ISLAM, DEMOCRACY, AND GOVERNANCE:
SUDAN AND MOROCCO IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

By

WALEED MOUSA

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by

Waleed Mousa
There is not a single night in which I do put my head over the pillow without thinking of the poor in my nation and in the world in large. It is to those impoverished people, to my parents who helped me reach this level of conscientiousness, to my wife whose love helped me overcome the agony, and to my children whose heavenly spirit helped sustain my soul that I dedicate this dissertation.

Waleed Madibbo
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Throughout its history, Islam has been marked by two trends. The first trend is a literalist tradition, which considers the Sharia laws as expounded in the medieval manuals as the eternally valid and immutable standards of conduct. The second trend is a liberalist interpretation of Sharia, which views that classical theory as only one stage in the evolution of the Sharia. This interpretation continues to interpret the Qur’an in light of the mundane forces that activate society.

My dissertation argues that the absence of a well-balanced socio-political philosophy exacerbates the tension between these two tendencies: between Islamization, which as a result of the colonial and post-colonial legacies has become tantamount with the literalist tradition, and Liberalization, which lies in consonance with intellectual school of thoughts that had evolved in the West. This tension becomes internalized in a culturally homogeneous society such as the Moroccan society; it becomes externalized in a culturally heterogeneous society such as the Sudanese society. Increasing acts of
violence display some of the tension that the Moroccan society is experiencing; jihad declared citizens of the south explains some of the Sudanese tension. An Islamic epistemological revolution, to borrow Mohamed Arkoun’s terminology, may be the way towards invigorating genuine interaction between Islam with its emphasis on a communitarian bond, and the sociological and historical roots of modernity with its emphasis on individuality, hence creating a morally bounded public sphere, yet one that is liberating.
CHAPTER 1
AN OVERVIEW

Democratization, with its ensuing pressures for parallel liberal economic and political reforms, poses a special challenge to Islamic countries. Relatively little work has been done on this subject (Tibi 2002; Ahmed 1992; Sivan 1990; Eickelman and Piscatori 1996; Lewis 1988; Nasr 2001). This dissertation is an attempt to fill the existing gap in our knowledge. It focuses on two African countries, Sudan and Morocco, which have been struggling for quite some time to reconcile an Islamic heritage with a more liberal political order. In addition, both countries have been wrestling with how to incorporate geographically peripheral parts into the political mainstream: in Sudan, the South; in Morocco, Western Sahara. These tensions have intensified in recent years as the end of the Cold War has unleashed an ideological tension within the Muslim world that exposed the weaknesses of existing political institutions.

Politics in plural Islamic countries, such as Morocco and Sudan fails to produce stability and a plural reconciliation because the pragmatic middle ground on the ideological spectrum (IS), occupied by traditional parties with a Sufi background, is being conquered by stronger forces. These modernist forces are mainly on the left and the right side of the ideological spectrum (Modernists forces are forces that use the state as their vehicle of reform, they can either be seculars from the left or Islamists from the right), and they use more effective political means to rule. The political authority in Morocco succeeded in the post-colonial era in overcoming extremist tendencies either to the left or to the right. This allowed the political authorities to follow a moderate path that
facilitated building a political and economic infrastructure that linked the coastal and inner cities (and the king to the masses in a rather superficial manner). But Sudan’s sporadic movements from the left to the right denied the state monopoly over (non)physical resources. This thwarted Sudan’s ability to overcome centrifugal tendencies and threatened its very existence as a central authority. The lack of cooperation between the two middle-of-the-spectrum parties has made traditional parties susceptible to seduction from either extreme. The left (seculars) accused the Umma and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) of succumbing to sectarian motives, as they engaged in using religion as a mobilizational tool within the domain of the sect. But the right (Islamists) accused these traditional parties of giving in to secular demands. As a result, the middle-of-the-ground parties had very brief moments (compare six years of democracy to 36 from the time Sudan took its independence) that it could use to bolster their capacity to politically incorporate the periphery.

In my comparison I shall examine the tension between ideological polarization and incorporation and how it affects political stability. The degree of ideological tension is higher in Morocco than in Sudan due to their different colonial experiences (Morocco was colonized by the French, Sudan by the British), proximity of Morocco from Europe and political dialectic that the Maghreb historically had with the Mashreq. The ideological middle ground is dominated mostly by Sufis in both countries, the Sufis nonetheless remain largely unincorporated in the political center. While the Moroccan center is dominated by the king, the Sudanese center is divided between two parties -- DUP and Umma. These parties are largely dominated by two religious families, the Marghanis and the Mahdis, respectively, by virtue of being the supreme authority, in
contrast, religious leaders in Sudan had at times during conflict recounted political authority that they devolved to elites to lead the traditional parties. Within these middle-of-the-ground parties a continuous tension existed between traditional leaders who controlled the majority of religious followers, and leaders who had secular modern appeal but lacked spiritual credentials. Consequently, it was easier for other political actors to ignore the center in Sudan than in Morocco. Political instability affected the ability of both countries to design a liberal political order that recognizes the rights of each group to compete on equal terms, and grants minorities their political rights and civil liberties. Although Morocco did not experience as dramatic consequences as Sudan (2 million people died in the civil war in Sudan, so far), because Morocco had relatively an ethnically and religiously homogeneous body, the issue of Western Sahara has proved costly both in terms of physical and human costs.

The argument pursued here is that in societies where the literal tradition continues to be very much alive, political stability is foremost influenced by the tensions caused by the political mobilization that this literal tradition permits, on the one hand, and the liberal and secular efforts to modernize and develop society, on the other. Within the Islamic literal tradition, however, there is also a marked polarity between centralization and dispersion of political authority, with “high” Islam pursuing the former and Sufists the latter. This latter division within Islam also has another dimension: “high” Islam being predominantly an urban, Sufism predominantly a rural phenomenon. The main argument here is that it is this “double disadvantage” of relying on dispersed authority and being largely rural that contributes to displacing the pragmatic forces from the
political center and leaving room for more radical secular or Islamic forces to seize political power.

The migration of elites to the left and the right of the ideological spectrum then has deprived the middle-of-the-spectrum of an important asset it could have used to intellectually (not only pragmatically) balance the rich --though dormant Islamic heritage-- with the important tenets that modern political systems are based upon, namely, political rights and civil liberties. In order to fully understand the governance challenges in Islamic countries it is helpful to pursue the analysis along two axes: one horizontal, the other vertical. The former refers to the ideological spectrum already mentioned, the latter to the way power is organized in a centralized or dispersed fashion. Islamic countries tend to differ politically in terms of where they are located in the matrix below:

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<td>Left</td>
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<td>? (NGOs)</td>
<td>Sufis</td>
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The ideological tension between the literalists and the liberalists has some resemblance to the continuum of Islamic socio-political philosophy that existed a thousand years ago and which extended from the taqlid to the ijtihad. The literalist considers Islamic jurisprudence/Sharia laws expounded in the medieval manuals as the eternally valid and immutable standards of conduct. The liberals view classical theory
as only one stage in the evolution of the Sharia and they continue to interpret the Qur’an in light of the mundane forces that activate society. However, a little bit of investigation in Islamic history reveals a lack of historical continuity between the old itjihad-taqlid distinction and the more contemporary liberal-literalist distinction. Thus, the itjihad school of thought, with its pluralist and empowering ideals was repeatedly suppressed by political authorities. These authorities sought refuge in taqlid to monopolize understanding of Islam. The taqlid therefore controlled the masses religiously and thwarted their potential to challenge to the status quo. Islamic regimes drew on the taqlid tradition to legitimate their political authority. For instance, while the Moroccan regime limited its understanding of Islam to media coverage of Friday prayers, the Sudanese regime tried to ideologically impose its understanding of Islam over the society as a whole by indoctrinating students at all levels, infusing Islamic agenda in media programs, and so forth.

Where there was no religious authority to monopolize the political center, such as Sudan, totalitarian regimes hailed Islam as a panacea for all problems to justify their move against seculars, namely, socialists or communists, who by the end of the Cold War lost their ideological appeal. During the Cold War the question was whether to include Islam in the equation of governance and under what forms (secular vs. theocratic). Toward the end of Islamic revivalism in Sudan the question has become how to include Islam and with what implication for political rights and civil liberties. The stumbling attempts of Islamists since becoming dominant to solve any of the endemic economic and social problems have called into question their monopoly over the “truth.” This more recent development has created more fluidity on the ideological spectrum with actors
modifying their previous positions. Thus, for instance, seculars who in the past didn’t attempt to legitimate their claims religiously, are now trying to decompose the “Islamic heritage” to grant it the intellectual dynamism it needs to fulfill the persistently changing demands of modern life. Rather than breaking out of the tradition, liberals are now reflecting inwards to liberate themselves from a literate tradition that had long justified discrimination against women and non-Muslim minorities.

The dichotomous relationship between the left and the right can be explained by the dysfunctional political systems that Sudan and Morocco inherited from the colonials. Nonetheless, much remains to be explained by an old-fashioned educational system that fails to benefit from the epistemological revolutions that overwhelmed the social sciences. Although it is difficult to be critical of peoples’ heritage under times of repression and political backwardness, Muslim scholars of Western education, such as Mohamed Arkoun and Mohamed Abid al-jabri argue that without revisiting and critically reexamining the tradition it would be difficult if not impossible to reconceptualize Islamic theology. Insofar as it takes for granted the authenticity of the original sources, the taqlid-ijtihad dichotomy remains rudimentary and in many ways insufficient. What was originally taqlid became synonymous with literalism (it is not necessarily literal, but uses an old epistemology), ijtihad became for sometime synonymous with liberalism/secularism (it has recently started converging towards the tradition, i.e., it is using Islam to legitimate its claims). Though it is important to design means of political accommodation of religiously diverse groups, overcoming the theological divide through intellectual and conceptual means remains vital over the long run.
Similarly, what allows Islamists an opportunity to label Sufism as heterodoxy and to some extent succeed in such propaganda is a colonial legacy that gave modernist groups institutional power --that of the modernist state-- to politically marginalize Sufi groups. In countries like Morocco where Sufis enjoy a sizable presence, the king boosts his authority by portraying himself, again aided by extremely influential modern media technology, as a mega Sufi, a religious scholar, and a descendent of the prophet. By playing both seculars and “high” Islamic forces against the Sufis, he has been able to neutralize their influence and occupy the political center-stage himself. While the Sufists had played a major part in the foundation of the Istqlal party in the 1960s, they have now been marginalized and unable to play their role in the political middle.

The political stage has for a long time been orchestrated by the king who in addition to having benefited from regional and international circumstances in bolstering his political authority, capitalized on an antique heritage or centralized religious authority. However, increased challenges from the right have exposed the efforts that the Moroccan regime have made to reconcile the Islamic heritage and liberal political values. The dismay of the public with secularism and their discontent with Islamic ideology that brought disasters to neighboring countries, such as Algeria, explain the public’s weak participation in national (party) politics. A case in point is the 2003 election in which less than 40 percent of the population participated in voting. They are equally dissatisfied with the king and his attempts to reconcile the ideological tension between the left and the right. Hasssan II responded to political challenges by shifting ideological labels and not necessarily changing or adjusting governance strategies. He used his intellectual mastery of Western philosophy when accused by seculars of backwardness (Cold War
era), and he resorts to his religious appeal when confronting Islamists (Islamic revivalism).

To the extent that this duality helped the king stabilize the Moroccan regime, it endowed Hassan II with maneuverability he could use to thwart political opposition without changing actual political stands. The king managed to make himself indispensable by activating political rivalries between actors at either end of the extreme, that is, seculars and Islamists. For example, during the Cold War radical forces were crushed for the cause of protecting Islamic identity from the evil of socialism. The change in the regional and international circumstances encouraged opposition leaders to demand political freedom that was overshadowed by the king’s demand for national unity in the face of secessionist forces in the Western Sahara. The king rejuvenated the baia, under the strictness of modern protocols and the notoriousness of modern media, to claim religious right over a politically disputed land, the Western Sahara. He considered the right of a Muslim king to extend his authority over an “annexed Muslim land.” What was surprisingly an oath of obedience that Muslim ulama had traditionally given to the king was extended to include modern politicians --even seculars and communists-- who after 40 years of defiance accepted the idea of a constitutional monarch to absorb the tidal wave of Islamic revivalism. They inflated the image of the king as a religious figure to thwart the ability of Islamists to use Islam for mobilizational purposes. While the issue of the Western Sahara was for a long time used to divert attention from violation of civil rights in the rest of Morocco, absence of freedom made it difficult for Moroccan politicians to address the atrocities committed against the Saharawis, inhabitants of the Western Sahara. The governance tale of Morocco clearly demonstrates that in a context
where power is effectively centralized --and occupied by an authoritative figure like
*Makzan*-- Sufism can occupy the political middle ground but with the important
qualification that the masses are not part of it.

The governance story of Sudan is different. It inherited a less strenuous relationship
between the left and the right as a result of the British colonial policy that did not have a
position against religion. Nor did the *salafi* doctrine play an important part in political life
in Sudan until recently. Despite its relative geographic proximity, Sudan remained quite
peripheral in the context of the big religious debates of the *Mashreq* (the core Arab
countries in what is now called the Middle East). The main difference, however, is that
political authority was never effectively centralized or held by an authoritative figure like
the King of Morocco. It became much more easily liable to ideological agitation from
either the left or the right, thus frustrating the democratic process and inviting an
intrusive army into the political arena. This was exacerbated by the fact that the
traditional parties appealed to a Sufi majority that resided in the rural areas, leaving the
cities --and the political center-- to modernist forces. The latter --whether Islamists or
communists-- tended to rely on authoritarian means to achieve their ends, while the
traditional parties tried to promote a parliamentary form of democracy. The more the
pendulum moved to the left, as, for instance during the rise of the secular forces to power
in 1969, the more it alienated the Muslim majority by advocating extreme secular
measures and refusing to allow Sharia a role in the design of public policy proceedings.
The more the pendulum moved to the extreme right, as during the rise of Hassan Turabi
to power in the late 1980s, the more it alienated the non-Muslim minority in southern
Sudan. In short, while Morocco has remained relatively stable and occupied one and the
same position in our matrix above, Sudan has continued to be unstable and shift position in the matrix more than once.

In conclusion, this dissertation argues that the locus of power is “off-centered” in both Sudan and Morocco, but they are so in different ways. Morocco is off center because of the dominant position occupied by the King and his ability to play different forces against each other and thus block progress towards a harmonization of the literal and liberal traditions and the achievement of a sustainable political stability. Sudan, on the other hand, is off center in the sense that the political vacuum at the center invites radical swings from right to left or vice versa, leaving the country without the necessary political stability to promote national development.

Three main blocks contribute to the building of this argument. The first section, which contains Chapter 1, explains the difficulty that Muslim countries in general encountered in coordinating cultural and political activities at the time of independence, the Cold War, and Islamic revivalism. The second section consists of Chapters 3 and 4. Chapter 3 examines the historical circumstances that allowed the state to impose its authority over the society, but with more degrees of success in Morocco than in Sudan. Chapter 4 traces the evolution of Islamic theology to identify the major benchmarks that have historically influenced the development of the ideological spectrum, as we know it today. Section three, which contains Chapters 5 and 6 traces the movements on the ideological pendulum to explain how they have affected efforts at establishing democratic governance. Chapter 7 discusses the ontological question: based on the experience of Morocco and Sudan, what lessons can be learnt for the Muslim world? In
this last chapter I make recommendations for what I think may contribute to the stabilization of regimes in Muslim countries.
CHAPTER 2
ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY

The relationship between Islam and democracy is both historically and in a contemporary perspective a tortured relationship. Mainstream notions of democracy are the product of a historical trajectory dominated by Western Civilization. Muslims have been approaching such principal features of contemporary democracy as individual freedom, human rights, and competitive elections from the outside to the inside. They are being asked to adjust to this type of political system without necessarily having the economic or cultural conditions that have given rise to it in the first place. But looking at these issues in a historical perspective, individual freedom was more advanced in the Golden Era of Islam in the 10th to 12th Centuries than it was during that time within other religious traditions. Thus, it is to easy to argue that within Islam the development trajectory has been from individualism to communitarianism, and in Christianity and Judaism, it has been just the opposite.

