas, associated with colonialism and imperialism. Euben and Zaman note that[111]

> ...the claim of authenticity is an act of power that functions not just to reflect the world but to construct it by determining who is included and excluded, who may and may not speak authoritatively, what is the proper realm of debate, and what is beyond contestation.

In this sense, the MUR's affirmation of an 'authentic' project implies a critique of the current system and of the legitimacy of those seeking to affirm its theological soundness. Commenting on the state's provisions, MUR senior member Auss Remmel notes: "We need

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109 Ḥarakat, *al-Mīthāq*.

110 Khalfi, M.(Editor of *Attajdid* newspaper; PJD MP), Interview by E. Francois. In person. Rabat, Morocco, 11/11/2009.

111 Euben and Zaman, *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought*, p. 28.

to instate real Islam. (…) The state is not fulfilling it functions because it has strayed from real Islam."[112]

2.2.3 From and towards a 'New Islamic Elite'.

It can be argued that through this promotion of activism within its ranks, the MUR is similar to other Islamist movements in seeking to "produce a new generation of modern-educated but Islamically orientated leaders prepared to take their place in every sector of society."[113] In this sense, among the movement's less explicit objectives, is the creation of alternative elites, offering a means of social accession to a generation which Vermeren describes as left out of the promises of development.[114] MUR leader Hamideen implicitly affirmed this but indicated the process as a gradual one when he stated: "you cannot create a modern Islamic elite in 10 years."[115]

The reformist perspective expressed by the MUR considers the traditionalist approach as having left the *ᶜulamāᵓ* disconnected from society and the issues plaguing it, and lacking the necessary tools to approach them. This forms an impetus behind the movement's belief in the need to forge not only Islamically educated elites, but those who are also trained in modern and 'secular' sciences, who can crucially bring to bear Islamic knowledge in a manner which is pertinent to the issues of contemporary society: "An Islamic movement is a movement of society, it needs to be knowledgeable in human sciences."[116] Critically, the focus on secular education represents an effort to reconcile a divide in identity between a modern educated secular elite and a traditional majority, reflected in a statement by Saeedine el Othmani: "It is a matter of showing that modernity is not in contradiction with Muslim

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112 Remmel, A. (Head of the large Qarawiyeen region), Interview by E. Francois. In person. Casablanca, Morocco, 10/2009.

113 Esposito, John L., *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 132.

114 Vermeren, *Maghreb, la démocratie impossible?*, p. 235.

115 Hamideen, Interview, 2009.

116 Hamdaoui, Interview, 2009

identity,"[117] and more specifically, bridging a social and cultural gap through recourse to the shared reference of the Islamic nature of the Moroccan regime.

To this end, the MUR's training program includes educating individuals beyond strictly theological realms in view of optimising their effectiveness in broader society, as discussed further in section *2.5.5* below. Similarly, the student wing of the MUR, the OREMA, created the 'Forum of Future managers' in March 2009 "to ensure that the intellectual elites of tomorrow are creating assurances for their future."[118] The emphasis on secular education is thought to be essential to the renewal of Islam and its reinvigorated presence in all layers of society, including the institutional strata:[119]

> Before the programs were focused purely on knowledge, Qur'an and Sunna, everything a Muslim needs to know. The new element is related to our recognition that the biggest problems are currently conflicts over values. (…) Also, the other new thing is skills. Before, in all our previous programs, there was no question of skills or ability – education was seen as giving people knowledge (implied Islamic knowledge) only.

But while the MUR's outlook seems to propagate a blending of religious and secular education in its members, the make-up of its own leadership highlights a class of activists who themselves emerged from this blend.

According to Haddad, the broader Islamic revivalist movement is tied to the lay population and its output is written by professionals, rather than governments or clergymen, and aims at "providing an impetus to progress for those who wish to see a developed and modern Islamic state."[120] Asef Bayat notes that the sort of religious transformation which Islamist movements created in Egypt forged a new kind of piety, which "was largely the stuff of the comfortable and privileged classes."[121] Similarly, it has been argued that Salafī reform movements are typically led by an emerging lower-middle and middle class, with

117 L'Express, 2006.

118 Moufidi, Interview, 2009.

119 Remmel, Interview, 2009.

120 Haddad, "The Revivalist Literature", p. 10.

121 Bayat, *Making Islam Democratic*, p. 197.

strong family or educational links to the *ᶜulamāᵓ*. In this way, they represent a bridge between the traditional and modern centres of authority by combining a secular and religious education. Marsot[122] argues that contemporary Islamism represents an urban protest movement, rooted in changes to the dynamics of state-society relations, specifically as regards mediation structures: "…the role of the ulema (learned men of religion) as intermediaries and popular leaders was devolved on new socially mobilized groups."[123] Through the scholars (*ᶜulamāᵓ*), the leaders of Islamic movements often received a traditional Islamic education, alongside their university degrees, making them a more potent force of contestation than their predecessors, through their closer access to modern centres of influence.

This trend of middle-class, secular-educated but religiously-versed figures as leading reformists movements is reflected in the MUR. Leaders of the MUR are drawn from some of the most prestigious religious and secular educational institutions in Morocco, including the Qarawīyīn (Ahmed Raissouni) and Dār al Ḥadīth al-Ḥassaniya (Mustafa Ramid)[124] and many teach in various university departments, countering the suggestion that Islamists are typically drawn from poorer and/or less educated backgrounds. As an instructive example, the MUR ideologue and PJD MP Saeedine al Othmani is a psychiatrist trained in Islamic jurisprudence, Hamdaoui is an engineer and Baha is an agronomist. Given the overlap between the MUR and the PJD's elites, it is interesting to note that,[125]

> the itineraries of the PJD's elites, with high levels of education, indicate diverse educational pathways, which have passed through institutions of modern training but also through the domain of the transmission of religious knowledge: Dār al-Ḥadīth, the Qarawiyyine, or the departments of Islamic studies at universities.

Membership further highlights clear middle-class origins of MUR members. Many of those whom I interviewed in their homes, including Abdelillah Benkirane, Khadija

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[122] Cited in Ismail, S., *Rethinking Islamist Politics: Culture, the State and Islamism* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003).

123 Ismail, S., *Rethinking Islamist Politics*, p. 86.

124 Ramid specialized in *Fiqh and Uṣūl al-fiqh*.

125 Zeghal, *Les islamistes marocains*, p. 228

Moufid, and others, live in upper-middle class neighbourhoods, in wealthy homes and often employed maids. One interviewee requested we meet at her private sports club, where we bumped into the political elite enjoying Sunday lunch. Among the core ideologues of the movement, Benkirane is a rentier and owner of a renowned school in Rabat. Y.Belal notes that whilst lower socio-economic groups are represented amongst the group's membership, they are much rarer amongst the leadership,[126] something I also recognized in my fieldwork. According to an internal survey undertaken by the MUR in 2004, almost half of its members are educated to university degree level (53% of men, 43% of women) and almost 10% are educated to PhD level, suggesting an above average overall educational level amongst members, in a country where illiteracy rates remain high.[127] This reflects the movement's dual aspiration, economically to afford an emerging middle class, drawn from traditional backgrounds, access to centres of power, but also culturally, to reflect back popular values in the public sphere, long dominated by a francophone elite.

2.4 The Shift in Strategy from State to Society.

The MUR's distinctiveness as a Moroccan Islamic movement lies partly in its critical support for the monarchy. This is premised on a recognition of the King's religious legitimacy, but underpinned by an implicit call for reform along religious lines. Though not revolutionary in their aspirations like their main rival al-ᶜAdl wa'l-Iḥsān, they nonetheless posit their acceptance of the monarchy on an idealized reimagining of its form and function.

2.4.1 The State as a Locus of Change: From an Archetype of Islamic state to Values of an Islamic State

Unlike other Islamist movements which have made the creation of an Islamic state their primary objective, the MUR's focus is not limited to the institutional realm. In this

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126 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*.

127 Figures for 2005-2008 show adult literacy of 56%, with steady improvements; http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/morocco_statistics.html

sense, it corresponds to Asef Bayat's notion of a 'post-islamist'[128] movement, which is focused on propagating certain values rather than establishing a specific type of state.

After breaking with the Chabība Islamiya, the ideologues of the MUR began to question their ideological dependence on Muslim Brotherhood ideas, in particular the focus on establishing an Islamic state. As critiques of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood emerged from Syria, Tunisia and beyond from the 1980s, the activists also turned their attention to North African thinkers, including Malik Bennabi and Ahmed Raissouni. From Bennabi, the movement took the concept of civilizational change which required an investment in all spheres of life, including culture, society and education, in addition to the state. From Raissouni, it took a methodological blueprint for resurrecting the faith which advocated a prioritization of their efforts, beginning with providing the basic necessities for human dignity (food, clothing, shelter, basic education) alongside efforts to propagate religious values in all fields, including the institutional realm. These perspectives were subsequently enshrined in the MUR's literature, so the MUR's overall project aims at a holistic reform,[129] of which one of its objectives is to 'deepen' the 'Islamic' nature of the state, as a means of protecting and reinforcing the country's Islamic heritage.

In this sense, the MUR is closer to the earlier MB model, which Hourani describes as a movement "for the reform of individual and social morality."[130] However, Hourani also notes that despite the focus of the early MB being outside of the institutional realm, "this teaching had political implications too,"[131] most notably in the fact the group would not recognise a ruler as legitimate unless he acted according to the Sharia. A similar perspective can be found in the MUR literature, where discussion of an Islamic state is premised on

128 Bayat, *Making Islam Democratic*.

129 Since "Islam is a holistic and comprehensive religion", Ḥarakat, *al-Mīthāq*.

130 Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, p. 349.

131 Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, p. 349.

'maintaining' a conformity between the state and the Sharia, so that Morocco 'remains' an Islamic state:[132]

> Our movement's view is that the efforts of reform have to build on two things: Supporting the principle of the Islamification of the state is premised on the fact it has a historical precedent, and is grounded constitutionally and it is a principle not open for compromise, as well as giving it its credibility in the public life, where it would be placed above all the articles of the constitution and it becomes a reference (or starting point) in the ruling on the constitutionality of laws and judgements that are produced by jurisprudence, juridical and executive bodies. The recognition of the Islamification of the state requires taking the Sharia as a source for all laws which, from a practical perspective, means abolishing all laws and policies which contradict the Sharia.

However, the MUR's conception of an Islamic state is premised not on a particular shape or structure, but drawing on the concept of the *maqāṣid*, on its ethics and ideas: "Islam is not a political regime- there is no model of an Islamic state, (…) the forms can vary, but the essential is the *maqāṣid*, the values."[133]

In the major shift of focus from an archetypical state to a state infused with 'Islamic' values, the MUR seems largely indebted to the Tunisian Islamist, Rashid Ghannoushi, who pioneered the concept of 'Islamic democracy' and advocated a focus on Islamic precepts rather than a specific model of Islamic governance.[134] The MUR thus proposes a model of an 'electoral caliphate'[135] as its ideal, although it does not call for an overthrow of the Moroccan monarchy to achieve this. It argues that the current political system is lacking in terms of Islamic values, which it measures based on the perceived distance from its understanding of the core texts: "we emphasise the Qur'an and Sunna as our point of departure, considering

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132 al-Tawhid wa'l-Iṣlāh, 1999. MUR blue introduction booklet (no publication information), p. 4 (my translation).

133 Yatim, Interview, 2009.

134 See: Tamimi, *Rachid Ghannouchi: A Democrat within Islamism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

135 Zeghal, *Les islamistes marocains*, p. 216.

them the highest source for legislation…"[136] This distance can be rectified through education and activism aimed at reasserting the Islamic voice in different fields:[137]

> This is a Muslim country, with Muslim law, Muslim constitution, *amīr al muʾminīn* – the risk of deviation or of an imperfect application doesn't mean we'll sacrifice the essential or the framework – we are not planning on getting rid of anything.

2.4.2 Towards an Indigenous Ideology

The intellectual distancing from the experience of the Arab East during the late 1970s and 1980s allowed the former Chabiba Islamiya members to assess their specificity as a Moroccan movement and in particular the nature of the state. By the late 1970s, a new school of thought was developing in the Arab Maghreb, critical of the Arab East and which drew on North African thinkers, including Khairuddin al-Tunisi, Mohamed Abduh, Abdelhamid Bin Badis, Mohamed al-Thaᶜālibī, al-Taher al-Haddad, Allal al-Fassi and others in view of forging an indigenously grounded perspective on the Islamic reformist issues. In Tunisia, Ghannoushi led the way in questioning the predominance of the 'Mashreqi' outlook, a perspective which would seep into Moroccan discourse. Former members of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (MB), such as Dr Fathi Osman, developed a critique of the movement and questioned the validity of the Egyptian MB ideology and methodology in an analysis which broadened to include other critical voices via *al-Muslim al-Muwasir* magazine, from Kuwait.

Subsequently, by the mid-80s, a new current emerged in the region, which Tamimi[138] refers to as a 'rationalist current', due to its desire to revive rationality, and which sought to resurrect the reformist tradition, drawing on Tahtawi, al-Afghani, Abduh, al Kawakibi, Qasim Amin, and others. By the late 1970s, Ghannoushi was moving from "a North African model of Arabism to a 'Mashreqi' form of Islamism and eventually to a

136 MUR blue introduction booklet, (no publication information), p. 4 (my translation).

137 Loudiyi, S., (MUR media representative), Interview by E. Francois. In person. Rabat, Morocco, 11/10/2009 & 20/10/2009.

138 Tamimi, A., *Rachid Ghannouchi: A Democrat Within Islamism* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2001).

specifically Tunisian, or 'Maghrabi', form of Islamism."[139] His ideas were to have a lasting influence in Morocco, where activists began to review their intellectual sourcing and reassess the nature of the Moroccan state. Indeed, according to senior MUR member Abdelrahim Chikhi, many Tunisians came to study in Morocco during the period of repression of the Islamic movement in Tunisia, including Ghannoushi himself: "The Tunisian experience had a big influence on Morocco."[140] Moukri Abou Zaid states that the activists observed other experiences of Islamic movements closely, especially in Tunisia:[141]

> We clearly saw what was happening to the East, in Tunisia, we were reading the experience of the Islamic movements everywhere in the world (…) I've read a lot on the experiments Indonesia, Malaysia, Iraq, Syria, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt – this continued to be my responsibility – to read their experiences and take inspiration from these lessons.

Ideologues of the MUR subsequently came to appropriate the ideas of 'Mashreqi' thinkers in a quest to elaborate a unique voice which reflected Moroccan culture and tradition. Amongst these, Al-Fassi was central partly because he, like the MUR, conceived of religion, not merely as an abstract affair, but rather as a "prescriptive religion, which offers clear rules to communicate with God and undertake one's devotions and regulates interaction between individuals within society."[142] Al-Fassi's thinking called for a "double submission of the Prince to the Sharīᶜah and to the community", a community which al-Fassi saw as invested with authority. Describing al-Fassi's political views, Belal states: "God is the source of sovereignty and the people His representatives on Earth."[143] These views and others like them were to be appropriated by the movement as a recently unearthed intellectual heritage, which lent weight to their convictions and rooted them in Moroccan history. The need to root their ideas within a Moroccan historical paradigm was particularly important in light of the King's gradual crackdown on foreign led groups and preachers who

139 Tamimi, A., *Rachid Ghannouchi*, p. 63.

140 Chikhi, Interview, 2009.

141 Abou Zaid, Interview, 2009

142 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*, p. 29.

143 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*, p. 106.

were portrayed as threatening Morocco's tradition of tolerance, from the late 1970s onwards and the narrowing of the religious field increasingly centred around formal institutions and figures from the 1990s.

2.4.3 From A Desire for Upheaval to the Primacy of Stability: The Gradual Shift to Critical Support

The MUR's conception of the monarchy is rooted in the ideological evolution of the movements which preceded it and from which many of its members are drawn.

As outlined in Chapter 1, the Chabiba's previous clash with the regime in the 1970's had proved costly for the movement. For those ex-members who in the 1980s went on to form the Jamaa Islamia, one of the first issues to be reassessed was the nature and legitimacy of the political system. The parallels between Ghannoushi's movement and the JI/MRR are striking. Like the Chabiba Islamiya in Morocco, Ghannoushi established a clandestine group, the Jamaa Islamia, in the 1970s, whose founding members were drawn from the Jamaa Tabligh,[144] and used a government-sponsored institution, the Qur'anic Preservation Society (QPS), as a platform to overcome the ban on Islamic organizations.[145] Tensions with the authorities and different sections of civil society led Ghannoushi to revisit the group's outlook and methodology and eventually, to advocate the specificity of Tunisian Islam based on the Mālikī school of jurisprudence, Ashaᶜriyya doctrine and Sunnī-Ṣūfism, a pattern very similar to the trajectory of the JI-MRR.

In 1996, when the Movement for Unicity and Reform (MUR) was born as a merger between the MRR and LIF, this allowed for a non-confrontational stance and a recognition of the monarchy to be incorporated into its official outlook.

The cumulative effect of historical conflict with the Moroccan monarchy, and lessons drawn from other Islamist movements internationally buttressed the shift to

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144 A *daᶜwa* missionary group.

145 Tamimi, *Rachid Ghannouchi*.

accommodation, rather than confrontation with the regime. To justify the shift, the movement appealed to the notion of 'stability', contrasted with some of the upheaval confrontation had led to elsewhere in the region:[146]

> We thought an Islamic movement can only prosper in a state of prosperity, it is a central aspect of our thinking, the idea of stability. Where there is a destabilization of the regime and confrontation of the Islamic movement and the state, it has never led to anything positive for the Islamic movements and the ends they were seeking to achieve.

Crucially, it also recognized the regime's claim to religious authenticity by acknowledging its Islamic nature. While this was a show of loyalty to the regime, it also carried with it the potentiality to implicitly hold up to the regime, the very values it claimed to uphold and thus introduce an implicit and non-confrontational critique of the state and even the monarchy.

This commitment to stability – or rather avoidance of confrontation with the regime – was to become an enduring feature and was enshrined in the MUR's official literature: "Our movement is a moderate movement which adheres to a peaceful *modus operandi* in its work and positions and rejects extremism and excommunication (*takfīr*)."[147] In fact, the emphasis on stability through a slow and gradual approach to reforming the state is a defining ideological trait in the MUR, alongside its commitment to the Islamicization of society at all levels through education and raising Islamic awareness:[148]

> The movement relies principally on the preparation and rehabilitation of the individual so that he becomes righteous[149] and reformist in his surroundings and environment, the movement also adheres to the methodology of gradual progression and wisdom and good sermon and peaceful defending[150] and positive participation and cooperation to do good with other individuals and organizations.

In this new perspective, religious morality was recast as a means of purging individuals from corruption both in a religious sense, but also in a more worldly sense of

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146 Yatim, Interview, 2009.

147 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*.

148 Hamdaoui, Interview, 2010.

149 Righteous in the active sense i.e. fixes things.

150 'Pushing back'.

someone whose behaviour might be detrimental to the broader stability and welfare of the country. In this new conception, Islam becomes a tool for the purging of negative impulses in the individual, in the traditional sense of religious practise, but also of purging society of any threat to its welfare, of which stability is conceived as a core component. Working towards the enhancement of the nation is infused with a cosmic value, one which both sacralises a form of loyalty to the state, but also forges a broad reference point – Islam – as the basis for evaluating the state of the nation.

2.4.4 The Democratic Shift

One of the central ideological re-assessments by MUR ideologues was an acceptance of democracy. This was upheld not just as a political principle, but also as an internal principle of organization in order to manage the group's diversity, but with the caveat of a consultative (*shūrī*) democracy that operates according to the Qur'an and the Sunna.

Youssef Belal notes that following the trauma of the Chabiba Islamia, the men aimed to forge an entirely new movement based on four principles: "collective leadership instead of a single figurehead, public activism rather than clandestine activity, political action within the existing institutions and allegiance to the monarchy instead of a recourse to violence."[151] Gradually, they integrated a view, theologically bolstered by Raissouni,[152] that democracy at a political level,[153] is a set of principles and mechanisms for allowing people to manage their affairs, which does not inherently contain a cultural or religious expression, but can convey such expressions, if it is willed by a majority of the people.[154] As such, Raissouni was countering claims, made by some scholars, that democracy was inherently un-Islamic and should thus be rejected. What is more, Raissouni has argued for democracy 'without limits'

151 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*, p. 55.

152 Though Raissouni only joined forces with the men officially in 1996, with the union to form the MUR, the men were aware of his writings and perspective on issues prior to this time and respected them.

153 As opposed to the internal management of the movement.

154 He elaborated his view on this in his book *al-fiqh al-Maqāṣidi*, p. 134 (publication details no longer available).

on the basis that democracy reflects the dominant values of a given society. If the outcome of democracy is un-Islamic, he suggests this is evidence of the failure to adequately educate people about the religion and must be "remedied through preaching and education,"[155] a shift from the conception of bounded democracy more common among Islamist thinkers.

2.4.5 New Visions of Monarchy: Seeing the King as 'Commander of the Believers'

While other Salafī reformist movements have been critical of hereditary rule, the MUR has accepted the religious and historical legitimacy of monarchy. However, this acceptance has importantly been made with reference to the King as *amīr al-muʾminīn,* the 'Commander of the Believers' and therefore as a symbol of Islamic continuity and guarantor of the religious basis of the state. This should not be confused with wholesale acceptance or support for the monarchy in its current form.

The movement's acceptance of the King's legitimacy was indebted to Abdelillah Benkirane, the founder of the Jamaa Islamia. Alongside Benkirane, other former Chabiba ideologues in the MUR had concluded that their political vision should be based on respecting the supreme role of the King and seeking instead to reform the system from within, "…how to maintain what is good and recognise it, and look for ways to change what is bad. Accept the precepts of the political game and look for political participation."[156] Gradually, the men came to consider the monarchy's religious nature to be advantageous and accepted its legitimacy in a public declaration in 1982.

However, it was the unique historical trajectory and nature of the Moroccan ᶜAlawī throne, steeped in Islamic heritage, that afforded the MUR ideologues with an advantage other Islamic movements were struggling to find: "We already consider the Moroccan state to be Islamic, there is no need to 'recreate' this – since Moulay Idriss, we have Islamic

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155 A. Raissouni and F. Ansari, Al-Ḥaraka al-Islamiyya (the Islamic movement), p. 55; Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*.

156 Talidi, Interview, 2009.

dynasties. Within this framework, we can enhance and improve."[157] Within an international movement dedicated to 'resurrecting' the Islamic state, or the caliphate, the Moroccan activists recast the regime as a faulted incarnation of that ideal, rather than a '*jāhilī*' or un-Islamic adversary. It merely required reform from within, rather than revolution or confrontation.

Causes for the MUR's acceptance of the monarchy have been premised as being essentially pragmatic. Youssef Belal argues that adherence to the monarchical system by the MUR is "as for a good part of the political elite, an act of reason".[158] He asserts that having spent time in detention and prison, and studied the lessons from the 'rules of the Moroccan political game', the ideologues concluded that they could best ensure the primacy of religion in the public sphere by presenting themselves as allies to the King.

The MUR itself however points to an inherent theological re-assessment that was critically fostered by the specifically Moroccan ideology then growing within the movement. Crucially therein, it locates Moroccan history as having a distinctly historical trajectory from the broader Islamic world, especially due to the fact Morocco was for long periods of medieval history never part of any greater 'Caliphate'.

MUR ideologue Mohamed Yatim describes this acceptance therefore as having roots in the group's theological reassessment of Moroccan history:[159]

> we began to make our own analysis of the political Moroccan reality, to create distance from the Islamic experiences of the Orient. The big question which was pre-occupying the movements of the East was the Khilāfa Islāmiyya, the Islamic state, we–with some theoretical step back–noticed that Morocco was never part of the Khilāfa Islāmiyya, the Abbasid, Umayyad, or Ottoman, Morocco was always an independent Islamic state.

Furthermore, this history of the current Moroccan monarchy as being rooted as far back into the 15th century (and thus initially legitimized by medieval notions of Islamic Kingship) became a major avenue for religiously accepting the monarchy. The MUR was

157 Hamdaoui, Interview, 2009.

158 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*, p. 209.

