

PARTIES AND PARLIAMENTARY EXPERIENCE IN JORDAN AND MOROCCO



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Historical Overview of Jordanian Parliament and Political Parties

Prof. Ameen Al Mashaqba⁽¹⁾

Since the establishment of Trans-Jordan Emirate in 1921, the country has achieved development on the political, social and economic levels. The state has always been keen on establishing and interconnecting social structures and integration, for which purpose it has been active in encouraging people to involve themselves in public life under the rule of law.

Significant changes have happened locally and regionally leading, in effect, to the evolution of a group of organizations and political parties. Those include the Independence Party, the Arab Covenant Party, the Arab Orient Association, the Jordanian People's Party, the Executive Committee for the National Conference Party, the Jordanian Labor Party, the League of Educated Youth and the Arab Solidarity Party (Al Mashaqba 2005, pp. 288-296). Those parties emerged in the period of 1921-1946, but they were politically weak, inactive and personalized. Their action lacked institutionalism and they could not serve as an indicator for political life in Jordan. (Musa, S 2005; Al Mahafzah, A. 1990)

After 1950, the environment became more conducive for parties life in Jordan. The constitution was promulgated in 1952, strengthening public freedoms and rights. The unification of the East Bank and West Bank changed the demographic and cultural composition of the country, another milestone event that helped in a stronger emergence and presence of parties and political organizations. Jordan was also not immune from the growing tide of nationalism in the region. Not only did political parties improve their action and presence but they also increased in number to nine parties representing the leftists and nationalist currents. The Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party and the Jordanian Communist Party, are two examples. The religious current also maintained a high profile with the rise of Muslim Brotherhood, and Hezbul Tahrir. Nationalist parties including the National Socialist Par-

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ty, the Arab Constitutional Party, the National Unity Party and the Umma Party participated in the 1956 elections. As most of the seats in the parliament were won by the National Socialist Party, the nationalists allied with the leftists and formed a government under the leadership of Suleiman Al Nabulsi. That was the only parliamentary government ever established in Jordan's political history. In 1957, however, the martial law was declared suspending parties life and driving political parties into the underground for a long period of time.

Parliamentary life was eventually restored in 1989, and the elections in that same year culminated in the Muslim Brotherhood's winning, the Islamic Action Front Party the majority of seats (22 seats) in the 11th parliament. Independent Islamists got 11 seats while 12 other seats went to nationalists and leftists. That has been one of the most active and effective parliaments in Jordanian political life as indicated by its vigorous exercise of its role of overseeing the government.

In 1992, the Political Parties Law No, 32 was enacted introducing the one-man-one-vote rule, used in the 1993 elections. The law weakened parties life in the successive parliaments until the 18th parliament of 2016.

Political Parties

The Political Parties Law No. 32 of 1992 was meant to regulate parties life in Jordan driven by the democratic transformations of 1989. It was enacted in accordance with Article 16 of Jordan's Constitution for the year 1952 as amended, which provides that:

1. Jordanians have the right of assembly within the limits of the law.
2. Jordanians are entitled to establish political parties provided that their objects are lawful, their methods peaceful, and their by-laws not contrary to the provisions of the Constitution.
3. The law shall regulate the formation of associations, unions and political parties and shall monitor their resources.

In accordance with this law, political parties were officially established after 1992 totalling 26 though declining to 23 in 2000. The number, however, fluctuated from year to year, especially with the enactment of new parties law. They were 23 in 2000, 36 in 2006, 14 in 2007 (a new law was issued), 23 in 2012 and 50 by the end of 2016 with the issuance of a new law. The successive amendments of the parties law confused political parties action, which needed to adapt to the new conditions of every new law. For example, the mandated number of a party's incorporators was 50 in the beginning before it rose to 500 members. It, afterwards, became 150, which helped in increasing the number of registered parties. There was another development, which is changing the affiliations of parties from the Ministry of Interior into the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs.

Political parties in Jordan are categorized into four political currents: nationalist, leftist, Islamist and centrist (moderate) conservatives.

First- The Nationalist Current:

This current subscribes to the tenets of Arab unity, the eternal nation's message, freedom and socialism. It considers the Arab Homeland an indivisible political and economic entity. Traditional archetypes include the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party, the Arab Ba'ath Progressive Party and Arab Action Front Party.

Second- The Leftist Current:

This current subscribes to Marxist ideology, though the leftist parties changed their theoretical premises to adapt to the Jordanian political parties law and constitution. Main examples include the Jordanian Communist Party, the People's Democratic Party (HASHD) and the Jordanian Popular Democratic Union Party.

Third- The Religious Current:

This one proposes Islam as a set of principles, ideas and platforms that can solve social and political problems. They call for the application of the Islamic Sharia on all facets of life. It is represented by the Islamic Action Front Party (Muslim Brotherhood), the Muslim Centre Party, Dua'aa Party and the National Conference Party- Zamzam.

Fourth- The National Conservative Current (Centrist-Moderate):

This current adheres to a set of general national principles and, as such, does not subscribe to a specific political creed or ideology. It believes in several values as democracy, pluralism, public freedoms, protection of national identity, women's issues, among other ones. It is represented by the National Current Party, the National Constitutional Party, the Reform Party, the Jordanian Unified Front Party and the National Unity Party.