The evolution of communitarianism in the Islamic world has both internal and external causes. The different religious interpretations and the relatively decentralized system of authority, which characterized Islam in the past and still exists, were not easily compatible with the ambitions of individual rulers wishing to create states of their own. Retaining some degree of control and coherence required the establishment of systems in which obedience in a religious sense and submission in political terms were necessary. The literal tradition lent itself to this kind of evolution with the ulama serving the needs of the rulers. The relative flexibility and freedom that individuals had enjoyed in the
Golden Era were gradually constrained. The *ummah*, which had at one time been interpreted in a “bottom-up” fashion, was gradually defined in distinct top-down fashion by the elite. Although the religious diversity within the broader Islam continued, each sect tended to “freeze” a certain interpretation of the Qur’an and the Sunnah, thereby giving such interpretation not only a sacrosanct status but also providing a rigid behavioral code for each follower. This tension within what might be called a “high” and a “low” Islam --between rulers and followers-- produced its own tensions between those inclined to follow a mysticist interpretation (*sufism*) and those ready to follow a more literal interpretation of the principal sources of inspiration (*salafis*). In both cases, however, individuals were expected to conform or comply with norms and beliefs set for them by authoritative sources within the religious system. Influenced by external and internal pressures, both groups had over the years moved onto the literalist side of the spectrum, with the only difference that the traditionalists/Sufis adopts a society-oriented strategy of reform, the Islamic modernists a state-oriented. There are virtually no convincing cases until very recently, for example, the opposition in Lebanon where societal action inspired by the liberal tradition has taken place. The point is that a secular civil society has yet to develop in Islamic countries. In trying to relate Islam to democracy in more constructive fashion, therefore, the virtual absence of a liberally inspired civil society is thec “Achilles Heal.”

Islam has always been interacting with other religions and civilizations. It would be wrong to suggest, therefore, that external influences are only recent. Islam was influenced by military combat with the Persians, Romans, and Europeans in Spain that nevertheless bred intellectual correspondence. However, the colonial invasion of the Muslim lands in
the 19th century registered a psychological defeat that made Islam more defensive and inclined to react to outside influences rather than shaping the trends of development. Its communitarian value system was held up as a preferable alternative to the increasingly liberal tradition within Christianity, especially after the principle of separation of church and state had been adopted. Within this increasingly secular tradition, individualism took hold. Community was seen as standing in the way of emancipating the individual. What I refer to as the “liberal tradition” in this dissertation eventually came to pose the opposite to the literal tradition that continued to be dominant within Islam.

These dichotomies between high and low Islam --or state and society-dominated rule-- and a literal and a liberal tradition have been the dominant factors shaping the evolution of Islam and its relations with notions of democracy. These distinctions constitute the basic organizing principles of understanding this relation, and the organization and discussion in this chapter reflect this. More specifically, it begins by tracing the evolution of Islamic thought and its political implications in the years prior to Western colonization in the 19th century. The second part deals with the effects of Western colonialism on Islam, especially its attempt to modernize Islam by weakening the grip by community of its individual members. The final section of this chapter identifies cases that illustrate a matrix built around the two dichotomies listed above.

**Political Authority in Islam Prior to Modernity**

The central issue in Islam’s political history has been authority: who “rightfully” holds the authority of interpreting the text and by what criteria is authority established (that is, differently among various groups)? Indeed, the original differences in Islamic history do lay the groundwork for what we see in contemporary Sudan and Morocco, for example, whether their authority devices from Sharia scholarship, prophetic descent,
mystical experiences, or a combination of all. While Sufis encourage a flexible interpretation of the Qur’an based on the allegorical interpretation (*tawil*) of the saint (*walee*), Salafis, true heirs to the early theocratic state, emphasize plain investigation/literal meaning (*tafsir*) of the scholar (*alym*). Hodgson in his classic, *The Venture of Islam*, asks the compelling question: “How can the inward-minded Sufis and the Shariah-minded Hadith folk be made to complement each other in an Islamic spiritual life” (Hodgson 1977: 402)? Should Muslims decide to give up their adornment with society as an indivisible polity, can the modern state --with its emphasis on functional differentiation-- provide each entity its domain while granting a schema of operation? Does democracy, with its indelible demand of popular sovereignty, extend Muslims an opportunity to pay tribute to their heritage or does it forfeit them such right in the name of “liberalism” and/or “secularism”?  

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1 In Chapter Three, I explain that Islamists have tried to obtain both the authority of the scholar and the sanctity of the saint, thus defying their modernist appeal and making it difficult for the observer to distinguish them for any traditional groups.

2 “The spiritual temptation of the Sufis was complementary to that of those of the Hadith folk who resisted going along the Sufi path. For the Hadith folk, the danger came from the attempt to capture the unformulable in a formula, to hold on to God Himself within the words of the Qur’an. In such an attempt, they risked forgoing the spontaneous responsiveness which never ceases seeking beyond what it has already found, in favor of a disciplined responsibility to truth already known: responsibility such as had caused people to receive and live by the Qur’anic challenge when it was first delivered. Such responsibility was always necessary to preserve the continuity of commitment in the tradition of any group. But, held to too narrow an exclusivity, such responsibility could impose a conformity which would preclude any new understanding, smother the creative dialogue which was equally necessary for any cultural tradition, and devitalize the very tradition it was meant to serve” (Hodgson 1977: 402).

3 Said Qutb --the intellectual factor of modern activism-- contends that the economic institutions of the West are fully governed by material rationality, a belief that defies the ontology of any religion. Secularism rules political institutes as a sovereign mistress, thus denying social norms and values a role in designing public policy procedures. The Enlightenment's vilification of religion has, at minimum, caused moral relativism, and, at maximum, culminated in the moral impoverishment of Western societies. Albeit, he did not live long enough to see Islamism with its admiration with the processes associated with modernization, for example, rationalization as well as technical capacity of the modern state, sold its version of modernity --a set of socially encoded values emphasizing sympathy for traditional values over economic efficiency, power, and profit-- that bankrupted Muslim societies, both morally and intellectually (Euben 2000: 30).
The Qur’an and the Sunna are the material sources of divine revelation in Islam. The Qur’an was revealed in 23 years and was completed shortly before the death of Prophet Mohammed. The Sunna represents the recorded words and deeds of the Prophet; it was recorded almost a century after the death of the Prophet. In his lifetime, the Prophet discouraged his companions from recording the Sunna. He wanted the broad precepts and ethical norms of the Qur’an to provide guidance for the newly forming community. Nonetheless, scholars, who followed the literate tradition, found in the Sunna (conceptual) tools they could use to confine the Qur’an to the spatial and the temporal particularities of the time (see Chapter 4), while still claiming that “Islam is timeless and unchanging.” Modern scholars like Abd al-Majeed Al-Sharafi (2001), Tariq Ramdan, (2004); Mohamed Arkoun (1999), and Nasr Hamid Abu-Zaid (1996) contend, in addition to agency-related issues, there are structural factors. These factors the extended period between the time of the Prophet and the recording of the Sunna. This may have influenced the imagination of individuals who reported the sayings of the Prophet not to forget the pressure that religious scholars experienced to stabilize a society undergoing rapid transformation. Historically deconstructing that time period to expose the relationship between truth and --power and thus to make a distinction between what the Prophet intended and what the scholars decreed-- resembles one of the thorniest issues for Muslims today. First, given their lack of intellectual training in social sciences, today’s ulama are ill equipped to undertake such a task (see Chapter 4). Second, activists who are often referred to as “Islamists” want to preserve the picture of a pure and pristine Islam in the face of continued encroachment of the West over Muslim territories. This is a defensive strategy as well as a strategic one.
While Ali b. abi-Talib (the fourth Caliphate after the Prophet Mohamed, his cousin, and son-in-law) demanded piety as a way of subverting parochialism that was deeply engrained in the Arabic culture, his cousin Moawya b. abi-Sufyan, also a political competitor, thought the latter feature could be used to stabilize the political system and thereby spread Islam. But what kind of an Islam is this? How different is it from the religion of Quaraish (the prestigious Arab tribe that had the honor of protecting Mecca and serving the pilgrims at the times of the Prophet) --one that justified submissiveness in the midst of injustice? The dispute was considered political, at most quasi-religious, because no one then had a monopoly over “truth.” Imam Ali was asked, in lieu of a military confrontation that consumed the lives of approximately 70,000 of the companions of the Prophet, what he thought of his cousin. Unlike the attitude of “modern” Muslim leaders who accuse their political opponents of apostasy, he confirmed they were Muslims who transgressed against their brothers. However pious the public perceived them, none of the first four caliphates dared to exploit religion for political reasons or use politics to dictate a religious doctrine (Mernissi 1992). The “secular” exercise of politics⁴ made Islam adaptive to different socio-cultural contexts, and gained the system political efficacy at a time when Islam spread to geographical territories beyond the caliphate’s capability to administer.⁵ Future kings, only three decades after the death of the Prophet Mohamed, viewed such characteristics as making religion

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⁴ That is to say, politics was practiced within the zone of (partial) overlap between the temporal and the spiritual domains. And none of the caliphates in the first three decades of Islam attempted to use religion to dominate any of the two domains or completely separate them.

⁵ “It is human intelligence that formulates the universal and elaborate methodologies, which vary according to the object of study to which they are applied (e.g., religious practice, social affairs, sciences), by working on the Quran and the Sunna. In other words, the Sharia, insofar as it is the expression of ‘the way of faithfulness,’ deduced and constructed a posteriori, is the work of human intellect” (Ramadan 2004: 34).
elusively malleable and its ‘kingdom’ politically vulnerable. However, it would take centuries of collaboration between Islamic rulers (Amirs) and religious scholars (ulama) to completely silence the moral consciousness of the individual Muslim as the only guard against theocracy.

During the first three centuries of Islam, four different Sunni schools of law were established and received recognition as "equally authoritative expressions of Sharia law." These are the Malikis, the Hanbilis, the Hanafis, and the Shafis. According to Coulson, "The genesis of Islamic religious law lay in a complex process of historical growth intimately connected with current social conditions." For instance, while a woman could contract a marriage only through her guardian in the traditionally tribal and patriarchal society of Medina, she had full freedom in contracting her marriage in Kufa, which was a cosmopolitan town in a predominantly Persian milieu (Coulson 1965: 76). By providing a socio-historical understanding of sharia, scholars helped the individual Muslim remain loyal to his moral consciousness --thereby contributing to the social balance and ensuring a peaceful coexistence between the inner and the outer self (they nonetheless risked losing their job in a modern setup). This helps us understand --contrary to the conviction of modern theists and activists-- that it is God’s law; the sharia is a natural law. Ramadan asserts, “The corpus of the Sharia is a human construction, and some aspects of it may evolve just as human thought evolves and just as some aspects of the Quran and the Sunna were revealed over time” (Ramadan 2004:37). Second, “The entire Islamic fiqh has developed through a process in which the community and its representatives have participated in open process” (Khurshid 2000:15). Sharia grew out of the need to put limitation on the sovereign, that is, the individual was perceived as the source of
authority, at least in theory. His intention was considered more valuable than their deed, and their perception of the “truth” depended on their intellectual capacity, not their material or cultural endowment. However, it is worth noting --although there were political attempts by the Umayyad to interfere with the proceedings of the Sharia-- that they were mostly unsuccessful. The dignity of the individual Muslim, something that the first four caliphames cherished, endured through the first five to six centuries of Islam. Although Islamic rulers had always succeeded in co-opting (ulama), it was not until the advent of the modern state that they completely succeeded in subordinating religious scholars. By virtue of being informal, education in the past was largely an activity of the society, not the state.

Muslim encounters with the high civilization of the Sasanids and the Byzantines, which were then the borders of Near Eastern Civilization, and later the intellectual barter with the peoples of Greece and Spain, made an impact on the intellectual history of Islam. As each of the Sunni schools of law was influenced by the social and political circumstances in which each school evolved, the fear of permutation has caused some Sunni jurists to increasingly discourage Sunni jurists from engaging in the activity of _ijtihad_ (independent interpretation) outside the scope of any of the existing schools of jurisprudence. The acceptance of belief on the authority of others, a doctrine known as _taqlid_, was refused by the proponents of the "rationalist" school who viewed the classical theory as only one stage in the evolution of the Sharia (Coulson 1965: 91). They perceived benefit from reflecting upon the knowledge of past generations but refused to be limited by it. The advocates of this tradition, of whom the mu'tazilite was the most prominent group, perceived rationality, not tradition, as the only guard against the
recession of Islamic jurisprudence. Toward the end of the 10th century, two schools of thought became prevalent: the traditionalist school, which adopted the doctrine of *taqlid*, and the rationalist school, which maintained the scholarly tradition of *ijtihad*.

The orientation of the Silk Road that extended from China to ancient Rome energized the pre-capitalized economy, which gave rise to a group of merchants who favored the rationalist school. Rationality was the Abbasid tool to subvert the Umayyad dynasty, which for a long time promoted fatalism. It was Allah’s will to have them as rulers of the Muslim *ummah*. Ironically, the Mu’tazilite were persecuted by the same dynasty that they helped bring to power. They nevertheless influenced and helped create an intellectual dynamics unprecedented in the history of Islam, often referred to the Golden Age of Islam (10th to 11th centuries). In the absence of a well-defined procedure that could mediate extremes, such rich intellectual dynamics were made vulnerable to the whims of a ruler who thwarted diversity in favor of unity. At the cost of having a stable political system, the Islamic authority --then the Abbasid dynasty-- had done away with *individual freedom* and instead appropriated the Persian heritage of “obedience” to establish the first theocratic state in Islam in the 10th century.⁶ “This did not, of course, mean the rule of the clergy, which in the sacerdotal sense, did not exist. . . .but there is another interpretation of the word “theocracy,” based on its original and literal meaning, that is, ‘the rule of God’” (Lewis 1988: 30).

In his classic, *The Arab Moral Mind*, Al-jabri asserts that the choice of “obedience” was strategically a political move, as well as a historic coincidence. To stabilize his regime, the Abbasid Amir needed a specific type of obedience, not the obedience of the

⁶ Inherent in this system was an authoritative logic that put indigenous populations, be it Persians, later Africans, and so forth, at the service of the “Arab Caesar.”
nomad to his chieftain, or that of the disciple to the pastor, but both. He wanted political obedience that was religiously stipulated. Such tradition was for centuries woven in the Persian culture, which saw the Caesar as both a religious figure and a political leader (Al-jabri 2001). To prevail through massive internal and external pressures, the political institution advocated an already existing religious doctrine, that of the Salafis (referring to the salaf: the companions of the Prophet). The theocratic logic, first introduced by the Umayyad and later institutionalized by the Abbasids, made it difficult for political dissidents to oppose the Amir (ruler) without facing the accusation of apostasy.7 Any uprising against the status quo, Al-Jabri asserts, needed to be substantiated religiously (and probably ethnically); it had to be a revolt from within the circle of religion. What was supposed to save Muslims --the plight of trial and error with their newly born political system opened-- the door for infinite turmoil. Repeated failures of the indigenous populations to destabilize the Arab-dominated regimes, be it Abbasid or Umayyad, enticed the new converts, mainly Persians, who became strangers in their own land, to seek a different strategy. They shifted from active resistance to passive resistance. By resorting to asceticism --again a quality inherent in the Persian heritage-- mystics evacuated the public sphere, thus diffusing the authority of the Amir, without giving him an excuse to use force. This created a precarious situation as it deprived the political authority of human and material resources it needed to carry further expeditions, that is, direct resources for outside invasion rather than wait for it to be directed against them. In the modern context, this will mean an indirect involvement in politics, which

7 Religious theology developed under political constraints. What was propagated as religious decree was mostly an offshoot of some political quarrel (Abu-Zaid 1996).
departs western understanding of party systems, given its separation between ends and means of achieving political objectives.⁸

Muslims of Persian origin masterfully used the weapon of “obedience” against the Arab Caesar. They transformed obedience from that of the ruled to the ruler, Al-jabri asserts, to it being obedience of the disciple (mureed) to the master (sheik). Pioneers of Islamic mysticism, such as Ibrahim b. Adham, Abd al-Allah b. al-mubarak, Shageeb al-Balki, and many others, were wealthy people; some of them came from privileged families. They were non-Arabs who used group asceticism as a weapon against the “invader” who deprived them of social and political status. Mystics discouraged their followers from pursuing political power and material wealth, and instead enticed them to concentrate on purifying the self and displaying moral discipline. The less tolerant the central authority became with deviations of the public from its outlined doctrine, the more tolerance the Sufi sheiks displayed to their disciples or mureeds. As a result, Sufism spread to the “periphery” in a very limited time, and its followers grew beyond the wildest imagination of the then Islamic Leviathan. Not surprisingly, countries that are in the periphery of today’s Islamic world, such as Morocco and Sudan, are predominately Sufis. It is through modern education that these nations’ elites got exposed to doctrinal Islam as found in Egypt or Saudi Arabia (see Chapter 4).