159 Yatim, Interview, 2009.

thus able to argue the Moroccan monarchy has always been distinctly 'Islamic'. Yatim adds:[160]

> The other thing is, there was continuity from Moulay Idriss 1st, throughout all the dynasties, which followed the Idrīssid dynasty. Even during the French occupation, the Islamic state never stopped, the Protectorate was not colonization from the judicial point of view, the Sultan still existed, the decrees, even if there was the *Muqim Am*,[161] even if they signed things, they had to get Mohamed V to sign the decrees. From a theoretical perspective, and from a symbolic perspective, there was a continuity of the Islamic state.

By defining the regime as 'Islamic' in origin and tracing historical examples of leaders and religious figures who have sought to reaffirm that religious identity, the MUR presents itself as part of an authentic Moroccan lineage which lays claim to defining the 'real' nature of modern Moroccan identity: "Morocco is a Muslim country in terms of its state and people: this settled truth is in the opinion of the movement confirmed by history and fact…"[162] This reading also means it can also accuse its detractors, as it does, of subverting Morocco's heritage and of being at odds with the ultimate source of authority within the Kingdom, the King himself. However, the MUR's attempt to ground its identity within a national tradition and namely that of the ᶜAlawī dynasty has been questioned by Ahmed Charaani who describes the reading as skewed and historically inaccurate.[163]

The important caveat to the MUR's acceptance of the religious legitimacy of the King is that this acceptance is conditional upon the MUR's own conception of 'Islamic kingship'. Like the Left before it and thinkers from the independence period such as Allal al Fassi, the MUR considers the relationship between the king and the people to be a contract, premised on rights and responsibilities for both parties and codified through the process of the *bayᶜah* ('allegiance') and popular suffrage. However, this also suggests if the king fails

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160 Yatim, Interview, 2009.

161 Representative of the French head of state in Morocco

162 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*.

163 "It is a manipulation of the word 'salafism' by the MUR for the group to claim that all past Moroccan rulers were 'salafist' and that the MUR itself also being 'salafist' is connected to a long national tradition." Chaarani, A., *La mouvance Islamiste au Maroc* ,p. 378.

in his responsibilities, he can be replaced, a principle for which there are historical precedents in Moroccan history.[164]

The MUR's particular conception of the *amīr al-muʾminin* however is contested by the King and the religious authorities within his control who assert that once allegiance has been given, it becomes irrevocable.[165] MUR ideologue Ahmed Raissouni previously courted controversy by questioning the need for the *baʾyah* to be reiterated if it was 'valid, serious and sincere' to begin with.[166] In 1985, as part of the 10th anniversary of the national Green March to claim the Western Sahara,[167] the minister for Islamic affairs organized a conference which brought together experts to discuss the theme of the caliphate, captured in three tomes, *al-bayʾah wa'l-khilāfa*, in which the obedience of the subjects to the authority of the king is laid out and disobedience is equated, through a recourse to religious argumentation, to a rebellion against God and His Prophet: "The theory of the caliphate is a justification, in terms of Muslim public law, of the power of the king."[168] The movement and the monarchy are thus at odds on the issue of the foundation of allegiance to the monarchy, despite the movement's commitment to the concept of *amīr al-muʾminīn*.

Accepting the religious legitimacy of the monarchy came with concrete benefits for the MUR. Through the trust established, it could begin to work openly, in communication with the authorities and avoid the harassment reserved for underground opposition movements. Conforming to the demands of the authorities would, Belal[169] speculates, also offer a degree of immunity from punishment. And in turn, the authorities could be seen to

164 At the turn of the 20th C, Moulay Abdelaziz was deposed for being unable to defend the territory from external aggression.

165 See the statement by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, in: Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*.

166 "Ahmed Raïssouni s'est demandé quelle serait « la nécessité de renouveler chaque année l'allégeance au roi Mohamed VI, si l'allégeance reçue en 1999 était toujours valable, sérieuse et sincere."(2012) Nouvelle polémique entre Toufiq et Raïssouni autour des rituels d'allégeance, à la veille de la Fête du Trône. Article 19

167 The 1975 national demonstration to reclaim the Western Sahara from then Spanish control.

168 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*, p. 274.

169 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*.

have an Islamic interlocutor through whom they recognized the 'Islamic awakening' and could be seen to be taking it into consideration. Indeed, by the mid-1980s Islamic movements had replaced Leftists on Moroccan campuses as the voice of opposition. Meanwhile, Islamic movements across the Middle East and North Africa were to become increasingly potent vehicles for opposition, emboldened by the Iranian revolution. To counter the political threat posed by the Left, the regime encouraged and supported aspects of the Islamic trend. As the political threat shifted from the Left to Islamists, the regime incorporated elements of the opposition, as it had traditionally done with other oppositional forces including Leftists and Nationalists previously, increasing the religious symbolism surrounding the monarchy and hosting an annual congress from the 1990s on the Islamic Awakening, to which leading figures from Islamic movements were invited, including Turkish leader Najemeddine Erbakan, the daughter of Iranian politician Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and others.[170] Bayat notes that in Egypt, "…Islamist mobilization conditioned the state to take account of the society's religious mode,"[171] a process which appears to describe the Moroccan case equally accurately.

Commitment to the monarchy however led to inevitable internal tension between democratic ideals and that of the hereditary ruler. While the movement expresses a commitment to democracy, it also accepts a higher authority, in the figure of the king, whose power it chooses not to challenge. Although this is not unusual in the Moroccan context, with all formal political actors required to recognise the supremacy of the king, it still represents an unusual conception of democracy in which a higher authority than popular suffrage, is accepted. In this, it diverges from its main organizational Islamist rival in

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170 Le congrès de la "Sahwa Islamia" se déroulera, à Rabat, du 29 au 30 octobre 1998. Nombre de figures Islamistes et laïques sont attendues au Maroc: le leader Islamiste du Rifaâ turc Najemeddine Erbakan, la fille de Rafsandjani, ainsi que nombre de personnalités chiites libanaises et syriennes.Chankou, A., "FIL DIRECT", *Maroc Hebdo* (1998).

171 Bayat, *Making Islam Democratic*, p. 173.

Morocco, al-ᶜAdl wa'l-Iḥsān, which despite more recent overtures towards the regime,[172] has remained critical of the sacred position of 'king' and favours a Republic. And unlike other actors who merely pay lip service to the status quo, the MUR is committed to maintaining the institution of the king, as *amīr al-muᵓminīn*, and his prerogatives in the management of the affairs of the Kingdom. This is due to the movement considering the sacred dimension of the king's identity, a safeguard against the emergence of proposals which might run counter to Islamic precepts. In effect, the king acts to bound democracy according to Islamic ideals, without the inevitable external and domestic criticism which would emerge were those boundaries to be placed by the movement itself. This allows the movement to seemingly support full democracy, while maintaining a commitment to the king which both avoids a semblance of confrontation with the regime and also enables the movement to seek to moderate the boundaries of democracy in the kingdom according to Islamic principles, that the King is duty bound to uphold.

From 1996 onwards, the official stance within the MUR was and remains that Morocco is a "Muslim country in terms of its state and its people",[173] regardless of what it terms 'laxity' in people's practise of the religion, or prior foreign occupation. Central to this vision is the King as *amīr al-muᵓminīn*, which the MUR considers a pillar of the Moroccan state and a "guarantee of its preservation and continuity".[174]

2.4.6 A Change in Strategy: The Move from State to Society

This critical acceptance of the monarchy and reimagining of the idealized Islamic Kingship came with a shift in strategy from an underground revolutionary group, itself

172 "The former American ambassador in Rabat, Thomas Riley, will be reassured following his 2008 meeting with Fathallah Arsalane, the spokesperson for al Adl, who clearly stated, as recounted in a diplomatic memo revealed by Wikileaks, that the group is "not against the monarchy (…) and that its primary objective is the country's stability." That is decisive. Even if the group recognises the king's legitimacy as head of the state, it contests its authority as leader of the believers" Michbal, M., 'Enquête. à quoi joue Al Adl ?' (*Tel Quel*, 2009).

173 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruᵓya al-siyāsiyya*.

174 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruᵓya al-siyāsiyya*.

merged with a largely quietist cultural network (the LIF), to a call to reform society, starting with the individual and the use of individual activists as 'discreet' agents of change. Such a strategy would avoid direct conflict with the regime, as well as allow for gradual change in every sphere of society.

When the MRR transformed its assessment of the state's legitimacy from the 1980s, this was accompanied by a shift in the movement's strategy, away from its formerly underground culture: [175]

> …we can no longer work secretly, as we are not enemies of the regime, we want to work legitimately, in the framework of the constitution and regulations in place, it doesn't mean the constitutional status of regulation is perfect, but you must struggle to change it, gradually. But the basis of it must be education, *da*ᶜ*wa* (and) social action.

Adopting the legal route by applying for a legal permit and integrating critiques of their previous strategy, the MRR asserted the necessity of approaching the question of renewal more holistically. Most importantly, the state became only one of a number of the possible avenues for change:[176]

> Our objective is the resurrection of religion, whereas for others it is the resurrection of the Islamic state. I'm not saying that the objective of resurrecting an Islamic state has no value, but our renewal is focused on knowledge and understanding of the *dīn*.

Although this is presented by the movement as an ideological shift, the unification of the movements in 1996 brought together a politically driven organization (MRR) with a network of social and cultural associations (LIF) – the merger meant affording equal importance to all parties and the ease with which local Islamic apolitical groups could be set-up and legally registered was testimony to the efficiency of non-political avenues for affecting Islamization,[177] particularly in light of both group's failure to establish a political party.

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175 Yatim, Interview, 2009.

176 Hamdaoui, Interview, 2009.

177 'Islamization' is understood here inline with the movement's conception of the term, namely raising religious consciousness among citizens and creating greater conformity between the MUR's interpretation of Islamic precepts and people's behaviour.

Basing themselves on the assumption of continuity of the ᶜAlawī dynasty and thus of the Islamic state, the ideologues of the MUR began to consider alternative strategies to revolution, to deepen the religious values they wished to see manifest:[178]

> the Islamic movement in the Orient claims it wants to institute an Islamic state, but it is here - now- we just need to give it content, we need action, social action, cultural, education, you need a *daᶜwa* action to renew the precepts of Islam, the basis, the ethics of Islam in individual practise and in collective practice. This transformation on the intellectual front meant we moved from seeing ourselves as revolutionaries to reformists.

From the late 1970s and early 1980s, a movement of self-criticism within Islamic groups worldwide proposed alternative means of affecting the overarching objective of 'Islamification'. Magazines and other publications[179] served as a shared space for dialogue on what lessons should be learned and violent change was largely rejected:[180]

> There was a literature which emerged from the crises of the Islamic movement in the Arab East (…) a whole literature of rethinking strategy, the theory of Islamic movement, whilst taking into account the failures and dramas due to confrontations with the regime. As we had a certain distance from the Orient, we weren't living these things - when you are a victim of torture, it is hard to be self-critical- we noticed a need for a change in strategies, in the methodology of the Islamic movement.

In addition, the ideologues began to heed lessons from the experience of opposition movements in Morocco, namely the Left, which had itself been through a period of confrontation with the regime. "Add to this the Moroccan political and social context, what happened in Iraq, Egypt, Syria, never occurred here, even if there were confrontations with the opposition, there was a margin of freedom, the state was a guarantor of the Sharia and Islamic state."[181] The ideologues concluded there was a lesson to be learned in terms of the most effective strategy for change.

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178 Yatim, Interview, 2009.

179 "We learnt from the critics others were making of Islamist movements: Khals Jellabi, Nafassi, the publication "Ummah" (from Qatar) on "āyn āl Khalal" ("where is the dysfunctioning') – these were auto-critiques by other Islamists" Baha, Interviw, 2009.

180 Yatim, Interview, 2009.

181 Yatim, Interview, 2009.

In neighbouring Tunisia in the early 1980s, Ghannoushi had begun discussions with the Left, which led him to question areas in which he felt Mashreqi thought had fallen short. This led him to a "process of revision and criticism of the intellectual models they imported from Pakistan and Egypt, those models which saw only a single dimension of the conflict, the ideological one"[182] and he began to merge Leftist and democratic thought with an Islamic framework. His thinking and actions were closely observed by Moroccan Islamists[183] who began their own reassessment of the Left, shifting their position from opponents to potential partners in areas of shared concern. Having accepted the legitimacy of the political framework, the ideologues gradually defined their stance towards the regime, political parties, and towards other Islamic actors as they established the 'new line',[184] based on the need to forge relationships with civil society in order to address aspects of life deemed negative, and cooperate to further good (*khayr*). The group bases this cooperation on a saying drawn from the Qur'an to '*enjoin the good and forbid evil*'[185] which it extends to different sections of society according to a hierarchy:[186]

> The first group we will cooperate with are those doing *da*ᶜ*wa* who are outside of the movement because of the union of the call makes the things that we agree on more diverse and after this comes the rest of the Muslims and then non-Muslims.

The shift in strategy towards gradual reform and cooperation was further confirmed by the Iranian revolution of 1979, in which a popular uprising led to the establishment of the Islamic Republic, reinforcing the primacy of the broader population in effecting change: "We had no relations with Iran but of course we saw the Iranian revolution as very positive and Khomeini is a leader who fascinated the entire Moroccan population through his audacity."[187] The activists noted that the Iranian revolution represented an alternative

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182 Tamimi, *Rachid Ghannouchi* , p. 52.

183 According to Chirhi, Interview, 2009.

184 '*al-khaṭṭ al-jadīd*'.

185 *al-amr bi'l-ma*ᶜ*ruf wa'l-nahy* ᶜ*an al-munkar*.

186 Ḥarakat, *al-Mīthāq*.

187 Abou Zaid, Interview, 2009.

scenario, in which a popular grass roots movement comprising cross-societal alliances,[188] wrought change: "The Iranian case appeared, it was another context, it was complete tyranny, it was a popular movement of the masses, the middle classes were for the revolution, they backed it, they identified with the ideology."[189]

Initially, the shift in strategy involved founding legally recognized institutions and ideals in parallel to society. From the early 1980s however, the strategy focused on creating alternative organizations within society, which could gradually entice more and more people into the movement:[190]

> In the first period, we sought change through overthrow – in the second – we wanted to create alternative associations which could integrate society. Islamicization was our objective in both cases, but the first was through imposition and authority, the second was by advocating an alternative model for society." The movement[191] defined its strategy as establishing an Islamic sub-community, which could propagate its ideals: "We no longer sought regime overthrow but rather to work within society, as an alternative organization. We wanted to create a group which could grow and put in place the desired references to Islam.

These re-assessments, in conjunction with pressure from the authorities, led to a renewed interest in the original[192] Muslim Brotherhood's message of grassroots, societal renewal through social activism and *da^{c}wa*, over a singular focus on political power.

However, despite the group's shift was likely not solely ideological motivated.

Asef Bayat notes in an instructive parallel how the Muslim Brotherhood's array of organizations represented a shield against a crackdown by the authorities.[193] The presence of the Brotherhood in so many different sectors of society ensured its longevity even during

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188 Though these alliances were to be severely tested in the post-revolutionary context, where competing visions of Iran were swept aside in favour of Khomeini's project.

189 Yatim, Interview, 2009.

190 Baha, Interview, 2009.

191 The JI/MRR branch of the MUR specifically.

192 Indebted to the ideas of Hasan al-Banna. Wiktorowicz defines as "to facilitate a more Muslim society through grassroots programs in education, charity, and social activities". Wiktorowicz, *The management of Islamic activism*.

193 Bayat, *Making Islam Democratic*.

periods of government repression.[194] Like in Egypt, in order to ensure the movement's longevity, the MUR's distinction of its social and cultural activities from any political ambitions made it less likely that a political crackdown could mark the end of the group's activism. In Morocco, as elsewhere in the Arab world, the regime tolerated social and cultural Islamic movements long before it accepted their entry into the political field. For the MUR, this meant gradually distinguishing its work from political activism through a process of specialization officialised in 2006, as discussed further in Chapter 3. While it is dedicated solely to educational and social objectives, policy issues are left to the organizationally distinct PJD.[195]

Negotiations between the LIF and MRR in the mid-1990s, in view of creating the MUR, led to a final significant shift in outlook as concerned the movement's relationship to society and its methodology. The LIF under Ahmed Raissouni saw its duty as educating an elite in Islamic sciences, who could then channel those values into different spheres. Raissouni's perspective influenced the direction of the movement a final time, when following the merger, the MRR renounced efforts to foster alternative institutions and established its methodology as promoting a set of ethics and ideals within existing institutions and organizations:[196]

> 1996 was a new phase: we no longer sought an alternative society but rather to work *within* society. The difference is in the alternative route, we bring individuals into our group. But in this new phase, we seek to work within society, not on its margins. We are no longer an alternative.

Invigorated by Raissouni's ideological grounding for their outlook, the newly established MUR advocated a resurrection of the early Muslim Brotherhood's focus on '*da^{c}wa*', understood as prioritizing education and self-discipline, alongside social action, as the more effective route for Islamic revival. This led the movement to outline a detailed

194 Bayat, *Making Islam Democratic*.

195 Through the Egyptian MB's choice to create a separate political party may symbolize a shift toward this strategy.

196 Baha,Interview, 2009.

understanding of the new *modus operandi* in its literature, in particular in the '*daᶜwa* vision'[197] pamphlet, in order to ease the shift[198] in focus for its members. The emphasis on *daᶜwa* and education was further deepened by the decision to devolve responsibility to NGOs in all areas outside of these in 2006, the move towards 'specializations', in order to maintain the movement's focus.[199]

2.5 *Daᶜwa* - The Core of Islamic Renewal.

Daᶜwa can be defined as a mission to educate and proselytise the religion of Islam. For the MUR, its missionary activity means inculcating a complete Islamic ethos at several levels, from individual MUR members or sympathisers, through to society and the state at large. Through daᶜwa therefore, and the education this entails, an individual is 'thoroughly Islamised', and through the 'islamization' of individuals, organs of society and state are similarly imbued with a 'correct' notion of praxis.

Since 2006, the MUR has established predication (*daᶜwa*), education (*tarbiyya*) and training (*takwīn*) as its priorities. It views its current role as fostering the conditions necessary for religiosity to develop and nurturing its brand of religiosity in individuals who can insure it then trickles down into all spheres of life: "we relativized the political side and political action within the broader action needed for an Islamic renaissance, it is essentially an intellectual, cultural, values renaissance, in the daily practises of the Muslims."[200] Unlike rival group al-ᶜAdl wa'l-Iḥsān, for whom *daᶜwa* represents an attempt to integrate new members into the organization by providing social support to impoverished members of the local community in different areas, the MUR's *daᶜwa* takes the form of an educational

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197 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-daᶜwiyya*.

198 More so from the MRR branch who'd been focused on political activism – the members of the LIF has already subscribed to this perspective.

199 Although pressure on the PJD, in the aftermath of the Casablanca bombings, to distinguish itself from the religious movement was also certainly a contributing factor.

200 Yatim, Interview, 2009.

program which members and/or sympathisers[201] integrate through a four year course, during which they are taught the MUR's priorities in Islam. The informality of the study circles means non-members can and do also participate. *Daᶜwa* for the MUR can thus be dubbed a re-orientation towards activism, whereby religiosity is linked to action in the way of the group. This was expressed by MUR educator, Mohamed Buluz, who explained the MUR's strategy in teaching as finding textual evidence and examples to support its particular vision: "We have ideas and then we look in the Qu'ran and Sunna for things referring to this, and also in the life of the Prophet."[202]

2.5.1 The Centrality of daᶜwa to the MUR as an Organization.

The term *daᶜwa* is deeply rooted in Muslim history. According to Canard, it has as its primary meaning the idea of "call" or "invitation".[203] The Qur'an regularly uses the term to denote the 'mission' of the Abrahamic prophets. In early Muslim history, the 'mission' of the Prophet Muḥammad was therefore cast in literature as the archetypical *daᶜwa,* an invitation to recognize the monotheistic precepts of Islam, but also the authority therein of the Prophet and his successors. From the 8th century onwards, various Muslim movements led *daᶜwa*s (often led by *dāᶜī*s*,* i.e. 'missionaries') to call for political and social reform, including the *daᶜwa* that led to the Abbasid revolution in the 750's, the *daᶜwa* that led to the Fatimid revolution in 909, and others thereafter. By the late-medieval and modern period however, the term *daᶜwa* was seemingly restricted to denote 'proselytism' or 'missionary activity'. Modern Islamist movements resurrected the idea of *daᶜwa* especially in the broad sense of 'proselytizing', understood as a call aimed at 'nominal' or 'non-reformist' Muslims to join in the mission of reforming and reviving the 'true religion'. According to Haddad,

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201 The movement is not membership driven.

202 Buluz, Interview, 2009.

203 Canard, "Daᶜwa" art. in *EI2*.

"the revivalist vision of the world calls on every Muslim to be a *dāʾiya*, someone who summons others to Islam."[204]

For the MUR, the starting point of the resurrection of religion is *daʿwa*. Like other Islamist movements, the MUR conceives of Islam as a holistic way of life and *daʿwa* is viewed as the most effective tool for its mandatory propagation at the individual, social, and state level in view of an Islamic renaissance: "*Daʿwa* is a religious obligation and prescribed according to Islamic law."[205] By *daʿwa* it means establishing religiosity at a personal level in people's lives, then within the family, then society and finally the state. The MUR considers the *daʿwa* to be the "first fundamental pillar necessary for the establishment of the (Islamic) message…"[206] For the MUR, *daʿwa* begins with the formation of '*risāliyya*' individuals, a word coined by the MUR to refer to people who 'convey the message' of Islam. In its Charter, the group refers to eleven defining principles at the core of the '*risāliyya*' message it seeks to convey. This critically includes *daʿwa*, a concept it describes as a '*jihād*', a mandatory struggle, and an obligation upon not just individuals, but also on different institutions and the state itself.

The theological imprint justifying the role of *daʿwa* in the MUR's outlook was provided most emphatically by Ahmad Raissouni. Again basing his arguments on that of the 14th century al-Shāṭibī, Raissouni advocated that the movement's priority ought to be 'bringing forth the interests of society' (*jalb al-maṣāliḥ*) and combatting corruption. Within this, the interests of preserving and establishing religion were deemed primary, and political and social activism could act as a bolster to support religion and spread religious values in society. While many in the movement had previously inclined to this prioritization, Raissouni's scholarly grounding offered the theological legitimacy required to achieve widespread consensus on this order of priorities.

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204 Haddad, "The Revivalist Literature and the Literature On Revival", p. 15.

205 Al-Iṣlāḥ, 2003.

206 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-daʿwiyya*.

The MUR's antecedents emerged due to a belief in the inadequacy of religious provisions in the kingdom and a belief, in some cases, that an Islamic revolution was required to institute a truly Islamic system. While the MUR does not subscribe to a revolutionary outlook, nor does it dismiss the monarchy's religious capital, the emphasis on *daᶜwa* represents a subtle critique of current religious provisions and institutionalized religious authority. According to Euben and Zaman, this is a defining feature of Islamist organizations: "Islamist political commitments are often intertwined with critiques of the scholarly tradition and its attendant institutions and practices..."[207] Since these provisions are deemed inadequate, the MUR views it as the movement's responsibility to provide these services and claims that following the death of Prophet Muḥammad, the responsibility for *daᶜwa* fell upon Muslims as a whole and has become an 'obligation': "…the trusteeship of *daᶜwa* passed in its entirety to the Muslim ummah, to the ordinary people and the elites."[208] Through this argumentation, it avoids confrontation with the regime by basing its legitimacy in undertaking *daᶜwa*, in effect a parallel religious education, on the very same body of ideals, 'Islam', which the king relies on for his own legitimacy.

Thus while the task of educating people about Islam may have once been the purview of scholars and preachers, the MUR claims the task has become a requirement upon everyone given the danger of the instrumentalization of religion in proximity to power: "*Daᶜwa* is not restricted to some individuals or groups, it is a responsibility upon everybody…"[209]

The call for a universal dedication to *daᶜwa* reflects a distrust of institutionalized religious authority, common to Salafiyya reformist movements. In Egypt, it was a distrust of al-Azhar through its relationship to the authorities which led al-Afghani to begin his sermons between the street and the mosque. Similarly, al-Banna considered institutionalized religion

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207 Euben and Zaman, *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought*, p. 13.

208Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-daᶜwiyya*.