Table (1)
List of Jordanian Political Parties (2016)

No.	Party's Name	No.	Party's Name
01	The Islamic Action Front Party	11	The National Constitutional Party
02	The Life (Hayat) Party	12	The Jordanian Cavaliers (Fursan) Party
03	The Jordanian Communist Party	13	The Jordanian Muslim Centre Party
04	The Freedom and Equality Party	14	The Stronger Jordan Party
05	Jordanian Democratic People's Party (HASHD)	15	The Message (Al Resalah) Party
06	The Jordanian National Action Party	16	The Jordanian The Reform (Al Islah) Party
07	The Democratic Popular Unity Party	17	The Unified Jordanian Front Party
08	The Jordanian National Gathering Party (TAWAD)	18	The Unified Jordanian Front Party
09	The Jordanian Du'a party	19	The Welfare (Rafah) Party
10	The National Loyalty (Wafa) Party	20	The Jordanian Shura Party

No. Party's Name

21 The National Current Party

22 The Secure Country (Al Balad Al Ameen) Party

23 The Justice and Development Party

24 The Jordanian National Aid (Awn) Party

25 The Jordanian National Unity Party

26 The Jordanian Social Democratic Party

27 The Jordanian National Youth Party

28 The Jordanian Covenant Party

29 The Justice and Reform Party

30 The Future (Al Mostqabal) Party

No. Party's Name

31 The Reform Party

32 The Jordanian National Orientation Party

33 The Jordanian Al Ansar Party

34 The Jordanian Renaissance Front Party

35 The Jordanian Social Justice Party

36 The Jordanian Wa'ad Party

37 The Jordanian Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party

38 The Jordanian Banner (Al Raya) Party

39 The Arab Ba'ath Progressive Party

40 The Jordanian Arab Party

No.	Party's Name	No.	Party's Name
41	The Popular Action Party	46	Al Nida'a Party
42	The Jordanian National Unity Party	47	The Jordanian Democratic Nature Party
43	The National Conference Party- Zamzam	48	The Conservatives Party
44	Jordan's Freeman Party	49	The Nationalist Movement Party
45	The Gallantry\ (Shahama) Party	50	The Jordanian Nationalist Party

At a quick glance, political parties appear to be weak, no matter how many they are. An exception is the Islamic Action Front Party (Muslim Brotherhood), but even this party suffered from acute schisms in its ranks between the doves and hawks. Adding to this weakness is public reluctance to joining political parties, the reason being attributed to the persistence of traditional tribal structures. The result is lack of public trust in parties, rendering them less able to reach the parliament and less influential in Jordanian political life.

The 18th Parliament and Parties:

The elections were held on September 20th, 2016, and eligible voters amounted to approximately 4.25 million, around 1.5 million of whom (37.1%) participated. On the governorates level, Amman was the lowest in terms of voters (23.5%), the highest being the Southern Badia (83.4%).

Thirty-nine registered political parties out of 50 of which seven got 24 seats from 130 at a percentage of 18.4%.

The National Reform Coalition (Muslim Brotherhood and allies) won 15 seats (11.5%).

The Muslim Brotherhood ran for the elections in 20 lists and got a total of 160,000 votes (for the winners and losers together) with a percentage of 78%. Total earned votes in Amman, Zarqa and Irbid accounted for 11% of the total number of votes in the Kingdom amounting to 1.5 million voters.

- This shows the declining voting powers of Muslim Brotherhood compared with the fact that it secured 340,000 votes in the past.
- Five seats were won by Muslim Brotherhood's allies through the Chechen and Circassian quotas and two in women's quota.

Generally, the number of Muslim Brotherhood members committed to the Islamic movement were 9 out of 15, as allied candidates totalled 6.

Representation of parties in the 18th Parliament and Parties:

The Islamic Action Front Party	9 MPs
The National Current Party	4 MPs
The National Conference Party- Zamzam	3 MPs
The Jordanian Muslim Centre Party	3 MPs
The Justice and Reform Party	2 MPs
National Unity Party	1 MP
The National Aid (Awn) Party	1 MP
Leftist nationalists	1 MP

Nationalist leftist parties participated in the elections with 16 candidates as follows:

- Three female candidates
- Four MPs from the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party
- Three candidates of the Popular Unity Party, Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party.
- One candidate for the Arab Ba'ath Progressive Party
- One candidate for HASHD and one for the National Movement Party

Parties members were distributed among 11 lists as follows:

Irbid's four districts, Zarqa's first district, Amman's first district, Balqa district, Kerak district and Jerash district. Nationalist leftists were absent in 9 out of 23 electoral districts.

Candidates of the leftist parties gained a total of 35,000 votes of parties members, but the result was the winning of one candidate, who even ran for the elections on the basis of tribal affiliations rather than his being a party member.

The Relationship between Parliaments and Political Parties:

Political parties participated in the 1989 elections gaining almost 40% of parliament's 80 seats, 22 of which went to Muslim Brotherhood, 11 to independent Islamists and 12 to the nationalist and leftist currents. Parties had a role in political oversight and were involved in public policy. They also participated in government formation, though with a percentage not more than 30% of parliamentarian members of successive governments. With the introduction of the one-man-one-vote system in 1993, parties representation declined in successive parliaments to the point that made several of them boycott the elections of the 13th parliament (1997-2001). The boycott was spearheaded by the Islamic Action Front Party (Muslim Brotherhood), Jordanian Democratic Party, Democratic Popular Unity Party, National Democratic Movement Party, National Action Party, Constitutional Front Party and Arab Ansar Party. The stand of the parties was supported by professional associations amidst anticipation of upcoming elections that would lack integrity, further strained by the complex procedures required to register in the elections.

Since then, the roles of parties declined, their numbers increased but their roles got weakened at the levels of public policy and parliamentary oversight. For the sake of comparison, the number of inquiries made by the 12th, 14th and 17th parliaments were as low as 1, 4 and 4, respectively, compared with 16 inquiries made to the government in the 11th parliament. This clearly indicates a decline in parliament's actual political oversight of governmental policies.

Jordan's political system is not fully parliamentary, as the elections are not conducted on a party-basis. Rather, they are constructed on tribal, family, geographical or even personal grounds. Governments are not formed of parties or blocs in parliament. Separating the powers, the constitution entrusts in the King (Article 35) to appoint, dismiss and accept the resignation of the Prime Minister. In this context, it can be fairly said that:

1 The relationship between parliament and parties is weak and ineffective.

2 Parliamentary elections are not conducted on party grounds.

3 The election law has been too frequently amended creating a state of legislative imbalance.

4 There is no single provision in the elections law that could otherwise provide for an incentive for political parties to grow and be more active.

5 Governments are not formed on parties and the legislative and executive powers are fully separated from each other.

6 Parliamentary blocs are weak and fluid that they could not help in enforcing the role of political parties in public life.

7 The frequent amendments of the parties law led to the proliferation and weakening of parties.

8

The public at large are reluctant to join political parties.