This political tension between centripetal and centrifugal forces persisted over the years and gave rise to theological tendencies that prevail strongly today. To the extent

⁸ In Sudan, Cudsi asserts, “The vacuum created by the reluctance of tariqa leaders to assume a direct political role was inevitably filled by secular liberal nationalists, who used the sectarian movements primarily to win away popular support from their rivals. On the contrary, this indirect political influence enabled Sufi orders to accommodate themselves more smoothly to, and play a more effective role in, subsequent non-democratic systems” (Cudsi 1983: 37).
that the petal/fugal tendency endowed Islamic theology with a kind of fluidity that hindered the formation of an ecclesiastical institutional, it thwarted the construction of a common public sphere. People escape the rigidity of the center to immerse themselves in the (spiritual and temporal) flexibility of the periphery. For example, elites or masses that feel stifled with dogmatic policies of modern Islamic nations choose to escape the doctrinal/distinctive Islam of formal Islamic schools (madrassa). These schools are supervised by the state scholars to join the doctrinaire/diffusive Islam of the maseed, one that is entertained by saints (auliya). By fleeing to the periphery, it is prudent to ask, has the individual Muslim better enjoyed his individuality or has he substituted one master with another, to borrow Al-Jabri phrase? Have the disciples (mureed) voluntarily joined a type of incarceration different from that of the pupil (talib)? How does the spiritual training of the former differ from the pedagogical training of the latter?

What role can modern politics play in governing --not exploiting-- the relationship between the two? Will colonials and post-colonial state builders try to ameliorate or exploit the already existing cleavages and with what objectives?

Modernization and Colonialism: The Creation of “the Other”

The encounter of the Muslims with the capitalist West is qualitatively a different situation from their encounter with the pre-capitalist West. Colonialism was the Muslims' first full encounter with the West in economic, social, and political terms. This was a hegemonic encounter that not only influenced the form of life, but also changed its substance (Taylor 1992: 66). Driven by materialism and armed with advanced military technology, colonialism set itself the task of filling metropolitan treasures with the wealth of colonized nations. An alien autocratic bureaucracy, erected for the fulfillment of this objective, continued to exercise tutelage and subjugate societies to its own whims in the
period of decolonization (Young 1994). As the cage was opened, colonized peoples found themselves in dire poverty and had to borrow money to cover the huge gaps in health and educational services. They fell prey to international financial institutions. These institutions preached impartiality but preserved the right of indoctrination. It used liberalism as a strong ideological arsenal against ancient civilizations --Islamic, Christian, and Chinese-- that were already beginning to lose their grips on the minds of people due to the forces of secularism: scientific rationality, economic interdependence, and communication technology (Anderson 1973: 65). This caused a transformation unprecedented in the history of mankind. Not only has man set a mission to conquer nature, but also to shake the convictions that had held humanity for thousands of years.

Though secularism, as explained by Badie and Binbaum (1983), was peculiar to the European history, it was propagated in the Muslim world as the natural evolution of political development. Nonetheless, this is not a type of secularism that granted religion autonomy from state or the state autonomy from religion; it is a hybrid strategy that targeted sufi Islam --that of the periphery. The colonial authority introduced legal changes that aimed at thwarting the potential of popular Islam and gradually diffusing its authority, as it vigorously fueled the resistance to the presence of imperialism in Muslim lands.⁹ Both factors had a matrix dividing effect on Muslim societies. The position of political authority vis-à-vis the sharia introduced for the first time in Muslim history a secular/theocratic dichotomy: Secular regimes substitute the Sharia with legal codes imported from France, Britain, or Switzerland. Not only did the state in Turkey (1920s)

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⁹ In contrast to radical forces, that is, fundamentalists, who in the modern would confront the enemy while being oblivious to the human cost, Sufis adopt passive resistance as a strategy that they mastered through the ages and which granted them success in front of an enemy that is disproportionately more powerful.
abandon the process of political socialization by borrowing a constitutional order from the West, but it also disregarded the needs and aspirations of society as the exclusive determinants of law in the secular sense.\textsuperscript{10} Quasi-secular regimes are secular at the core and use Islam for legitimation purposes. For example, Saudi Arabia limits the role of the Sharia to family matters and by no means does it allow Islamic values to influence the policy of the state. Theocracy, for example, Afghanistan at the time of the Taliban, considers the Sharia laws as expounded in the medieval manuals as the eternally valid and immutable standards of conduct. Not only is religion the decisive source of moral authority, but it is also is the sole determinant of politics. Quasi-theocratic regimes, such as the Sudanese regime (1989-present), are theocratic at the core but use pluralism for legitimation purposes. They use Islam as an idiom to mobilize resources, nonetheless these regimes face challenges from fragmented Islamic parties as to what Islam really means (Eickelman and Piscatori 1992).

In addition to the already existing cultural difference between high and low Islam, educational policies had the effect of separating the economic interest of elites from that of the masses, that is, create a socio-economic barrier between the rural and urban populations. Whereas socialist/communist groups chose economic development as a means to overcoming the distance, Islamists --be they conservative or radicals (the difference between authoritative versus totalitarian approach to governance remains to be explored in Chapter 4)-- preferred manipulation of cultural symbols. Regional and international pressures --that coincided with sketchy temporal zones such as colonialism/independence, Cold War (zenith/ebb), Islamism/War on Terror-- influenced

\textsuperscript{10} This can be oppressive to the population because the law is neither imposed upon society from above nor is it growing out of it. “Nonrecognition can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being” (Taylor 1992:25).
the move of regimes from one quadrant to other, simultaneously altering the reference points. The economic mode moved from colonial exploitation of the natives (pre-capitalist/primitive), to imperial expropriation of the periphery (socialist/capitalist), to (dis)integration of global economy (state versus society-oriented reform).

Simultaneously, the cultural code shifted from questioning the validity of traditionalism (traditionalism/modernity), to critiquing the political and social utility of religion (secular/theocratic), to finally confronting the challenging task of making it an integral part of governance (liberalist/literalist). Proper contextualization of liberalism may hopefully advance the cultural code toward entertaining a rights/duties spectrum, one that goes beyond the confinement of religiosity.

For as long as Islamists were politically and economically weak, they managed to stay under the umbrella of traditionalism in their confrontation with modern elites during the period of independence and slightly after. The modern appeal of Islamists made them representatives of Islam --both popular and ideological-- given its combat against socialists/communists during the Cold War. The rise of Islamic revivalism enticed Islamists to dissolve their coalition with conservative parties that were the primary representatives of the periphery, and pursue economic and political policies that only

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11 With the fall of Russian communism, a new era with the East has arisen --this time one against those very forces formed in prior melees. The “War on Terror” is, in essence, a militaristic manifestation of the animosity felt by the West against the extremism it helped to create. Nominally against --those who embrace wholeheartedly totalitarianism in the name of religion-- it instead has hindered even those who would seek to reconcile political differences by creating an even more divergent political environment. It was not long before President Bush announced his crusade (against the Muslim world) that he recanted and said Islam is a beautiful religion that was hijacked by terrorists. Embedded in this decorative statement is a political logic, which refuses to accept Islam as a political discourse that among many others rejects the hegemony of the West (Moris 2000). Translating Islamism into fundamentalism and equating the latter with extremism objectifies subduing it militarily and/or politically. The United States has tactically invaded countries with the least popularity; these are the secular and theocratic extremes, Iraq and Afghanistan, respectively. These are the regimes that mostly lacked legitimacy, and thereby had weak links to the society.
succeeded at the expense of unseating their traditional allies. Though the traditional middle ground is ill equipped intellectually to confront the Islamists, it will be aided with the Left that adjusted its strategy and the Right that is coerced internationally to play by the rules of the democratic game. Without making the reader overly optimistic, this paragraph assumes a move in the right direction for two reasons. First and foremost, by overcoming a dichotomous relationship and instead assuming a continuum along extremes, both culture and economics have amended their relationship with reality. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, rather than dominate economics that inevitably creates an identity problem (see Chapter 6), the state can enhance the ability of the public sector to provide services to the private sector by providing education and health services to the poor, hence diffusing ethnic tension by way of integrating national economy. Also, an enlightened form of secularism can secure a deliberation medium between various ideological views. Second, politicians --with their distrust of ideology and disenchantment with their performance-- have realized the coordination of culture and economics as an important component of governance.

With emphasis first on legal/institutional changes, followed by explication of economic/structural factors, this section attempts to systematically go through the national and international events that set this dynamic on the move. Prior to and after independence there was a tension between traditionalists and modernists. During the Cold War, there was a conflict between Islamists and secularists. Toward the end of the Cold War and immediately after the rise of Islamic revivalism, the debate got heated between ideological Islam --that of center (sometimes referred in the literature as “high Islam”) and sufi Islam-- that of the periphery (also referred to as “low Islam”). The liberal group,
for reasons we will later discuss, suffers most the absence of society-oriented activists, that is, individuals who are willing to legitimate their liberal concerns Islamically. The report, *Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources, and Strategies*, recently published by the National Security Research Division (Benard 2003), encourages its partners and strategic allies, who until now are unidentifiable, to join in the “recognition of fundamentalism as a shared enemy” against the United States and Sufism. The report seeks to facilitate “cooperation between modernists and the traditionalists who are closer to the modernist end of the spectrum.” There are many built-in defaults to this argument. First, the report uses rudimentary definitions and anachronistic categories that place Muslims along an ideological spectrum with a colossal gap between modernism and traditionalism. Second, the report overlooks the fact that modern-day Sufis and Salafis belong to the scripturalist end of the spectrum, with the only difference being that the Salafis choose the state as its vehicle and the Sufis choose the society. Third, by translating scripturalism into fundamentalism and equating the latter with extremism, the United States risks repeating the mistakes of the Cold War, mainly advocating war as a way to resolving cultural and political conflicts.

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12 The view that Sufis are traditional allies of colonialism/imperialism is an Islamist view that mistakes passive resistance for submissiveness.

13 The authority of political Islam cannot be diffused authoritatively, that is, through annihilation, imprisonment, or psychological torture, but by engaging it in a persistent and systematic debate that penetrates deep enough to influence change and gradually cause a transformation that makes accessible the liberal end of the ideological spectrum. Otherwise, what incentives do these “modernists” and/or “traditionalists” have for cooperation, with what objectives, and through what political mechanism?

14 The modern-day incarnation of the eternal strife between the East and the West, concerning as it did the two World Powers, was a battle over competing theories of ideology and economics. Lenin-Marxism, the political system of the Eastern Bloc, was designed to be completely devoid of religious tendencies. It was, as a result of this ideal, that when the Eastern Bloc began to expand its sphere of influence, it embraced those more secular nations of the Islamic world, and the United States began to seek out the more conservative, orthodox states. The United States supported the Sarekat-I-Islam against Sukarno in Indonesia, the Jamaat-I-Islami against Zulfigar Ali Butto in Pakistan, and the Society of Muslim Brothers
To give itself a chance of educating public morality, Asad contends that colonialism dismissed traditional values as “irrational” and irrelevant, consequently making a “strategic separation between law and morality” that justified its use of force against the indigenous Muslim population. For example,

In Egypt the codes introduced at the turn of the century were largely European and secular while morality was largely rooted in Islamic tradition. This fact leads to the question of how interpretive tendencies and assumptions of ‘secular’ law engage with sensibilities and predispositions articulating ‘religious’ morality. If traditionally embodied conceptions of justice and unconsciously assimilated experience are no longer relevant to the maintenance of law’s authority, then that authority will depend entirely on the force of the state expressed through its codes. (Asad 2003: 240)

By so doing, colonialism registered its strongest blow against Islam. Not only had colonialism severed the links between the rationality/scientific endeavors (which in the old days were exercised in the domain *fiqh* but not limited to it), morality, and political circles that Islamic Leviathans ill coordinated, as I show in the previous section, but it also divided each upon itself thus causing a schizophrenia from which Muslims still suffer. Making a distinction between procedural and substantive rationality (Weber 1982) deprives a community of its heritage, thus denying it existence (Taylor 1992). Asad correctly notes,

tradition is not based on rationality founded belief but on commitment to a shared way of life divinely mandated. The techniques of the body (kinesthetic as well as sensory) employed in rituals of worship are taught and learnt within the tradition, helping to form the abilities to discriminate and judge correctly, for these abilities

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The expectation was that political Islam would provide a local buffer against secular nationalism (Mamdani 2004:121). Therefore, through the course of several decades, competing nations exacerbated the ideological polarization in Muslim states. A gulf was widened between the moderate and radical factions of Islamic society, and the trend continues to this day. In his book, *Good Muslim Bad Muslim*, Mahmoud Mamdani asserts, “Moderate movements organize and agitate for social reform within the existing political context. Radical movements organize to win power, having concluded the existing political situation is the main obstacle to political reform” (Mamdani 2004:38). The nationalist appeal was replaced with internationalist zeal.
are the precondition not only of Islamic ethics in general but also-and this is the point I want to stress – of the law’s moral authority. (Asad 2003: 249)

The separation between law and ethics causes an enigma because it challenges the conception that sharia is “the process whereby individuals are educated and educate themselves as moral subjects in a scheme that connects the obligation to act morally with the obligation to act legally in complicated ways” (Asad 2003: 241). This demarcation between private and public morality has adverse effects, as it opens the door for patrimonialism (For example, individuals do not feel shame embezzling public funds to fulfill private responsibilities, nonetheless they may consider themselves religiously devout). It deprives the state of a spiritual endowment it could utilize to do development, thereby overcoming its distance from the society. Badie and Birnbaum (1983) contend that the political development espoused by the colonials has split "third world societies in two: one segment of society derives its legitimacy from the desire for modernization, while the other strives to preserve national traditions without any effort of adaptation or reform" (Badie and Birnbaum 1983: 99). Not surprisingly, colonialism succeeded in its original plan: portraying modernity and traditionalism as running at cross-purposes.

To be modern was to be free from ties of community and tradition and live instead with forms of regulation that were formal, specified, and impersonal, whereas to be moral was to live with common cultural values and strongly inscribed traditions that effectively denied democracy, individual self-development, and equality. In short, one could have either individual rights without binding moral codes or binding moral codes without individual rights. (Wolfe 1989: 191-192)

Nevertheless, says Schulze, “traditional Islamic culture” did not disappear. “The bastion of that tradition remained mysticism. The movements of rebellion against colonialism were based on this traditional culture, and the hostility between it and colonialism was extended to relations with the official Islam that colonialism had created” (Asad 2003: 21). This form of “conservative Islam” will continue its
collaboration with state elites even after its independence. The failure of the post-colonial state will deprive the state appointed scholars (*ulama*) of leadership position their counterparts had at the beginning of the 20th century. The vacuum will be filled by modernist elites.¹⁵ Unlike their predecessors, the conservatives, who accepted their role as an instrument of the state, the Islamists use the state to achieve their religious objective of wanting to establish an “Islamic state.” The characteristics of this state will be examined carefully in the coming sections. However, it behooves the reader to recognize that the project of “civilizing” the Muslim population, one that justified the use of force, is one that modernists forces, be it Islamists or communists, share with the colonial masters. Marnia Lazreg contends,

> The Islamist’s aim is not to ‘re-Islamize’ people as is often said. Rather, it recolonizes private and public spaces by infusing them with new meanings and norms derived from ideational and behavioral sources that sound familiar to individuals because they are expressed in the Arabic language and refer to a monolithic Islam. (Lazreg in Ahmida 2000: 149)

Though their treatment of *Sufism* as irrational is objectionable from a philosophical standpoint (something that complicated their conceptualization of education and caused them to mystify rather than analyze history, see Chapter 4), it alienated the center which was spiritually connected and already had meager economic ties with the periphery. The advocacy of modernist forces --both secularists (who during the course of the Cold War existed either as Socialists Naserist forces or Communists Leninist forces) and Islamists (who existed either as conservative traditionalists or radical modernists)-- a “monolithic approach to truth,” that is, ideological approach to power, denied them malleability they

¹⁵ They are modern in the sense that they use the institutions of the modern state to achieve their objectives and not necessarily adhere to the philosophical and sociological roots of modernity, that is, they do not promise liberalism, they present old ideas in modern cloth.
could have used to swiftly move between irony and ideology. For example, Jamal Abd al-Naser mobilized ethnicity as the “natural” source of political and social cohesion (Eickelman and Piscatori 1992). However, as honest an effort to contain ethnicity under the umbrella of an Arab superordinate identity, it failed to stand the test of “authenticity.” First, it was challenged locally by Islamists who questioned its intellectual/spiritual validity to combat an enemy, Israel, that was only growing stronger. Second, its political utility proved useless when it got proposed as a model of development to countries with culturally heterogeneous societies, such as Sudan or Morocco. Tibi contends, “The core of ethnicity resides in the socially produced and ever-changing quartet of common myths, memories, values and symbols. Thus, ethnicity cannot be properly defined in terms of static cultural elements, such as Arabness, or shared essential religious beliefs, such as Sunni Islam” (Tibi 2002: 127, 136).