209 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-daᶜwiyya*, p. 17.

subservient to the interests of the regime, requiring a level of independence offered only by those who maintained a distance from the authorities. In Morocco, this co-option of the *ᶜulamāᵓ* by the state escalated following independence, when their religious authority was institutionalized through their incorporation into the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Habous, at the head of which is the King himself, and the sole legitimate source of religious edicts.[210]

For the MUR, the institutionalization of religious authority has led to its uncritical affirmation of political decisions. In an interview published on the MB's English website, MUR ideologue Raissouni offered his appraisal of the state of scholars in Morocco:[211]

> there are many religious scholars, and the institutions spawning the religious scholars are still working; however, they have been side-lined and their roles have been minimized since independence(…) there has been a policy that deliberately shut down and gradually paralysed these institutions (…) all the country's public policy makers, since independence, are involved in making this state.

The MUR therefore considers an alternative religious voice, one not subservient to ruling interests, to be necessary to spread a 'correct' understanding of the religion, a voice that can crucially spread most effectively by *daᶜwa*.

In its literature, the MUR spells out what the concrete manifestation of *daᶜwa* looks like. At a societal level, *daᶜwa* involves fighting poverty, family breakdowns and lack of education, all of which the MUR deems leaves people open to sin. This also helps it counter the influence of NGOs with a 'non-Islamic' agenda, through grass-roots community work (counselling, social work, literacy programs, etc.). This is based on the understanding that the Sharia directs Muslims to work for the 'public interest' (*maṣlaḥa*) and therefore requires the movement to provide the basic necessities (*ḥāja taḥsīniyya*), which if people are deprived

210 fatwa.

211 Sarat, "Raissouni: Religious Scholars".

thereof, can lead them to neglect religious obligations.[212] The movement also views such work as an investment in individuals who may then go on and work to further its interests.[213]

At a cultural level, *da^{c}wa* means using the media to propagate the movement's message and the MUR has called for religious programming to be played on the Moroccan Television channel 2M, as well as an increase in Arabic and Berber press which it argues are overshadowed by French language media.[214] The MUR produces its own media output to effect change, publishing the daily newspaper *Attajdid* with a 10,000 print-run. [215] The MUR further published a trimestrial magazine *al-Furqān*, aimed at an intellectual audience.[216] It also has an online presence, and according to former editor Mustafa Khalfi, the MUR website received around 10,000-15,000 hits a month in 2010.[217]

2.5.2 Demarcating boundaries between da^{c}wa and politics

The shift of strategy by the MUR to focus primarily on *da^{c}wa* and education was most emphatically highlighted with the formation of an organizationally independent political party, the Party of Justice and Development (PJD).

The creation of the PJD entrenched a division between strands of the MUR that still favoured political activity and those who held predication and education needed be a priority. Those who conceived of the necessity of focusing on the political route entered the

212 Ḥarakat, *^{c}Ashara sanawāt*.

213 Ḥarakat, *^{c}Ashara sanawāt*.

214 Chaarani, *La mouvance Islamiste au Maroc*, p. 181.

215 *Attajdīd* was formed after the union of the MRR and the LIF by fusing papers from both movements ('As-Sahwa' of the LIF and 'al-Rāya' of the MRR). The MRR's 'al-Rāya' ('the flag') was launched in 1990 as a bi-monthly (8,000 print-run) and subsequently weekly publication in 1995, with a print run of approximately 10 000. The first issue of Al-Rāya was on the religious foundation of *ḥijāb*. It replaced a previous publication, "Al-Islah".

216 Headed by former Leftist intellectual, Mohamed Talabi. "The editorial line aims to contribute to national dialogue on issues of concern from an Islamic activist perspective, as well as, according to the MUR's media representative, "lift the intellectual debate, widen the dialogue in the nation and contribute to rationalize and moderate the discourse of the Islamists" Loudiyi, Interview, 2009.

217 Khalfi, Interview, 2010.

political foray, including many of the MUR's leading figures,[218] whilst those who remained in the MUR became increasingly critical of the focus on political activism as the movement's main emphasis. Some also began to denounce the PJD's pragmatism and muted successes. Indeed, some members have suggested that whilst the PJD began as a political party whose objective had been subservient to the broader MUR objective of spreading the Islamic ethos, others such as Benkirane, have been viewed as accepting the parameters of the political game too wholeheartedly and kowtowing too readily to royal pressure.[219]

For some within the MUR, the inherent limitations of the political arena in which power remains largely vested in the figure of the King, represents a potential trap for the movement which could see its efforts undermined, like previous opposition movements before it (namely the Left). This has reinforced the argument in the eyes of many remaining MUR activists that *daᶜwa* and education must remain its strict priority and that political activism is not an end in itself.

This perspective within the MUR was most explicitly expressed by a former senior member of the MUR Farid al-Ansari (a religious scholar, former head of the MUR's student wing and member of the council of *ᶜulamāᵓ* of Meknes), who authored a booklet arguing that political matters are secondary to religious matters. Ansari stated that the energy of the Islamic movement should be focused on religious education and its transformative potential, rather than politics: "…the choice of making politics a priority is an error… The Islamic action of renewal (*tajdīd*) is an act for religion, before it is an action for the state, and a

218 Abdelillah Benkirane, Saaedine al Othmani, Mustafa Ramid, Abdullah Baha, Soumaya Ben Khaldoun

219 At a MUR conference in Kenitra in 2012, MUR president Mohamed Hamdaoui criticized the PJD's weakness and inaction, telling the party it ought to have "refrained from participating if you realized the limitations of your participation." Panoramaroc. (2012, 04 27). "Le président du MUR attaque les ministres PJD, qu'il accuse de céder aux lobbies", *www. panoramaroc.ma*, October 10th 2012: http://www.panoramaroc.ma/fr/le-president-du-mur-attaque-les-ministres-pjd-quil-accuse-de-ceder-aux-lobbies/

request for the Qur'an, not for power…"[220] Yousef Belal notes that Ansari preferred "religious influence" to political action "in order to protect the da'wa from politicization,"[221] judging the importance of politics to be secondary to *daᶜwa* and educating people about the Islamic religion: "*Daᶜwa* will allow for the forging of a society marked by religiosity (*mutadayyin*)."[222]

In a 2006 interview with the Muslim Brotherhood's English website, MUR ideologue Ahmed Raissouni reflected this absolute emphasis on predication and education. He declared that "Frankly speaking, the experiment of the Islamists is not, in most cases, completely good."[223]

Other members of the MUR like Khadija Moufid, who was also a PJD MP, argue that the distinction between the political and predication spheres is vital to ensure that any failure of the political project is not perceived as the failure of Islam and that the MUR must uphold its function as forging God-conscious trustworthy individuals. Whilst members of the MUR tend to agree on a distinction between political and religious/educational action[224] in practise,[225] the divergences occur on the issue of the priority of any given type of action and on the *modus operandi*. This particular division was one that Abdessalam Yassine had also implemented in his group, officially stating in his last public appearance in 2000, that "our political program is education, education, education."[226] But unlike al-ᶜAdl wa'l-Iḥsān, in which the group's political project is profoundly intertwined with the mystical authority of

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220 Belal, in his, *Le cheikh et le calife* at p. 165 cites al-Ansari, Farid, "*al-Bayān al-daᶜawī wa'l-tadakhkhum al-siyāsī*".

221 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*.

222 Belal, in his, *Le cheikh et le calife* at p. 165 cites al-Ansari, Farid, "*al-Bayān al-daᶜawī wa'l-tadakhkhum al-siyāsī*".

223 Sarat, "Raissouni: Religious Scholars".

224 Suggesting a conception of what Olivier Roy refers to as "Islamic secularization", or at least a theological division of labour.

225 Ideologically, it is unclear whether this division holds beyond strategic concerns.

226 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*, p. 294

Shaykh Yassine, the relationship between the MUR's political outgrowth and its central, educational branch is more complex.

Whilst officially distinct, the PJD is an offshoot of the MUR, containing many of its founding figures and visionaries who have been forged by and helped forge its outlook. In addition, the overlap in membership tends to blur the boundaries between the two organizations. Many PJD MPs[227] have held senior posts at the MUR, although in recent times efforts have been made to minimize the overlap due to external pressure.[228] Given the PJD's controversial and thorny path in the public sphere, the MUR has found itself supporting the party, through the provision of individuals, including female politicians for local elections, where the party was struggling to achieve quotas.

The MUR has further sought to raise awareness of PJD initiatives in the MUR's official press organ, *Attajdīd*. From late 2004 however, following public pressure on the party to distinguish itself from the movement, the PJD launched its own publication and *Attajdīd* opted for a position of critical support towards the PJD. It also began to incorporate active support for initiatives of other parties deemed to be undertaking actions in line with the movement's overarching values. Just as in Yassine's movement, where the discourse of the Guidance Council is distinct from that of the Political circle, which uses only secular language and avoids religious references,[229] both internally and publically, the MUR's discourse is distinct from that of the PJD and it guards itself from making policy recommendations, despite having views on the political sphere: "when we hear a party, PJD or other, is doing a law text to reduce alcohol or drugs, we valorise this contribution."[230]

227 Including Abdelillah Benkirane, former member of the MUR executive office and current Prime Minister, Mustafa Ramid, former editor of Attajdid and MP, Azziza Bakkali, head of the MUR coordination committee and former MP, etc.

228 In particular, accusations the group were blurring the distinction between the religious and the political as enshrined in Moroccan law.

229 Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*, p. 193.

230 Ludiyi, Interview, 2009.

2.5.4 Objectives of the daᶜwa

The MUR's objectives are based on Ahmed Raissouni's theorizing, whereby the group contends that it "borrowed fundamental concepts from al-Shāṭibī and others and transformed them from their original rigidity into practical work."[231] The movement's work is thus divided between 'maintaining a presence' (*al-ḥifāẓ āl-wujūdī*), which it defines as undertaking *daᶜwa* in politics and society to preserve and nurture the existing state of religiosity and spread this message through all layers of society, including at the economic and political strata, and the 'greater preservation' (*āl-ḥifāẓ āl ᶜaẓamī*)[232] The latter is defined as preventing actual or anticipated damage to the faith and involves undertaking *daᶜwa*, political and social action in order to preserve the achievements of Islam at all levels and 'improve' civil society by repelling and opposing influences deemed contrary to the faith. Here, religion is defined as bearing a social responsibility towards the welfare of society, a view of religion with implications for the highest religious authority in Morocco, the King himself, who could be implied to be defaulting on a religious responsibility in not ensuring the people's welfare needs are met.

Despite leaving policy issues to the PJD, the MUR is still concerned with *daᶜwa* being affected at the institutional level and in particular, the propagation of a Sharia based political framework.

At an institutional level, the MUR defines Muslim society as one which distinguishes itself by the fact laws must be derived solely from Islam and all legal edicts must adhere to Islamic values and regulations, denouncing as idolatrous states which fail to do so. Like other Salafiyya movements, it considers the validity of a law to be dependent on its reference point (the *sharīᶜa*), as opposed to "temporal social needs or desires, as in the

231 Ḥarakat al-Tawḥīd wa'l-Iṣlāḥ, *ᶜAshara sanawāt min tawḥīd wa'l-islāḥ* (Rabat, Morocco: Top Press, 2006).

232 Ḥarakat, *ᶜAshara sanawāt.*

human legislation of secular societies".[233] The group's Charter[234] is based on a document created by the Prophet Muḥammad when he established the first community of Muslims in Medina and might be viewed[235] as a critique of the Moroccan constitution's perceived deviation from Islam. It describes[236] any charter based on something other than Islam as '*bidᶜah*' (or 'unlawful innovation'), and asserts that the constitution "must adhere to and be based on Islam."[237] The ultimate objective stated by the MUR is for all laws to be in line with the Sharia:[238] "The Judicial power must adhere to the Sharia and man-made law (*waṣīᶜa*, pl. *waṣāʾiᶜ*) should be abolished."[239] And in the winter of 2002, the MUR published a communiqué in which it stated that "since Morocco is an Islamic country, the Sharia should be stipulated in the constitution."[240] However, since the MUR does not engage in politics directly, it continues to claim that it primarily advocates education and *daᶜwa* to create a climate favourable to these ideals. The movement does not advocate legislation as the primary vehicle for change, but rather favours fostering self-discipline and awareness raising: "The government should not force people to pray, we have to change people from the inside, not use force…"[241]

The MUR has critically sought to institutionalise the *daᶜwa* in view of optimizing its effectiveness. This has meant working in different spheres (social, cultural, educational) by providing for the needs of local communities in these fields. By 2006, the MUR had dozens of grass-roots organizations working to provide social support through local activism, but

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233 Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, p. 145.

234 Ḥarakat, *al-Mīthāq*

235 Through its recurrent emphasis on the Qur'an and Sunna as the only legitimate reference points.

236 Ḥarakat, *al-Mīthāq*, p. 15.

237 Ḥarakat, *al-Mīthāq*, p. 60.

238 One example of this, is when Morocco recognized the Universal Charter of Human Rights, it inserted a clause rejecting article 18 concerning freedom of religion.

239 Ḥarakat, *al-Mīthāq*, p. 60.

240 Howe, *Morocco: The Islamist Awakening*, p.134.

241 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-daᶜwiyya*, p. 18.

decided to devolve this work so the management of the daily operations of each organization would no longer be a burden on the MUR head office. An estimate based on internal MUR documents, dated 2010, suggest the MUR coordinates a network of around a hundred local organizations across the country.[242]

Conclusion:

The MUR's ideological outlook has its roots in two movements with diverging conceptions of Islamic reform. The JI-MRR's political focus, married to the LIF's educational and cultural emphasis led to an eventual split within the movement, and the formation of the PJD. As the PJD took over political activism, the MUR deepened its commitment to forming individual agents of change, whose education within the MUR would offer them the combined wisdom of secular and religious knowledge required to advance social interests according to an Islamic frame of reference. In so doing, the Islamic movement would consolidate Islam as a strong rival to westernized models of development. At its core, the movement consists of a call to an activist conception of Islamic praxis which entails social responsibilities tied to the conception of faith itself. It emphasises a call to *daᶜwa* and education, both means of aligning individual members of society with the movement's conception of Islam and containing educational principles which, through their divergence from the official religious education, entail a critique of power and a call to remedy the perceived lacunas. As such, despite its 'apolitical' stance, its educational program involves an implicit critique of the current regime's mode of rule, specifically, its social failings, and of the religious conception underpinning the King's authority. Its *daᶜwa* is not only a means of aligning Muslims with their conception of Islam, but also of forging a religious elite capable of not only critiquing the system, but providing religiously inspired solutions.

242 Although the MUR is very secretive as to exact figures and unwilling to confirm speculation.

3. THE MUR IN SOCIETY

3.1 Introduction

The MUR aims to reform Moroccan society from the individual to society and the state, through a process of *da^{c}wa* and education. Within society, this ambition is realised through a network of organizations operating in a range of fields which seek to provide social services in line with the MUR's conception of Islamic praxis. These networks are called 'specializations' and function in partnership with the MUR's central organization, which provides the ideological outlook, as well as funding in some cases, to enable the organizations to operate. Despite claims the MUR's social work is merely a means of shoring up political support for the PJD, Mark Lynch notes that "volunteers in the Islamic charitable sector profess a far wider set of motivations for their participation than just political rewards."[1] Indeed this may well inverse the pre-eminence the MUR itself affords to social work, as compared to political work through the PJD. Through the organizations, the MUR maintains contact with the broader population, actualizes its ideals by linking Islamic principles to actions in society, and provides platforms for its members to gain better access to spheres of power. Similarly to Jordan, where Wiktorowicz argues that the Islamic movement has helped provide a counter to extremist and anti-regime movements, marginalising such elements, whilst absorbing increasing religiosity and acting as a "buffer that protects the regime from revolutionary discursive challenges"[2], the MUR's actions in society channel Islamic activism into non-confrontational activities, while ultimately contributing to addressing social inequalities unaddressed by the state.

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1 Lynch, *Islamists and their Charities*.

2 Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism*, p. 110.

3.1.1 The Specializations – Creating Change on the Ground

The group's literature describes one of its founding principles as 'the positive partnership',[3] described as a partnership or cooperation in furthering 'good' within the community. In view of this, the MUR operates as a central ideological base which 'outsources' specialised associational work to organizations or networks of associations, with varying levels of independence from the main body of the MUR. The objective of these associations is to highlight the extent to which Islam, as a holistic framework according to the movement's understanding, is both relevant and useful to society.

The objective of the MUR is to "defend the Islamic identity of Morocco whilst preserving what is positive in what is already present".[4] Associational work is considered essential in reaching out to all levels of society, as it enables communication to reinforce the country's religious identity, while also allowing the group to undertake charitable work which it conceives of as a mandatory element of religious identity. Of 90,000 associations operating in Morocco, a third are deemed to be run by Islamist groups.[5] While the main political parties all tend to have societal based organizations working in various fields, from youth work to women's rights, Darif notes a specificity in the case of the MUR-PJD relationship. While other parties developed social activism as *part* of their political project, the MUR has a *social project*, that is a vision for society which it is seeking to achieve, and which all its specializations, including those which have since become independent such as the PJD, function as a means of achieving: "The PJD has never ceased behaving like a social movement. And we know well that the stakes of a social movement differ radically from those of a political party. Contrary to a party, the social movement has no considered political programme or schedule. It has a societal project and a reference (that is the case with Islamist movements). Its objective is not to govern, (…) but rather to mould society in

3 Ḥarakat al-Tawḥīd wa'l-Iṣlāḥ, Introductory Pamphlet, p. 4.

4 Azziza Baccali, Interview, 2009.

5 Farah, *Le PJD prepare une OPA sur la societe civile*.

its image."[6] This is significant in understanding the function of the various specializations, most notably in the fact that they serve not merely as is often presumed as a means of rallying political support for the PJD, but rather as part of a much wider project, of which the PJD is one element, to shape society according to the MUR's particular vision.

Brooke also notes that while the provision of such services is typically assumed to be antagonistic vis a vis the state, the fact these services alleviate the strain on public services and ultimately reduce public grievances over those services suggests they may in fact act as a buttress to the state's legitimacy, rather than the presumed challenge to it: "Islamist social service provision may actually serve to reduce those grievances that have historically spurred anti-regime mobilization".[7] In the case of the MUR, which claims to be seeking to reinforce the religious legitimacy of the monarchy, its social work could be seen to be reinforcing that legitimacy by providing evidence of the 'benefits' of religion within society and by patching over state failures in social provisions. The state however has been suspicious of Islamist social activism, despite apparent advantages accrued to it, not least out of concern such groups could be serving subversive ends. In the case of the MUR, it is clear the Ministry of Interior has kept a close eye on the group, including in some cases direct communication with senior figures in order to negotiate the group's presence and activities.[8]

3.1.2: NGOs, Assisting the Poor and Strengthening an Emerging Middle Class

Steven Brooke notes that despite a paucity of evidence, most studies of Islamist groups assume some version of the following statement: 'Islamists' network of hospitals, schools, day cares, soup kitchens, and other social services help the group (choose one of the following): win elections, Islamize the population, recruit and retain members, delegitimize

6 Farah, *Le PJD prepare une OPA sur la societe civile*.

7 Brooke in "Islamist Social Services. Islam in a Changing Middle East", *POMEPS* 9, pp. 12-14.

8 Many activists, including A. Belaji, R. Benkhaldoun, M. Yatim and others, spoke of direct communication between the state and the ministry of interior over several decades during interviews.

the state, or demonstrate their commitment to Islam".[9] In the wake of Mohamed Morsi's election to the Presidency in Egypt, many analysts tied the MB's electoral success to their provision of social welfare projects despite evidence from Janine Clark[10] that no direct correlation can in fact be drawn between the provision of services and mass political mobilization, given that much of the former actually caters to the same middle classes providing the services. Al Arian notes that in Egypt, an organic process emerged whereby "newly urbanized middle class students were cultured into broader communal engagement that encompassed social welfare programs as well as political activism".[11] He also found, like Clark, that such provisions did not necessarily represent sources of Islamist mobilization, but rather acted as service organizations. Similarly, many MUR activists expressed their participation in social welfare programs as an aspect of their religious duty, and in many cases, the link between the movement and the services was not directly obvious. In fact, as elsewhere, patronage systems in Morocco have far deeper roots than the newer provisions of services by Islamist groups like the MUR, or others.

Like Clark,[12] I found that many of those benefiting from MUR social welfare provisions did not seem aware of the link to an Islamist organization. This suggests that the movement cannot expect to directly benefit from each welfare receiver's support given that many of them are unaware of the source of the provisions. Engagement was limited to the provision of the required service, rather than an opportunity to expand a social or even membership circle. Although MUR ideals might be evident within the NGOs, such as in Islamist run schools, where an Islamic ethos was evident, from dress codes, to artistic content (al-Aqsa themed drawings), class divisions, as well as the divisions between those perceived as committed to the Islamist 'project' and the rest, remain clearly delineated. Although some individuals did 'cross over', those individuals receiving assistance from

9 Brooke in "Islamist Social Services. Islam in a Changing Middle East", *POMEPS* 9, p. 13.

10 Clark, *Islam, Charity, and Activism*.

11 Al Arian, "A State Without a State", in "Islamist Social Services", *POMEPS 9*, pp. 7-9.

12 Clark, *Islam, Charity, and Activism*.

Islamist projects tend to be from a poorer social milieu, often illiterate, or barely literate (especially in the case of women) and struggling with dire social problems (acute poverty, domestic violence, illness, etc.) which left little time for the more middle class nature of volunteer work.

In Morocco, social stratification might be divided between the elites, a small largely Francophone group with close links to the palace, the nascent middle class, largely Arabophone but often at ease in French and/or English, educated and aspiring to see their values reflected in the public sphere (government, media, etc) and the 'masses', divided between the rural and urban poor. The MUR network of associations - run by this nascent middle class - do not target the poor in all cases.

In the case of the OREMA (Organisation du Renouveau Estudiantin au Maroc), a student branch of the MUR, or the MUR's youth group, Amal al Toufoula (*ᶜamal al-ṭufūla*), these organizations are more about laying both the ideological basis for future activists and employment opportunities for them, and tend to attract either the children or relatives of current members, those within their immediate social networks (friendship groups, study circles, etc.) or activist types seeking an organized movement to join. Such individuals tend to be drawn from the emerging middle class.

Two of the MUR's networks observed could be said to focus more directly on poverty issues, 'Forum Bassma', which caters specifically to poverty alleviation in deprived areas, still primarily urban areas, and 'Forum Azzahra', a women's organization which undertakes a range of activities for women, from counselling, to basic literacy education and which tends to assist vulnerable women, including in more rural areas. In these organizations, I saw a focus on charitable work but not on direct recruitment as a consequence per say. In fact, some of the organizations which the MUR works with on the ground are not led by MUR figures, suggesting the ideological component of spreading the message beyond the MUR or recruiting members is not a primary motivation. This fits with the MUR's ethos which does not seek to grow the movement through incorporating as many

new members as possible, but rather seeks to create an elite which can work in cooperation with existing groups to further the movement's values.

What seems to be important to the activists involved is the perception among recipients that Islam is the motivating factor behind the charitable undertakings. This translates through the ethos of those involved who emphasize religious motivations and reference a religious worldview. It can also be manifest in the solutions proposed which emphasise communal principles over individual rights.

3.2 Outsourcing activism – Organizational Structure at the Service of Ideology

As part of the MUR's constant evolution and re-assessments of its efficiency, the movement decided to specialize and decentralize in 2006, leading to the creation of 'Specializations' ('*al-takhaṣuṣāt*'), a reference to the overarching networks regrouping NGOS in a given field. Unlike previously, the MUR no longer manages the association's day to day operations, which can be subdivided into three categories: Independent institutions; supervised organizations and funded supervised organizations.

According to MUR president Hamdaoui, it was during the revision of the MUR's previous pyramidal model (see index) that it occurred to the activists that the movement's structure could serve the ends of the organization, namely to stave off potential repression, but also of working from within society and in cooperation with other societal actors: "we began to see organizational structure as a means".[13] This means was rather than bring people into the movement, which could appear to the state as the formation of a counter-power, the movement could bring its ideals to the people, through the training of key individuals and the provision of services which could help foster attitudes and behaviours deemed in line with MUR ethos.