9

Parliamentarian customary practices are on the decline, which is affecting the development and momentum of political parties, which rely on such practices.

10

Parties are not aware of their own basic roles and functions such as political mobilization, education, connecting citizens with the state and so on.

11

Parties are weak in political education, though they are supposed to be a tool of political and social development.

12

Political parties suffer from declining institutionalism, which, in effect, led to the existence of parties based on the persons of the elite founders.

13

Political and qualified elites refrain from candidacy, which gave way to 'political money' (black money) and facilitated the entry of business to successive parliaments. As a result, parliaments would evolve into a gathering of non-politicized and service MPs.

The Parties-Regime Relationship

- 1 Distrust between parties and the state.
- 2 Political parties suffer from declining institutionalism, which, in effect, led to the existence of parties based on the persons of the founders.
- 3 Jordanians are reluctant to join parties.
- 4 Traditional (tribal) structures continue to exist as a key player in the election process.
- 5 The historical heritage disfavours political parties is still affecting public life.
- 6 Financial resources of Political Parties are inadequate.
- 7 There are too many political parties, which are, in the case of Jordan, very weak and ineffective.

In conclusion, the role of parties in Jordan's parliament is very weak and ineffective because of the above cited reasons. My feeling is that the situation will continue for around two decades ahead unless the elections law is significantly amended to give them a better role. It would also be good to introduce a quota for political parties, since parliamentary governments are not formed, with the aim of strengthening the presence of parties in parliament.

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Overview of Political Parties in Morocco

Dr. Abdelaziz Nouaydi⁽²⁾

The Moroccan experience with parties saw landmark developments. In addition to post-colonialism historical parties, known as the National Movement Parties, other parties close to the government emerged. Those were labelled as 'administrative parties' in addition to parties of Islamic ideologies.

In this paper, I classify the parties using an approach that is ideological and political at the same time. In other words, the matter boils down to the community platforms those parties adopt and the set of values governing their internal affairs and relations with the actual governing authority, that is the Palace. This classification, though challenged by a complex milieu, will help us identify three groups of parties, as follows:

- 1** The nationalist parties that call for democracy and interact with the authority either as participants or opponents, while enjoying a sort of autonomy to varying degrees depending on the prevailing conditions. They also interact, in their own ways, with all issues of democracy and political reform.
- 2** Religious-Islamist parties, which also follow the same pattern of interaction with authorities, sometimes as proponents and at other times as opponents. They have their own perspective on issues of democracy and political reform.
- 3** Pro-government parties and, as such do not seem to enjoy full autonomy. They are active, however, in politics and play a vital role in state administrative institutions, including the parliament, government and local communities.

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1- Parties calling for democracy and interacting with authority either as participants or opponents

Those include the traditional Nationalist Movement parties, followed by the opposition leftist parties. Before getting down to talk about the present situation of nationalist parties, it is good to note their tremendous contributions in the recent past. Those parties were part of the national liberation struggle and calls for constitutional amendments in 1962, 1972 and 1992.

The leftist parties did much to the building of the Moroccan civil society, making calls for modernization and educating the masses on the values of democracy and social justice. They also participated in building unions and other associations for women, the youth and students. They spearheaded efforts in the establishment of mass media and journalist schools with their own media outlet proving to be most influential in all spheres, especially considering that audio-visual and print media are controlled by the state. The nationalist parties helped in founding and advocating rights based organizations, diagnosing and analysing the economic conditions and organizing the intellectuals. They are also behind linking intellect with politics and laying down the foundations of basic laws for the country throughout the period 1958-1960 as well as founding the basis of a liberated economy (during the cabinet of Abdullah Ibrahim). They pledged support for the restoration of the Western Sahara and helped in mobilizing citizens and strengthening parliamentary action either before the promulgation of the constitution through the National Advisory Board (headed by Mehdi Ben Barka) or through its political participation beginning with the first elected parliament of 1963. They acted as a centre for balance and deterrence, having curbed the regime from reaching the maximum limits of its designs. They also participated in building a frontal and unification culture, particularly in such decisive junctures as those in 1972, 1990 and 1998.

Those parties have also had a role in supporting nationalist liberation struggles in Algeria, Palestine, Iraq and Lebanon and cultivated ties with struggling powers all around the world. In addition, they were incubators for many members who served in influential positions in the state's apparatus.

The most salient transformation the largest of those parties saw in the 1990s, nonetheless, was their merger and participation in activism in public affairs, in accordance with the rules of the game laid down by the regime. That sort of participation was the reason for those parties to sustain weakening schisms and conflicts. In response, they increased reliance in participation with their current leaders not envisaging any place for them outside the governmental scope of management, for fear of sustaining ore marginalization, especially with the increasing influence of the Islamist powers.

1. The Traditional Nationalist Movement Parties: The Independence Party stands as the archetype of the Nationalist Movement Parties. It is the one from which a large leftist political party split and emerged in 1959, that is the National Popular Forces Party, which was formed by the splitting progressive current of the Independence Party. The offshoot also had members from the then Moroccan Union of Labour and the National Federation of Students of Morocco and had also members from the Resistance Movement and Liberation Army. The Independence Party was the main opponent to absolute monarchy. Several intra-party and external developments affected the party. The unionist members broke away and some members of institutions adopted the democratic struggle aligned to some currents that advocated violence in response to the oppression used against the party since 1959 (arrests, acts of torture, assassinations and forced exile). In effect, the National Union was changed into the National Union of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces in 1975.

Accordingly, it is fair to say that the main components of the Nationalist Parties categories have been until recently the Independence Party and the National Union of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces Party. In the legislative elections of 2002, the National Union of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces Party reached

a momentum by winning 57 seats, before suffering from an increasing setback reaching a nadir of 20 seats in the October 2016 elections.

The category can as well accommodate the Party of Progress and Socialism (formerly the Communist Party), which suffered from harassment by the regime and marginalization by nationalist parties⁽³⁾. Breaking away from the Party of Progress and Socialism with the support of then the Minister of Interior, Mr. Driss Basri, was the Front of Democratic Forces in 1997 led by Mr. Al Tihami Al Khayari. Strength faded out of the front, though, as it failed to secure any seat out of the 2016 elections.