The more political challenge Naser --or his disciples of the Arab world-- faced the more they resorted to the masculine feature of the legal state, force, and they relinquished its feminist component, symbolism. Not surprisingly, force created its antithesis. Muslim Brothers who aided President Naser in his ascension to power challenged him using Islamic ideology that gained salience, especially after the Israeli defeat of Egypt in the 1967 War. They presented a “modernized formulation of the idea that Islam is the archetype of the world,” to borrow Abdou Filali-Ansary’s expression, which suited the emotions of already stressed populations (Ansary 2003: 5). Themselves suffering the disruption and dislocation of modernity (Tibi 2002), Muslim Brothers presented a model that insisted on divine authority as arbiter of not only religious but also political and social life, a concept Qutb calls hakemeya --God’s Sovereignty (Eubenne 1999: 22).
Qutb considers the implementation of the *sharia* the responsibility of the state. The mixing of nonsacral politics with a sacral understanding of religion is problematic in many ways (Soroush 2000: 60). First, this mixing overlooks functional differentiation as a basic feature that separates the modern state.\(^\text{16}\) Hourani contends, “The inexorable development of law, of administration and of economic life was bringing about a de facto separation of the religious and secular spheres” (Hourani 1981: 185). This eased a burden that religion endured for centuries --establishing communitarian bond necessary for the existence of humans as a socio-political entity (Galyoun 1991). It was only in the last two centuries that the concept of citizenship evolved, which gave humans a chance to identify through administrative/political rather than primordial ties. This necessitated a transformation of the classic concept of supreme sovereignty to elective and contractual sovereignty, as a prelude to legitimation based on popular support and not personalized authority (Lewis 1988). Modernity has shaken the fundamentalist claim "that certain truths about the nature and purpose of community life are absolute and self-evident" (Eubenne 1999:13). This of itself is a significant achievement because only now, unlike any other time in the history of Muslims, can the fulfillment of the Islamic aspirations become part and parcel of the democratic process (Khurshid 2000).

Introspectively speaking, the ideology of the Muslim Brothers was not less authoritarian than Naserism. It revitalized elements of the despotic model of the Abbasid Amir, which suited the heritage of the colonial state and which Muslims until today confuse with the model of Prophet Mohamed (PBUH)and the Four Righteous Caliphates, thus giving it sentimental if not historical credibility. Naserism inevitably gave way to the

\(^{16}\) Vatikiotis asserts, “The wedding of Islam to a modern state is not a straightforward preposition (Vatikiotis in Cudsi and Dessouki” 1981: 193).
rise of Pan-Islamism. After all, Muslims blamed Turkish nationalism --though
incorrectly-- for the demise of the Ottoman Empire as the bastion against the
advancement of Imperialism in Muslim lands. Islamists accuse Arab nationalism of
conspiring to help erect the Zionist state in exchange for guarantees by the British and the
French to secure their monarchies. Collaboration between conservative regimes in the
region and Western powers became evident the more the enemy assumed control of
Muslim lands (Abu-Zaid 2000). Israel was to grow stronger at the expense of weakening
the Arab world. Democratization of Muslim countries was either resisted or completely
thwarted. Pushed to its logical conclusion, democracy could elect forces that would resist
American exploitation of the region, and therefore threaten its economic interest. It is an
act of fate that Palestine should become the point of confrontation between Islam and the
West, between a civilization motivated by faith and an empire propelled by materialism
(Ahmad 1992). It is under these circumstances that extremists became representatives of
both camps. Radical Islamists push forward a cultural argument that pays no attention to
global economic interdependence as a de facto reality, leaving no room for illusion of
demarcation between the Muslim and the “infidel” (referred to in conventional
nomenclature as dar al-hard and dar al-Islam). Christian fundamentalists sell their
biblical fallacies to consumerist societies in a capitalist cloth (Ali 2002).

**Islamic Revivalism: Adaptation or Retreat**

To better understand how regional/international circumstances influenced regime
change in the Muslim world, we need to complement cultural/ideological displacement
that Muslims had undergone with economic transformation that colonial developmental
policies introduced to the region, (refer to Figure 1). “Reinhard Schulze once asked a
question most historians have taken for granted: Why did nineteenth-century Islamic
reformers take so eagerly to the European interpretation of Islamic history as one of ‘civilizational decadence?’ The interesting answer he gives refers to political and economic changes, as well as to the cultural consequences of print. European capitalism, he points out, transformed the 18th century mode of surplus extraction through rent into a system of unequal exchange between metropolis and colony. Because the traditional forms of political legitimation were now no longer appropriate to the colonial situation, he argues, a new ideological creed emerged out of the social-economic disintegration of the old society and of the effects of print on its culture. European historical reason (including the notion of an Islamic Golden Age followed by a secular decline under the Ottomans) was adopted by the new elites, he suggests, via books from and about Europe, as well as the Islamic “classics” selected for printing by European orientalists and by Westernized Egyptians. That civilizational discourse could now be used, concludes Schulze, to legitimize the claim to equality and independence” (Assad 2003: 218). These claims were articulated by elites who by virtue of reasonable exposure to Western or Eastern ideas, respectively, originating from Europe (France, Britain) and the Islamic centers (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and so forth), entrusted by traditional leaders to carry the nation building process.

For reasons we will discuss later (see Chapter 4), elites privileged with Western education were better equipped intellectually to take over from colonials and thereby lead their countries to Independence. Although the colonials favored the “nobility” with educational opportunities, it was the economically disadvantaged that played an antagonist role, not necessarily an instrumental one. Collaboration between these two groups was instrumental to reducing the human cost of resisting colonialism. It was not
long before the economic interest of morally conservative forces collided head to head with morally liberal elitist groups that were determined to use the state to politically and economically challenge the status quo. Marxism was destined to fail in the Arab/Muslim world because it relinquished the very tool --spirituality-- that the center used to traditionally maintain its link with the periphery. There were no class interests in the underdeveloped world that stood independent of Islam. It could have articulated to overcome the distance between the center and the periphery. The Baathist regime of Iraq was among the last survivals of socialism. In addition to exogenous variables, it survived longer due to its flexibility and willingness to engage, though manipulatively and exploitatively, some cultural components, be it ethnicity (such as Arabs versus Kurds in Iraq) and/or religion (Almohads /Shiite versus Sunnis in Syria or Iraq). Cultural symbols did not prove malleable --at least not in the hands of modernists’ forces-- because by virtue of being statist, they ignored society efforts for reform. Conservative amalgams, who were then the representatives of the masses (as authoritarian as that may be ruled by libertarian standards, they inherited the allegiance of the masses), became very distrustful of elite agenda, which it considered radical, and consequently mobilized cultural resources to combat socialist/communist forces. Sharia was instrumental in this regard. It influenced the advance of politics for quite a long time along a cultural dimension. It was not until recently, that is, precisely with the rise of Islamists to power, such as in Sudan, did this Uni-dimensionality start disappearing. That is to say, the economic dimension become visible.

The end of the Cold War, which for a long time provided impunity for allies of both camps, had the effect of forcing regimes to face political realities that extended
along economic and cultural domains. In the *Islamic Leviathan*, Nasr argues that
“islamization must be understood in terms of both its defensive function --a response to
political and ideological challenges to ruling regimes at times of crisis-- and its proactive
function, to get better terms in negotiations with social forces for power and capacity.”
What appeared to some as a pseudo-cultural response to modernity was actually a
“conscious strategic choice,” on behalf of elites who wanted to ideologically overcome
the distance between the center and the periphery. He continues, “Islamism doesn’t
purport to be some form of liberalism”--as it does not engage the problematic of the
dominant of the state . . . nor alter the scaffolding that sustains its edifice as in the case of
Iran. It merely repackages the postcolonial state as Islamic, that is, gives it a cultural
reorientation (Nasr 2001: 17, 106).

The choice of high Islam was strategic to modernist groups, this time Islamists,
who favored the center over the periphery. They denounced as obsolete the attempt of the
state to direct national economy and instead used the market as their vehicle to personal
wealth. The more they ignored the economic and political demands of the periphery the
more the racial hierarchy that facilitated such exploitation became visible. Religion is
related to ethnicity inasmuch as political groups are chiefly ethnoreligious in their
ideological composition. Tibi correctly asserts, “this new phenomenon can be observed
throughout the world of Islam, but perhaps most clearly in Afghanistan, where three
major ethnic groups --the Pashtun, Tadjik, and Uzbek-- struggle for power, in the name
of religion. In the multiethnic Afghan society, we see clearly that religion does not unite,
but rather is mingled with, ethnicity as a divisive force. In Afghanistan and in Sudan,
ethnic fragmentation undermines the capabilities of the Islamic fundamentalists, and in
Sudan the fundamentalists are in power.”17 It took Muslims of western Sudan decades to realize that this notion of an “Islamic State” --one that justified declaring jihad against southern Christians-- was nothing more than an ideology northerners used to continue their hegemony over the rest of the country. In contrast to ideological Islam that spared no effort to exploit these cleavages, the Darfur conflict is a case in point. Sufi Islam through the centuries diffused ethnic tension between Arabs and Africans in western Sudan. Not only so but also ameliorated the frictions between pagans, Christians, and Muslims all over the African and Asian continents. Filali-Ansary asserts, “The realization that Islam, properly understood, is not a system of social and political regulation frees up space for cultures and nations --in the modern sense of those words-- to lay the foundations of collective identity” (Filali-Ansary 2003: 9). As a reaction to the political/ideological imposition of Islam, some scholars have made the case for popular Islam as only a system of ethics. Inasmuch as Sufism remains the link of the center with the periphery, it needs to be enticed to participate directly in the political process. Relegating Sufism to the spiritual realm is equivalent to giving it a carte blanche to access the political corridor through the back door, that is, practice politics under the auspices of tyrants (Cudsi 1983).

Aside from adopting wrong developmental strategies, which in most cases were exogenously influenced, these forces made no effort to change the aforementioned characteristics that identified colonial rule. They contrasted distinctive high Islam that of the center --with diffusive low Islam-- that of the periphery, and they decreed the low Islam as irrational. In so doing, they separated religious prudence, which was expressed

17 Islam became associated with remote provincial communities, whose earlier religious association gradually became ethnicized (Tibi 2002: 131).
in total and uncompromising terms from ethics of the public that historically evolved outside the corridor of political power. This incursion justified the use of force and spared Islam “the Sufi love of Ibn Arabi, the reason-based orientation of Ibn Rushd, the historicizing thought of Ibn Khaldun, and al-Farabi’s secular concept of order” (Tibi 2002). I would add the humanism of Rumi, the courage of Halag, the intellectual integrity of Ahmad b. Hanbal, and so forth.18 These are the needed seeds for an Islamic enlightenment that can liberate the Muslim mind and soul from the domain of medieval theology. Between the Muslim and accessing his rich heritage are thick layers of interpretation that can only be accessed epistemologically, not ideologically or dogmatically (Arkoun 1999; Abu-Zaid 1996; Al-Sharafi 2001; Harb 2000; Al-jabri 2001; Filali-Ansary 2003).

**Modernity and Modernization: Different Notions and definitions**

Democracy as meaning governmental structures that ensure alternation in governance, transparency in governance, and accountability to the governed (Diamond 2003) is a necessary not sufficient condition.19 It needs to be substantiated with education as a tool that can expose Muslims to the modern-day achievements, as well as give them

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18 Bellah asserts, “The Hanbalis, as we have noted, were the only school that allowed a wife to claim dissolution of her marriage if her husband married a second wife in breach of a prior agreement not to do so. By today’s standards, Ahmad b. Hanbal was a liberal. Even though Saudi Arabia adopts his school thought, its family laws reflect cultural impositions than sharia precepts. Also, Asian Muslims, mainly Pakistani and Indians, rigidly adhere to the Hanafi school of thought, but they fail to realize that their mazhab “represent eclectic amalgams of the doctrines of the four schools” (Coulson 1965: 85).

19 In his article *The Elusive Reformation*, El-Affendi asserts, “The question of whether liberal democracy can be given a ‘truly’ Islamic basis is unanswerable, since there cannot conceivably be any Islamic democratic movement which is untouched by the influences and challenges of Western liberal-democratic thought and practice. Meanwhile, any modern Islamic reform movement trumpeting its liberal-democratic potential begs the question of whether religious-cum-cultural reform is a precondition for democratization, since to cite favorably the presumed liberal-democratic potential of a particular interpretation of Islam is to assume that there is already a broad Muslim constituency for liberalism and democracy as things desirable in and of themselves. Not all those classified as ‘Muslim liberals’ base their liberalism on theological assumptions; in fact the majority do not” (El-Affendi 2003: 1).
an opportunity to revitalize elements in their heritage that can help with the promotion of principles of pluralism, tolerance, and inclusivity-- values that are embedded in current international efforts to foster democracy around the world. Although Masmoudi considers liberal Islam “the nascent voice of the Muslim world’s silenced majority” (Masmoudi 2003: 4,1), this section asserts that the term “liberal” does not precisely capture the pervasive ideological orientation. The majority of Muslims are not liberal, they are moderates. The Muslim lives values of individual liberty, human dignity, and human rights in his moral consciousness not in their social or political reality. Influential events happened along the history of Islam, as I have explicated in previous sections - that made the individual submissive to the family, the society subservient to the state, and the state (umma) incapable of translating prophetic prescriptions into a universal vision (Filali-Ansary 2003: 7), rather than expect the opposite.20

20 “On the surface it is more than a clash of cultures, more than a confrontation of races: it is a straight fight between two approaches to the world, two opposed philosophies. And under the great complexity of the structures involved --the layers of history, the mosaic of cultures-- we can simplify in order to discover the major positions. One is based in secular materialism, the other in faith; one has rejected belief altogether, the other has placed it at the center of its world-view. It is, therefore, not simply between Islam and the West --although many Muslims and non-Muslims who are brought up to believe in this simplistic formula will be surprised at this conclusion. On the threshold of the twenty-first century the confrontation between Islam and the West poses terrible internal dilemmas for both. The test for Muslims is how to preserve the essence of the Quranic message, of adl and ahsan, ilm and sabr, without it being reduced to an ancient and empty chant in our times; how to participate in the global civilization without their identity being obliterated. It is an apocalyptic test; the most severe examination” (Ahmed 1992: 264).
Figure 2-1: Basic Parameters Determining Islam's Relation to Democracy.

Muslims accept democracy as a means that can moderate politics peacefully. But Muslims may not necessarily be receptive to a reconceptualization of religious doctrine that grants women, Muslim minorities (Shiites living in a predominantly Sunni majority, or vice versa), and non-Muslims their economic, political, and social rights. Concepts such as *dar-al-harb/dar-al-Islam* (land of Muslims versus infidels), *dheme* (Christian or Jew), and *hareem* (isolation of women in private places) still permeate Muslim culture, both politically and socially. This is not to say anything negative about Islam but to remind the reader of the extent that “Islam has often been described as an egalitarian religion and, in a profound sense, this is true, the world into which Islam came at the time of its advent in the seventh century was very far from egalitarianism.” Lewis offers three

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inequalities in particular were established and regulated by law and developed through centuries of usage: the unequal status of master and slave, of man and woman, of Muslim and non-Muslim. These are, of course, three different kinds of classifications, which may overlap or intersect, and the practical effects of belonging to one or other of these categories varied greatly from time to time and from place to place (Lewis 1988: 65, 66).

The rising popularity of Islamist trends, Abdalwahab El-Affendi argues, “has created a fear among liberals that democratic forms may hand power to illiberal Islamists.” (El-Affendi 2003: 3). For them, “The introduction of electoral democracy without the existence of constitutional liberties will mean electoral victories for illiberal Islamists who would (ab)buse their new institutionally-recognized political power to destroy the most basic civil liberties, even eliminating elections themselves” (Zakaria 2004:108). Surprisingly, despots have used these genuine scholarly concerns to sabotage the democratic process. They adopted tools that further embedded the Islamist “salvationist” appeal. Nasr correctly asserts, “In many cases, the secularization drive pushed religion out of the public sphere where it could no longer be effectively regulated or controlled by the state. As a result, religion --made more politically conscious-- festered in the private arena as a potential source of support for opposition to the state and its ideology. In Pahlavi Iran, the Islamic Revolution of 1979 resulted from exactly this process. As a result, Islam remained important to politics in Muslim states, and ultimately ruling regimes admitted to this as they turned to the repertoire of Islamic symbols and cultural tools to shore up their authority. The outward secular image of the state therefore was in contradiction to its own use of Islamic cultural manifestations” (Nasr 2001: 21). It is not as much the manipulation of cultural symbols that these regimes exercised but the
oligopoly that they used to reign over power without attempting to rationalize the structure and working of state institutions that contributed to their bankruptcy.