The concept of the 'positive partnership' grew out of the experience of the MUR predecessor movements' working underground, and the state's intolerance of all secretive,

13 Hamdaoui, Interview, 2010.

parallel activity. In its place, the movement reimagined its role as 'supporting' the state's work in improving the lives of Moroccans by creating local organizations, or partnering with existing ones. For its part, the MUR benefits from access to local communities without accusations of subversion, a means of spreading its outlook under the guise of a semi-official status and opportunity to highlight its effectiveness as proof of the superiority of its outlook compared to that of more secular organizations.

3.2.1 The Privatization of Activism

The MUR modelled its specialization on the state, describing it as "the privatization of politics - the state maintains some domains which are strategic under its tutelage, but it privatizes the areas which don't need to be under its tutelage, this is exactly what happened in our experience."[14] This strategy of 'Islamic privatization', the incorporation of techniques from a business model to the functioning of the MUR has been an important part of the MUR's operational distinctiveness. It conceives of such operational reforms as reflecting the Islamic reformist ideal of operating within the Islamic sector while applying current and productive professional strategies.

Since the decision to specialize, the MUR itself retains only the "fundamental functions of an Islamic movement"[15] namely *daᶜwa*, education and training, whilst other auxiliary functions are taken on by the specialized networks (social, cultural, artistic, etc.): "Within the MUR, we learn the Qur'an and Sunnah together. Within the specializations, we try to apply what has been learnt."[16]

The unity of the MUR's project is guaranteed through the presence of the heads of the specialization networks in the MUR's Majlis Ashoura ('consultative council'): "It is coordination based on communication more than on actual mechanisms"[17] and through

14 Hamdaoui, Interview, 2009.

15 Baha, Interview, 2009.

16 Baccali, Interview, 2009.

17 Hamdaoui, Interview, 2010.

educational circles, which all members undertake continuously and which one member referred to as ‘educational maintenance’.[18]

The movement thus has significant social and cultural projects which extend into diverse sectors of society. Through the provision of these services, the movement provides a point of contact with different communities, as well as an opportunity to display the movement’s achievement through concrete projects and a possibility for the dissemination of its outlook. Looking at the MB in Jordan, Wiktorowiz notes that “although these organizations do not engage in political activities, there is a political effect.”[19] This political effect is measured to some extent in potential political support for the organization’s message, but also, perhaps even more crucially, in the adoption and promotion of the religious message.

3.2.2 Organizational dynamics

The MUR operates through a series of networks in its specializations. The networks maintain a direct relationship with the central MUR association and function along the lines of a ‘partnership’ with local associations, allowing them independence in their undertakings at the grass-roots level, but providing them with training and support. Commenting on the loose nature of the connection of the local associations to the central organization, Hamdaoui stated:[20]

> I don’t even know the number of women’s organizations, nor their presidents. There are presidents of some of these organizations who are not even members of the MUR - it is the members and sympathizers of the associations who make the decisions.

In addition, they have encouraged the creation of other associations within that area of specialization which come under the umbrella and supervision of the MUR coordinating committee.

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18 Baha, Interview, 2009.

19 The Management of Islamic activism, Wiktorowiz, P108

20 Hamdaoui, Rabat, November 2009 (Hamdaoui, MUR president 2002-2014, 2009).

All the network organizations (independent or supervised) have their own charter and internal operations. They also select the associations which may join their network following discussions in which they assess whether they share the same objectives and ideals and whether the association feels it would benefit from the partnership: "For example, for Basma, we offer training, information, mediation, etc. and we offer this in a spirit of collaboration and cooperation. It is not solely an organizational link, the MUR is a setting for work."[21]

Indeed the move towards specializations was an attempt to transform the MUR from a membership organization, to an ideological base which partners with social organizations with the expertise necessary to tackle specific issues of concern:[22]

> Instead of saying I belong to the MUR or not, what am I doing in the MUR, what am I contributing to it? The traditional perception of an Islamic movement is one of membership, we try and move beyond this membership conception to a conception of action.

One of the main benefits from the movement's perspective has been the cooperation which these associations allow between the MUR and other civil society actors as well as local government. Their ability to provide key services makes them a necessary partner in the field and through these partnerships, the association derives legitimacy and recognition, both from the grass-roots, as well as from local government, which recognizes their contribution. Touria Rharbal who is both a PJD MP and employed in local government explained:[23]

> I even made an alliance between the commune of Agdal Riad and the MUR for the International Day of the Family, we did a whole program together, though it was hard to get the other parties to agree, without making it seem like it was the movement. They had very good programs, there were a number of associations working with the movement. They protested a bit but they had no alternative to offer. The movement is an association like any association, if you have an alternative, bring it.

21 Baha, Interview, 2009.

22 Baha, Interview, 2009.

23 Gharbal, Interview, 2009.

In this sense, the movement works hard to function as a necessary social support system which the government finds itself leaning on for the implementation of a range of policies, from literacy programmes, to drugs awareness. Its women's specialization, 'Forum Azzahra', received over 130 000Dh to encourage female voter participation.[24]

3.2.3 The Committee of Specializations

The MUR's Lajna Takhaṣṣuṣāt ('Committee of Specializations') helps to orientate and coordinate between the MUR and its networks. It helps to define the big axes they want the networks to focus on, such as in the case of those organizations dealing with the family and the child, to help maintain their Islamic identity. These links are maintained and nurtured so the associations don not depart from the original objective for which they were created. The MUR provides the ideas for societal change and they undertake them as best they see fit. The committee also helps coordinate between the different networks when there is overlap between the problems they are tackling and therefore in their areas of work: "Basma can sometimes need to address women and children issues, so in order to avoid conflict or overlap in their areas of work, the committee facilitates communication."[25]

Since the networks function independently from one another, they do not consult one another, so the coordination committee is designed to minimize overlap and waste of resources. "We foster partnerships where possible as it helps to maintain the specialization but doesn't impede the organizations from working in areas they need to."[26] The coordination committee can suggest work they may deem necessary to the partnership organizations: "There is a degree of action-reaction, but we can also be an actor of 'proposition', making suggestions in order to get out of the pattern of action and reaction."[27] The coordination committee liaises between the different associations and attempts to

24 Darif, Interview, 2009.

25 Baccali, Interview, 2009.

26 Baccali, Interview, 2009.

27 Baccali, Interview, 2009.

maintain the ideological line guiding the motivation for action. As such, it represents the largely invisible line of control between the independent BGOs and MUR central, policing the ideological boundaries and ensuring conformity between the end product of the NGOs work and the ideals of the movement.

The Coordination committee's objectives are to:

1) attempt to maintain the organization within the big axes of the MUR's work

2) coordinate between the different associations and committees

3) establish partnerships – to maximize effectiveness

3.3. The Specializations – Strategic Partnerships

The MUR has two types of 'specializations': strategic partnerships and supervised networks.

Strategic partnerships are independent institutions with which the MUR has a partnership relationship: This includes the PJD and the Trade Union organization, 'Union Nationale du Travail au Maroc' ('UNTM'). These are strategic partnerships with organizations which share the MUR vision but have their own internal structures and function independently of the MUR. These organizations have separate structures at every level and are only represented in the MUR by members sitting in on the Majlis al-Shūra of the MUR. According to *Attajdīd* journalist, Bilal Talidi: [28]

> The Trade Union (UNTM) is represented on the Council of Specialization – but they are in the same position as the PJD were. There is a desire to move towards the position of support for the UNTM, like for the PJD eventually. Maybe later the same thing will happen with other specializations."

3.3.1 The PJD

The Party for Justice and development began life in 1998 as a reincarnation of the formerly defunct MPDC party of palace confidante Abdelkrim Al Khatib. Although today

28 Talidi, Interview, 2010.

formally distinct from the MUR, it grew out of the MUR's original ambitions to spread its message in every sphere, including the political one.[29]

3.3.2 The National Union of Work in Morocco (UNTM)

The UNTM ('al-Ittiḥād al-Waṭṭanī li'l-Shughl bi'l-Maghrib'), was created in its original incarnation in 1976, as the Trade Union branch of the MPDC party, then under the leadership of its founder Abdelkrim al-Khatib. During the union of the MPDC with the political wing of the MUR in 1996, activists from the MUR also merged into its Trade Union wing, the UNTM. Mohamed Yatim, a senior MUR figure, was assigned the task of rebuilding the TU which, much like the MPDC itself, existed virtually only in name. He began with the teaching sector due to the large number of MUR members in the teaching sector, gradually broadening their membership to other sectors. Although the union began in the public sector, where many of the activists are employed, most notably in education, health, postal service and in the ports, they eventually also moved into the private sector, yet their presence there remains more limited. In 2014, it estimated its membership at around 50,000,[30] making it one of the largest TUs in Morocco. There are around 20 trade unions[31] in Morocco but this apparent plurality actually masks a large degree of inactivity. Trade Union membership in Morocco is very limited – less than 7%.[32]

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29 For more on the PJD, see Chapter 3:2.

30 According to UNTM president, Mohamed Yatim, quoted in *Le Matin*, accessed 28/01/2015: http://www.lematin.ma/journal/Mohamed-Yatim-secretaire-general--de-l-Union-nationale-du-travail--au-Maroc--UNTM-_On-ne-doit-jamais-refuser--le-dialogue-car-c-est-l-occasion--d-exprimer-son-point-de-vue/181539.html (sourced: 14/02/2014)

31 The main unions are the UMT (Union Marocaine du travail), established in 1955, the UGTM (Union generale des travailleurs du Maroc) established in 1960 and linked to the Istiqlal party, the UNTM (Union national du travail au Maroc), established in 1976, formerly linked to the Democratic and Constitutional Popular Movement party (MPDC), now linked to the Party for Justice and Development (PJD), the CDT (Confederation Democratique du travail), established in 1978 and linked to the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP).

32 According to Zaireg, Reda, "Maroc, la difficile recherche de l'unité syndicale" art. in *Orient XXI*, 12/5/2014, accessed: 27/05/2015, http://orientxxi.info/magazine/maroc-la-difficile-recherche-de-l-unite-syndicale,0590.

While Trade Unions are typically thought of as mass movements, designed to convey the economic interests of workers to the governing class, in Morocco, the small minority of workers actually registered in trade unions means they act more like elite pressure groups than mass movements. It might be worth considering trade unions as another front of political contestation focused on the negotiation of workers' rights for the emerging middle class. Trade unions are thus an alternative realm in which to contest economic injustice and/or workers' rights without engaging in calls for political democratization, perceived as a contestation of monarchical power. In this sense, the unions offer a 'safe' means of making demands on the regime, without ultimately challenging the broader framework of authoritarianism, as part of what Abdeslam Maghraoui calls the depoliticization of the public sphere:[33]

> … the marginalization of questions of legitimacy or sovereignty and—in the Moroccan case especially—the concomitant political primacy given to economic issues. Having unremittingly framed economic questions in strictly technical terms, the monarchy has succeeded in sidestepping a fundamental debate on the sources and distribution of power in the Moroccan political system.

In this sense, for the MUR, participation in trade union activity offers another safe space for political and economic contestation, without seeming to undermine the broader system in which those inequities occur.

Distinguishing the different remits of political parties and trade unions, the academic Mohamed Darif notes "a political party defends a vision, an ideology and interests, regardless of the social status of its members. A trade union defends the material interests of people who have the same social status, but according to a set political vision."[34] However, in Morocco, the line between trade unions and political parties is less clearly defined, due to the political link between the majority of unions and political parties. Historically, parties in Morocco created union appendages as a means of mobilising the masses through the

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33 Maghraoui, "Democratization in the Arab World?", pp. 24-32. "Depoliticization in Morocco", art. in *Journal of Democracy* 13:4, pp. 24-32 October 2002 https://www.researchgate.net /publication/236827097_Depoliticization_in_Morocco

34 Abou El Farah, "Maroc: les partis finiront-ils par tuer les syndicats?"

grassroots influence they provided. As such, they should be considered predominantly as extensions of parties, providing a mobilizing capability. Unions have been at the root of mass public unrest, including riots, through to strike action which, such as in June 1981 when a nationwide strike disintegrated into four days of rioting, met by army intervention. Buehler notes that "in Morocco, public employees have spearheaded labour mobilisations. (…) Strikes from public employees threaten regimes because they endanger their 'ruling bargain' with citizens, who expect consistency in service delivery in a trade for political loyalty."[35] Control over an influential trade union provides the MUR with another angle from which to pressure the regime concerning issues of economic equality, due to the underlying threat of unrest and the attendant risks to regime stability: "unions' mobilisations—strikes, protests, and marches—created opportunities for such unrest to outburst, conjuring latent violence from some of urban society's most marginalised groups,"[36] indeed "since colonialism, urban riots have accompanied labour mobilisations in Morocco, helping unions garner concessions." As such, the UNTM is another avenue for contestation, one which has historically grounded roots within the regime's parameters for acceptable political expression.[37] This isn't to say that the UNTM's positions and negotiation attempts haven't been contested, not merely in content, but in form, both by the regime and others.[38]

The UNTM has struggled to gain recognition among other TUs since its inception and has also struggled to gain acceptance by the state. Chaarani () notes for example that the UNTM has been left out of negotiations between the government and other trade unions, as

35 Buehler, 'Labour Demands, Regime Concessions', p. xx-yy.

36 Buehler, 'Labour Demands, Regime Concessions: Moroccan Unions and the Arab Uprising'

Matt Buehler, British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies Vol. 42 , Iss. 1,2015, pp.88-103

37 Buehler notes that historically "labour mobilisations have provoked urban violence that has prompted Morocco's non-democratic overlords, whether French officials or regime elites, to grant material concessions." (Buehler, 'Labour Demands, Regime Concessions', p. 88-103.)

38 At the time of interviewing, the TU was seeking to negotiated pension funds with the government but communication had broken down. In response, Yatim was preparing a series of protest actions: "The government no longer wants to listen to dialogue and therefore we need to organize protests and activism to make the working class heard." Yatim, Interview, 2010.

well as internal trade union negotiations.[39] The UNTM's former secretary general, Abdesalaam Mâati, denounced such tactics as the product of the government's desire to work only with TUs sympathetic to it. In fact, the UNTM has faced consistent accusations in the media of undue interference from the PJD and the MUR.

Since the MUR's overarching objective is to provide an Islamically framed response to the manifold challenges facing Moroccans in order to assert the centrality of Islam as both a core component of national identity but also a central source of guidance in the resolution of worldly affairs, trade unions offer an avenue of engagement with a strata of workers and a means of pressuring the regime using recognized avenues of contestation.[40]

One of the movement's strategies for working within the system has been to seek to re-inject existing institutions with their original, stated function. In the case of trade unions, rather than operating to advance worker rights, many unions had been operating as narrow interest groups benefiting from a prevailing system of patronage. The MUR, just as it had done with the PJD, seeking to turn a largely defunct political party into a professional political party, sought to turn the UNTM into a professionally run union which could exercise political influence while publically seeking to locate the professionalization of operations as a direct consequence of the new-found Islamic ethos. This is based on what Juan A. Macías-Amoretti refers to as "a deep critique of the political system from the moral point of view" among Moroccan Islamists, "one based on the need for a *re-Islamization* of society but also informed by the need for social welfare among the marginalised sectors of the population or those the party considers as victims of the post-colonial state in the Maghreb".[41] The challenge for the MUR within the trade union sector as elsewhere has been that, to quote Darif,[42] because the 'monarch would never allow an *ikhwanization* of the

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39 Chaarani, *La mouvance islamiste*, p. 272.

40 This fits with the movement's broader ethos of recognizing the political legitimacy of the regime, unlike its main rival Al-ᶜAdl, which refuses to engage with the regime's existing parameters.

41 Macías-Amoretti, 2014.

42 Darif, Interview, 2010.

state,' the group seeks an Islamization of the monarchy, by re-injecting substance into religious symbols from which monarchical authority is derived and by merging democratic and Islamic idioms in order to render democratization an essential and central aspect of Islam and thus of the King's underlying legitimacy.

3.4 The Specializations - MUR Networks

In addition to 'partnerships', the MUR has a second type of relationship, which it qualifies as a relationship of 'supervision' of organizations which have typically been set up by the MUR, as actors within civil society, but also include associations which share the network's overarching ideals, but which began independently. The MUR then provides support to these associations. According to MUR president Mohamed Hamdaoui,[43]

> We don't want to control these Associations. We think they can and should move toward total autonomy. This can occur gradually. We have faith in the system. At present, we only maintain this coordination committee but we think one day, they should function without MUR support. We want them to maintain the same line of thought but make the structures disappear. Eventually, we hope to have only partnerships, the objective being to develop a symbiotic relationship, like what has occurred with the political party and the trade union, there is no supervision like there is for the associations.

For the MUR, these associations offer a means of expanding its outreach within society through a diffuse network which, due to the very indirect association to the MUR, experience a degree of protection from state repression, while operating along the lines of and often with official state approval (many of the associations were legally recognized or pending official recognition), including in some cases, drawing on government funding. Horizontal ties are created and deepened between local community leaders and centralized MUR leadership, offering a wider base of support, including potential recruits, and the means to spread the MUR ethos through training provisions and other forms of cooperation or assistance. This is in line with the MUR's broader ethos of working from within society, at all levels, from MUR members working in various levels of local government, education and even, according to Hamdaoui "we have imams from the movement working as imams of

43 Hamdaoui, Interview, 2009.

the state."[44] This allows the movement's message to be spread with the least resistance and seemingly organically.

The MUR networks include:

3.4.1 Azzahra Forum

Founded on May 12th 2002[45] as a reflection of the MUR's desire to regroup its work in the area of 'women's work', the organization's objective was to defend women's causes and to combat discrimination from an Islamic perspective: "Our vision is based on the sharia, on concepts authentic to Moroccan history, to our religion. This is the most central point which distinguishes us from other social actors."[46] It aims to create an Islamic model for the emancipation of women, both at a local and national level, to compete with other women's empowerment trends. Specifically, it aims to create a popular women's movement which is grounded in an Islamic frame of reference and which reinforces the role of mothers.[47]

In its mission statement, it describes itself as "an independent cultural and women's rights association, working for women's rights and the right of the family and aims to realise its objective: an honoured woman, a united family, continuous development."[48] One activist from the network described her work to me as follows:[49]

> AZZAHRA is a Moroccan networking organization with an Islamic orientation. It seeks to find solutions to problems of civil society drawing on Islamic values. Other organizations have drop-in centres in which they prioritise individual values to the detriment of family values. AZZAHRA has centres called 'Family Orientation centres', in which we direct people towards a solution which is best for the whole family. It is not just about giving women their rights, other family members have rights also. (…) This is an Islamic framework. We try to quote and evoke all the

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44 Hamdaoui, Interview, 2009.

45 According to Banhssin, Interview, 2009; Somaya Ben Khaldoun put the date at 2001 (Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009).

46 Boutaina, Interview, 2009.

47 Mounjib, *Enquete PJD et MUR: histoire d'un mariage coutumier* (http://www.panora24.fusion-agency.com/enquete-pjd-et-mur-histoire-dun-mariage-coutumier/).

48 Monasso, "Mountada Azzahrae pour la Femme Marocaine" 25/6/2014, accessed via: http://monasso.ma/association/mountada-azzahrae-pour-la-femme-marocaine

49 Boutaina, Interview, 2009.

> Islamic reasons for keeping the family together. It represents a practical use of Islam in daily life.

The network uses its grassroots experience as a means of lobbying influential organizations or individual ministers or ministries, as well as parliamentary groups in line with the movement's ideals. This allows the movement to marry a sense of expertise in given fields to its Islamic ethos, which provides it with more legitimacy in its efforts to influence policy.

According to its website, the network is made up 90[50] women's organizations working in the fields of rural girls education, listening centres and family support. The forum regroups local organizations working at the grass-roots level, many set up by MUR activists and was preceded by a national central committee for women, founded in 1999. Most of the women involved are middle class, the majority of women in the bureau having higher education diplomas and jobs.

<u>Women as a cultural battle ground</u>

The MUR's perception of women's work is framed by a central concern, notably the view that women are at the center of a cultural battle to define the very nature of Moroccan society. In this struggle between 'secular' organizations on the one hand and 'Islamic' organizations on the other, the MUR views much of the activism in the realm of women's rights as being pushed by organizations which consider Islam itself to be the source of women's oppression and seek to push back against this.

Within the MUR, women are considered as having a primary role within the family. This is reflected in the Azzahra forum's domains of focus: women, children and family:[51]

> The woman is one unit within the family, you cannot separate the rights of women from the rights of the family. We don't speak of the rights of women in contrast to the rights of men, we think that women's rights are linked to the family, she cannot live

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50 Moho, Fatima, "Femmes pjdistes réclament la castration des pédophiles", *fr.Le360.ma* 23/4/2015, accessed via: http://fr.le360.ma/societe/les-femmes-pjdistes-reclament-la-castration-des-pedophiles-38231

51 Boutaina, Interview, 2009.

> well if the family is in a bad situation, so we do not separate the rights of men, women and the family. They are all complimentary.

According to the Forum's outlook, a woman's primary role is that of a mother and it is in her capacity as a mother that they seek to address the issues confronting women. This conflict over individual over communal rights is at the heart of the MUR's perception of a 'western' influence of individualism, rooted in a culturally-specific conception of human rights, which activists explained was detrimental to women in a context which didn't operate within the same framework of social welfare and within constraints of often acute poverty. Here, the network's 'Islamic' solutions were deemed more appropriate to the needs of Moroccan women.

The Mudawwana or the negotiation of what is 'Islamic'

The field of Islamic meaning is a contested one in Morocco since the king has the monopoly as ultimate religious leader and head of the country. The conflict with the regime emerges from the fact the MUR aims to restrict the discursive field around what is Islamic according to its own understanding of the faith and force the monarchy to adopt its conception over that of other actors within society. It is worth stating that in a predominantly Muslim country, most actors were committed to working within an Islamic framework. Wuerth notes that "What is also significant in the participation of women's organizations in pressing for the reform of the Mudawwana is their commitment to working within an Islamic framework…"[52]

It does so by laying claim to greater religious understanding as well as through the experience it has acquired in the field, which it uses to justify its proposed solutions.

This conflict was best highlighted over the issue of the Moroccan personal status code, the Mudawwana, one of the last remaining areas of Moroccan law – in this case family law – defined exclusively according to Islamic law. For the MUR, which wishes to

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52 Wuerth, O., "The reform of the moudawana: The role of women's civil society organizations in changing the personal status code of Morocco", *Hawwa*, 3:3 (2005), pp. 309-333.

'preserve' the Islamic nature of Morocco, any changes to the Mudawwana were perceived as part of a broader attempt to change the 'Islamic nature' of Morocco and undermine the centrality of the sharia, which they wish to see hold pre-eminence within Morocco.

The first official reform of the personal status code was initiated in March 2000 with support from the World Bank, as part of the 'National Strategy for the Integration of Women in Development'. Subsequent reforms were also undertaken in 2004 following campaigns by women's rights groups who argued the text was inherently discriminatory. From the 1960s, calls for the reform of the Mudawwana, created after independence, had been made by various civil society groups. Following the political opening of the kingdom in the early 1990s, women's rights groups had sought to push for a number of amendments including the abolition of polygamy, equality between partners, the removal of the status of matrimonial guardianship, ensuring judicial divorce as the only means of dissolving a marriage and ensuring women's rights in terms of child custody and financial settlements. King Hassan II responded that anything related to the sharia, was his remit and established a commission formed of all male scholars, who, in 1993 recommended a number of minor amendments, considered disappointing by some women's rights groups.

A second attempt to amend the Mudawwana was made in 1999, initiated by a member of the Socialist party in coordination with Leftist women's rights groups and was immediately challenged by a number of religious scholars, members of the Istiqlal party and Islamic activists, who argued that the project represented an affront to religion and denounced their lack of consultation. Islamic female activists, including Nadia Yassine, a senior figure within al-ᶜAdl wa'l-Iḥsān, rejected the amendments on the grounds they'd excluded other components of society from the discussion, whilst others denounced the lack of reference to tradition within the text. On March 12th 2000, hundreds of thousands of people protested in Casablanca against the project, led in large numbers by al-ᶜAdl and the MUR, while a smaller march occurred in Rabat, in favour of it. Faced with such divisions, the recently enthroned King, Mohamed VI was called upon to resolve the tensions and

appointed a commission which was to work in coordination with the major societal movements concerned by the question. The amended text sought to ground the changes in Islamic textuality and tradition, and was adopted in January 2004, with cross party support, including the Istiqlal and the PJD.[53] Y Belal[54] notes that the only difference between the proposed law adopted by parliament and the proposal which had previously been rejected was the insertion of Qur'anic quotations and references to the sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad (*ḥadīth*s). The King also drew on opinions outside of the Mālikī school of jurisprudence,[55] traditionally associated with, and practised, in Morocco.