The Party of Progress and Socialism held several portfolios in the cabinet of Mr. Abderrahmane Youssoufi in 1998 and participated in severable other cabinets including those headed by Mr. Driss Jettou (2002), Mr. Abbas El Fassi (2007) and Mr. Abdelillah Benkirane (2012). It was also a loyal supporter of the Justice and Development Party. The party's experience shows its autonomy in decision making.

2. The opposition leftist parties that accept to operate through institutions

In 1983, a number of strugglers broke away from the Socialist Union out of conflict on the political line of action of the party calling for participation in the elected institutions, notwithstanding what the dissidents claimed as the lack of actual constitutional and political guarantees. They formed the **Democratic Socialist Vanguard Party**. In 2001, similar reasons led another group of strugglers affiliated with the Unionist Youth, of which

(3) The Party of Progress and Socialism emerged as an offshoot of the Moroccan Communist party, which was established in 1943. Leon Sultan was the founder and Secretary General of the party as elected in the Founding Assembly on November 14th, 1943. Upon his death on November 25th, 1945, Sultan was succeeded by Ali Yata assuming office in 1946. The party participated in the struggle against the French occupation and in the foundation of the Moroccan Union of Labor (1955). It was persecuted and banned in the early days of Independence in 1960. It had the name of the Liberation and Socialism Party in the period 1974-1969 until it was licensed in 1974 and has participated in the parliamentary elections since 1977. Yata died in 1997 and was succeeded by Mr. Ismaeel Al Alawi, who has been in turn succeeded by Nabil bin Abdallah since the Eight Conference of the Party in 2010.

Mohamed Sassi was a prominent leader, and the Democratic Confederation of Labor Union led by Noubir Amaoui and formed the **Fidelity to Democracy Society**. As for unionists, they formed the **National Congress Party**, which would also suffer the split of the **Socialist Party** under the leadership of Mr. Abdul Majeed Bouzoubaa, a former deputy of Amawi.

Another leftist party was formed in the late 1970s by a leftist student organizations under the name the Popular Democratic Labour Organization, which was merged in 2002 with other leftist groups as well as the Fidelity for Democracy Society to form the **Unified Socialist Party**.

In 2014⁽⁴⁾, a group of the democratic leftist parties, namely the National Congress Party, the Unified Socialist Party and the Socialist Democratic Vanguard Party, decided to upscale their coalition by forming the **Democratic Leftist Federation**. The new entity was meant to be a progressive transitional organization to serve as a political project that would reflect their five-year efforts the aim of achieving a qualitative stride in their joint struggle. Those parties proclaimed the following **as their mandated tasks**:

1 Offer a clear and comprehensive account of their political projects by using well defined slogans boiling down to parliamentary monarchy, fighting against corruption and despotism, advancement of social justice, promotion of human rights and gender equality and the civil democratic state.

2 Formulate a comprehensive strategy towards democracy with all its political economic and social manifestations. Such a strategy should answer to

(4) The Democratic Leftist Federation: Political Paper <https://www.facebook.com/notes/%D%81%9D8%9A%D%8AF%D%8B%1D%8A%7D%84%9D8%9A%D%8A%9D%8A%7D%84%9D8%9A%D%8B%3D%8A%7D%8B%-1D%8A%7D%84%9D%8AF%D8%9A%D%85%9D%82%9D%8B%1D%8A%7D8%B%7D8%9A-f%C%3A9d%C%3A9ration-de-la-gauche-d%C%3A9mocratique/%D%81%9D%8AF%D%8B%1D%8A%7D%84%9D8%9A%D%8A%-9D%8A%7D%84%9D8%9A%D%8B%3D%8A%7D8%B%-1D%8A%7D%84%9D%8AF%D8%9A%D%85%9D%82%9D%8B%1D%8A%7D%8B%7D8%9A-%D%8A%7D%84%9D%88%9D%8B%1D%82%9D%80%9D%80%9D%8A%-9D%8A%7D%84%9D%8B%3D8%9A%D%8A%7D%8B%3D8%9A%D%80%9D%80%9D%8A712391565472280/9>

the demands of the masses and aspirations of democratic and leftist powers. The aim is to enable such powers to mobilize and form the broadest possible coalition and convince the undecided to participate in the democratic struggle.

3 Participate effectively in restructuring the tools of democratic and masses struggle driven by a new and renewable vision that would integrate the struggles of the federation, the unions and civil society organisations. This goal should be pursued through a graduated approach involving a broadly based democratic masses current within the Moroccan society and serve as a real guarantee for winning the battle of democratic transformation.

4 The achievement of those great tasks will require, first and foremost, the establishment of a democratic leftist federation. Through struggle, it will evolve into an organised coherent masses political force with a unified frame of reference and a uniquely articulated line of political action. This will enable it to **stand up to the oppression of the mekhzen (King centred) form of governance, which opposes to structural reforms. It will also rise against the fundamentalist designs, which oppose to the intrinsic values of democracy but use, at the same time, their own instruments to accede to power to install a totalitarian regime.**

The Democratic Leftist Federation fought the legislative election battle in 2016, but it did not secure more than two seats for each of Casablanca and Rabat, because of its limited resources and delayed mobilization. Besides, it had suffered for a long time from discrimination of authority.

In addition to those leftist parties, there is the Democratic Way Party, which struggles outside institutions. It was established as a party in 1995 by a group of activists advocating Marxist-Leninism that aimed to build socialism and fight against "Morocco's dependence on imperialism". The main obstacle facing Morocco's development towards democracy and social justice is the

mekhzen regime, the party says. It also calls for secular state. The party refuses even to subscribe to parliamentary monarchy, which forms the main point of departure from other democratic leftist parties closest to it. It is in this area, though, that the party converges with the Justice and Spirituality (Ihsan) Group, and likewise it boycotts institutional work, refuses to participate in elections and refuses to work under the current constitutional framework. Like the Democratic Leftist Federation, the party calls for a democratic front built off a democratic system and the Democratic Leftist Federation serving as the framework for unionist, rights-based, Amazigh, women, cultural and civil forces.