Williamson differentiates between culture, institutional environment, and governmental structure. He asserts that each has a life cycle of its own; culture being at the deepest level (L1) assumes a life of 1,000 years, institutional environment at the second deepest level (L2) persists for 100 years, and governmental structures (L3) not as deeply rooted 10 years (Williamson 2000).

This theory elegantly resolves the dilemma that scholars have over which level comes first: cultural features or institutional norms. They have to be compatible in design and orientation. Manipulation of cultural symbols provides the consensus needed to steer development in the right direction without resorting to violence. Without hegemony governance becomes an impossibility, too much of it kills dissent and eventually causes apathy.22 Evans contends, “Re-examining the developmental state means rethinking embedded autonomy. In developmental states, connectedness has meant ties with industrial elites. Can embedded autonomy also be built around ties to other groups?” (Evans 1995: 228) In the absence of material links, state elites cannot extract resources without influencing or even manipulating “thinkability.”23 To make the latter operationable, development has to go beyond that what is material; it has to revitalize

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21 The theocratic model of the Abbasid dynasty, which Al-jabri claims have influenced the beginning of authoritarianism in Islam, had been established exactly 10 centuries ago, that is, 1,000 years (Al-jabri 2001).

22 Liberalism remains an illusion in the Western world, that is, individuals live within a cage in which they do not detect its presence; authoritarianism is the antinomian in the Muslim world where all that the individual sees is the bars of the cage.

23 That is to say make a distinction between those who think politics like conservative groups (sufis in the periphery) and those who think politically like modernist forces (Islamists in the center) in the Muslim world.
education and reconfigure spaces for political socialization. This is precisely the predicament of political change in the developing Muslim world: it is dependent on historical immaterialism and not historical materialism.24

Whereas individualism (that is, economic liberty) was the tool by which a European gained his individuality, i.e., political freedom remains the Muslims’ only means to changing conditions of subjugation. It is along the economic dimension that revolution occurred in Europe.25 In the Muslim/African world, there is not enough socio-economic stratification that can cause a political revolution; it is along the cultural dimension that revolution occurs in this part of the world. This paper asserts that education, a major realm in which the state exists and builds its power relations culture (Mitchell 1988: 76), has been used by most Muslim states to reproduce rather than overcome the pathologies of politics.26 Ehteshami contends,

The process from liberalization/pluralization to democratization in the Muslim world is riddled with contradictions. The inherent tensions, which mark the boundaries between the civil and religious power, offer another unique but important barrier which is yet to be overcome if Islam and democracy are to

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24 In full-fledged capitalist societies, the state has developed over the course of the centuries enough material links that it can use to influence the way they think about themselves. This collective identity is maintained, refined, or redefined through a redistribution of resources to which the state plays a central role.

25 “In Europe the contribution of religion to state formation was rooted less in economic considerations, and more in ethics” (Nasr 2001: 19).

26 Despite commitment to secularism, the monarchies in Morocco and Saudi Arabia associate themselves with Islam in different forms: Sharifian principle --genealogization of charisma to the Prophet, and religious leadership of the ummah (whole nation), respectively. While the king claims to be a descendent of Prophet Mohamed, the king of Saudi Arabia strives to be the leader of the Muslim ummah. Though Saudi Arabia and Morocco attempt to keep the state pure from societal penetration, religion is not granted autonomy from the state. These two countries allocate a sizable budget to domesticate Islam in accordance with the needs of the state. Regimes of this type combine the worst of both modernity and traditionalism. They use the “tutelary power” of the state to erect hierarchies of power, prestige and privilege (Tocqueville 2004:52), that effectively deny democracy, individual self-development, and equality (Wolf 1989:191). Needless to say, the religious demand of political conformity of this kind can produce schizophrenics at best and hypocrites at worst, but not believers.
emerge as complementary forces in modern Muslim societies. So in this context, the pursuit of the agenda of constitutionalism and good governance, which largely avoid some of the ideological underpinnings of the western ‘democratic model’ might still bear fruit, particularly if systematically pursued in Muslim polities with pluralizing tendencies and embedded horizontal features of democracy. (Ehteshami 2004:107)

Can “steering,” which is the layman’s expression for governance, be done without causing cultural fatigue or deeming institutions ineffective? Does democratic rule necessarily imply a cultural reorientation that links the individual with his inner self, the society with its various organs, and the state with its variegate components? What role can international factors play in expanding the scope of governance beyond lib/lit duality to a rights/duties spectrum?
CHAPTER 3
ISLAM AND THE POLITICS OF STATE FORMATION: SUDAN AND MOROCCO
IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Prior to colonialism, politics in Islamic countries was conducted almost exclusively within the literal tradition. Politics was about immaterial values, a phenomenon that gave particular weight to those who were best suited to interpret the religious text and/or use those immaterial values to mobilize popular support: official scholars (ulama), non-official scholars relying on mysticism (sufis), and/or blood lineage to the Prophet Mohammed (sharifs). Because of the competition between these groups and the scope for different interpretations of the religious texts, this kind of politics tended to be unstable. It veered between efforts to centralize control and escape from it. The history of Islam in Sudan and Morocco --as elsewhere-- is characterized by this struggle between centripetal and centrifugal forces: the ulama trying to centralize and the sufis to disaggregate and decentralize power.

Although the religious and political configurations in Morocco and Sudan bore a definite resemblance because of their incorporation into the Islamic world, there were also differences that stem from their relation to Islamic authority in the Mashreg (East), notably Saudi Arabia and what is now Iraq, as well as the geographic conditions of the two countries. Thus, centralization of authority to a monarch proved easier in Morocco because of the religio-political dialectic between the Maghreb (Islamic Spain/ Al-Andalusia) and the Mashreq. Also, the possibility of establishing central control thanks to a system of irrigated agriculture. The prevalence of rain-fed agriculture in the Sudan and
its peripheral position in relation to religious authority made Sufism and disaggregation of authority more dominant.

Such were the differences that existed at the time of European colonization of Africa. The French became the masters of Morocco; the British, following the weak reign of Ottoman rulers, took control of Sudan, albeit only after having quelled a major rebellion. With exposure to what was gradually emerging as the liberal tradition within these countries, politics changed in colonial days by becoming more stable and influenced by a wider range of variables. The social and political tensions were no longer confined merely to those within the literal tradition. Conflicts between the literal and liberal traditions took on increasing significance and became the basis for the formation of new political parties, spanning the full spectrum from theocratic literalism to secular communism, an issue to be further explored in Chapter 4.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the gradual evolution of politics within the Islamic tradition in Morocco and Sudan, demonstrating the similarities and differences. It follows a historical trajectory by first discussing the political dynamics in these countries prior to colonialism, and second by focusing on changes during the colonial period. It ends at the time of independence in the mid-20\textsuperscript{th} century.

**Centripetal and Centrifugal Tendencies in Pre-colonial Days**

Historians and scholars of contemporary Islam have made the tension between centripetalism and centrifugalism a major theme in describing the essence of politics in Islamic societies (Hourani 1981; Al-Jabri 2001; Hodgson 1977; and Lewis 1988). It goes as far back as the time when Islam first crossed the desert of Arabia to northern Africa.

The dynamics of sufis pulling toward the periphery (centrifugal force) and mahdis (messianic leaders) pulling toward the center (centripetal force) influence the interplay of
religion and politics in both Morocco and Sudan (Stiansen and Kevane 1998; Duran 1985; Degorge 2000; Warburg 1995). Since both countries are at the “periphery” of the Islamic world, this tension remained more political than religious. The ability of rulers to overcome such tendency depended much on the geography of their countries, topography, socio-cultural context, and, more importantly, political developments that preceded and/or followed the arrival of colonialism to the African continent (al-Geibli 1987; Hammoudi 1997).

**Institutional Basis of “Obedience”**

The political dominance of particular families, mainly the *sharifs, scholars (ulama or fugaha), and/or Sufis,* explains the prevalence of “obedience” in Morocco and Sudan. This value spread in the form of *baraka* --blessing-- and permeated the two cultures with different intensity and extensity. As it requires dedication and special pedagogical training, it was more common among settlers than pastoralists. In addition to occupation, the topography of the two countries influenced their socio-political differences. Morocco succeeded in centralizing power through its monopoly over physical resources --mainly cultivatable land that was limited and mountainous-- and forceful mobilization of human and physical resources that was legitimate in the face of imminent danger from the Crusaders, and, at a later stage, Portuguese and Spanish invaders. On the contrary, Sudan faced limited external threat and had vast amounts of flat accessible land, which thwarted the state’s ability to create an economic hierarchy or feudal aristocracy by which it could steer the process of political development in the direction required by the Caliphate.

**Proximity of the Magreb to Islamic Religious Authority**

In his book, *State, Sainthood, and Space at the Middle Magreb,* Al-Geible cites four states in the history of Morocco that fit the definition of a centrist state that had
successful monopoly over spiritual and material resources (al-Geible 1987). These states include: the Almoravids (the Almoravids - 1100 A.D.); Almohads (the Almohads - 1200 AD), mareeniyeen (1450 A.D.); and sa’daeen (1600 A.D.). Without exception, each of these dynasties accused its predecessors of collaborating with the invaders. The Moroccan/Islamic territory was continuously threatened by the Crusaders after the demise of the Umayyad Caliphate in Al-Andalusia (today’s Spain), and each dynasty relinquished its duty of guarding the public morality. To have exclusive monopoly over politics, or at least not feel obliged to consult the indigenous populations, rulers throughout the history of the Maghreb sought to align themselves with an external source of power. Also, due to the complexity of the society and the undulating circumstances, none of the rulers could maintain as their priority “enjoining good and forbidding evil.”

Each of these four dynasties imposed its vision of morality through the adaptation of a sectarian religious doctrine: 1) adarisa introduced Shiite Zaideya/Isma’eliya; 2) Almoravids adopted the Maliki Sunni school of thought; 3) Almohads had links to a Shiite Mutazelaite; 4) and Asa’rhaite doctrines (specifically Mohamed Al-Wattassi was a Shiite who made Shiism the dominant mazhab or religious doctrine of the state), was later inherited by the mareeniyeen. These doctrines did not necessarily reflect the aspiration of the local population as much as the surrounding dynamics. The state in the Magreb (northeast Africa) enjoyed relative independence. Oftentimes it aligned religiously with the state in Mashreg --Abbasids in Baghdad-- to gain political support whenever it could afford to establish its own religious authority. That often gave the local authority impunity that justified discrimination, persecution, and torture against tribal/societal forces that were not aligned with the ruling regime.
The polemical environment that existed in the Mashreg (east of Arabia), as a result of the Kharjite revolt (724 A.D.) against the religiously established authority, caused the migration of some of the sharifs --descendents of the Prophet Mohamed. The most prominent among them was Mulaye Idris toward the Maghreb. The Abbasid Caliphate (1234 A.D.). Haroon Arrasheed, feared the mobilization of his opponents for the emotionally charged environment and consequently persecuted all the sharifs. Mulaye Idris fled the Mashreg with his servant, was received by the Berber tribes who embraced Islam and later made him a king. His assassination by an agent of the Caliphate took a psychological hold of the masses so much so that some insisted on opening his grave sometime after his death. They found fresh blood coming out of his body, thus confirming his welaya, sainthood. Mulaye Idris did not live long. Nonetheless, his legacy will for centuries define the tripartite of power: sharifism, scholarship, and sufism (of which mahdism or millenarianism is but one manifestation). For example, Ibni Tomart, who was the founder of the Almohads dynasty, was a Mahdi (see glossary for definition), an Imam (equivalent of a fagih), and a descendent of Idris II, who is a descendent of Idris I. Also, Alaouite, the ruling dynasties of today’s Morocco, are descendents of Mulaye Idris. Those who lacked any of these credentials had to make up or form a coalition with someone who had it. For example, mareeniyeen considered themselves direct heirs of Almohads. Sa’daeen redefined sharf (honor that one receives through his blood lineage to the Prophet Mohamed) to religious purity. Abd al-Rahman contends that sharifism is a strategy that attempts to rejuvenate political asceticism that manifested itself in al-Hassan b. Ali and/or courage in facing religious authoritarianism that rested greatly with his
younger brother al-Hussein b. Ali, both being the descendents of the Prophet from his

The great historian, b. kuldoun, is the first to have pointed out this phenomenon. He commented, “anytime you have a religious fervor and a tribal bond (asabeya), you will have a state in the Arab world” (Rosenthal 1981). The sultan engaged his forces in jihad, and when danger was eminent at home, he accused his opposition of apostasy or rida. This was zealous, according to Al-Geibli, that manifested itself locally. Since there was literally no room for politics, tribal people resorted to Sufism/Welaya as a form of passive resistance that could help diffuse the power of the center. Later, they collected their forces to face a decaying regime in the form of Mahdism/Sharifism. Power resides in the form of fagih, leaves the center in the form of welaya (sainthood), and returns to it in the form of mahdaweya (millenarianism). People seek refuge in Sufism from the rigidity of theology, accept Sharifism (the origin of the word Sharaf means “honor”) to regain religious purity, and submit to Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) to maintain political stability.

Through their control of travel routes, Al-Geibi argues, the Almuravids succeeded in monopolizing, if not completely homogenizing, the socio-political space (Al-Geibli 1989:76,77). Bin-Tashfeen, the leader of the Almuravids state (who was called Amir Al-Muslemeen, translated Prince of Muslims), is the first to have attempted to manage the diffusiveness of power and to reduce the petal-fugal tension in favor for the latter. To do this they made alignments with people of their own ethnic background and others whom they could entrust with guarding the road in exchange for rewards in the form of prestige or material gain. Looting, killing, and kidnapping were the norm rather than the anomaly.
It did not escape the attention of natives to ascribe some mystical/super qualities to a person who traveled alone and arrived safely to his destination. Some historians contend that traveling at this time was so dangerous that religious scholars had to issue a decree making “voluntary” the obligatory religious duty of the pilgrimage. Moroccans, who did not feel a need to pay allegiance to the central authority, continued performing the pilgrimage by paying dues to these shifta (individuals engaged in the act of armed robbery). However, the central authority did not limit its focus to controlling transport routes. It spread its influence through various and oftentimes cruel means, which included displacement of rural inhabitants, forceful acquisition of their belongings, and appropriations of land. Through its agents in the rural areas, the state forced the peasants into bringing their crops to the center. The state later distributed these crops to whomever it pleased, thereby obtaining the loyalty of tribal-religious patrons. The erection of a social hierarchy, along with the manipulation of religious symbols, spared the central authority excessive use of force. According to al-Geibli, the term “Makzan” (which literally means the “storage house”) was representative of such a function --at least in formal writings- towards the beginning of the 13th century (al-Geibli 1987). The Makzan remains the institution that coordinates the activities of the palace today. Although it is no longer dependent on extraction of resources from the periphery, the Makzan remains a central player in politics by promoting its role as reconciler among power seekers. The Makzan has no power of its own. It gains its influence by depicting the weaknesses of others, but, more importantly, playing them against each other. Further developments along the history of Morocco made the periphery more manageable.

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1 This persistence reflects in the devoutness of Moroccans today to their religious duties, especially performing a pilgrimage. I have seen people, for example, who cry when denied visas to the sacred lands.
Al-Karsani, Chairman of the Political Science Department at the University of Khartoum/Sudan, asserts that the Alaouite dynasty in Morocco used hydro-politics to successfully integrate the rural areas (PR. AAK. Spring of 2003). The center controlled the agrarian population through its strict management of irrigation dams for agriculture. It made allegiance to the king a condition to obtaining access to water resources. Sustenance was passed to the stomach of natives in the form of ‘obedience.’ By accepting the ordinance of the king, who is also the Leader of the Faithful, Believers are not being submissive; they are being good servants of Allah. In contrast, Al-Karsani contends the rural population in Sudan could not have been as well integrated because it simply depended on rain, in addition to the availability of land. He asserts that rain-fed areas in large part remain apolitical. The followers of sufi sheiks, such as wad-Hassouna, Abu-murain, Wad al-Arbab, by far exceed the number of followers who belong to the two large sects --Khatmeyya and Ansar-- but they are not organized. The history of Sudan therefore remains greater than to be reached by ideological Islam, and its geography is wider than to be limited to the sectarian domain defined by the British. These are peasants who had been beyond the reach of the state to organize and beyond the capacity of any party to organized. They had for a long time been out of the gravitational attraction of any central power, be it spiritual or economic. “Capturing” these peasants remains an arduous task, and moreover a costly exercise because they own their means of production, to use Marxist terminology. More importantly, they move in the spiritual orbit of sufi sheiks, who may not necessarily be apolitical but are cautious in dealing with politics as it could very well diminish their authority (because they are already marginal). Islamists amicably understood that spirituality (immateriality) is the access to the
periphery in Sudan. However, instead of trying to reorient/synchronize the move of these many spiritual orbits, they have tried eliminating them in the favor of “one central orbit.” History, geography, and topography may have favored Morocco in this regard, but definitely not Sudan.