The Azzahra forum members studied the amended Mudawwana text and compared it to its concrete application and consequences in the field. The objective was to determine in the first few years of application, whether any unintended consequences emerged. The forum hoped their findings would vindicate their belief that, whilst they affirm support for equity between men and women, they remained critical of the use of the word 'equality' between the sexes, which they argued ignored the woman's role as mother and in rearing her child: "Women cannot ask for absolute equality like men, because women have roles men don't have, like motherhood. We want equality which takes into account the specificity of men and that of women."[56] The women successfully lobbied the Ministry of Social Affairs to ask them to reconsider the use of the term equality and to replace it with the term equity: "We don't want female victory on men, each one has rights and knows his/her obligations, we are opposed to anyone taking their rights and not looking at their responsibilities towards other partners."[57] Such instances highlight the sort of change the MUR has been able to effect through its specializations. Through their proximity to the population and the formalization

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53 Although reticent to accept aspects of the reform, the political climate post-May 2003 bombings meant the Islamic movements were weakened and much more constrained in their vocalisation of potential opposition.

54 Belal, 2011, p. 286)

55 To justify the end of guardianship, he drew on a Ḥanafī opinion.

56 Banhssin, Interview, 2009.

57 Boutaina, Interview, 2009.

of their work therein, the movement can and has successfully challenged official positions, arguing both within the religious vernacular incumbent on the king to preserve and drawing on the 'training' in secular fields of knowledge which allows associations to argue from a position of expertise. It is such changes which, while almost imperceptible, are part of the MUR's much larger societal project.

3.4.2 BASMA Forum

BASMA is a MUR network formed in September 2000[58] and which regroups all the organizations operating in the field of social work. The network's main objectives are "reinforcing human dignity, assisting those in need through the implementation of values of helping one another and social solidarity, and the participation in the creation of social institutions."[59] Unlike other organizations which commit to humanitarian work, the network sees its role as more linked to the idea of 'development', that is not merely providing for those in need, but assisting them to emerge out of the conditions which led to a situation of need.[60] This is consistent with the MUR's broader objective of not simply engaging in charitable works, but also addressing the underlying causes of inequality through its vision for society.

The network seeks to assist orphans, which it defines broadly as those children without paternal assistance. They seek to link the child or family to an individual who can assist them both materially and educationally, through providing a religious education alongside the financial support:[61]

> Basma supports orphans in families. We seek out people who can guide the family and guide the child toward a correct Islamic perception and invite the child toward certain types of activities (learning Qur'an sessions, etc). This program compliments the financial support with ideological support.

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58 http://www.panoramaroc.ma/fr/enquete-pjd-et-mur-histoire-dun-mariage-coutumier/

59 Mounjib, *Enquete PJD et MUR: histoire d'un mariage coutumier.*

60 Mounjib, *Enquete PJD et MUR: histoire d'un mariage coutumier.*

61 Baccali, Interview, 2009.

‘^{c}Amal al-ijtimā^{c}i wa’l-thaqāfī’ in Rabat is one branch of the broader organization with the same name which undertakes social work throughout Morocco, and is part of the Basma network. Created in 1990 in Fes, it has almost a dozen branches throughout Morocco. The organization undertakes programs to eradicate illiteracy as well as tailoring and computer lessons during the week and provides support lessons for students in the evenings. It also has an Orphan program which cares for 40 children who receive 500Dh for the adoptive family in addition to other support (educational, medical, etc.).

In the year 2008-09, the organization trained 47 beneficiaries in modern and traditional couture and decoration. It also trains under-privileged individuals to enter the job market. And provides literacy training for 150 beneficiaries. During Ramadan in 2008-2009, it provided for 360 families in difficulty and distributed clothes and lamb to orphans during the *Eid* festival. Services are offered for a 24Dh per month ‘symbolic’ fee, which the organizers discount for those unable to cover the cost. In addition to the monthly fee, each activity is costed, but subsidized to a large extent through fund-raising and state bursaries. According to the association’s annual report, it financed 78 revenue-generating projects in 2008-2009. The organization also partners with other organizations and public administration services, such as careers advice through the Agency of the promotion of employment and skills (ANAPEC) and ‘mentorship style’ support to staff and educators, such as through a joint project with the Ministry of National Education to look into ways of improving education. The work undertaken by this association, just one part of the broader BASMA social network, highlights the multiple ways in which the MUR’s engagement with both the population and the regime, via local government schemes, yields the sorts of opportunities for societal change which the movement capitalizes on both to highlight the effectiveness of its worldview and to spread a normative level of religiosity which it believes will feed into its desire to preserve the Islamic nature of the Moroccan state.[62]

62 Zwinten, No first name (VP, BASMA), Interview by E. Francois. In person. Rabat, Morocco. 1/10/2009.

In addition to these independent networks, a number of ‘supervised’ associations benefit from direct MUR financial support. These include:

3.4.3 AMAL association for children

The AMAL network for children regroups several organizations working for the benefit of children, including ‘Al-Rissala’ association, which emerged from the League for an Islamic Future.

The Al Rissāla Association was founded in 1988 as an independent NGO, based in Salé and is managed in coordination with the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport which partly finances their activities through grants. Other funds come from the small fee charged for people to attend the camps (between 300-550Dh for 15 days, all included). Aside from the Director and the crèche staff, the association is entirely run by volunteers who are often MUR members or relatives of the children being cared for in the centres. Most are students or teachers who work weekdays and dedicate their free time to associational work.[63]

According to Rabat branch director, Mr Bourhi, the association’s educational vision is one which aims to promote development with a focus on children, drawing on a religious framework: “we are aware Morocco is a developing country and we need to do something about it. We want to help people, especially children integrate into development of the country and help them be linked to the Islamic religion.”[64] As such, it reflects the MUR’s desire to counter-act a secularising trend within the Moroccan system, whereby the King maintains a monopoly over religious knowledge which is used to advocate full support for his rule, but without attendant responsibilities which the group argues are tied to that religious legitimacy. What is more, the official discourse on religion permits a strong degree of private religiosity but largely forbids the drawing on religion to make political claims. In

63 Zwinten, Interview, 2009.

64 Mr Bourhi, Amal al Toufoula center, 1/10/09

the MUR's educational vision, Islam is taught as a holistic way of life which necessarily includes expectations in the social and political spheres.

Bourhi described the aim of the association as "to educate Man to be well-rounded, balanced at the spiritual, mental, physical levels and to preserve the identity of Islamic civilization."[65] The association seeks to achieve these objectives through activities which link religion and daily life closely, notably through courses on prayer, the Qur'an, which includes competitions for the memorization of Qur'an, a focus on manners and education more broadly. This ties in with the MUR's core beliefs that an education which incorporates a religious dimension is "balanced and produces a better society".[66]

The association grew from one branch in 1993, to 6 in 1995, 16 in 1998, 30 in 2003 and in 2010 had 42 sections[67] throughout the country. It cares for 10,000 children and employs around 710 staff. The association provides care facilities and activities for children from young babies until the age of 18, including a crèche, after school educational activities and summer camps, mainly for children from 8-14 years.

The aim of all classes and activities is to reinforce the children's religious identity and ensure they have a 'correct' understanding of religion, one which ties religion to active citizenship: "…we are mainly interested in teaching the religion properly, how to be a person in life who manages their problems with dignity and generosity, (…) we teach them how to be an active citizen in Morocco." And the school also trains young people to be politically active within the system, by encouraging discussions on which parties to support and why: "When there are political activities, such as elections, we discuss how we can intervene, who we can encourage or oppose."[68]

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65 Mr Bourhi, Amal al Toufoula center, 1/10/09

66 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-daʿwiyya*.

67 Figures correct as of 2009, provided by Mr Bourhi, Amal al Toufoula center, 1/10/09

68 (Mr) Bourhi, No first name given (ʿAmal al-Toufoula Center). Interview by E. Francois. In person. 1/10/09.

3.4.4 OREMA – the MUR student wing

The OREMA grew out of the student branch of the MUR called the 'Faction of Unity and Communication'('Faṣl al-Waḥda wa'l-Tawaṣṣul', FUC'). It represented the union of the student branches of both the Movement for Reform and Renewal and the League for an Islamic Future when the MUR united, within the National Student union, the UNEM.

The FUC is a political orientation within the UNEM, an organization which has been banned since the 1980s when it elected radical Leftists who opposed the monarchy, to its leadership. Although the UNEM no longer has a formally recognized legal status since 1981, it continues to exist informally on campuses. Its controversial status is further complicated by the fact as an institution, it has been headed by al-ᶜAdl wa'l-Iḥsān members since the demise of the Left on Moroccan campuses from the 1990s. Student activism however remains limited in Morocco and estimates suggest no more than 10% of students are actively involved in Student Union organizations.[69]

The UNEM is currently headed by al-ᶜAdl. It has fourteen offices in universities across the country and 44 representatives at the departmental level. The main areas of action are scholarships, exams, transport, student discounts and unemployment.

From 1997 to 1999, the MUR joined with al-ᶜAdl on university campuses under the banner of 'al-Waḥda wa'l-Tawaṣṣul' within the UNEM, but the union broke down with complaints from the MUR members that al-ᶜAdl was seeking to monopolize the institution and favoured their internal structuration[70] over dialogue with the different Islamic tendencies. Describing the relationship between the movements, OREMA President Mohsan Moufidi stated:[71]

> There is a mutual respect with al-ᶜAdl, although there is some competition, they try not to organise parallel events to avoid conflict. Direct coordination is not yet possible because of their different orientation and different methodology, especially as regards

69 http://www.telquel-online.com/251/maroc2_251.shtml (accessed 15th October 2010).

70 In reference to the Ṣūfī group's strict internal hierarchy

71 Moufidi, Interview, 2009.

integration with the state and working with it on positive things, something which they reject.

For critiques of the Islamist movement, the UNEM has served as a successful means of normalising the Islamist discourse and outlook via student activism: "The presence of Islamist charitable associations on the public scene ('al-Salām', 'al-Birr', 'al-Mishkāt') has served to normalise the figure of the Islamist. Student activism represents the visible side of this nebula."[72] But this has also meant that for the MUR, a presence on Moroccan campuses was essential to capitalize on the body of activist minded, educated, emerging middle class students.

Although the MUR has continued to maintain representation within the UNEM, through the FUC,[73] the dominance of al-ᶜAdl within the organization led to a breakdown in communication, most notably over issues of negotiation with the authorities, something al-ᶜAdl's activist reject. In 2003, the MUR students created a separate lobby organization, the 'Organization for Student Renewal' ('Munāẓamat al-tajdīd al-ṭullābī', OREMA).

The stalemate in the UNEM left the terrain open for the MUR to capture religiously minded students who might wish to contest inequalities, but maintain dialogue with the authorities all the while. Today, it is in direct competition with the al-ᶜAdl run UNEM for the representation of students. Helpfully for the regime, this also channels support away from al-ᶜAdl's frontal confrontation towards a movement which advocates operating within the limits of the political system. This might help explain why, according to its president, Mohsan Moufidi, while the OREMA initially failed to get legal recognition, "now all our sections are legally recognised and it is easier for the new ones to apply for legal recognition."[74]

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72 "La présence des associations Islamistes de bienfaisance sur la scène publique (As-Salam, Al-Birr, Al-Michkat) a permis de banaliser la figure de l'IslamIslamiste. L'activisme estudiantin représente le côté visible de cette nébuleuse" http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/1999/08/TOZY/12315.html

73 *Fasl al Wahda*

74 Mohsan Moufidi, OREMA President, Rabat, 21/10/09

The OREMA has 3,000 members[75] and 19 offices in universities across the country.[76] It focuses on establishing cultural forums for students, trade union departments and aims to re-establish the research role of the university and integrate it into the informational society:[77] “We are those most affected by the issue of scientific[78] research. It is our weapon to struggle against immorality and what Roger Garaudy calls ‘the negation of humanity…’”[79] For the MUR, the students represent the front line of reconciliation between modern forms of knowledge, often deemed to be hostile to religion, and Islam in the modern Moroccan state. Their education and training within the MUR alongside their secular university education is part of the MUR’s broader project of forming religious elites, capable of disseminating religiously informed, or at least religiously bounded, solutions to the issues facing the Kingdom. Such ideas are seen as being able to rival the dominance of secular paradigms, and in so doing, offering emerging elites access to centres of power, where they would consolidate the religious nature of the state.

The OREMA, as the student wing of the MUR, thus represents the development of the new generation of MUR leadership and new ideas. These new ideas and initiatives have sometimes brought them into conflict with the old guard. One such issue is that of music where the OREMA has come up against more conservative views which object to the use of instruments and to non-devotional music. There have also been divergences between the old guard and the younger generation over the invitation of critical scholars whose perspectives are considered too radical. This generational gap speaks to the internal tensions within the movement, between its traditional old guard, and younger new guard, but also to evolving

75 http://www.telquel-online.com/251/maroc2_251.shtml

76 As of 2009, four more were in development.

77 http://www.telquel-online.com/251/maroc2_251.shtml

78 I understood “scientifique” here to mean ‘in depth’ or rigorous as opposed to limited to the scientific field.

79 “…nous sommes les plus concernés par la question de la recherche scientifique. C'est notre arme pour lutter contre l'immoralité et ce que Roger Garaudy appelle la négation de l'humanité” OREMA student, Ismaïl Hamoudi, quoted in Tel Quel: http://www.telquel-online.com/251/maroc2_251.shtml (accessed 15th October 2010).

attitudes to social issues within Islamist circles, where perception of 'correct praxis' evolves in conjunction with society. Many of the young OREMA activists rolled their eyes in response to the old guard attitude to music or socializing between the sexes:[80] "Sometimes we are ahead of the MUR in answering contemporary questions".

Every year, the head of the OREMA meets with the MUR executive committee and all 19 regional student body heads. The OREMA is operationally independent, sharing principally in the MUR's orientation, but it relies on it financially, receiving subsidies. It is represented in the 'Majlis al-Shūrā' of the MUR which seeks to ensure harmony between the different specializations.

The OREMA sections work around five poles:

(a) Education (Islamic orientation)

Education, or Islamic orientation, is the group's primary function. It has two levels of activity. The first is to train leaders so they themselves can train others and the other is periodic campaigns to raise awareness over various issues, from cheating, to prostitution, drug abuse, etc, all framed through an Islamic lens: "Our references are Islamic values, we seek to reinforce our message through Islamic arguments, such as not only are drugs bad for you, but they are ḥarām."[81] The functional committees are responsible for devising and developing these campaigns.

(b) Formation (shaping/orientation)

The group has an internal training program which all members can benefit from, and which seeks to reinforce Islamic cultural and political values. It contains a number of axes, including the legal (sharia), political, and intellectual. These training sessions consist of

80 Moufidi, Interview, 2009.

81 Moufidi, Interview, 2009.

studying given books, round-table discussions, presentations on selected themes, etc., to ensure the students are encouraged to participate in the Islamic renewal project:[82]

> We seek to participate in the intellectual discussion of the Islamic movement so we choose a different theme every year. It is very important to us, to move, bend the barriers and make the discussion advance. The renewal of the Islamic project is a very important topic for us. We want it to be a spirit, it cannot stop at al Othmani and Benkirane, we must keep it up.

This reflects a concern with the MUR more broadly that the formative generation which emerged out of the 1970s and 1980s need renewing in order to produce a new generation of Islamic intellectuals. To encourage the development of a new leadership and encourage active participation in the movement, the MUR has an informal quota of 20% youth in its functional organs, ensuring the new voices will uphold the MUR's project.

(c) Political 'framing'[83]

The political branch seeks to foster political activism and interest among Moroccan youth: "We want to frame the young Moroccans so they are interested in politics and general public order. Less than 1% of our youth are politically engaged. The Morocco of tomorrow is ours, it is for us to be engaged in public discussions. This requires basic political training and political awareness campaigns."[84] In this sense, the OREMA operates at a dual level, providing a means of organising student rights framed by the MUR's outlook, but also functioning as a means of training a new body of Islamic intellectuals or elites, for whom activism provides an organized means of seeking accession to power and to circles previously restricted to the old, predominantly francophone elites. In March 2009, they created the 'Forum of Future Managers' to ensure that the intellectual elites of tomorrow are creating assurances for their future.

According to Mohsan Moufidi, the OREMA encourages key discussions on political issues and seeks to generate interest and debates amongst the youth, teaching them

82 Moufidi, Interview, 2009.

83 Translated from the term: 'encadrement'.

84 Moufidi, Interview, 2009.

the workings of the political system and the means of participating and lobbying the government, rather than merely protesting: "We must not just protest, we must be a force of proposition."[85] The OREMA also lobbies the state for jobs, providing it with a 'Campaigns booklet',[86] presenting propositions on many different fronts in order to ease student life. These demands were not purely financial in nature, though bursaries are included in the demands, but make detailed recommendations on the allocation of the public budget. They also organize a lobbying of the authorities to influence the allocation of resources.

Despite claims the political branch acts as a funnel for the PJD, positions on politics and political participation are more diverse and complex in the OREMA than in the MUR, where support for the PJD remains the norm.[87] Some OREMA members expressed the view that the PJD political experience has been a failure and advocate the withdrawal of participation from a political system which is regarded as giving legitimacy to the King's overarching powers. For this reason, the stance of many of the OREMA students I spoke to on the issue of political participation, was much closer to that of al-ᶜAdl, than to that of the PJD. However, unlike al-ᶜAdl, a pervasive fear that toppling the regime could bring about a fundamentalist secular state means there is very little support for the revolutionary *modus operandi* advocated by al-ᶜAdl. The political branch also seeks to interact with all segments of the political system and not restrict themselves to any given political party in order not to alienate potential adherents and ensure the widest possible base of support: "The state still sees us as an arm of the PJD at university – but we don't represent them."[88]

(d) OREMA Trade Union

The OREMA trade union seeks to defend student interests in Parliament, as the FUC is limited to the campus, and seeks to forge political and trade union leaders of the future.

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85 Moufidi, Interview, 2009.

86 Translated from the French: "Cahier Revendicatif".

87 Despite some voices questioning the efficacy of the PJD's political project.

88 Moufidi, Interview, 2009.

The organization envisages that once the embargo is lifted, the OREMA's trade union activism could be handed over to the UNEM. A number of the students active in defending student interests then go on to join the MUR's trade union, the Union Nationale du Travail au Maroc (UNTM).

(e) Academic research

The research department was created out of a desire to provide research and data led analysis to support the OREMA's contentions. The branch was at the time of research seeking an alliance with senior MUR activist, Mustafa Khalfi's research centre to provide aspiring researchers opportunities to contribute to discussions of concern from an academic perspective: "We need young researchers doing concrete, scientific work, not only to protest, but to develop scientific assertions and train researchers for the different projects of the MUR movement as part of the Islamic renewal movement."[89] This was based on an assessment of academic studies as being dominated by an outlook hostile to the presence of religion in the public sphere and a desire to prove the relevance of Islam as a faith to modern society, by drawing on its ethics and principles as a means of resolving real world issues.

The various branches were created with the objective of creating a renewal in Moroccan Student life, to stay abreast of issues occurring within broader society and as a means of maintaining the relevance of religion in the resolution of contemporary issues.

3.4.5 The Cultural specialization

The cultural specialization regroups several organizations working in the cultural realm as well as members of the MUR who had been working in associations focused on cultural work prior to joining the MUR. When the specialization process was undertaken, the MUR sought to regroup the remaining associations which didn't fit under the existing categories (women, social welfare, children, etc.) under the banner of the 'Cultural

89 Moufidi, Interview, 2009.

specialization'. It organizes colloquiums on Islamic thought, conferences, discussions with well-known personalities, and in 2010, was still in the development phase.

The cultural specialization was, in 2012, the least developed and least well-established of the MUR's specialization. When I met with Fathe Abdul Fadhi in 2010, he had yet to form the cultural network and was in the process of contacting different existing associations with whom the MUR would consider a partnership. He had also not yet devised the 'cultural paper' which would provide the guiding principles for work undertaken in the field of culture, as exists for the work undertaken in the other fields. However, the network already had a number of associations linked to the previous movements which were to be incorporated into the network once it was active.

Among the specialization's challenges was defining its specific remit of work, and even the nature of 'culture' itself: "When we talk of culture, it is a vision of the other, of the self, it is very deep."[90] The challenge to establish the remit of work and the objective of cultural work for the MUR speaks to the movement's sense that some form of cultural reform is necessary in Morocco in order to counter the remaining influence of colonialism and specifically, secular culture, but also the more contemporary threat to a faith-infused lifestyle posed by a global capitalist culture, underpinned by individualism, consumerism and liberal mores. But it also has forced the movement to examine more closely what it seeks in terms of an alternative 'cultural movement'.

The movement has the ambition to provide an Islamic cultural alternative in terms of music, art and entertainment, according to a 'reformist view', but was struggling to define the network's objectives clearly and the boundaries of acceptability according to Islamic law which could find consensus within the organization: "At the moment, we are trying to define clearly the objectives of the project. It requires time so we don't have problems later. We have a definition of sociology, of culture, etc. Culture, what are the components of society's

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90 Abdul Fehdi, Fathe (MUR head of the cultural specialization). Interview by E. Francois. In person. Morocco, 21/10/09.

culture? How to change culture, what are the objectives which we must specifically define?"[91] Like other networks it has ambitions to incorporate non-MUR led associations under its umbrella, based on a belief that the thirst for alternative forms of cultural production is present outside of the limited realm of the movement and that the movement's work is enriched through the incorporation of associations working for the same objective but coming from outside it: "I think there are many associations who will work with us, including many with no links to the movement. Because our goals are very objective, many people who are convinced by our aims…." [92]

The network is headed by Fathe Abdul Fehdi, a professor of Philosophy, working at a secondary school, with a PhD in Islamic jurisprudence. He described the movement's work in the cultural sphere as working at the "heart of society, on its mores, values, traditions".[93] The question for the cultural specialization was how the movement could 'renew traditions within a people' and he described its objective as:

> It (the cultural realm) is at the base of social change. It's not just about reading a book or improving your education, there is a renewal at the heart of the society, how to improve the social mores at the heart of society, the values, even how to improve the identity of a society – this is cultural work.[94]

For Fadhi, the network is an effective way of transmitting the movement's message throughout the entirety of the Moroccan territory, through conferences, presentations, book expos, art exhibitions, etc., as a means of improving "Moroccan's respect for their values, identity and mores". Fadhi, like others within the MUR, perceives of Morocco as in the grip of a cultural conflict which operates at every level of society to delegitimise the role of religion in public life: "this is a global conflict which works through acculturation through social sciences, sociology, etc."[95] This 'war of ideas' is being challenged by the MUR through the use of the same mediums, TV, radio, the arts, literature, film – but infused with

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91 Abdul Fehdi, Interview, 21/10/09.
92 Abdul Fehdi, Interview, 21/10/09.

93 Abdul Fehdi, Interview, 21/10/09.

94 Abdul Fehdi, Interview, 21/10/09.

95 Abdul Fehdi, Interview, 21/10/09.

the MUR ethos: "In the movement in general, we want to work in this framework of cinema, of music, etc. to produce something which can be respected, admired." This would offer an alternative to a perceived form of acculturation: "Moroccan cinema is not Moroccan cinema. (…) we need a real Moroccan cinema, not a colonized cinema." One of the ways the movement proposes to do this is by seeking to engage a dialogue between cultural producers (film makers, writers, artists, etc.) and the movement itself, to generate what it describes as greater respect between cultures. Underpinning this objective is the movement's view of Moroccan culture as subject to a process of cultural colonization due to the forming and training of many artistic producers in France: "how can he be taught in France and he becomes a director, but then we give him the means to make a film which won't respect his country. (…) This is another form of colonization – artistic colonization."[96] For Fedhi, this form of cultural colonization is an extension of a broader attack against Muslim peoples and cultures: "What we see on the global plane today proves this. Some people get shot in the neck, others make a film which doesn't respect our morals."[97]

Fadhi explained that competing within the cultural realm with well-financed films and a global entertainment industry was a serious challenge for the movement. Budgets could not provide the means to create entirely separate institutions as had occurred in other realms of the MUR's work, notably in the field of social welfare, and so the movement was contemplating how it could work with existing structures, by effecting a change in mind-set, rather than to re-create an entire industry:[98]

> We, as Islamists (…) we don't have money to make a film which is either Islamic, or respects Islam, or which gives viewers a respect of Islam and their Islamic identity and values. From an artistic perspective, not a religious one, we don't have the means financially, to create a film. Film is very costly, we can't have this through one single association, even for the movement. This is why, we are seeking to convince Moroccan film producers, this is a very deep cultural work, and film directors to make films from a perspective which respects religion. Most of them, they are students of the Western schools, which don't respect this.