Party schisms are significantly a recurrent phenomenon in Morocco, the main reason of which boiling down in the first place to the non-democratic management of differences, conflicts of interests, proliferation of intellectual differences and the authority's interference with the aim of fuelling such schisms.

2- Religious Parties:

There are four currents under this heading:

First: The Justice and Spirituality (Al Ihsan) Group: This is the most organized and powerful religious group. With its influence manifested in the demonstrations that it stages, the group is not recognized as a political party but as a society. Neither does it recognize the rules of the political game.

Second: The Justice and Development Party: It accepts the rules of the constitutional and political games and participates in elections. As such, it managed to make significant winnings in the legislative elections since 2002. It has always been at the forefront in all elections since the passing of the constitution in 2011 and won the subsequent elections of November 2011 and October 2016, despite all oppressions exercised against it by the regime.

Third: The current that the state and a number of observers call Jihadist Salafism. This seems not to be structured under one leadership. It advocates

violence and holds the state and society as apostates.

Fourth: The Democratic Islamist Current: This current does not see any contradiction between democracy and Islam. It accepts coalitions with the leftists, such as Al Umma Party and the Cultural Alternative Party, both dissolved in 2008 under the pretext that their leaders were involved in a terrorist design. Their leaders were imprisoned, before they were released by a royal pardon in April 2011, amidst the storming social movements.

1. The Justice and Spirituality (Ihsan) Group:

The Justice and Spirituality (Ihsan) Group is the strongest in terms of size and expansion. It is yet not a recognized entity as it openly challenges the religious authority of the King. In 1974, its leader Abdul Salam Yaseen sent an open letter to the King titled Islam or Flood calling him for repentance, reverting to the ruling system of the just caliphate Omar bin Abdul Aziz and becoming a good Muslim. In response to the letter, Yaseen was arrested to serve three years and a half in prison without trial. He was then released but sent to a mental hospital before he was eventually placed under home arrest from 1989 until 1999 without trial. The house arrest was not lifted until 2000 with the death of King Al Hassan II. Yaseen, promptly sent a letter to the new King Muhammad VI titled: "To whom it may concern" asking him to retrieve the wealth of his deceased father and use it in developing the country. This time, the letter did not cause him to imprisonment, as the siege would be lifted afterwards within weeks.

The group maintains an active presence mainly at universities as it assumed the majority of seats in the National Federation of Morocco's Students. It is also active among the impoverished classes through its social action. It participates in popular demonstrations but is keen on being distinguished from other movements. To that end, it follows an air-tight organization of the affiliated masses and separates women from men during demonstrations.

Mr. Abdul Salam Yaseen is the theorist, spiritual guide and political leader

of the group. He authored several books, most famous of which are *The Prophet's Method* and *Dialogue with the Respected Democrats* in 1994. In those books he criticizes Laïcisme (secularism), leftism and nationalism and sets as a common ground for dialogue the condition that they openly declare their being Muslims, or else "nothing will bring us together." He also authored several books in French, most important of which is *Islamiser la modernité* (Islamization of Modernism). Yaseen died on January 13th, 2012.

The group has a website serving as its media outlet⁽⁵⁾. The movement also uses other media outlets such as media interviews involving its official spokespersons such as Fatahallah Arsalan and Nadia Yaseen, who is the daughter of Sheikh Yaseen. It also uses demonstrations in which it participates along with other political and social powers. The group was an influential component of the February 20th movement in which it showed convergence with the Democratic Way Party as they both articulated similar positions including the rejection of parliamentary monarchy and embraced a call for a democratic constitution and boycotting elections to institutions and advisory boards created by the King. However, it pulled back after the 2012 elections that led the Justice and Development Party to the government.

2- Justice and Development Party:

In 1992, the Reform and Renewal Movement then headed by Dr. Ahmad Al Raissouni failed to be registered under the name of National Renewal Party. The movement's leaders talked to Dr. Abdul Kareim Al Khatib, who was close to the Palace, and offered him a merger that could revitalize his Democratic Constitutional Popular Party. Al Khatib agreed on three conditions: subscribing to Islam, recognition of constitutional monarchy and non-violence. They held a conference in 1996 wherein they renamed the party into the Justice and Development Party.

(5) <http://www.aljamaa.net/ar/index/index.shtml>

The political influence of the party grew as it secured 42 seats in the 2002 elections in a dramatic rise from 12 in 1997, despite the harassment and pressures exerted by the Ministry of Interiors to reduce the party's number of candidates. Those pressures continued, particularly after the terrorist attacks in Casablanca on May 16th, 2003. In June 2003, Dr Ahmad Al Raissouni resigned as a chairman of Tawheed and Reform Movement, after he made statements to *Aujourd'hui le Maroc* daily about the institution of the Emir of Moumineen (Commander of the Faithful). He had been in the top leadership position twice since 1996. Al Raissouni's statement embarrassed the position of the party and put it in a big trouble, as they appeared two days before the Casablanca attacks. Those statements alluded to the existence of a current within the movement targeting the royal institution⁽⁶⁾.

The political developments brought the party to the fore, making it an essential piece of the political puzzle. Popular unrest began on February 20th, 2011, as an immediate repercussion of the fall of the Tunisian (January 14th) and Egyptian (January 25th) regimes coupled with the outbreak of the revolution in Libya (February 17th, 2011). The King, in response, addressed the nation on March 9th proclaiming an unprecedented significant constitutional reform. A thorough series of consultations followed all over the period March-June 2011 involving political parties, unions and civil society organizations. Those players proposed amendments to the constitution, most of which were considered in a