**Tripartite of Power in Morocco**

The Moroccan Kingdom has developed material and spiritual skills by which it has overcome the periphery, but it has not completely thwarted the potential of its historic rivals: sheriffs, sufis, and ulama --religious scholars. In spite of its embeddedness in socio-cultural history, religious authority remains temporal in nature. That is to say, it can be influenced materially through changing political, economic, and social circumstances.

By adopting *baraka* (blessing) as the paramount criterion of power, Berber tribes span the balance of power in favor of *sharifs*, who saw themselves as kings with an undisputed authority. The erection of a hierarchical authority of this kind defies egalitarianism as a basic logic of any tribal institute. But by elevating himself above the citizenry, the king sets himself the task of positioning his subjects against each other. For example, a preferential treatment of the chieftain is strongly emphasized in the sociological sense but disappears completely in the political sense. There is a protocol in saluting him, not in expressing a concern or complaining about injustice. Unlike a king, a chieftain cannot impose his vision on his subjects. He has to listen to be able to maintain the balance within the tribal institute, which may exist in actuality or metaphorically in the prevalence of conciliatory or compromise culture. Even though it was legitimate to use just enough external pressure to maintain balance, Moroccan kings had sought the assistance of outside sources to suppress dissent, albeit with various degrees. Indigenous
populations were helpless in as far as subverting the logic of Sharifism. But these people used the zawya --sufi worship place-- to coordinate their rebellion that was legitimated by the ulama. The ulama considered giving allegiance to anyone other than a Muslim ruler an abrogation of religious creed. Embedded in this religious language is a political logic that sees collaboration with outsiders as marginalizing the periphery in favor of the center. It could be a spatial periphery meaning rural areas, or spiritual periphery indicating those sufis, sharifs, and scholars who are not co-opted by the sultan. Inability of the sultan to serf through the wave of sufis, sharifs, and scholars can result in the authority of the former being challenged because he obtains his power from them in a dialectical manner. For instance, Mulahi Abd al-Hafiz claimed to have sought the help of the French Protectorate to administratively modernize government institutions. He was removed by the ulama for having brought the French into the Moroccan land, and his brother, Mulayi Yousif, who is the great-grandfather of the current king, was chosen in his place (Attuzi 1999). Colonialism was by then a de facto reality that Moroccans had to confront. The effort to remove the French created social and political dynamics that helped consolidate the authority of the king.

Inadvertently, the French helped the king get rid of three strong historical opponents, mainly sharifs, who spiritually represented the tribal interests, sufis who provided the ethics needed to establish bonds beyond one’s primordial ties, and the ulama who were their spokesmen. By crushing tribal resistance, the French emasculated the

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2 I use Sharif with a capital ‘S’ to mean the central authority that claims lineage to the Prophet Mohamed. and similarly for Sufism and scholarly religious authority; small letters to indicate those who exercise their authority in the periphery.

3 A religious title of respect that people of northeast Africa use.
ability of sharifs to launch a millenarianist campaign from the periphery. Also, they put under strict surveillance sufis they could not neutralize, absorb, or completely eliminate. The French Protectorate changed the institutional basis of Al-Qaraween University (most prestigious Islamic University in North Africa) to diffuse the authority of religious scholars as representatives of social integrity. Once the king’s political power was completely thwarted, the French revived his spiritual authority to maintain the internal balance of power. Although the sultan had no power and literally served as a consultant for General Loyouti, he was portrayed to the public as the cornerstone of Moroccan politics. This myth --that the king is the source of salvation of the umma or nation-- had its origin in the consciousness of the individual Muslim. Nonetheless, it was well woven --this time using the colonial authority.

In his prize-winning book, *Azzawya wal-Hazib* (translates Sufi Religious Center and the Party), Azzahi asserts that elites were the local agents who helped the French Protectorate –General Loyouti- achieve his objective of wanting to make the king the central spiritual authority who replaced all other authorities (Azzahi 2003). It is inconceivable that a foreign power could have succeeded in doing all this without help from some influential national figures. Some of the early elites like Al-Fasi and Balhassan Al-wazani, found it convenient to access politics from a religious door simply because they had theological credentials; more importantly, they originated from families and cities of special spiritual weight. Although there were structural/historical and sociological factors that influenced their decision, they made a “rational choice” of accessing politics from a non-political door. National elites set themselves the task of pulling all strings of power and putting it in the king’s hands. They inflated the sanctity
of the king as a sharif capable of overshadowing all other sharifs. They spared no effort to become spokesmen for the King in religious circles, albeit not without resistance from elderly and renowned scholars of Al-Qaraween University, such as Boushoa’ib Addakali or Balarabi Al-A’laoui. Finally, elites had to overcome sufi figures if they were to have access to a Moroccan popular basis that was predominantly religious, and if they eventually were to become the king’s spiritual proxies as a requisite to sharing political power with the French Protectorate. The elites justified their sincere collaboration with the Protectorate as a political enterprise aimed at protecting the national interest of the country. Surprisingly, they considered the dealing of sufi figures with the colonial an act of treason. Elites used the words “protectorate” and colonialism interchangeably; they used “colonialism” when speaking about the sufis and emphasized “protectorate” in reference to themselves.

**Sudan’s Limited Experience with Central Authority**

Compared to Morocco, the politics in Sudan is off-centered both along the temporal (development) and spiritual domains (identity). Already established kingdoms in the periphery occasionally --and voluntary-- gravitated to the center that itself was not politically unstable. Beswick contends,

The written history of present-day Northern Sudan goes back to biblical times. The Egyptians called the land Kush, and added it to their empire. For about a century, however, the princes of Kush seized Egypt itself and ruled it as the twenty-fifth dynasty. When Egypt fell under foreign rule, the central Sudanese Kingdom of Meroe (c.300 B.C.E. to 300 A.D.) preserved the ancient tradition for most of a millennium. During the Middle Ages the Nubians established several new Kingdoms and adopted Christianity (c.300-1300 A.D.). At the dawn of the modern age in the early sixteenth century a new realm, Sinnar, was founded by a Muslim African dynasty, the Funj. (Beswick 2004:13)

It is in this period (1504-1820) that Sudanese Islam gained some of its lasting features. At the center of this Islam stood the Sufi *shaykhs* as archetypal figures
who provided the community with its spiritual sustenance. Besides, these *shaykhs* were at the center of a complex socio-economic and political context and as such they owned property and exercised a degree of political influence. The *shaykhs* built their independent center of power vis-à-vis the state and other *shaykhs*. This bestowed a great deal of prestige on the Sufi institution; so much so that when the Sudanese eventually wanted to realize their salvation, it was only a *shaykh* produced by this institution who could unite them and lead them into a revolution that promised global salvation. (Mahmoud 1997:169)

That *shaykh* was Muhammad Ahmad b. Abd Allah (1844-1884). He had some resemblance to the Wahhabist action-bound reform movement (refers to Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhab, 1792) of Hijaz, today’s Saudi Arabia, and jihad movements of West Africa, mainly that of Usman Dan Fodio in Nigeria, in the sense he had to declare jihad against unjust rulers, who are nevertheless “Muslims.” Also, to substantiate his claim, he had to declare them “infidels.” Since the British ruled Sudan in cooperation with the Egyptian authority that paid allegiance to the Turkish Sultan, they operated under a religious umbrella, that of the Great Muslim Caliphate in Istanbul.

The Turko-Egyptian government was not interested in colonizing Sudan, but it manipulated Sudanese politics just enough to secure access to the slave trade and ivory that passed from the southern part of the country through the north to Egypt (Holt and Daly 1988; Stephanie Beswick 2004). Junior officers were stationed in major cities that served the purpose of checkpoints more than actual military presence. Since Sudan was seen as the backyard of Egypt, it was not allocated an independent budget. Therefore administrators had to depend on their ability to extract resources from the masses. In their

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4 This will prove to be a especially precarious movement because that same tactic will be used against political dissidents by the Caliphate Abdullahi. To the extent that this tactic of religious mobilization proves successful in starting revolution, it has some deleterious effects in the building of a polity afterwards. Surprisingly, this is the same tactic used by Islamists in eliminating their political enemies, even in modern times. The NIF regime in the early 1990s declared opposition leaders as infidels and went to the extent of confiscating their personal belongings. This is considered legitimate against non-Muslims in the medieval theology, which echoes heavily in today’s Muslim heritage.
collection of taxes, officers resorted to harsh and unjustifiable measures. For example, they demanded high taxes on agricultural crops but did not provide safety measures for peasants or delivery services. The colonial administration had to depend on local authorities, that is, tribal chieftains/leaders and occasionally religious authorities, to collect taxes. The latter acted strategically enough so as not to subjugate their clan members and shrewdly diverted anger toward the invaders. The introduction of disciplinary measurements through the adoption of Sharia Laws did not protect authorities in face of the public anger that reached upheaval limits with prevailing economic depravity.

Al-Mahdi traveled Sudan extensively to check its pulse and accordingly announce his revolt. Typical of all millenarian, movements were popular in those days, particularly in that part of the world. He justified his movement as a revolt against injustice. So it was a religious revolt against an unfair political system. Mohamed Ahmed b. abd-Allah was brilliant enough to have recognized the environment of depression that clouded the feelings of the Sudanese people. Since Muslims worldwide believed in a mahdi (or messiah) as the only (metaphysical or super) force who could relieve them of injustice, he called himself the “mahdi.” He may not have perfectly fitted the descriptions of the Mahdi, according to the Sunni tradition (or even believed it himself), 5 but this claim helped him mobilize the spiritual and material resources needed for the revolution. It also helped overcome the authority of the periphery that was dominated by sufi sheiks. While mureeds in large part answered the neda (call), their sheiks justified their lackadaisical

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5 Sayyid Sir Abd al-Rahman, posthumous son of the Great al-Mahdi, is quoted to have said that they are the descendents of Jaafar b abi-Talib, who is the cousin of the Prophet, thus he secretly discredited the claim that they are the direct descendents of the Prophet Mohamed (PBUH) (PI. AMA. Summer of 1983).
response by questioning the authenticity of mahdism. Shaykhs such as al-Amin al-Darir, Shakir al-Ghazzi, the mufti (supreme judge) of the Sudanese Appeals Council, Ahmed al-Azhari, and others, resisted mahdism from a purely religious perspective (Mahmoud 1997:175). They resisted the call of millenarianism for fear of diffusing their own authority. (What was essentially a political tactic became a religious strategy, that is, spiritual salvation became an aim in and of itself rather than a tactic to diffusing the authority of the center and overcoming it at the time of weakness.) Nonetheless, the quick success of the movement --something it owes to the marvelous timing of the leader-- added to their embarrassment. After all, the new leadership promised to alleviate hardship and injustice long endured by their own people. These ulama were easily discredited as an ally of the “infidel” Turko-Egyptian government. Degorge remarkably notes,

The revolt that had been waged by the Mahdi was a two-fold reaction: a revolt of the fakis who were concerned with the increased secularization and adaptability in Sufism; and a revolt against the modernization and Westernization brought on by the Turko-Egyptian administration. These two forces combined, although the initial fervor did not last, proved to be quite a binding force since it took military strength to overthrow them. (Degorge 2000:201)

The political success of the revolution overshadowed the myth of millenarianism; nonetheless, it left the Mahdi with the burden of authenticating his rule religiously.

Although the Mahdi used mahdism or millenarianism as a political tactic, he could not escape its religious implications.

As a shaykh, however exalted and influential he might be, he would after all be one among many and part of a vast and intricate web of rivalries and animosities. It was the appropriation of the position of the Mahdi (who by definition is a scholar, a sufi, and sharif) that would at one stroke place him above the entire religious establishment and bestow upon him the required authority to exercise his role. (Mahmoud 1997:172)  

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6 Hamad al-Turabi, the great-grandfather of Dr. Hassan Turabi, is said to have announced Mahdism that did not go beyond the realm of his disciples (Mahmoud 1997:173). By trying to consolidate power religiously, his grandson, Hassan al-Turabi, would commit the same mistake of announcing a grand scheme at an untimely fashion.
Along with overcoming his sufi competitors, al-Mahdi had to introduce *tareeqa* (spiritual discipline) to his disciples, mainly the pastoralists of western Sudan (the part of the country that is least dominated by Sufism). The pastoralists probably had more interest in war than spiritual salvation. The term *faki* --colloquial for *faqih*, jurisconsult-- is still used in a derogatory fashion among the Baggara (literally means people who herd cows, but refers in large part to the Sudanese Arabs who settled in western Darfur, others who herd camels and who settled in northern Darfur; are called *Jammala* or *Abbala*). The baggara not because they abhor religion but because they see religiosity more the function of urban life. On the contrary, we notice the *faki* is highly revered (and plays the role that a tribal chieftain plays in western Sudan) among settlers in the north and central part of the country. To legitimate his rule regionally, Al-Mahdi announced himself the Muslim reformer of the century, and accordingly wrote messages to leaders from all over the Muslim world. To legitimate himself nationally al-Mahdi attempted to formulate a *tareeqa* (spiritual order) large enough to encompass all other *tareeqas* in Sudan. This *tareeqa* suited only the people of western Sudan and others who lacked sufi tradition: Muslims from northern and eastern Sudan went back to their own religious traditions. The keenness of sufi *shaykhs* to carve spiritually and physically independent domains for the exercise of their authority resembles one of the major plights of governance in Muslim countries. The attempt, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, to overcome this tendency theocratically by superimposing a grand scheme, as in the case of Mahdism or neo-Mahdism (that is, Turabism), leads only to further alienation. Political

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7 According to the Sunni tradition, there is a reformer, whether a scholar or politician or both, who rejuvenates the teachings of Islam at the beginning of every century. Mohamed ibni abdel-wahab, the founder of the Wahabi movement, is considered by his followers in Saudi Arabia as a reformer.
accommodation is possible through the proper institutional arrangement, both material and immaterial.

Al-Mahdi did not live long enough to see his vision of a religiously and politically united Sudan occur. He died only six months after the liberation of Khartoum, and was succeeded by Caliphate Abd al-Allah b. Muhammad. Al-Mahdi’s successor, Caliphate Abd al-Allah b. Muhammad, was no less charismatic than his predecessor. As a matter of fact, he is believed to have provided the military tactic (by virtue of being a Baggari, of the nomadic/Arab tribes of western Sudan, he was by nature a fighter) that humiliated the British army and granted the Mahdi swift victory with very limited resources. He was also a prudent administrator who managed to rule Sudan in spite of internal turbulence and external threats for almost 13 years (1885-1899). Nevertheless, the Caliphate lacked all three criteria that constitute the triangle of power in an Islamic context: scholarship, sufi background, and sharifi heritage (lineage to the Prophet). The Caliphate depended on a tribal logic which weakened him further as it opened the door for fierce opposition from leaders from western Sudan -his own constituency to use today’s terminology. These leaders by virtue of being sultans, saw themselves as better representatives of the nobility class, such as Ali Dinar (Sultan of Darfur), Musa Madibbo (leader of the Reizighat tribe, the most influential among the Baggara of western Sudan), Seneen al-Radi (leader of the Taaysha tribe), and others. In short, the Caliphate lacked the “religious” credentials that only with time and proper political tactic could have united major sufi movements.

Regardless of what could be said about the Caliphate’s period, he remained faithful to the

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8 Although some scholars argue the term “tribe” promotes a myth of primitive African timelessness, obscuring history and change, I adopt this term to mean the outer boundaries of an extended kin-group with the aim of preserving socio-economic and political dynamics.
program outlaid by the Mahdi: using a religious strategy in overcoming opposition. The Caliphate inherited the burden of \textit{Ansaria} as the “big tareeqa” that he had to enforce as his only means of consolidating political power. He had to overcome an ethnic divide between \textit{al-Graba} (derogatory term jalaba/aulad al-Bahr use in reference to people of western Sudan) and \textit{aulad al-bahr} (people of northern Sudan, which includes east and north) that he had to suppress militarily to ensure continuity of his regime.