96 Abdul Fehdi, MUR head of the cultural specialisation, 21/10/09

97 Abdul Fehdi, MUR head of the cultural specialisation, 21/10/09

98 Abdul Fehdi, MUR head of the cultural specialisation, 21/10/09

Among the issues singled out as particularly at odds with Moroccan culture and custom was the presence of nudity in film, which Fadhi argued was shocking to the Moroccan public: “they show naked women, etc. – these are things which shock the Moroccan spectator, even if the Moroccan spectator has no voice to express this.”[99] Because in some cases, such films are state funded, the movement also seeks to hold the State to account for funding films which it considers to be at odds with the Islamic basis for its legitimacy.

3.4.6 Association Joudour

The movement has a specialization which focuses on outreach to Moroccans abroad and which is currently represented in Morocco by the ‘Association *joudour*’ (*joudour* meaning ‘root’). This is one of the more secretive of the MUR’s areas of work given the Kingdom’s concern with international Islamic movements and potential political tensions arising from Moroccan Islamic movements influencing the practise of Islam in other countries, such as France[100] or Spain. For this reason, the association is also technically separate to the movement and does not feature within its organizational structures officially, although according to MUR activist Abdelnasser Tijani “we collaborate”[101] both with the MUR central, and also with the state.

The association was founded by Adelnasser Tijani, also its president, in August 2009 to assist Moroccans living abroad in finding religious leadership voices, or imams for conferences, facilitating children’s Arabic language holiday camps in Morocco, establishing tourist camps for the children of Moroccans living abroad, offering support to families experiencing problems, seeking to attract Moroccans to invest in Morocco and collaborating with Moroccan organizations abroad by providing human resources and links with Morocco

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99 Abdul Fehdi, MUR head of the cultural specialisation, 21/10/09

100 Particularly in light of efforts by the French government to establish an “Islam de France” or French understanding of Islam, precisely in reaction to its perception of outside interference in the French Muslim community.

101 Tijani, Interview, 2010.

as a means of "distancing them from extremist ideas".[94] Unofficially it also connects Moroccans from the MUR with Moroccans from other Islamic currents which contributes to the movement's sense of itself as operating within the framework of a broader, international Islamic awakening.

Conclusion

The MUR specializations are one of the least understood or studied aspects of the organization, despite the fact they may be among its most important. The MUR's objective, as a social movement, is to seek to shift the direction of society's evolution, away from a conception of modernity defined according to a narrow elite whose ideas are presumed to reflect contested values influenced by neo-colonial modes of thinking, to a vision devised by a new, emerging middle class who claims greater authenticity for its ideals based on Islamic parameters deemed to reflect greater historical continuity, and which garner widespread grassroots support. The MUR's specializations function reflexively both in providing the movement access to a wide pool of people who will more or less directly be exposed to their outlook, but also through maintaining a connection to the values of the broader population, allowing them to remain connected in their ethos to popular ideals. Although the MUR does not absorb these entirely uncritically, and in many ways, seeks to mould localized Islamic practise inline with its understanding of dogma, influencing it and seeking to change it, it undertakes this effort at 'reform' through a societal exchange in which both local populations and the movement are influenced by the exchange of services.

While most studies of Islamic movements focus on the political parties which emerge from them, the study of the MUR suggests that the PJD should really only be assessed as one of several avenues through which the MUR seeks to undertake change. What is more, the limitations of the highly centralized political system also means that alternative modes of action may actually be more effective in establishing the sort of change within society which the movement envisages. The MUR's specializations are the concrete application of the principles derived within the MUR and the most potent means of

disseminating its ethos – through action. Ultimately, the MUR's success in spreading its ideals is not measured in votes for the PJD, nor by the number of new MUR recruits, something the movement itself does not consider a priority, but in the growth of its associations and the reach of its networks, which currently are rivalled only by al-ᶜAdl wa'l-Iḥsān. Given that the MUR views all Islamic movements as ultimately working to deepen an Islamic frame of reference, this rivalry is true at an ideological level, but less significant at the level of a movement which seeks to assert the supremacy of an Islamic frame of reference in the daily life of all Moroccans.

4. THE PJD: BEYOND THE MUR'S POLITICAL WING

Introduction

The Party of Justice and Development (PJD) is the most well known of the MUR's specialisations. Its success at the polls, gradualist approach and seeming willingness to negotiate the terms of its presence on the political scene in order to avoid conflict with the authorities have come to represent its brand of 'Islamist' political participation. While initially clearly linked to the movement, a vehicle for its political ambitions, the PJD has since 'outgrown' its initial remit as a MUR specialization, designed to actualize its political vision, and today, formal links to the central movement have been all but severed in order to comply with pressure from the authorities. But this severance has also brought with it increasing tensions between the PJD and the MUR, as the PJD has taken on a life of its own and the MUR continues to question whether its current form represents the true actualization of its ideals in the political sphere. This section proposes to conceive of the PJD, at least in its initial phase, as the political project of the MUR, while examining its gradual transition to a more independent entity, by virtue of the constraints of the institutional parameters and the party's natural evolution. What is more, while many studies have focused on the policies and platforms of the PJD, few have examined how the MUR's views have informed the PJD's vision. This chapter will outline the MUR's political vision and analyse the extent to which the PJD can be said to reflect those ideals.

4.1 The PJD – Realising the MUR's Political Vision?

4.1.1 Creating the 'Political Vision'

Most studies of the MUR in Morocco focus on the Party for Justice and Development (PJD) and view the MUR as the associational branch of the political party, designed to shore up support at elections and mobilize the grassroots for the party. But such a characterization misrepresents the nature of the MUR and omits the chronology of the movement from which the PJD emerged. The PJD represents the formalisation of the MUR

and its predecessor movements' ambitions for formal political representation, of which there were several varying precedents (applications for political parties, attempts to join other parties, etc.).

In fact, although the MUR was formerly established in 1996, the same year that a number of its members joined the Democratic and Constitutional Popular Movement party (MPDC), rebranded the PJD in 1998, the antecedents of the MUR, the League for an Islamic Future (LIF) and the Movement for Reform and Renewal (MRR), significantly predate the PJD and political activism had long been conceived by both branches as merely one aspect of their *daᶜwah* activities. This suggests that the relationship between the MUR and the PJD needs to be thought of in more complex terms than the MUR merely providing constituency-building activities for the party.

In 1996, as the MRR and the LIF were preparing to unite with the MPDC, two sub-groups from the LIF, the Jamāᶜa Daᶜwa bi-Fas and the Jamaa Shourouq expressed concern over the political direction in which the newly united movement seemed to be heading. Consequently, in July 1996, Jamāᶜa Daᶜwa bi-Fas asked for the prioritisation of the MUR unification and for the political alliance with the MPDC to be delayed. This proposal was rejected and the group subsequently left[1], marking the departure of the most *daᶜwah*-education focused sub-group among those considering union in the MUR and the recognition of remaining groups that, to varying degrees of importance, political work would constitute one important facet of their project for the Islamicization of society.

This historical itinerary suggests the PJD was, from the outset, viewed as the culmination of the LIF and the MRR's previously thwarted political ambitions. But it is also evidence of the limited importance attributed to political work within the broader framework of Islamic reform which both movements considered to be the ultimate objective.

1 Their exit from the joint unification was a reflection of their belief that the social and cultural work, which was being deepened through the union, not only came first, but could be damaged by a foray into the political field. Mechtalli, Interview, 2009.

4.1.2 The relationship between the MUR and the PJD

The PJD is often referred to as the political wing of the MUR despite the official line which claims total independence between the two organisations:[2]

> According to the official discourse of the MUR and the PJD respectively, the two organizations are independent as the PJD is a political party and concentrates on the parliamentary arena whereas the MUR remains an independent civil society organization which puts its main emphasis on *daᶜwa* (propagation, 'calling' to Islam) and associational activities.

Given the legal obligation on the movement to distinguish its activities from the political domain, is the distinction between the MUR and the PJD strictly instrumental? Zeghal notes that the dual MUR/PJD strategy serves a 'divide to survive' objective,[3] the dual structures offering two separate grounds of operation and recruitment, whilst providing a link between the establishment and the grassroots.

According to Willis,[4] the distinction between the MUR and the PJD was stressed from the outset to protect the MUR so that "in the event that the MPDC might be banned or dissolved by the authorities", the consequence would not be the loss of "a legal organisational base."

The relationship between the movement and the party is more complex than a mere branch might indicate. In an interview in 1997, when the PJD was officially a MUR 'specialization',[5] meaning key decisions pertaining to its functioning were being taken within the MUR executive office, Benkirane stated that although independent, the movement

2 Pruzan -Jørgensen, Julie. E., *The Islamist Movement in Morocco: Main Actors and Regime Responses*. Danish Institute For International Studies Report (Copenhagen, DIIS, 05/2010). http://www.humansecuritygateway.com/documents/DIIS_Islamist_Movement_Morocco.pdf, p. 12

3 Zeghal, M., *Les islamistes marocains : le défi à la monarchie* (Paris: Découverte, 2005), p.216

4 Willis, "Between *alternance* and the *Makhzen: At-Tawhid wa Al-Islah's* entry into Moroccan politics", *The Journal of North African Studies* 4:3 (1999), pp. 45-80, p. 48.

5 Its status was changed to a 'partnership' in 2004.

and the party "cooperate".[6] The exact nature of this "cooperation" has been the subject of much speculation and evolved significantly from 1999 to the present.

Further insights into the early understanding of the relationship between the movement and the party were provided by a 1998 document issued by the MUR executive office, entitled "On the Relationship between the Party and the Movement" in which it stated that "the actions of the movement in the political field is of a specialised nature, indicating an extension of the message of predication which consists of enjoining the Good and forbidding Evil, just as this specialization reinforces the reformative action undertaken by the movement."[7] It further added that "the MUR and the MPDC are two independent entities from one another, legally and materially, neither exercising tutelage over the other, but the two organizations are united in cooperation and consultation."[8]

A significant number of senior MUR figures participated in the 1999 PJD's national congress, where such notables as Saâdeddine el Othmani, Abdelilah Benkirane, Abdallah Baha, Mustapha Ramid and Mohamed Yatim were elected to the party's general secretariat. Meanwhile, they also held positions within the MUR's executive office, dating back to the MUR's 1998 congress. Organizationally, the participation of senior MUR members in the PJD initially created significant overlap between the leadership of the social movement and the party.

By 2003, a majority of the PJD's leadership still hailed from the MUR: "of seventeen members of the secretary general, only six are former members of the MPDC."[9] In

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6 Interview in *La Nouvelle Tribune*, no. 83, 1997, cited in (Ben Elmostafa, O., *Les mouvements islamistes au Maroc leurs modes d'action et d'organisation* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007), p. 69).

7 Cited in Panoramaroc, "Enquête : PJD et MUR, histoire d'un mariage coutumier", Panora24.com, 16/9/2012, accessed 4/02/2013

8 Cited in Panoramaroc, "Enquête : PJD et MUR, histoire d'un mariage coutumier", *Panora24.com*, 16/9/2012, accessed 4/02/2013

9 Zeghal, *Les islamistes marocains*, p. 216.

her 2006 Thesis, Eva Wegner[10] placed the percentage of MUR members who directly engaged in the PJD at 15% but recognized that up to 90% of those national, provincial and local party leaders and candidates hail from the MUR. Those individuals are also over-represented in the party's most senior positions.

Due to both media and official criticism directed at this overlap – deemed to infringe rules of secularism within Moroccan politics, the MUR subsequently imposed an internal rule which prohibited members from holding both formal MUR posts and running as an MP.[11] From 2010 and the MUR's fourth annual congress, no members of the PJD were elected to the MUR executive office, although both Mohamed Yatim (Member of the PJD, National Office) and Abdellah Baha (Assistant Secretary General of the PJD) were nominated to advisory positions within the executive office, ensuring there remained cross-over figures between the movement and the party.

While most of the PJD's senior leadership (Benkirane, El Othmani, Ramid, Baha, etc.) have previously held senior positions within the MUR, they no longer hold simultaneous posts within both, although in most cases, they have continued to have strong social and, in some cases, educational links to the movement, since all members of the MUR are expected to keep up educational classes, regardless of seniority and many attend MUR meetings where they hold 'advisory' or 'nominal' positions, which avoid official titles.

While the PJD is no longer officially represented at MUR congress meetings, PJD figures are often present. According to Clark, "communities of participants accept, internalize and promote a particular set of values in these networks,"[12] suggesting such forums provide a space for the cementing of shared ideals. The MUR congress brings

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10 Wegner, Eva (2006), *The Inclusion of Islamist Movements into the Political Institutions: The Case of the Moroccan 'Party of Justice and Development* [PhD Dissertation]. Florence: European University Institute.

11 Although when it came to meeting quotas on women within the party, this rule was bent.

12 Clark, J.. *Islam, Charity, and Activism: Middle-Class Networks and Social Welfare in Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2003), p. 154.

together the representatives from each of the MUR's specializations with the main body of the MUR and is an opportunity to update MUR central on their activities and progress. It is also an opportunity to refocus on shared strategic objectives and principles. As such, the formal link to the central movement has been lost and replaced by informal, ideological links, based on the MUR's educational program.

While the nature of the relationship between the MUR and the PJD may have evolved over time, the MUR's political vision outlines ambitions for the political sphere which go beyond the remit of a political party.

4.2 The MUR's 'Political Vision'

The MUR has among its core strategic documents, a pamphlet entitled 'The Political Vision' (*al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*),[13] in which the movement details its political principles and ideals. In order to assess any ideological overlap between the MUR's political ideas and those of the PJD, it is worth looking at this document in some detail.

Published in 2003, this vision represents the ideals which the movement aspires to see actualized in the political sphere. However, it is not a political manifesto which seeks to advance specific policies. Rather, its aim is to establish the guiding principles of any sort of political action, grounded in the Qur'an and Sunna: "this paper aims to define the general principles that guide our political and social behaviour. And not to outline our theoretical and conceptual visions about the constituents of the political reality."[14]

This reflects the movement's efforts to respect the 'rules of the game', as set by the authorities, and not directly encroach, as a religious organization, on the political domain. It also means that although the movement supports the PJD as the party currently deemed to be

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13 Ḥarakat al-Tawḥīd wa'l-Iṣlāḥ, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya* (Rabat, Morocco: Top Press, 2003). Retrieved via: http://www.alislah.ma/images/stories/siyasi.pdf (sourced: 27/03/2015).

14 In focusing on the core texts, the movement aligns itself with the Salafī reformist trend of a return to the sources and implicitly offers and alternative approach to that of the kingdom's official religious institutions which are required to abide by Morocco's traditional adherence to the Mālikī school of jurisprudence. Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*, p. 4.

best carrying that ethos into the political domain, it could in theory at least, and according to some activists, shift that support to any party deemed to best be enacting those same principles.

What the movement really seeks is a transformation of the political sphere, from a largely symbolically religious monarchy to what the movement terms a '*khilāfa rissāliya*', a caliphate driven by the objective of spreading Islamic values and specifically, a caliphate that embodies the Prophet's paradigm of leadership.

4.1.1 Truly Islamic Government – the 'khilafa rissāliya'

The movement defines the guiding principles of political action as being based on a combination of general Islamic precepts and the paradigm of political action, the rule of the Prophet Muḥammad and that of the 'rightly guided Caliphs'. It considers that Muslims have to "follow in their examples and to strive to establish that model...."[15] Underlying this aspiration is the belief that the current political system has drifted from its ideal due to a number of factors, including internal ones pre-dating colonialism, such as the creation of 'local aristocracies', Moroccans having distanced themselves from the guiding principles of the Qur'an and Sunna[16] namely in education, in addition to the impact of colonialism on all aspects of the state (legal, constitutional, economic, social).

The MUR established a list of priorities in its work and defined the interest of "preserving and establishing the religion"[17] as its first priority. This partly explains its support for the monarchy since the monarchy's religious identity and, specifically, the grounding for its legitimacy in a religious paradigm, is regarded as a protection against secularizing tendencies. The movement also recognizes that the very same socio-religious symbols and practises which sustain the King's position enable a broader societal dialogue

15 Ḥarakat al-Tawḥid wa'l-Iṣlāḥ, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya* (Rabat, Morocco: Top Press, 2003), p. 7.

16 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*; p. 23.

17 Ḥarakat al-Tawḥid wa'l-Iṣlāḥ, *ʿAshara sanawāt min tawḥīd wa'l-islāḥ* (Rabat, Morocco: Top Press, 2006), p. 44.

about religion in which the basic, untouchable premise, is that Islam with the King as its official guardian, is at the heart of Moroccan identity.

However, the current political system is described as deeply indebted to the legacy of colonialism and to deficiencies in the Islamic understanding of most Moroccans, which the movement has advocated remedying through a 'true' Islamic state,[18] or '*khilāfa rissāliya*'.

The MUR provides the general characteristics of the 'true' Islamic state (*khilāfa*), as the grounding of all governing authority in the Qur'an and Sunnah: "The Qur'an and the Sunna are its constitution, and its supreme legislative reference which supersedes even the Rulers (*al-khulafāʾ*)."[19] The establishment of an authority higher than that of the ruler is a means of reframing the current political system in order to render the king accountable to the people through the very religious symbols which he employs for his legitimation. The literature also describes the fact that the state must be '*rissāliya*',[20] a term coined by the movement to signify emulating the Prophetic paradigm. It is also described as electoral[21] and consultative,[22] although this is defined as the final recourse after consulting the Qur'an and Sunna first. It must also establish justice and guarantee rights[23], enable freedom of expression and the right to oppose.[24]

Reflecting its concern as regards the unchecked powers of the monarch, the MUR has elaborated on how to check and limit arbitrary personal rule and replace it with the rule of law. It argues that by placing Islam above all other sources of authority, this can act as a

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18 The group use the term "*khilāfa rissāliyya*", meaning an Islamic state where governance conforms to Prophetic praxis, as understood by the movement. Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*; p. 9.

19 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*; p. 9.

20 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*; p. 9.

21 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*; p.10.

22 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*; p.10.

23 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*; p. 11.

24 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*; p.12.

check on a ruler's power. The description of the Qur'an and the Sunna as the "supreme legislative reference which supersedes even the Rulers (*khulafāʾ*)" is indicative of the MUR's use of Islamic precepts to attempt to account the Monarch, drawing on an 'objective', independent set of values which they seek to use to limit the king's power.

The MUR's 'Political Vision' places given ideals, sourced in Islamic texts, above the King's personal authority and premise his position as subservient to these ideals. This is a deeply controversial position in a country in which the King's religious authority is unquestionable and in which he is deemed to be the highest religious authority.

Although the MUR's statement of 'Islam as above the ruler' is, in theory, recognized by the King himself who is duty bound to uphold this by virtue of his title as 'leader of the believers', the movement seeks to render concrete what has largely been understood in looser, more symbolic, terms in the modern era. In this sense, while the PJD openly subscribes to the constants of the political field, the MUR's position is unambiguously more confrontational in its challenge to the King's authority, questioning the substance of religious symbolism used to uphold his legitimacy and authority.

The MUR considers the aim of any political activism as safeguarding the reference to Islam within the system and ensuring that all decisions taken in the political realm conform as closely as possible to the letter and spirit of the law: "The Qur'an and the Sunna are its constitution…."[25] Whilst the group has remained firmly committed to retaining the reference to Islam in all matters of the state, it does not advocate the implementation of any rulings without public backing: "If we succeed in convincing people to adopt our vision or readings, it is fine, but if not, we must renew our ways, our vehicles for convincing people. …the PJD thinks at this level, there is no contradiction between Islam and democracy."[26] This is where the MUR's educational and social projects operate in synchrony with the

25 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*; p. 9.

26 Talidi, Interview, 2009.

PJD's project, since they are regarded as preparing the terrain for people to accept the sorts of policies the PJD might propose.

The MUR conceives of the political party as providing one avenue for the achievement of the broader, more substantive reform which would establish an understanding of Islam, as a discursive tool for the public contestation of power including the supreme power of the king, typically understood as outside the realm of contestation.

In its political vision, the MUR contrasts the *khilāfa*, which it defines as the idealized system of rule embodied by the Prophet's leadership and during the 40 year period which ensued, with the monarchical system, which it defines as beginning with the Umayyad caliphate and which it characterizes as extravagance and non-consensual rule: "The monarchy we also mean is any system which does not bear the mark of prophethood and goes against its guidance, either in the use of aspects of splendor and luxury in what was not encountered during the time of the Prophet, or in rejecting what is right and obstructing sharia."[27] This implied critique of the regime, well known for its opulence and extravagance, seeks to play on the terrain of the King's religious legitimacy by questioning his adherence to the principles underpinning it. The very fact of contrasting the idealized Islamic system (*khilāfa*) with the monarchy, a term used loosely but clearly to refer to the prototype of an 'un-Islamic' system betrays a far more biting critique of the monarchy than is openly expressed.

The MUR has indicated that the concept of '*khilāfa*' is not restricted to a single political system but can take differing forms based on the independent reasoning (*ijtihād*) of Muslims at different times and places in history. Rather the term reflects the "establishment of the meanings (values) of the religion in ruling and administering the matters of the Umma, as well as its wealth, according to the principles of the religion."[28] According to Faluli, "even

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27 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*, p.13.

28 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*, p.13.

if you don't find an ideal form in Islam, there are principles, of justice, equity, etc. – each form of government which realises these principles, is a 'Divine' government".[29]

Gudrun Kramer notes that one of the characteristics of much contemporary Islamist political writing is its "…attempt to translate ethical and religious duties into principles of political responsibility and participation" which she contends results in a sacralisation of politics: "The submission to God's sovereignty as demonstrated in the strict and exclusive application of the sharia, therefore, signifies not just the (only genuine) rule of law, but also the (only genuine) liberation of man from servitude to man (*ᶜubūdiyyat al-insān).*"[30] In this sense, the MUR has described Islam as providing a framework for limits on the monarchy's powers and as providing a framework of liberation from all forms of despotism, given that freedom is understood as coming through submission to God's ultimate sovereignty to which even the King is not immune.

In the MUR's political vision, the term 'monarchy' is taken to mean all systems which reflect unjust values and "where the *sharīᶜah* was not applied properly, and justice has been weakened, and the rights of expression and opposition have been violated, and rulers allowed themselves to use the wealth of the Muslims in ways that oppose the shariah"[31]. However, the MUR caveats its position by suggesting in times of 'need', a monarchical system could be acceptable as a *temporary* measure if "it was used, or some of its aspects were used in establishing religion and supporting the sharia…"[32] Thus, the MUR's position on the monarchy appears far more critical than that of the PJD, which describes itself as a 'royalist party'.[33]

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29 Faluli, Interview, 2009.

30 Kramer, Gudrun, "Islamist Notions of Democracy" in *MER* 183 (1993), accessed via: http://www.merip.org/mer/mer183/islamist-notions-democracy, p.76

31 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*, p.14.

32 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*, p.15.

33 Baldé, Oumar , "Mustapha El Khalfi du PJD : « Nous ne nous attendons pas à des relations difficiles avec le Palais", *Yabilaadi.com*, 27/11/2011, accessed 28/09/16 http://www.yabiladi.com/articles/details/7586/mustapha-khalfi-nous-nous-attendons.html

Nowhere is this ambiguous loyalty better evidenced than in the movement's conception of the national oath of loyalty to the King, the *baʾya*. With the *baʾya* the movement seeks to play the King at his own game, infusing religious symbols of loyalty with reciprocal meaning.