(6) He said King Muhammad VI is not eligible for leading the believers and that there needs to be a stand-alone *ifta* (religious opinion) institution comprised of Islamic jurists. The party had to make an explicit answer to the provocative statements, upon which Abdul Karim Al Khatib issued a press release describing Al Raissouni as 'an idiot'. In response, Al Raissouni tried deny the statements as fabricated and the next day he said the interview, which was published in a French speaking newspaper, was made in Arabic because he did not speak French. Against the increasing pressures, Al Raissouni resigned on June 11th, 2003. Despite distancing himself from the movement, Al Raissouni preserved a thin thread with it, though he started to get away from the movement gradually. The surprise was yet to come in the Fifth Conference of the Justice and Development Party, when he earned the majority of votes, although he did not run for the leadership office. However, Al Raissouni could not take it anymore and seized the earliest opportunity to leave for Saudi Arabia to contribute there to the preparation of an encyclopedic work on Islamic jurisprudence. He returned to Morocco and participated in the August 2014 conference of the Tawhid and Reform Movement. He participated in the leadership elections and earned in the first round 340 votes. His competitors were Mawlay Oar bin Hamad (332 votes), Aws Al Ramal (209 votes), former minister Saededdin Al Othmani (166 votes) and Abdul Rahim Al Sheikhi (162 votes). The situation was reversed after three rounds ending with 202 votes for Abdul Rahim Al Sheikhi, 202 for Ahmad Al Raissouni, 117 for Mawlay Omar bin Hamad, 6 for Aws Al Ramal and one vote for Saededdin Al Othmani.

bid to strengthen the guarantees of rights and striking a balance by empowering the roles of parliament and government, strengthening judicial autonomy and bestowing constitutional roles upon civil society.

A strong desire surfaced for stopping the popular unrest fearing it would, otherwise, evolve into a fully-fledged revolution. Efforts were made, therefore, to speed up the reforms by adopting the amended constitution on July 31st, 2011. Legislative elections were held for the 395-seat parliament on November 25th, 2011 with the participation of 30 parties, and boycotting of some other parties (mainly leftists). The elections were overwhelmingly won by the Justice and Development Party securing 107 seats⁽⁷⁾. The constitution provides that “the King appoints the Head of Government from within the political party arriving ahead in the elections of the members of the Chamber of Representatives, and with a view to their results.” Accordingly, the King appointed on November 29th, 2011 Abdelilah Benkirane, the Secretary-General of the Justice and Development Party as the head of the new government and designated him to form the cabinet.

Undoubtedly, the party was the most benefiting from the Arab Spring, which compelled the state to amend the constitution against its will. The situation at that time prevented any fraud in favour of the pro-regime coalition consisting of eight parties and proclaimed in early October 2011, that is less than one month and a half ahead of the premature legislative elections of November 25th, 2011.

The party, thanks to its good organization, was well prepared for fighting the elections. It was also merited by a resourceful leader, who knew how to gain the King's trust while sticking to a middle discourse in relation to supporting the February 20th movement, standing at the same distance from either side.

After five years of the life of the coalition government, despite all harassments

(7)60 seats for the Independence Party, 52 for the National Rally of Independents, 47 for the Authenticity and Modernity Party, 39 for the Socialist Union of Popular Forces, 32 for the Popular Movement Party, 23 for the Constitutional Union, 18 for the Party of Progress and Socialism, 4 for the Labour Party and 13 seats distributed among other 13 parties.

exercised against the party by distorting its image and blaming it for such behaviours that it never advocated in the first place (the Ministry of Interiors' crackdown on public freedoms and demonstrators, criticism over businessmen being in charge of economic policies, using unions against him because of his social policies, refraining from subjecting security agencies and the intelligence department to the sovereignty of the government but using them against the party, having the public media wage a war against the prime minister and using a number of newspapers to fight against its policies and his party ministers.) The government took several decisions described as 'unpopular' such as the reform of the pension system, reduction of the governmental subsidies to the Compensation Fund, a measure used for long to protect the purchasing power of the poor (subsidies of such commodities as wheat, sugar, oil, cooking gas and gas). Nevertheless, as the grip of the Palace tightened and pro-palace parties pronounced prejudice against it, the party got the sympathy of several segments of society, enabling it to achieve the highest results in the legislative elections of October 7th, 2016, as it secured 125 seats. It had already won the municipal elections in the level of the largest Moroccan cities in September 2015.

3- The “Islamist Jihadist” Currents:

Those currents reject democracy as a form of apostasy relying in their verdict on the arbitrary interpretations of Salafists and Wahhabists. Morocco has seen several organizations that exercised violence in the name of Islam. Main organizations include the Chabiba islamia (Islamist Youth Movement), led by Abdul Karim Mutee. It had a role in the assassination of Omar Benjelloun, a leader of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces. The movement had links with Dr. Al Khatib (who established the Reform and Renewal Movement Party and facilitated the founding of the Justice and Development Party) as he was accused of smuggling the assassins.

4- The Jihadist Salafism Current:

This “current” does not seem to have a well-defined organizational structure.

Rather, it is an orientation of individuals or separate groups having in common the trend of considering as apostate the ruling systems and accusing them as serving the 'apostate West". They also denounce democracy as act of polytheism and equate secularism with atheism. They also oppose the non-Jihadist political Islam, adopted violence and masterminded the terrorist attacks in Casablanca on May 16th, 2003, which claimed the lives of 42, of which 34 were Moroccans. The remaining 11 were the suicide bombers and foreigners. The attack injured around 100.

Such developments had an impact on shaping politics, as the authorities seized the opportunity for restructuring the religious domain towards catering for an official Islam that is open to society, though conservative politically, to strengthen the religious authority of the King as Commander of the Faithful. Traditional parties nourished that emerging situation as they believed the official Islam proclaimed by the Commander of the Faithful would protect society from Islamic extremism. The Justice and Development Party, likewise, stood by the side of the King. Only the Justice and Spirituality (Ihsan) Group kept opposing the King as a Commander of the Faithful. The leftists, as well, refused the King's political authority exercised in the name of Islam. Some of their ranks even called for establishing a republic and separating religion from the state.

5. Pro-democracy Islamist parties:

While some recognized Islamist currents seek the Islamization of democracy, other forces, such as the Cultural Alternative Party, headed by Al Mustafa Mutasem, converged with the Moroccan radical leftists on several issue including the diagnosis of the current situation and calls for constitutional and political reforms for the sake of a genuine democracy. The Cultural Alternative Party believes that if genuine democracy is established, it would surely result in the sovereignty of Islamic values, given the fact that the majority of Moroccans are Muslims⁽⁸⁾.