For instance, Amir Yunis wad adikaim --a cousin of the Caliphate, did not hesitate to whip anybody who passed by his left side, asserting it is the path of Satan that is preserved only for “infidels.” He is the commander who directed the forces of jihadia or battalion of the state against the Jaa’lyeen, a northern tribe that preferred to face death than allow their children and families to be humiliated or relocated for “strategic military reasons.” To justify such a cruel act, the Caliphate cabinet accused Abdallah wad saad, the leader of the Jaa’lyeen and one of the early supporters of Al-Mahdi, of collaboration with the enemy. This was the beginning of zealousness in the history of Sudan (Slati, Carl, Freihervon 1969). In their attempt to build a “Turabist space” that delegitimized what existed outside it, Islamists will come the closest to resembling the Mahdist theocratic heritage.

The Caliphate army, which was predominately occupied by forces from western Sudan, spared no effort in eliminating a northern tribe in the 19th century. But we notice the current regime directed by northern officers had no reservations in carpet bombing villages in Darfur/western Sudan. Though unjustifiable, one can understand the Manichean logic the religious gurus used in declaring jihad against the pagans and Christians of southern Sudan. The attempt to forcefully build a community of believers
had grievous results in the past and present of Sudan. It allowed only political cleavages
to be resolved militarily, thus jeopardizing the unity of the nation by accentuating further
ethnic/religious divides. It was this sectarian dictatorial logic that old and modern
theocrats used that mostly made Sudan vulnerable to invasions from outside.

The failures of the Mahdist regime and its eventual removal at the hands of the
Anglo-Egyptian Condominium forces in 1899 did not, however, put an end to the
aura and influence of Muhammad Ahmad’s Mahdism. The legacy of that
revolution still remains and plays an active role in present-day Sudan in the form of
the Ansar, a religio-political organization of significant presence and weight.
(Mahmoud 1997:178)

Al-Mahdi justified his choice of his successor religiously; sometimes testifying that
Caliphate Abd al-Allah was the one who came most frequently to the prayer or calling
him the one most devoted to the message of the leader. But it was basically a tactical
move to secure the support of the group with the major political and military weight, that
of western Sudan.⁹ Not surprisingly this choice exploited the orthodox/sufi divide
between the state administrators who favored a unitarian approach to the interpretation of
the text and sufis who adopted a more syncretic approach. It deepened the ethno-religious
divide between the west and the north (effects of that struggle are evident in today’s
Darfur conflict), thus making the political situation more polemic. Unlike the sufi leaders
of northern Sudan who resisted the Mahdi to maintain their own influence, chieftains
from the western part saw it as an opportunity to overcome their own tribal differences.

⁹ Mahmoud asserts, “Abd Allah B. Mumammad belonged to the Taaysha branch of the Baqqara of western
Sudan. According to al-Zubayr Rahama (d. 1913), Abd Allah’s great-grandfather came as a pilgrim from
West Africa and then settled among the Taaysha and married into them. Having been spared by al-Zubayr
after falling captive in his hands, Abd Allah wrote to him telling him about a vision in which he had seen
that al-Zubayr was al-Mahdi al-muntazar (the Expected Mahdi). Al-Zubayr rebuffed Abd Allah’s
suggestion but this did not apparently drive the latter into despair. When Abd Allah later met Muhammad
Ahmad, he immediately declared at their first meeting that he had seen in him the signs of the Expected
Mahdi” (Mahmoud 1997:173).
In their effort to square against one another, they identified opposition to the Mahdi meant as direct opposition to Islam, which justified persecution. The choice of the Caliphate subverted social aristocracy as the very logic that sustained these chieftains. It was less the fault of the Caliphate than it was the tribal logic, and “obedience” could only be given to either sharifs, sufis, and/or scholars. Apparently, the Caliphate did not have any of these credentials. Other leaders from the northern part of the country, such as the Great Abu-Sin (the chieftain of the Shukreya tribe), also refused to submit to the central government and consequently faced torture and humiliation.

These grievances were compounded to such a high level to justify the cooperation among religious --and tribal-- leaders with the British forces that invaded Sudan in 1916. Ali Al-Mirghani, who is the leader of the Khatmeyya sufi sect (that will later form the basis for the Democratic Union Party, DUP) served as an officer in the army of Kitchener. That army literally annihilated 70,000 Sudanese soldiers from the army of the Caliphate in less than an hour. Although many Sudanese perceived it as an act of treason, to a great extent, Sayyid Ali symbolized the animosity that the majority of the Sudanese, especially those of northern Sudan, had against the Taaysha tribe. This animosity was wrongfully translated to hatred against the people of western Sudan. But more importantly, Sayyid Ali represented the grievances that sufis had against the “central authority.” The Caliphate’s attempt was the first in the history of Sudan to centralize or at least attempt to overcome sufism as the centrifugal force of Islam. To the extent that dealing with the “infidel” or foreign invaders may have been considered a violation of the creed of Islam --*wala and bra*, it established a historical precedence that allows DUP to deal secularly or rationally with southerners. They are definitely more secular/rational
than the heirs of the Mahdi or “Islamists,” who are rightfully the heirs of Caliphate Abdullahi in as far as dogma is concerned. Degorge contends, 

Al-Mirghani’s son, Hasan (1819-1869), continued the work his father started. He instituted close ties with Turko-Egyptian rule (1821-1885). This marked a move into the political arena of a major Sufi order. The tariqa (sufi order) acted as a mediator between its followers and the governmental structures in place. It collected taxes, announced decrees, and many of the followers served in the armed forces. When Egypt invaded Sudan, the Khatmeyya cemented ties with the Egyptian administration, which additionally marked the path that they would follow in the political arena: one of adaptability and reconciliation. To exercise its political influence, the Khatmeyya did not advocate revolt, but worked from within the administration to accomplish what it desired. It was adaptionist in its political activities, and did not depart from the intellectual foundations of its founder. (Degorge 2000:200)

The petal/fugal tendency materialized in the case of Sudan to some sort of sensitivity in the relationship between the Khatmeyya and the Ansar. It is worth noting that both have their basis in the periphery. However, the Ansar favors a spiritually centralized/ideologically distinctive approach to governance rather than a spiritually decentralized/ideologically diffusive one. Compared to the Khatmeyya whom Warberg describe as a more docile sufi order, the Ansar is an Islamic revivalist movement seeking to convert Muslims through the adoption of an Islamic state (Warburg 1995: 221). “They both remained extremely powerful in the years during the Condominium administration (1898-1956). Each one had their moments where the administration would favor them. The outcome of this jockeying was that the two orders were established as political forces with opposing viewpoints” (Degorge 2000:201).

By allocating the leader of the Khatmiyya, Sayyid Ali, a huge endowment of material and political privileges, the British thought of overcoming the authority of the periphery (Mahmoud 1997). The Khatmeyya gradually became large enough to embrace and politically (not religiously) dominate other tareeqas, such as Qaderya and
Sammaniyya (Degorge 2000), thus avoiding the mistake the Mahdia made of attempting to dilute the influence of religious leaders. Whenever they felt their religious authority threatened, charismatic leaders, such as Asshareef Al-Hindi (who is also a sharif and, moreover, a walee), oftentimes rose to challenge the political authority of Khatmeyya leader. Through their command of large tareeqas, for example, the Sammaniyya who gave breed to the Mahdi, the colonial authority thought of drying up the potential of zealous (which would translate to “terrorism” in today’s terms). Due to their highly organized and centralized makeup, the Sudanese tareeqs were the structures that enabled the Sudanese to articulate and aggregate their interest. The imperial experience, Degorge asserts, “Gave way to a duality or competition between both tareeqs --Khatmiyya and Ansar-- that furnished the setting for the loyalties of Sudanese Muslims” (Degorge 2000:204). Nonetheless, they balanced the power of their loyal ally, Sayyid Ali, by empowering Sayyid Abd al-Rahman (the only remaining son the Mahdi). The latter consumed the energy of his “zealous” followers cultivating huge amounts of land that he was allocated on the island of Aba. The British gave him interest loans to build the “masjid” of wad-Noubawee, in the city of Omdurman, that would later serve the purpose of collecting scattered Mahdia forces. Sayyid Abd al-Rahman was grateful for the bounties that the British bestowed upon him, and accordingly adopted a principle of passive resistance. Sayyid Abd al-Rahman indulged in worldly pleasures, such as wearing fancy clothes, building palaces, and importing thoroughbred horses from Britain, so much so that the British thought he departed the ascetic ideal of his father, the Great Al-Mahdi (SBN. Personal Interview. Summer 2002). Eventually, they entrusted him with building the Umma Party of Sudan (SUP) that would become a traditional front in the
face of a growing protest that emerged from Nady al-Khiregeen (Gordon College Old Boys Club).

Sayyid Abd al-Rahman tried to attract or even co-opt some elites who could give his message a modern appeal. But he nevertheless could not gather enough numbers to match those of the DUP. He had a limited pool to recruit from, because education was a privilege that the colonials extended to northern settlers. Most of early elites were by default Khatmeyya who belonged to the sect by virtue of their socio-cultural background. People who joined Umma Party, such Al-Mahjoub, Prime Minister of Sudan (1956-1958), felt their weight due to the scarcity of elites in the Umma Party. Others in the DUP were strong enough to manipulate politics, sometimes threatening to divide the party. They almost did in the case of President Ishmael al-Azhari (President of Sudan 1956-1958). Toward independence time (1956), the spectrum of Sudanese politics could resemble a two-hump

with Ali al-Mirghani patronizing the national unionist parties and Abd al-Rahman patronizing the Umma (Nation) Party. By contrast, the other Sufi orders withdrew on the whole to the background and confined themselves to their religious role. What may, however, be noted about this period is that though the two religious leaders were prime players on the political scene, the dominant political discourse was essentially secular. (Mahmoud 1997:179)

Political pragmatism has influenced Abd al-Rahman’s decision to at least temporarily give up some of his father’s theocratic claims that were strongly accented by the Caliphate. Abd al-Rahman was prudent enough to have understood the impossibility of molding a society religiously, but he worked dedicatedly toward infusing Islamic ethics. While his progeny denied the Caliphate political credit he deserved, they inherited his theocratic ambitions (Slati, Carl, Freihervon 1969). It was during the heat of the Cold War that Imam al-Hadi al-Mahdi found himself sabotaged by the Muslim Brother’s
demand for an “Islamic Constitution.” In the rise of Islamism, al-Sadig al-Mahdi found no alternative to competing with the National Islamic Front, NIF, in its pursuit of an Islamic state. It was not until he was personally insulted and his political constituency at the expense of eliminating the Umma presence in Sudan. Islamists specifically targeted areas of heavy Umma presence because they felt they capitalized on a shared millenarian heritage. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, anytime a modernist/statist group --be it leftist or Islamists- -tries to dissolve the influence of traditional conservative parties in the army or civil service, it risks causing an ethic/religious rupture and/or rural/urban divide.

In spite of weak political (and economic) links with the periphery, the two traditional parties, the DUP and SUP, have in the past successfully mediated ethnic differences between the Arabs (Baggara) and Blacks (Zurga) of Darfur/western Sudan. The Fuor and Masaleet, now under fierce attack from the Janjaweed (Arabs who were traditionally and historically affiliated with the Mahdi movement), do not have spiritual ties with the Khatmeyya, only political links with the DUP that has a secular appeal and does not resist spiritual independence from the center. These indigenous African tribes of Darfur did not participate in the Mahdi movement, and they did not have strong affiliation with sufi tareeqs, except maybe with the Tejhaneyya which was political dormant, at least in western Sudan. Nonetheless, during democracy periods, they gravitated politically toward the center. It has been observed that during coalition periods between the DUP and Umma, the central government tends to peacefully mitigate -- though not at all times-- the problems between pastoralists Arabs and peasant Africans of Darfur. It is not clear whether the two major parties, DUP and SUP, at the time of independence, realized that they represent a minority of the periphery, and that it was
only a historical coincidence that gave them leadership of the political platform. However, they used political mobilization at the national level and spared religious mobilization within the domain of their sects (PI, AZA, Spring of 2003). Unless compelled, they refrained from an ideological use of Islam for the aforementioned reason and for fear of alienating the non-Muslim minority. This creates a need to push for a revitalization of a liberal Muslim heritage that respects human dignity and gives all groups their God-deserved rights. Depending on the circumstances, the petal/fugal tendency --discussed extensively in this chapter-- can cause an ideological tension (see Chapter 4). That is to say, rather than a continuum of thoughts, a country can experience a rigidity/flexibility duality in the interpretation of the text (see Chapter 5). Without careful management, this can cause stagnation, as in the case of Morocco, or agitation, as in the case of Sudan. This gives rise to a hierarchy/rebellion proclivity (see Chapter 6), which has become evident in the two countries’ long civil wars.

In conclusion, the two colonial powers (the British and the French) appropriated the concept of sharifism differently. While the British maintained balance by introducing sectarianism in Sudan, the French Protectorate had no alternative to presenting the King of Morocco as a unified central authority, thus fusing sharifism, sufism, and scholarship in the figure of the sultan. The religious groups mainly incorporated in the Sudanese political system, the Khatmeyya and the Ansar --which are led by Sharifs-- gave rise to the two major political parties. The Umma Party of Sudan (SUP) consisted of pastoralists located at the western and central part of the country who drifted toward the political center at the time of the Mahdia (1885-1899). The DUP represented sedentary peasants who lived at the northern and eastern parts of the country, and who escaped control in
those days by pulling their feet toward the periphery. Whereas traditional leaders resorted to sectarian platforms in the name of democracy, modernist leaders sought refuge in the military in the name of revolution. The discontinuity created by the move from dictatorial regimes to democratic systems and back interrupted the ability of patrimonial leaders to fix the social hierarchy needed to overcome the power of the periphery. By trying to bypass traditional leaders, such as tribal chieftains/leaders, religious or sectarian leaders eluded the very logic that sustained them. As a result, the religio-political power in Sudan became more diffuse. Islamists tried, though unsuccessfully, to overcome this difficulty by promising to rebuild the Sudanese social fabric using their religious appeal and an unlimited access to monetary funds. Although they succeeded in weakening sectarian basis materially, they could not overcome the long heritage of “obedience” that was deeply ingrained in the Muslim psyche. Piety that manifested itself materially could not replace “antiquity,” no matter how hard it tried.

While the British used sectarianism as a strategy to rule the Sudan, the French used sultanism to facilitate administering the Moroccan society. The latter capitalized on a 12 century heritage to create a central authority that it can manipulate from behind the curtain. The French Protectorate helped the king get rid of three strong historical opponents: sharifs who spiritually represented the tribal interest; Sufis, who provided the ethics needed to establish bonds beyond one’s primordial ties; and scholars (ulama), who were their spokesmen. By crushing tribal resistance, the French emasculated the ability of sharifs to launch a millenarianist campaign from the periphery. Also, they put under strict surveillance sufi sheiks they could not neutralize, absorb, or completely eliminate. Once the king’s political power was completely thwarted, the French revived his spiritual
authority to maintain the internal balance of power. Although the sultan had no power and literally served as a consultant for General Leyouti, he was portrayed to the public as the cornerstone of Moroccan politics. National elites had to overcome sufi figures -if they were to have access to Moroccan popular basis- that were predominantly religious and eventually become the King’s spiritual proxies as a requisite to sharing political power with the Protectorate. They justified their sincere collaboration with the Protectorate as a political enterprise aimed at protecting the national interest of the country and ruled the dealing of sufi figures --one that was limited to protecting followers or securing their needs-- with the colonial as an act of treason. By defaming sufism elites weakened their own basis of popularity and thus set themselves for the political unseen. Surprisingly or not, they woke up to find themselves dummies in the king “blessed hands.” After independence, Mohamed IV came out as the first Moroccan king with undisputed temporal and spiritual authority, thus allowing for future challenges to be contained religiously.
CHAPTER 4
SPECTRUM OF INTERPRETATIONS AND SOCIO-POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Because the Islamic tradition is so heavily dependent on what was being written in the Qur’an and the Hadiths, it is no surprise that education has been a vital issue in these societies. Those controlling the curriculum could also assure themselves of a stronger grasp of the determinants of regime legitimacy. In modern times, such as the times since colonialism, the educational issue has centered on how to combine the literal and the liberal traditions. How far have Islamic leaders been willing to be pragmatic and adjust their own thinking to suit the changing circumstances that British and French colonialism brought to Sudan and Morocco, respectively. This chapter briefly traces the early struggles over curriculum in the pre-colonial days before proceeding to examine the way education and political socialization has been handled in colonial and post-colonial days. It concludes with a discussion of what my own research suggests are the current issues of greatest significance in these countries and how these issues compare to trends elsewhere in the Islamic world.