4.1.2 The baʾya – Reworking Islamic Symbols

The movement describes the Moroccan political system as an imperfect Islamic state, founded historically on a number of pillars, including: Islam, "Islam remains, since the creation of the Moroccan state, the highest reference among Moroccans…,"[34] lineage and tribal solidarity,[35] the *bayʾa*, or contract between the ruler and the ruled, the guarantee of unity among the tribes and independence from foreign powers: "Failure to fulfill this condition (requirement) meant a revolt against the central power which could not defend the nation or surrendered to its adversaries."[36] In outlining the pillars the group seeks to establish the non-negotiable basis for consensual rule between the ruler and his subjects and lays out its ideals for the governing framework.

For the movement the *bayʾa*, an annual ceremonial oath of allegiance to the King, is not merely symbolic or procedural. Rather the movement has sought to restore the historical function of the *bayʾa* and its centrality to the relationship between the ruler and the ruled: "the King is named based on the *bayʾa*, … He is named on the basis of the Qur'an and Sunnah and protection of religion, it is a religious act between the King and those he governs."[37] The Moroccan monarchy has long used these politico-religious symbols as part of its religious capital to cement the King's political authority, but the monarchy has so far not been challenged on the potential mutual implications of those symbols on the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. This is the intended objective of the

34 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*, p. 20.

35 '*ʿaṣabiyya*': the term is sometimes understood as 'nationalism'.

36 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*, p. 22.

37 Faluli, Interview, 2009.

movement's support for and attempt to re-assert a more substantive significance to what have largely become empty symbols of ritual legitimization.

Tozy[38] observes that, "all the producers of meaning attached to the service of the Kingdom are dedicated to providing a reminder of the filiation of the monarchy with the earliest governors of Islam and seek to reproduce the traditional political ritual." This is part of what Daadaouoi[39] refers to as "institutionalized Rituals of Power (ROP)" which function as a cultural toolkit at the heart of the King's political power. In defining the *bayᵓa* itself, the movement is acknowledging its centrality, as dictated by the regime, but contesting the implications of its significance in terms of the King's accountability to the people. While the current re-working of the symbolism of the *bayᵓa* has tended to emphasise the subservience[40] of the people to the King, Faluli suggests the King's failure to abide by the terms of the contract could and ought to have political consequence: "The king makes sure he doesn't go against the sharia, as this would be grounds for overthrowing."[41]

In fact, Bencheikh[42] argues that while the significance of the *bayᵓa* has been reworked over the years, the contractual understanding is in fact closer to its' original significance in the period following the death of the Prophet Muḥammad, which was conceived of as a pact implying reciprocal obligations. With the centralization of the modern state, the *bayᵓa* took on a far more hierarchical dimension of the submission of the people to the ruler.[43] Kramer asserts that modern Islamic movements like the MUR reinterpret religious rulings to suit their political ends so that:[44]

38 Tozy, *Monarchie et Islam politique au maroc,* p. 33.

39 Daadaoui, M., *Moroccan Monarchy and the Islamist Challenge: Maintaining Makhzen Power* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

40 Mohamed Tozy states that "the ceremony of allegiance is central in the strategy of legitimation of the Moroccan political system." (Bencheikh, 2008)

41 Faluli, Interview, 2009.

42 Bencheikh, Ghaleb and Antoine Sfeir, "Lettre ouverte aux islamistes" (Paris: Bayard Jeunesse, 2008).

43 The ruler who was referred to by different names at different points in history: Imam, Mehdi, Caliph, etc.

> …ethical and religious duties and injunctions are systematically politicized, extended and institutionalized. In a process that clearly betrays the impact of modern (Western) political ideas, the transition is made from a limited involvement of the community in selecting the leader via shūrā and the oath of allegiance (*bayʾa*) to a constitutional system involving continuous consultation and permanent control over the ruler and over government in general, which are now held responsible not only to God but also to their electorate.

In this sense, the MUR has reworked the significance of the *bayʾa* in order to ultimately restrict the King's power, drawing him into the political foray over which he has historically presided as arbiter, but never competitor. The King's cultural 'toolkit', used for his religious legitimation, becomes a site of meaning contestation and struggle for pre-eminence.

While this symbolism is the site of open contestation by the movement, the PJD as a formal political party has been required to operate within the secular framework of the state and as such, it's early *daʿwa*-infused politics has been gradually replaced by a commitment to more concrete policy issues.

4.3 The limits of religious politics

4.3.1 Religious politics in a secular framework

The relationship between the MUR and the PJD is informed by the Moroccan political setting which prohibits religious political parties and insists on a distinction between religious and political activism. Thus any analysis must take into consideration pragmatic accommodations of these legal stipulations, rather than assuming delimitations necessarily reflect ideological prerogatives.

Wegner describes the emergence of a political party from a wider social movement, as the "institutional branch of the movement organization".[45] This description is befitting of the relationship between the MUR and the PJD in that the PJD's activities are considered as only one part of the organization's broader social and political activities. According to

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44 Kramer, M., "Coming to Terms: Fundamentalists or Islamists?", *Middle East Quarterly* (2003), pp. 65-77, p. 77.

45 Wegner, *The Inclusion of Islamist Movements into the Political Institutions*, p. 5.

Mohamed Darif,[46] the relationship of the PJD to the MUR can be described as a "strategic partnership", whereby each organisation takes autonomous decisions, has autonomous projects, but share the same fundamental project and ideological outlook. In an article in December 1998, a PJD spokesperson described the division of tasks, as the MUR performs the *da^{c}wa* and social action and education, based on Islamic precepts, whilst the PJD deals with political matters.[47] This reflects a description offered by MUR President, Mohamed Hamdaoui in 2009, "This partnership (the PJD) stays in contact with the societal project, but it is not under the tutelage of the movement. We check - does the party defend religion, does it counter corruption? As long as it fights corruption, it is a party I can help, even though, it may not have direct relations with us, at an organisational level."[48] Describing the interaction between the work of the party and that of the social movement, Bilal Talidi, a PJD member and *Attajdid* journalist, said: "Whenever, thanks to the results of *da^{c}wah*, a value comes to enjoy social legitimacy, it becomes incumbent on politics to fortify it by enacting clear policies and laws around which the people will rally."[49]

The PJD's trajectory provides insight into the pressures of the political milieu, evidenced by the party agenda's shift from reflecting the MUR's moralising outlook in the late 1990s, towards a political party whose policies conform more closely to traditional manifestos from 2003 onwards and the pressure which followed the Casablanca bombings.[50] As a consequence, the party experienced renewed pressure both from the authorities and the media to conform more closely to the discourse of traditional political parties and distance itself from the religious movement.

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46 Darif, Interview, 2009.

47 *La Gazette du Maroc*, 7 December 1998.

48 Hamdaoui, Interview, 2009.

49 Cited in: Lav, D., "The Next Proving Ground for Political Islam: The September 7, 2007 Parliamentary Elections in Morocco", *Inquiry & Analysis Series Report No. 384*, 6/9/2007 (The Middle East Media Research Institute, 2007) accessed via: http://www.memri.org/report/en/print2368.htm.

50 Coordinated suicide bombings which killed forty-five people.

The evolution in the PJD's identity and actions has led to increasing tensions between the party and the movement, over the party's direction, and concern over its commitment to the MUR's original objectives in engaging with the political sphere. Despite this, PJD member Dr Rida Ben Khaldoun described the MUR in 2009 as "the soul of the PJD"[51] and referred to the movement as an important anchor for political figures, which could help them remain committed to their ideals amongst the vagaries of politics. For him and others, the MUR is conceived as providing a moral and spiritual grounding for those engaged in politics and as such, continues to exert an ideological pull in terms of their ideals and objectives.

What is clear in the relationship between the MUR and the PJD is that the principles, behaviours and practises learned within the MUR were repeated, reshaped and adapted within the PJD to produce an idealised model of political behaviour. Willis notes that PJD members had the best rates of attendance at parliamentary sessions and asked the most questions of ministers.[52] What is more, the PJD was the first party in government to begin its reimbursement[53] of the state of the subsidies provided to parties running in the elections, returning 20 million of the 54 million dirhams given to the party by the Ministry of Interior. It also publishes the attendance record of all members at parliamentary sessions in order to highlight chronic absenteeism found in other parties.[54]

The MUR is also viewed as preparing the terrain in order for people to be more receptive to PJD policies and provide a grassroots approach to issues which are deemed too complex to address strictly through the political route. In a 2004 interview in which he

51 Ben Khaldoun, Interview, 2009.

52 Willis, J.M., "Islamism, Democratization and Disillusionment: Morocco's Legislative Elections of 2007"; http://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/mec/morocco/Islamism-Democratisation-Disillusionment.pdf

53 No Author, "le tresor de guerre du PJD", *LaVieEco.com* 15/9/14, accessed via: http://www.lavieeco.com/actualite/le-tresor-de-guerre-du-pjd-6463.html

54 See: "The U.S., the EU and Middle East Reform: What Can We Learn from Morocco? A Middle East Program Morocco Trip Report," Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), March 2006. Quoted in: http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33486.pdf

discussed the sale of alcohol in Morocco and the PJD's position on the issue, Saaedine el Othmani stated:[55]

> … social phenomena cannot be dealt with solely through judicial or repressive means, it is necessary to have recourse to social remedies through information and awareness campaigns. It is a long-term project which requires the intervention of institutions of socialization: the family, the mosque, the media to inform, awareness and supporting citizens. The educational, social and cultural approaches are undeniable.

MUR president Mohamed Hamdoui further clarified the supportive role that social activism provides to the political sphere, comparing the PJD to Turkey's AK party and the MUR to the "Gulen", social and religious, movement of Sayid Nursi:[56]

> Gulen is the infrastructure of the AKP – at the time Erbakan was against the Nurserin,[57] he wanted to work as submarines, have TV stations, have Zaman newspaper which sells 800,000 copies a day, have schools throughout world, … The Nurserin is a strong movement in the financial stakes, they have 4-5 channels and many schools, but in the end, what is it doing actually, it is supporting a political party. Same as what we do with the PJD..

The PJD does not envisage the possibility of effective change within society without the attendant and parallel social and cultural work of the MUR to support action in the political domain.

As such, the MUR continues to provide a moral anchor both to individual MPs and also to the party as a whole, offering a cultural steerage at the grassroots level which the PJD can capitalize on. However this is not a one-way street. The MUR also benefits from a political sphere in which its ideals are formalized and stamped in official legitimacy. This confers the MUR's cultural project greater validity and a sense of official validation of its outlook and ideological ambitions:[58]

> … by embedding religious values in state institutions and subsidizing the activities of religious actors, …the state helps regenerate national religious identities, props up the social-religious authority of religious leaders, and makes the appearance of a public religion more likely.

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55 Interview with Saaedine el Othmani, in *La vie economique*, March 28th 2004.;

56 Hamdaoui, Interview, 2009.

57 The Nur Movement.

58 Driessen, M. D., *Religion and Democratization: Framing Religious and Political Identities in Muslim and Catholic Societies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 260.

This mutually transformative process explains both why the MUR would view the PJD's presence in the political field as a success, despite what it might view as a dilution of its core message, and why the PJD itself would be expected to be modified by the environment in which it operates.

While the PJD can no longer openly present itself as undertaking a form of political *daᶜwa*, the MUR may continue to regard its contribution as the closest current actualization of its ideals, within the limits set by the state.

4.3.2 From Political daᶜwa to 'just another party'?

The MUR describes political participation as an obligation for Muslims,[59] framing it as a form of *daᶜwa* in the political sphere. The MUR's ideological outlook clearly contains political ambitions and its activists are taught that Islam contains prescriptions for the political sphere. Describing the PJD, Ben Elmostafa states, "…the objective is to practise God's *daᶜwa*. Thus power is merely one way to work to this end, namely Islam."[60] MUR activist Jazila described politics as "an extension of your (MUR) training."[61]

The MUR's understanding is premised on the view that the modern state is hegemonic and intervenes at all levels in the life of an individual and in all matters (birth, death, marriage, education, etc.). Consequently, any attempt to address issues of popular concern requires political action:[62]

> If you don't integrate these institutions, you cannot participate in the decision making process. … If you take any social plague, unemployment, poverty, debauchery, alcoholism, drugs, you find the source is in the management of public affairs, so politics takes its importance from the nature of the modern state.

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59 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*.

60 Ben Elmostafa, O., *Les mouvements islamistes au Maroc leurs modes d'action et d'organisation* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007), p. 83.

61 Jazila, Interview, 2010.

62 Baha, Interview, 2009.

Whilst initially both the movement and the party's views overlapped closely, in no small part due to the initial predominance[63] within the PJD leadership of MUR leaders (all of the MPs elected in 1997 came from the MUR), an evolution has occurred since 1996 due to external pressure, whereby the party has sought to distance itself from the MUR's moralizing discourse. According to Abdullah Baha,[64]

> When we entered into politics, we entered as Islamists, we favoured identity but gradually you are confronted with matters of management, the citizen doesn't contest his being Muslim but has problems in the managing of daily life, so you must respond to these needs. You try and resolve problems of society and its citizens, but whilst respecting and maintaining the Islamic reference. You don't become completely pragmatic, you cannot do this. Total pragmatism of trying to resolve problems without taking into account the referentials, no – but to try and emphasize resolving problems.

However, the PJD's members who have previously adhered to the MUR continue to view the movement as providing critical social and cultural work to support action in the political domain, as well as self-discipline for individual politicians: "Politics can draw you in different directions and it is very important to conserve education through the circles, learning the Qur'an, etc."[65] In this sense, the MUR remains the central body in which individual actors, including PJD MPs, source their holistic worldview and principles. These may not represent direct policy directives, but can be understood as ethical guidelines which are intended to be taken forward in all spheres, including politics. According to Belal, "…the members of the PJD undertake politics because they consider themselves harder working, more serious, more virtuous than the rest of the political class. They have this sentiment because they were educated by the MUR."[66] As in Turkey where the social movement led by Fethullah Gulen was seen as providing the cultural and educational framing which the AK Party was seen as embodying, the MUR's focus on the importance of maintaining Islamic values in all aspects of one's life feeds into the image of the PJD as a party with an 'Islamic

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63 All of the MPs elected in 1997 came from the MUR, see Willis, "Between *alternance* and the *Makhzen*".

64 Baha, Interview, 2009.

65 Benkhaldoun, Interview, 2010.

66 Belal, Youssef, *Le cheikh et le calife: sociologie religieuse de l'islam politique au Maroc* (Lyon: ENS Éditions, 2011), p. 263.

referential', similar to White's description of the Islamist party: "…political practice occurred within a cultural frame reinforced by religion."[67]

The fact the PJD was initially at least perceived as another avenue for *da^cwa* was evident in some of the criticism launched at the party's early foray into the political realm. The PJD initially entered into the political sphere in 1999 as a branch of the MUR and therefore viewed its political venture as a means of reinforcing Morocco's Islamic identity and seeking to promote Islamic values in the political sphere. Touria Gharbal, a politician who joined the party in 2002 explained that when she first joined, she had a different political language to many of her fellow party members. She corroborated the view that some in the party initially failed to speak the language of politics, continuing to discuss political issues in the language of *daᶜwa*:[68]

> You must know how to distinguish. Political language is not *daᶜwa* language. You can do *daᶜwa* without others knowing it, you can begin with *bismillah*, etc, but political language is different to *daᶜwa* language. This is what differentiates me from the sisters in the PJD.

Today, the PJD continues to enjoy significant support in Morocco, after success in the 2011 elections, in which it won a plurality of seats and formed a coalition government. Its struggle to retain its roots as a party committed to a religious ethos in a secular political sphere has led to inevitable tensions both internally and with the MUR, but, for the MUR the PJD is now, simply, the party closest to its ideals – an allegiance which could shift if the PJD were to distance itself too dramatically from its original mandate.

Conclusion:

The study of the PJD in relation to the MUR should help reprioritize the significance of social movement activism versus elite activity within the Moroccan context and help better inform the extent to which PJD practises can and should be located within the habits

67 White, p. 95.

68 Gharbal, Interview, 2009.

and norms established by the social movement prior to the party's emergence and through on-going overlap in membership between the movement and the party.

Political activism reflects the group's belief in the creation of an "Islamic state",[69] not in the sense of supplanting the current system, but in a clear critique of its current functioning and a reflection of the group's belief that ensuring this objective requires a multipronged strategy which targets all levels of society, including the state. As Daadaoui contends, "Islamist activism is not merely institutional with the aim of challenging the state and its institutions; it should be examined also as a cultural phenomenon that cuts deeply through local Muslim societies and engages the regime in a public sphere of contested symbols and rituals."[70] This contestation occurs at many levels for the MUR, of which the PJD is merely one.

While presenting itself as accomodationist and supportive the of the monarchy, the MUR's 'project' ultimately aims at challenging and modifying the nature of the monarchy's power in line with its own conception of what the symbolism underpinning the king's socio-religious authority represents. But where the tension will continue to grow with the PJD is in the clear limits to direct challenges to the monarch's prerogatives and the continuing inability of the 'outsiders', in the form of the PJD MPs, to access the inner circle of power which ultimately holds the key to the sorts of reforms its original mandate aimed to address.

From the outset, the link between the party and the movement was to prove a complex line to balance, in light of legal and institutional pressures seeking to maintain a secular political sphere, as well as the need to reconcile increasingly diverging approaches, each forged from the necessities and experiences of the different milieu of social versus political action. The movement has long provided a degree of credibility to the party among supporters who viewed the PJD's appeal as lying partly or entirely in its religious identity –

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69 Quote from Mustafa Ramid, cited in (Ben Elmostafa, *Le cheikh et le calife*, p. 79).

70 Daadaoui, M., *Moroccan Monarchy and the Islamist Challenge: Maintaining Makhzen Power* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 103.

but with increased pressure to distance itself from the movement and friction between the movement and the party over the party's direction and objectives, many in the movement fear the PJD may lose the very distinctiveness which gave it its edge in a political scene perceived as sterile and incompetent. With the Gulen movement and the AK party at virtual war with one another in Turkey after decades of tacit cooperation, both parties are aware of the risks involved in any rupture between the movement and the party. While current human overlap continues to provide a bridge of communication and ideological connection between them, as younger generations come through with no links to the MUR however, the competition and divergences may deepen.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This thesis draws three main conclusions. Firstly, that Islamist movements have been disproportionately studied as political movements, omitting the broader social movement from which political parties often emerge. In so doing, such analysis skews the understanding of Islamists as political actors vying for political power primarily, and ignores the broader attempts at social and cultural change, in favour of explanations aimed at tying such work to the acquisition of more votes. In the case of the MUR, as Chapter Three shows, its political activism, since taken over by a now independent political party the PJD, is only one of manifold fields of work. The tracing of the movement's history, in Chapter One, through the union of two trends clearly shows its activists were not driven singularly by a thirst for political power, but rather by a vision for an idealized society, in which the achievement of social, educational, cultural and political change all play their part. As the movement has developed since its inception in 1996, it has given priority to educational objectives, '*tarbiyya*' and '*taqwīn*', education and training, aimed at forging '*rissāliyya*' individuals, agents of change armed with the MUR's understanding of Islam as a holistic prescription for all levels of society. Such moves are clearly not simply ideological and reflect pressure on the movement to distinguish between religious and political spheres of action, but such pressures can also be overstated. As Chapter One illustrates, the movements which combined to form the MUR were in many cases committed to educational, social and cultural forms of '*daᶜwa*' ('religious activism'), long before they sought political avenues for their activism and, in some cases, undertook the latter alongside their main work, suggesting formal politics has only ever been conceived as one of many routes for achieving the desired objective.

Such individuals are then expected to spread those same values in various fields, but most importantly, to demonstrate them and translate them into concrete action as both a means of serving the community, an important aspect of the MUR's religious ethos, but also of proving the ideological superiority of this holistic worldview, to the secularized

conception of Islam advocated by the state. As the state has sought to restrict the use of religion to meanings defined officially and in the narrow personal sphere, external spheres having been appropriated by official bodies, such as the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Habous. The ensuing tension which flows from such reforms has become apparent in public statements by MUR ideologue Ahmed Raissouni, namely concerning the reforms of the department for Islamic Affairs and Habous which he dubbed "excessive institutionalisation": "Things are moving towards an exclusion of all religious activity which is not under the control of the ministry of Habous and Islamic Affairs, which is not achievable. There is an attempt to ensure that there remain only official voices in the religious field".[1]

The MUR's vision of Islam as a holistic project for the betterment of society competes with the official narrative and seeks to illustrate its superiority through its grassroots work, where it need not preach its message, but merely deliver a more efficient, more reliable, religiously branded service. As such, the MUR's networks are much less about feeding the PJD's electoral machine, which it nonetheless provides significant support for, but rather aims to create a competing understanding of religiosity, one which includes a sense of religious identity as validating claims of accountability and responsiveness between the ruler and the ruled. In effect, this amounts to a subtle and very gradual shifting of public conceptions of religion, in order to formalize, through unofficial means, an understanding of religion which both supports the religious structure of the state, but also includes an implicit critique of its current functioning.

Such conclusions confirm the proposition that Islamic movements, or Islamists, need to be analyzed as other social movements and not merely as incubators for political parties. As Social Movement Theory suggests, a focus on the organization of the movement, including evolutions in its shape and structure, provide insight into means of organizing

1 Dahbi, Omar, "Que cherche Ahmed Raïssouni?" *Aujourd'hui le Maroc*, 24/10/2005, accessed: 26/9/2016, http://aujourdhui.ma/focus/que-cherche-ahmed-raissouni-36542.

collective action.[2] In the case of the MUR, unlike other organizations which seek to increase membership as a primary objective, it seeks to spread a conception of religiosity which need not require formal adherence to the movement to not only be shared, but also acted upon. In more authoritarian settings, understanding how religious organizations draw on the idiom of Islam to advance ultimately political ends is essential. In the case of the MUR, which ultimately aspires to see the resurrection of a grand Islamic civilization, a focus on the narrow field of formal politics is to see only the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

The second hypothesis concerns the perception of the MUR as a watered down version of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. In fact, this study shows that while key movement activists certainly took inspiration from the model of the Egyptian Brotherhood in the 1970s, the timing of the emergence of Islamic activist movements in Morocco occurred just as critiques of the Egyptian model were increasingly prevalent in Islamic activist circles and new currents were encouraging the exploration of more localized, more indigenously grounded, sources for Islamic renewal. This means that while the MUR remains well within the Islamic reformist current, of which the MB is a main component, it has evolved its own, original ideology, which as Chapter Three outlines, has sought to incorporate important situational differences between the two settings, namely the conception of religious continuity of the state and hence a notion of religious legitimacy conferred upon the monarchy, totally absent and indeed at odds with the Egyptian MB's conception of the monarchical system. This has allowed the MUR to develop a distinctive conception of *da*ᶜ*wa* which seeks not to convert, as is often the understanding of the word, but rather to broaden a sense of religious literacy; something it has worked to convince the regime ultimately serves to bolster its own authority, by supporting the monarchical claim to religious legitimacy. As such, the MUR has become something of an example among other Islamic political movements, with its leaders claiming that other powerful Islamic movements internationally, including the AK Party in Turkey, have taken inspiration from their model and ideas. Indeed,

2 See Wiktorowitz, *The Management of Islamic Activism*, p. 7.

the movement has acquired a unique status, contributing to new ideas in the Islamist conversation over the very nature of Islamic rule, modern conceptions of the Sharia and the nature of *daᶜwa*. In fact, its ideological leader Ahmed Raissouni is considered a key Islamist intellectual and his ideas are part of a broader conversation among Islamists over the future shape and substance of Islamist activism. This is best observed through his election as vice-president of the International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS)[3] in Saudi Arabia, an organization headed by the Egyptian MB ideologue Youssef Qaradawi.