(8) Muhammad Dareef, op cit, p. 108, annotation 234.

The Cultural Alternative Party suffered from the authorities denying its exercise of political action in equal footing with other associations and parties for over a decade (1995-2005). Even when it was transformed into a political party in 2002, its application for a license was rejected. The party, though, gained the support of several human rights organizations and political parties, particularly the leftists, until it was finally given the license in 2005. It was the first party to win recognition without the need to merge with another party, as the in the experience of the Justice and Development Party. It was, however, dissolved in 2008 as previously mentioned.

Like the Cultural Alternative Party, the Umma Party suffered from the procrastination of authorities, though it gained solidarity of national parties. It eventually held its founding conference on June 3rd, 2007 at the office of the Socialist Union Party, as it was spacious enough to accommodate the attendees. The founding conference elected the National Council with Mr. Muhamamd Al Marwani elected as its chairman, the remaining persons being elected as members of the Secretariat General.

The Umma Party, however, met the same fate as that of the Cultural Alternative Party. It was dissolved in 2008 under the pretext that its leaders were implicated in a terrorist deign. The leaders were imprisoned until they were released by a royal pardon in April 2011, during the social movement.

3- Pro-regime parties:

Those parties have been established either by authority or with its support. What they were created for was to neutralize national movement parties and provide for a cosmetic pluralism. They get around democracy by securing for themselves a manipulated win in the elections, which means they accede to governmental offices, the parliament and other elected institutions.

A main distinctive feature of those parties is that they wholeheartedly support the regime's propositions and visions against its opponents , be they nationalists, leftists or Islamists. They would stand in the face of any other party accused

of having a desire to dominate governance or show hostility to the monarchy or seek to overthrow it. The administrative parties were established under the pretext of the necessity to represent given areas or classes of society, such as the rural areas, the generation of independence, national capitalism, etc. Those parties include:

First: The Popular Movement

The Popular Movement Party is the oldest in this category. It was established in February 1959 by Mahjoubi Aherdane. He served as an officer in the French army, then was appointed as governor of Rabat Province soon after independence. This party presents itself as one that fights against the 'hegemony' of the Independence Party. It claims to represent the rural people and the Amazigh ethnicity and supports the monarchy. The party got the support of the state and had among its leaders Mahjoubi Aherdane and Dr Abdul Karim Al Khatib.

The popular movement, on the occasion of the 1963 legislative elections, saw an ad hoc coalition called the Front for the Defence of Constitutional Institutions. It was led by the Minister of Interior and the Chief of the Royal Court Ahmed Reda Guedira and aimed to face up each of the Independence Party and the National Union of Popular Forces. Despite the election fraud, the coalition could hardly secure a majority with Al Khatib becoming the Speaker of the Parliament and Aherdane the Minister of Defence.

It was yet to see a schism with the breaking away of a group under the name of the Popular Constitutional Democratic Movement Party in 1967 under the leadership of Abdul Karim Al Khatib. This party, however, disappeared in favour of the Justice and Development Party, which as explained earlier, is a religious party that does not mind the rules of the political game.

Relations got strained in the 1980s between the party and some of those close to the Palace ousting, as a result, Aherdane from the Popular Movement and bringing to the leadership position Mohanad Laenser. Aherdane established

the National Popular Movement Party in 1991, before it was merged with the Popular Movement in 2006.

The party suffered another schism with the breakaway in 1967 of the Social Democratic Movement under the leadership of a police officer Mahmoud Archane, notoriously known by the victims for his involvement in the so-called 'years of bullets', who gained a big support leading his party to win 32 seats in the 1997 elections. An equal number of seats went to the Independence Party, a result that was surely orchestrated by the former Minister of Interior to hit back the National Party. It saw a setback, though, in the 2016 elections as it gained only three seats in the House of Representatives.

Second: National Rally of Independents

In the wake of the popular movement and the creation of the Front for the Defence of Constitutional Institutions in the 1963 elections, the authority in 1977 sought again to pursue a means of attaining a loyal majority. It asked King Hasan II's brother-in-law to lead a new party, which emerged under the name of the National Rally of Independents. The name of the party indicated that those who would form it had run for the municipal and legislative elections of 1976 and 1977, respectively, as independent from any party. With the support of the Ministry of Interior, they won an overwhelming majority in the municipal elections (8607 seats), compared with 3058 seats won by the Independence Party and the Socialist Union Party together. The National Rally of Independence won 140 parliamentary seats, compared with 49 for the Independence Party and 15 for the Socialist Union. From within the parliament, the National Rally of Independents formed the National Rally of Independents Party, relinquishing their previous status as independent, and the president of the party became the Prime Minister.

Its members incorporated a myriad of senates who had nothing in common except defending their own interests and those of the authority. Some of those senates included Sahrawi persons who pledged loyalty to the King

after the restoration of the Sahara. Other members were former unionists and wealthy people. Against this background, there was no surprise that the party suffered a split in 1981 with the establishment of the National Democratic Party by those who presented it as a party concerned with rural interests. That was the slogan under which its first conference was held in 1982 electing Muhammad Arsalan Eljadidi as Secretary General.

The party participated in the subsequent elections and retained its position in the majority, but it later on took an ever declining trend.

Third: The Constitutional Union Party

In preparation for the elections in 1984 and given the declining momentum of administrative parties, the authority would push the newly appointed Prime Minister and Minister of Justice Mr. Maati Bouabid to establish a new party under the name of the Constitutional Union Party in 1983. That came under the pretext that it would 'fill in the gap', a slogan that would soon be proven to do nothing but lip-service⁽⁹⁾.

Just as happened with the National Rally of Independents, the party would eventually justify its presence by claiming the era of traditional parties had come to an end as they failed to incorporate the independence generation. It would also talk about social liberalism and adherence to the Alaouite Throne.

The party won the majority of the seats in the 1984 legislative elections (83 seats) followed by the National Rally of Independents (61 seats), the Popular Movement (47 seats), the National Democratic Party (24 seats), but the opposition parties altogether could not win more than 82 seats distributed among them as follows: the Independence Party (41 seats), Socialist Union (36 seats), Progress and Socialism (2 seats) and Labour Organization (1 seat). Since then, though, the party has seen sharp declines. Its share in the parliament was reduced to 27 (2007), 23 (2011) and 19 (2016).

(9) An interesting quotation of Mr. Muhammad Dareef: Moroccan Political Parties, op. cit. p. 218.

Fourth: The Authenticity and Modernity Party

In 2007, the country reached a decisive tipping point. The dire economic conditions, with the gap between the rich and the poor getting wider, made it impossible for most segments of society to make ends meet. The country performed poorly on UNDP's human development indicators. The power of traditional and pro-government parties abated, while the Islamic parties and movements were on the rise. With this in mind, the regime had to establish a new party, the Authenticity and Modernity Party. It pushed all traditional and loyal parties to line up behind the party against the Islamists.

The party was established by one of the King's friends, Mr. Fouad Ali El Himma, whom the King appointed on November 9th, 1999 as a Secretary of State in the Ministry of the Interior, having removed Driss Basri, whose days were gone as the second powerful man in King Hasan I's reign. The future was for El Himma in the new reign of King Muhamamd VI. However, he gave up his position in August 2007. In the beginning, Mr. Fouad Ali El Himma formed the All Democrats Movement, whose name was changed afterwards into the Authenticity and Modernity Party. The members were of mixed backgrounds and orientations. Some were leftists, coming from the All Democrats Movement. Others came from five smaller self-dissolved parties, namely the National Democratic Party, the Covenant Party, the Environment and Development Party, the League of Freedoms and the Citizenship and Development Initiative Party.

Here are three pillars that underpin the Authenticity and Modernity Party:

- face fundamentalist threats;
- offer a political alternative for the elites that lost credibility, being completely focused on advocating the interests of their members and refusing the devolution of authority among the elites;
- support the country's 'mega projects', at the core of which is a comprehensive developmental effort led by King Muhammad VI with the aim of putting

Morocco at a par with the developed nations.

Mr. Fouad Ali El Himma moved from being a minister for interior into an independent candidate not affiliated with any party in the 2007 elections. That move happened weeks ahead of the elections, in which the party diligently participated winning over all other parties with three seats for Al Rahamnah District. Within the parliament, there was a collective migration of dozens of MPs into the new parliamentary bloc with the suspension of Article 5 of the Parties Law, which originally prohibited such migration. In the 2009 municipal elections, thanks to the authority's support of the new party's candidates, the Authenticity and Modernity Party came first, just a few months after its establishment.

However, the popular unrest of February 2011 saw slogans raised against the Authenticity and Modernity Party in addition to individuals from the security, media and political spheres. The 2011 elections took place seeing a declining power of the party, which could not win more than 47 seats. Afterwards, the government was formed by the Justice and Development Party, and the King appointed Mr. Fouad Ali El Himma as his own advisor, in an innuendo of the latter's withdrawal from political life. Nevertheless, as the popular momentum ebbed and chaos prevailed in the region, the regime seemed to have readopted its older design, which was meant to give more momentum to this pro-regime party.

The party held a conference appointing a new leader of the party, in a declared attempt to reduce the domination of the Islamists and regain prominence on the parties landscape. Several arrangements were made in that direction, but even with the party attaining the second rank in the 2016 elections, winning 102 seats, second to the Justice and Development Party (125 seats), the party's success was made at the expense of other parties. It would have not made such a success, had it not been for the authority's support, as some parties and analysts say.

While administrative parties seemed to continue declining, except for the Authenticity and Modernity Party, which was more fortunate than others, the

functions of those parties did not quite come to an end. The regime still used them to attach a sort of democracy and pluralism to politics and strike a necessary balance to protect its interests and positions. It used the relative representation voting system so that it could force other parties to enter into coalitions and normalise relations with administrative parties to the end of forming such majorities necessary for forming coalition governments. Since such forms of governments do not maintain a good degree of harmony among their components, the authority could influence them into the direction it most desires.

In this way, the 'rotational-consensus' government declared on March 14th of the same year under the Prime Minister Mr. Abderrahmane Youssoufi. It was a coalition government that included the Socialist Union of Popular Forces, the Independence Party and the Progress and Socialism Party.

All of them belonged to the bloc, in addition to the Popular Movement, the National Rally of Independents and a number of independent ministers answering directly to the Palace of such portfolios as of the interior, foreign affairs, defence, department of state and waqif and religious affairs.

When the cabinet of Mr. Abdelilah Benkirane, from the Justice and Development Party, was formed in January 2012, it included a coalition between the Justice and Development Party, the Independence Party (which was subsequently replaced by the National Rally of Independents after its withdrawal), the Party of Progress and Socialism and the Popular Movement. Other ministers joined the government and were known as "sovereign ministers' answering to the Palace"⁽¹⁰⁾.

Finally, the following table summarizes the representation of parties in the House of Representatives, based on the official results of the elections for the parliament from 2002 up till 2016.

(10) https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D%8AD%D%83%9D%88%9D%85%9D%8A9_%D%8A%7D%84%9D9%85%D%8BA%D%8B%1D%8A2013_8

Party	The Results as on October 7th, 2016	The Results as on November 25th, 2011	The Results as in 2007	The Results as in 2002
Justice and Development	125	106	46	42
Authenticity and Moderation	102	48	Non-existent at that time	Non-existent at that time
The Independence Party	46	60	52	48
National Rally of Independents	37	54	39	41
The Popular Movement	27	32	41	27
The Socialist Union	20	39	38	50
The Constitutional Union Party	19	23	27	16
Party of Progress and Socialism	12	18	17	11
The Labour Party	00	04	-	-
Democratic Social Movement	3	02	09	07
Front of Democratic Forces	00	01	-	-
The Democratic Leftist Federation, the Unified Socialist Party+ The Vanguard Party+ the National Congress Party	2	Did not participate	1	1
Total	395	395	325	325



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