Finally the third proposition concerns the notion that the PJD and the MUR to a lesser extent are tools of the Makhzen, designed through the timing of their emergence to undermine the Left, something their growth did lead to both politically as well as on Moroccan campuses, and channel religious discontent through formal politics, rather than the mass protest movement of al-ᶜAdl wa'l-Iḥsān and its revolutionary potential, or extremists networks. The regime has long used the same methods, recognition, containment, support and co-optation of different currents to undermine any growing opposition, Islāmists for the powerful leftists and more recently Amazirgh/ Berber culture movements to undermine Islāmists.[4]

It is certainly undeniable that the main leaders of the MUR and later of the PJD were, from the dissolution of the Chabiba Islamiya, in informal conversation with the authorities through various individuals, agents from the Ministry of Interior, the then Interior minister himself (Driss Basri),[5] Palace confident Abdel Khatib, and others. Some of the authors cited (Ben Elmostafa, Charaani, etc.) make reference to Benkirane specifically having been 'transformed' during his time in prison in the 1980s. Certainly, it is clear that conversations did occur in which the regime sought some form of accommodation with the

3 See "Ahmed Raissouni devient le bras droit de Youssef Qaradawi", *Tel Quel*, 15/12/2013, accessed 26/9/2016, http://telquel.ma/2013/12/15/ahmed-raissouni-devient-le-bras-droit-de-youssef-qaradawi_10089.

4 See Maddy-Weitzman, Bruce, and Daniel Zisenwine, *Contemporary Morocco: State, Politics and Society Under Mohammmed VI* (Oxford: Routledge, 2012), p. 5.

5 Interior Minister from 1979 to 1999

activists and it is also clear that political benefits would be reaped for the regime through the emergence of a politically quietist Islamic movement. In order to acquire this formal status, the MUR founders had to sign up to the regime's red lines – the inviolability of Islam, the Monarchy and the Moroccan status of the Western Sahara, but as is clear from testimonies and the literature, the reformed view of the monarchy and of Islamic legitimacy did not amount to wholesale approval of the current political system and its operations.

Unlike its main rival, al-ᶜAdl wa'l-Iḥsān, the MUR does not directly contest the King's religious claim to legitimacy, nonetheless, the movement seeks to drag the monarchy into a contest over meaning in which it aspires to influence the regime's understanding of religion. It does so in order to render the political sphere, understood here to encompass the Makhzen, more accountable, but also to popularize such a meaning so that the authorities are ultimately forced to respond to a widely understood conception of the very values underpinning the king's legitimacy. This in itself seeks to bring the king into a contested arena of power in which, unlike the stipulation of the constitution whereby the king is above the rules of the political game, he is in fact subject to constraints delineated by the very religious vocabulary he uses to justify his unquestionable authority.

And there is some evidence to suggest the strategy has been successful. According to Hamzawy:[6]

> Islamist currents in vital social spheres—education, social services, media outlets, and youth activism—have been strengthening in Morocco since the 1970s. The Islamist momentum has gradually forced the expansion of the space given to the articulation of religious ideas in politics.

In his study of the religious field in Morocco,[7] Mohamed Darif notes the processes through which the monarchy has gradually restricted the religious field in order to ultimately create a monopoly of meaning and legitimacy over the expression of religious ideas, from

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6 The 2007 Moroccan Parliamentary Elections: Results and Implications, Hamzawy, Amr, "The 2007 Moroccan Parliamentary Elections Results and Implications", *Carnegie Endowment*, Sept 11th 2007, accessed: 27/09/16, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/moroccan_parliamentary_elections_final.pdf, p. 4.

7 See Darif, *Monarchie marocaine et acteurs religieux.*

fatwas to the very meaning of religious symbols, such as the *bayʾa*. He calls this process a 'secularizing of Islam', which in effect amounts to restricting independent religious thinking to the private sphere and banishing all attempt to draw on omnipresent and powerful religious idioms in any other context but the legitimation of the king's rule, as *amīr al-muʾminīn*. Islamic symbolism is thus defined by the monarch and wielded by him in order to justify his authority and rule. Darif notes how historically, from the 1960s, the very concept of the *amīr al-muʾminīn*, introduced into the constitution in 1962,[8] was used to counter political attempts to limit the king's power. From the 1980s, this religious legitimacy was reinforced in order to counter currents which sought to oppose the official religious narrative. Darif distinguishes between the two, but I propose to consider so-called 'religious' movements, as 'political' in their ambitions to redefine the religious narrative, since religion and power are intertwined in the figure of the king and the discourse of such religious movements, whether al-ᶜAdl wa'l-Iḥsān, or the MUR, is inherently political in its attempts to redefine the relationship of the ruler to the ruled.

At a time when the state has sought to restrict the religious sphere, and restrict the expression of Islamic ideals outside of its monopoly, using the fear of extremists as grounding, the movement has sought to portray itself as an ally against the same extremism, while seeking to, once again, 'popularise' religious authority. In their '*daᶜwa* vision' (*ruʾya daᶜwiyya*), the movement calls on people to spread whatever little knowledge they have, in an effort to counteract the notion that only official figures can speak authoritatively on Islamic issues: "certainly, the more a preacher is knowledgeable and wise, the more effective the preaching. But there is no need to be a great expert of the Sharia, nor to know all its details to undertake this […] The Prophet said: 'Transmit even a single verse'."[9] This creates a sense of empowerment among lay-Muslims with regards their ability to draw on religious

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8 Darif, *Monarchie marocaine et acteurs religieux*, p. 21.

9 Quoted in: Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife*, p. 216.

discourse as a means of articulating the gap highlighted by the movement between an idealized Islamic system and the existing form of rule in Morocco.

The conflict with the regime emerges from the fact the MUR aims to restrict the discursive field around what is Islamic according to its own understanding of the faith and force the monarchy to adopt its conception over not only its own, but also that of other competing actors within society.

The movement's critical support for the monarchy operates through the projection of an idealized conception of the regime, which ultimately seeks to reshape it according to its own particular conception of Islamic rule. This means that Islam acts as a vernacular of contestation in which the meanings of religiously laden words is contested in a battle over authority and ultimately power. He who wields the power to define Islamic terminology has the power to define support for the monarch as either conditional or unconditional – as bearing certain responsibility, or as being above criticism. In this field of contested meaning, the MUR seeks to play on the sensitive terrain of religious legitimacy to, in theory, push the king towards greater 'religiosity', but where religiosity means a greater responsiveness to popular will and to a collectively forged set of values. As such, its outlook continues to contest the monarch's rule, but in a restricted political arena where both the political religious parameters are tightly controlled, it does so through subtle references to an idealized history which is the only authority higher than that of the King himself – Islam.

As the election campaign begins ahead of the 7th of October ballot, Prime Minister Benkirane, one of the leading figureheads of the MUR movement and subsequent PJD party, has been trying to play down tensions with the royal establishment. The PJD is favourite to remain the dominant party and Benkirane has responded to speculation by saying his party's five-year relationship with the monarchy has been one of "cooperation rather than confrontation".[10] The phrasing is an interesting one, reflecting much continuity in the MUR

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10 El Yaakoubi, Aziz, "Morocco's Islamist Party Plays Down Royal Tensions as Election Campaign Begins", *Reuters*, 25/09/16, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-morocco-election-idUSKCN11V0NE

strategy of working in seeming unquestionable support for the monarchy, while all the while pushing for subtle changes, in Benkirane's case, political reforms: "In 2011 the PJD said no, we won't risk our monarchy ... now all that instability has disappeared thanks to the reforms."[11]

Such tensions are the subject of much press speculation over the real nature of the relationship between the monarch and the working class prime minister, with a comedic penchant. But what is clear is that the MUR line of working to reinforce the religious legitimacy of the monarchy, whilst simultaneously drawing on religious arguments to call for greater accountability, transparency and social justice is still apparent in the PJD's strategy, however tempered the religious language has become. It should also be noted out that such a strategy is not exclusive to the MUR/PJD, with other Islamic activists and groups historically and more contemporaneously (including al-ᶜAdl wa'l-Iḥsān) using the country's Islamic framework to call upon the king to bring about social and economic reforms.[12] What makes the MUR's strategy quite unique, is its commitment to never achieving a frontal confrontation of the regime which could risk either its viability as a movement, or the future of the monarchy, including most notably its religious trappings. This ensures this sense of constant 'cooperation', while both parties remain cognisant of the underlying tensions in their visions.

Since the PJD first entered the political foray, its behaviour has demonstrated its commitment to some of the core MUR ideals. Gradual change, as illustrated by its[13] willingness to field a limited number of candidates (in only 43% of electoral districts) in the 1997 national legislative elections, and similarly in 2002 when it only marginally increased

11 Benkirane quoted in: El Yaakoubi, Aziz, "Morocco's Islamist Party Plays Down Royal Tensions as Election Campaign Begins", *Reuters*, 25/09/16, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-morocco-election-idUSKCN11V0NE

12 See Yassine's infamous 1974 missive to King Hassan II, "Islam or the Deluge", in which he warns the King to reform or face Divine wrath. For more: Maddy-Weitzman, "Islamism, Moroccan-Style: The Ideas of Sheikh Yassine", *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter (2003), pp. 43-51. Accessed online 25/9/2016 via: http://www.meforum.org/519/islamism-moroccan-style-the-ideas-of-sheikh.

13 Then as the MPDC.

its participation to 60% of districts. This desire to avoid confrontation with the authorities at all costs in order to preserve the stability of the monarchy is axiomatic to the MUR's strategy and outlook, not least to preserve its religious framework. This however is what Willis suggests may have led to their relative failure to increase its representation (although it did grow modestly) in the September 2007 elections, in which he suggests that the party's "anxiety not to offend the regime and present a moderate image"[14] may have led to disillusionment among some voters. While politically, this may have been viewed as a setback, for a movement which has long had a multipronged approach to change, the proximity to power and notably to the King, viewed as the linchpin, was something MUR activists[15] suggested to me was possibly more important than strict electoral outcomes. As one analyst pointed out "as time goes on, the PJD has demonstrated that it is a party which understands the power relations between the power given through elevations and the historical and legitimate power of the monarchy."[16] I would suggest that the MUR activists who make up the PJD have long understood this power dynamic, but that divisions exist on the willingness to test the limits of political power through the ballot in any critique of the King's vast sphere of power (both economic and political) and not least drawing on Benkirane's constitutional prerogatives. His position on the issue has remained very clear: "Don't' count on me to enter into a confrontation with his majesty."[17]

The election in 2008 of Abdelillah Benkirane, viewed within the movement as a more accomodationist figure than Saeedine el Othmani, his predecessor, suggests an appetite

14 Willis, *Politics and power in the Maghreb*, p. 183.

15 See Mohsan Moufidi, Interview, 2010

16 Cited in: Iraqi, Fahd, "Au Maroc, le vrai bilan d'Abdelilah Benkirane", *Jeune Afrique* (online), 14/04/2016, accessed: 29/09/2016, http://www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/315148/politique/maroc-vrai-bilan-dabdelilah-benkirane/

17 Cited in: Iraqi, Fahd, "Au Maroc, le vrai bilan d'Abdelilah Benkirane", *Jeune Afrique* (online), 14/04/2016, accessed: 29/09/2016, http://www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/315148/politique/maroc-vrai-bilan-dabdelilah-benkirane/

among PJD supporters for a 'pressure group'[18] approach to power, rather than one rooted in pure electoral outcomes. In a semi-authoritarian setting, in which much of the political processes happen within the King's close circle, rather than the parliament per say, such an approach reflects an acute awareness of the limitations of the formal political game. It also reflects the limitations of a study of semi-authoritarian regimes through the lens of strictly democratically processes when traditions of patronage and the persistence of closed elites remain deeply influential.

Following the 29 November 2011 elections, the PJD became the ruling party and is predicated to do well in the upcoming elections (October 6th 2016). Despite failing to meet some of its key promises on reducing unemployment and achieving growth, the popularity of the party and its charismatic 'man of the people' leader, Benkirane persists. For the MUR, the political wing was always a means of achieving as much political reform as possible within the accepted limitations of the system. Improving social welfare, reducing poverty and tackling corruption are not mere concessions to the formal political game, but part of a theological conception of working for the best interests of society. According to the movement's understanding, a society in need cannot fulfil its religious covenant, since it is caught up with basic necessities: "…if the necessities (*ḥājja*) are affected, that will affect the obligations (*ḍarūrī*).[19]" Any room for manoeuvre is therefore perceived as an opportunity to push for change, however slow. The debate both within the PJD, and between the movement and the party, will lie in the effectiveness of the PJD in achieving this while seeking to never rock the political boat.

In its political vision booklet, the MUR states: [20]

> The *khulafāʾ* (sing. *khalīfa*) followed in the path of prophethood in establishing justice and guaranteeing rights and retribution from the oppressor to the oppressed, Muslims

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18 Interestingly, this was one of the approaches to politics considered by the movement when its requests for a formal political party were denied.

19 Ḥarakat, *ᶜAshara sanawāt*, p. 44.

20 Ḥarakat, *al-Ruʾya al-siyāsiyya*, p. 10.

used to be equal in front of the law with no difference between the lofty and the lowly, or between the noble and the weak, following the saying of the Prophet (saaws).

While the PJD is seen to continue this mission, however incrementally, it will continue to benefit from the MUR's support and with that, a sense of connectedness to the grassroots, overwhelmingly left out of an elitist political game. But for the movement, regardless of tensions with the Makhzen, the consolidation of a religious frame of reference in the public sphere, at both the supra-national level, in the figure of the *amīr al-muʾminīn*, and at the political level, in terms of the predominance of a political party with a clearly religious frame of reference, is itself a victory. Its social and educational work feeds into an accepted narrative about the pre-eminence of religion as a frame of reference and the competition now, is over who gets to define the substance.

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Rimmal, Aaous. (President of the regional executive office for the region Qarawiyine and at the MUR Central Office (Bureau central), in charge of the dossier for the elaboration of education and formation for 15-20 year olds). Interview by E. François. In person. Rabat, Morocco, 11/2009 and 11/2010.

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Yatim, Mohamed (MUR executive office / Head of the UNTM), Interview by E. François. In person. Rabat, Morocco, 06/10/2009, 19/10/2009 and 11/2010.

Zahra, Fatima (MUR activist), Interview by E. François. In person. Rabat, Morocco. 10/2009 & 10/2010.

(Mr) Zwiten, No first name given (VP, Association BASMA). Interview by E. Francois. In person. Rabat, Morocco, 1/10/2009.

MUR INTERVIEWEES BY HIERARCHICAL ORDERING:

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Hamdaoui, Mohamed (MUR president, 2002-2014).

Raissouni, Ahmed (former MUR president.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Abdul Fehdi,Fathe (MUR head of the cultural specialisation).

Mohamed al-Hillali, Errashidia (MUR General secretary, member of the Executive Office, Head of the youth).

Baha, Abdullah (Vice Secretary of the PJD and member of the Executive Bureau of the MUR).

Chikhi, A. (MUR external relations officer).

Khalfi, Mustafa (Editor of Attajdid newspaper; PJD MP).

Loudiyi, Saad (MUR media representative).

REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Falouli, Rachid (M member of the MUR's regional executive council).

(Mr) Hassan, (MUR activist, Bureau regional du MUR).

Remmel, Aaous. (President of the MUR regional executive office, Qarawiyine).

Talidi, Bilal (Attajdid journalist, MUR activist).

Toufiq, Azzedine (MUR executive Office).

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Baccali, Azziza.

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Fadli, Aicha (MUR activist).

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al-Abbadi, Ahmed (Rabitat Mohmediya des ulamas).

FORMER CHABIBA ISLAMIYA:

Bellaji, A. (Former Chabiba Islamiya activist).

Mechtalli, Ahmed (former MUR member and Chabiba activist).

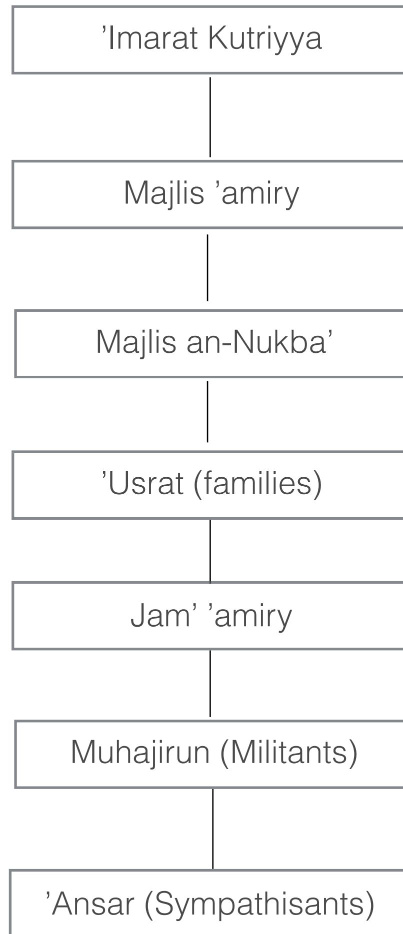

Figure 1: **Chabiba Islamiya Structure**
(El Ahmadi, *Les mouvements islamistes au Maroc*, p. 68)

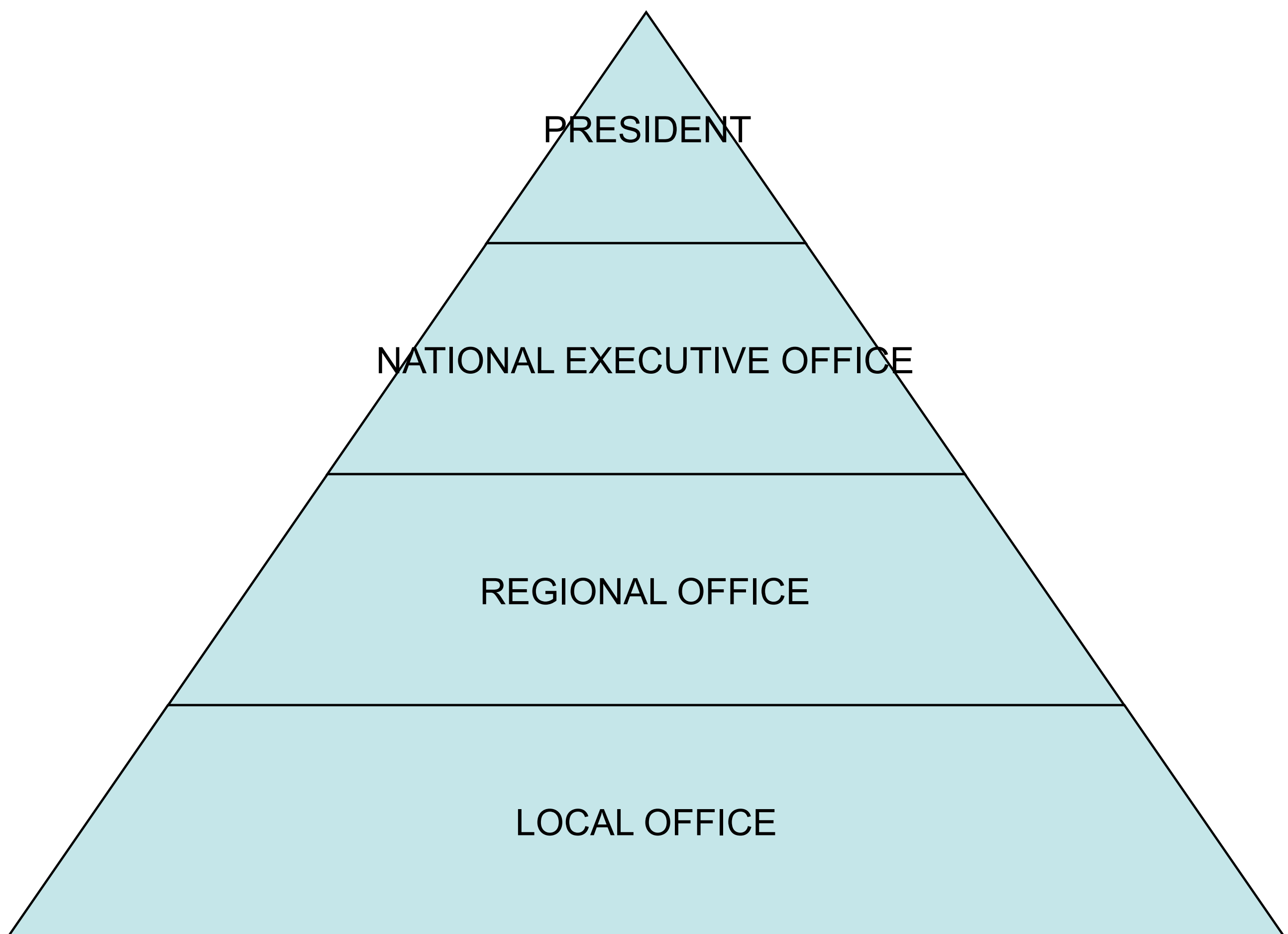

Figure 2: **Old Structure of MUR (1996–2006)**

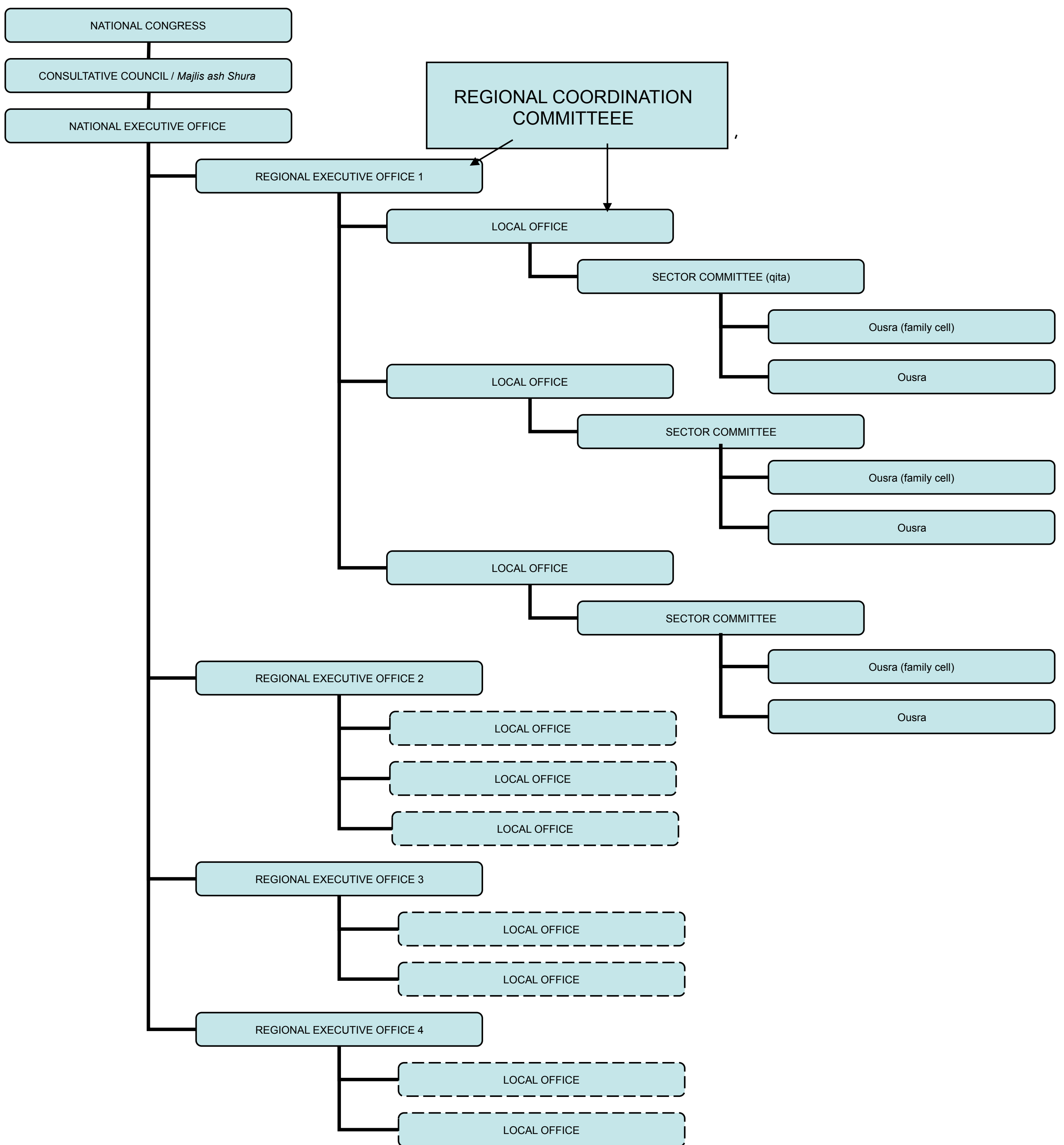

Figure 3: **Overall Hierarchical Structure of MUR (2006–onwards)**