The colonial experience, its benefits notwithstanding, has made Islamic theology more dogmatic by causing a dichotomy between what is spiritual and what is temporal, between reason and revelation, and hence between “god’s city” and the imagination of humans who are entrusted with overseeing the various processes of execution. The outcome has been an ontological gap that caused only minor cracks --that was later patched by post-colonial state builders-- in the city walls that for centuries fortified religious fantasies and political fanaticism. Not surprisingly, Islamic fundamentalism
finds comfortable accommodation in regimes that are secular at heart and use religion for legitimization purposes, what I call “quasi-secular regimes” such as Morocco and Saudi Arabia, or “quasi-theocratic regimes” that are theocratic at heart and only use pluralism for legitimization purpose such as Sudan and Iran. The complete lack of effort to do away with religious dogma --on the contrary infusing it-- or depart the route of theology (with all its deadlocks) has become evident in the psychological rift between the individual and his innerself,¹ and between the society’s aspiration and state’s directions --understandably the low esteemness of the society denies the state leverage in bargaining with the international community.

This chapter addresses the structural (economic/cultural)² factors that influenced the development of Islamic orthodoxy in the 11th century and helped with its promotion until the advent of colonialism in the 19th century. At that time, it was given the status of law codified by the state for the purpose of inducing political stability. What appeared for centuries as the cultural preference of the Caliphate was now given the authority of an “authentic” Islam, which was exploited politically by Islamists, which invited a reaction from seculars. The political polarization --between the left and the right, between the seculars and the theocrats, between the liberalist and the literalist-- is only ideological. It is a dispute about shared characteristics and not different characteristics. Also, considering themselves “advanced” and dismissing Sufis as “sectarian” and “backwarded” is more a propaganda ploy that served no purpose other than superficially assisting elites to elevate themselves above social reality.

¹ This is a result of the society’s pressure for conformity and the individual longing for abstractness.

² The political factors are addressed extensively in Chapter Three.
The cultural and sociological factors that influenced the practice of politics in the Moroccan (and Sudanese) society were woven into a collective memory that did not recognize a separation between religion and politics. In the midst of this ideological quarrel, modernists --elites from the left or right side of the ideological spectrum-- failed to engage the local heritage by way of educating it. They were more interested in expressing their views than harkening to the wisdom of the masses. This attitude thwarted their ability to communicate effectively with the masses. Under the pressure to influence change, elites embraced techniques that were correctly perceived by the masses as an attempt to unseat their traditional leaders. Such opportunism made the society resilient and its culture more stagnant. (Elites in the African/Muslim world, as we shall see in subsequent sections, were more a liability than an asset.)

Elite preferences were reflected in their choice of educational policies that confused education with indoctrination. While occasionally introducing some adjustments, they made no effort to do away with dogma. As it stands today, religion and secular sciences stand side by side with no correspondence that can help the elites or the masses perceive as beneficial a mutual relationship between the two. The first part of this chapter traces the development of a religious tradition that until today has a strong hold on Muslim minds. The second part explains how modernity has challenged the grip of such tradition but has not provided Muslims with conceptual tools that can help them adjust to such huge transition --one that requires that one creates the world in one’s own image and not just accept it as is. Thus modernization has denied Muslims the liberties it delivered to European populations.\(^3\) The third part reveals the tendencies that developed among

\(^3\) Modernization in the 19th century, and still more in the 20th century, far from reducing autocracy, substantially increased it. Lewis asserts, “On the one hand, modern technology, communications, and
contemporary Muslim thinkers, as a result of historical and political tensions that for the first time signal an indigenous attempt to reconcile “modern epistemological views with a classical cultural religious tradition” (Filali-Ansary 2003:6).

In Chapter 2, I alluded to the political circumstances that made favorable the choice of the traditionalist school over the rationalist school in the 11th century. The former innovated a dichotomy between Sharia knowledge, which it strategically called “beneficial knowledge” (alm nafah), and sciences, which it referred to as “worldly knowledge” (alm dunyawi). Embedded in this distinction was an attempt to psychologically rebuff external influence and politically suppress internal dissent. Understandably, the more Muslims got exposed, the more empowered they became in challenging the “truth,” as was propagated by the political authority. The meager the realm of irony/imagination, the easier it was for one group to promote its understanding of religion as religion. The reader may find it difficult to understand how one approach to knowledge would prevail uninterrupted through almost 10 centuries, in spite of political, economic, and social turbulences, but not if we understand the pedagogical approach that got introduced at this turn in history. This approach emphasized obedience of the pupil to the master and gave pride in memorization of knowledge as was passed by one’s “honorable” masters. The master of your master becomes your grandfather in

weaponry greatly reinforced the rulers’ powers of surveillance, indoctrination, and repression. On the other hand, social and economic modernization enfeebled or abrogated the religious constraints and intermediate powers that had in various ways limited earlier autocracies. No Arab Caliph or Turkish Sultan of the past could ever have achieved the arbitrary and pervasive power wielded by even the pettiest of present-day dictators” (Lewis 1993:96).

4 Huff contends, “It should be noted that instruction in the madrasas was a totally personalistic experience. The student came to the master and learned what he taught. The master in turn certified the student by
knowledge, something that is considered more valuable than blood kinship. To the extent that this pedagogical approach --individual exchange between master and student-- has preserved the authenticity of the text, some scholars like Nursi Said of Turkey, think it has inhibited the permutation of Islamic knowledge as the only means through which ideas can transcend their historic context (Eickleman 1999: 2).

The authority of the master and the tradition was affirmed through the establishment of Islamic colleges --\textit{madrasas}-- in the 11\textsuperscript{th} century. These institutions were religious trusts that strictly taught Qur’an, the traditions of the Prophet, Arabic grammar, Arab genealogy, poetry, and some arithmetic for the purpose of dividing inheritances. Although they were protected from political intrusions, the madrasas were not legally autonomous entities. “Rather, as strictly religious charities, they were perpetually bound to the strictures and limitations specified in the founding document creating the educational trust (\textit{waqf}). No alterations in the purpose of the trust, or the subjects of study was permissible. In a legal sense, they created a true ‘dead hand’” (Huff 1997: 31).

There was no faculty to assess the curriculum and make adjustments according to the need of the time, only a group of individuals, each entrusted with issuing an \textit{ijaza} (permission to transmit) in his own field. This is not to question the credentials of the masters who in most cases were renowned scholars, or the pupils who tolerated a strict training method --almost to the point of being authoritarian. It was emphasize the Muslim educational system as the master institution in the perpetuation of Islamic tradition and the creation of Islamic society as we know it today (Geertz 1965: 95).
For as long as the Silk Road existed, which to a great extent manipulated world trade for centuries (Ferguson 2000), Muslims paid their pious endowments in the form of educational trust (*madrasas*), which “could not encompass the teaching of anything inimical to the spirit of Islam” (Huff 1997: 31). This proved the most difficult hurdle, as the world was about to witness one of the greatest intellectual revolutions ever made. It is at the 15th century that Europeans found the transatlantic as an alternative trade route with which they could access the Americas. They increased their gold endowment by 800 hundred percent in less than a century, which propelled the industrial revolution, endowed the Europeans with weaponry and enticed their appetite for wealth (Ferguson 2000). Hence, the rise of capitalism/imperialism that necessitated functional differentiation as a way to establishing an efficiently managed operation guarded by a legal rational system (Weber 1983). “For it was those legal developments that created the possibility of a public sphere and paved the way for the institutional breakthrough to early modern science.” Although religious authorities of the medieval Church could have contributed to the emergence of an “institutionally autonomous domain of discourse” (Huff 1997: 32), it is inconceivable that “legal autonomy embedded in the law of corporations” could have been possible prior to the rise of capitalism. Huff nevertheless explains the failure of Muslims to benefit from their intellectual rich endowment by their inability to curb an educational institution as a “legally autonomous entity.” 5 Huff asserts, “The success of scientific development leading to what we call ‘modern science’ occurred uniquely in the West despite the fact that Arabic science was the most advanced

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5 Unlike the Islamic *madrasas* that kept the natural sciences out, and the Chinese bureaucracy that rejected the study of anything that could be called scientific, Huff contends, “The European universities put the study of nature first in an institutional structure that was in effect legally autonomous” (Huff 1997: 33).
science in the world from roughly the 8th to the 13th century, while China’s technological base was superior to that of the West up until the 15th or 16th century, and its science was second to that of the Arabs” (Huff 1997: 26). As distinguished a historian as he is, Huff overlooks the chronology of events. He also pursues a cultural argument while ignoring economic, political, and administrative developments that led to the rise of Western civilization. No one disputes that individuality—a quality celebrated in the Greek heritage and one that later resembled the founding pillar in western democracy— which was as cherished in any place in the world as in the West. Nonetheless, scholars entertain multiple perspectives in the understanding of this de facto reality. For instance, why is it that Muslims who translated the Greek heritage failed to benefit from it? Why did they instead embrace the Persian heritage that stabilized the political system at the cost of aborting individuality, the very quality that for centuries rested dear to the hearts of the community members (Al-jabri 2001)?

In case of Islam, it was less a problem of one authority imposing itself over others than the existence of the scientific, moral/religious, and political domains independent of one another (see Chapter 2) that denied Muslims the transition “from the closed world to the infinite universe,” to borrow Koyre’s phrase (Huff 1997). Rather than adjust their strategy to meet the demands of an ever-changing reality, jurists adopted a “jurisprudential definition of religion” that shunned sharia from the developments in other fields. They have wasted an opportunity to coordinate—that is, if they ever had an option6—the relationship between the aforementioned authorities (who will become historical rivals). They have also failed to allow for the discoveries in one field to

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6 The agency, in this case the jurists, were bound by huge structural factors that I allude to in chapter 2.
enhance the understanding in the other, thereby thwarting the ability of the Muslim community to evolve beyond the confinement of religiosity and hover into the realm of spirituality. Sharia eventually recessed into being God’s law, instead of a legal mechanism. With such essentialism in mind, Muslims felt compelled to define themselves in opposition to “the other” rather than mobilize the constituents of their own heritage to venture into wider realms. This was contrary to the ethos of the founders of the faith who pursued a universalistic vision, nonetheless in face of prevalent injustice, they occasionally felt compelled to bear on particularities (Filali-Ansary 2003). Hodgson, the great British historian, asserts, “It was precisely what was universal in the vision of Islam, its hope of equal justice and of a human responsibility under transcendent norms that issued in the exclusivity of Islam. The very response to the vision which allowed that vision to be embodied in a living tradition, and the responsible commitment which then carried it forward in actual society, were what closed Islam off from rival values and rival traditions” (Hodgson 1977: 369). This explains the obsession of some Muslims with concepts that have almost become obsolete. Nonetheless, they may not have been completely siphoned off the Muslim frame of reference, such as the distinction medieval jurists make between the land of Muslims and that of “infidels” (dar-al-Harb and dar-al-Islam), or the term dhimi (used in reference to Christians or Jews living among a predominantly Muslim majority). Rashid Ghounishi considers this a jurist term that has lost its political implication in associations where people no longer live as a “community of believers” but “citizens of a nation state” (Ghounishi 1981). It is difficult but not impossible to overcome these concepts, especially in a society that voluntarily chooses to abide by the Sharia. Because, as Hodgson correctly asserts, “The exclusivity latent in the
Qur’an was early complemented by an exclusivity grounded in the historical Muslim community. In the reaction that followed the third *fitnah* and the “Abbasi triumph, this communal orientation of this Shari spirit was explicitly emphasized: that is loyalty to the community of Muslim allegiance, even at the expense of any other value” (Hodgson 1977: 370). It is pointless to speak about Human Rights without paying attention to these issues that are deeply embedded in the Muslim heritage. For almost five decades, the Arab world watched the slaughter of non-Muslim natives in southern Sudan without any remorse as if it was a religious conquest. It was not until the Sunni Muslims of Darfur got attacked by the autocratic regime in Khartoum in 2001 that they started perceiving as legitimate the grievances of the rural populations that were manipulated by the center in Khartoum.

In spite of the firm teleological grip, Muslims continued to perch on the forward edge of one of the highest intellectual endeavors, only to be inherited by Europeans who would take to it unprecedented limits that changed for good and forever the conditions of human correspondence, at the economic, political, and social levels. Most significant was the opening up of the public sphere whose activities were for a long time enjoyed by the privileged. “Jurgen Habermas defined the public sphere as a social space in which so-called ‘private’ individuals come together for the purpose of using their critical faculties...

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7 Hodgson asserts, “Among Christian or Buddhist peoples, religion has indeed been very central also. But it has informed the culture of Christian Occidentals and of Christian Abyssinians, for instance, almost entirely in isolation from each other, so that there is no single civilization associated with Buddhism. But – despite the vaster areas covered development any culture of their own at all, never lost contact with each other: their cultural dialogues were always intermeshed. The bonds of Islamic faith, indeed especially the irrepressible transcendent ideals implied in the root meaning of Islam, with their insistent demand for a godly transformation of all life, have been so telling in certain crucial aspects of the high culture of almost all Muslim peoples that we find ourselves grouping these peoples together across all their different regions, even apart from considering other facets of high culture. Islam offered creative impulses that ramified widely throughout the culture as a whole, even where it was least regions” (Hodgson 1977: 94).
in the service of so-called ‘public’ interests” (Huff 1997: 27). Does Habermas condition the engagement in the public sphere on individualism and secularism? Should he treat individualism and secularism as “epiphenomal products of bourgeois self-interest”? Does Habermas ignore the role religion plays in the emergence of a public sphere in a different cultural context? Since both are important criteria for our evaluation of institutional design and educational policies in the Muslim world, I will first discuss the issue of individualism as a direct breed of capitalism. I will later address concerns about secularism.

Capitalism could have only been possible due to the bifurcation of scripturalism and materialism in the late 15\textsuperscript{th} century. The unlimited accumulation of wealth in Europe could not have been perceived with guilt without departing the ascetic ideals of the Protestant Ethic, as explained by Weber (1983). That, coupled with scientific rationality defined in opposition to the doctrinal understanding of society, paved the way for the philosophical rooting of secularism and liberalism in the late 16\textsuperscript{th} century. After the French Revolution in 1789, the bourgeoisie undermined the political and social institutions on which feudalism was based. Since the Church allied with the losing partner, the feudal lords, it inevitably lost any role it could have played to influence the course of public life. Thus, the separation of religion and politics was circumstantial, albeit acute in the case of France. The British had a different experience with religion. The separation between religion and politics was consonant with Christian theology, which philosophized that while Crown and Church are distinct in function, they are inseparable in substance (Badie and Binbaum 1983). The cultural influence of Protestantism helped build a political system that was organically linked to religion with
the monarch being the most senior authority in the British political system, at least figuratively, as well as the head of the Evangelical Church.

Among the more prominent causes of this historical trend is the interference of various European powers, of which France and Great Britain are good examples, in the Islamic cultural spheres, by way of colonialism, in the New Imperialist era of the late 19th Century. There were philosophical as well as practical reasons that influenced the distinct ways by which both the French and the British administered their colonies. Given the relatively limited size of its empire the French afforded conversion as an efficient mean of exploitation; the British depended on domination, which was facilitated through the loyalty of indigenous leaders. Since the French were naturally distrustful of Islamic piety in the public sphere, they allocated religion no space --needless to say authority-- in their design of public education. For example, the French Protectorate shut down any suggestion by national cooperatives to include the teachings of Arabic or the Qur’an in the educational curriculum in Morocco (Personal Interview. OJ. Fall of 2003). In addition to the philosophical position that was antithetical to religion, the French had a political objective. By denying theists/theologians access to power, wealth, and secular education, the colonial administration hoped to diffuse the authority of the periphery that traditionally and historically fueled resistance to the intrusive authority of the invaders (Kedourie 1966: 38). This contradicts the conventional wisdom of modernist forces -- either Islamists or seculars-- who for instrumental reasons accused Sufi sheiks of being collaborators with the colonials. Aside from a minority that was co-opted, Sufis represented a bulwark in the face of colonialism until they were gradually and completely disenfranchised. As theistic scholars became less equipped to deal with the perplexity of
modernity, they were replaced by a new breed of elites who in their own right wanted to impose the views they inherited from Europe (France or Britain).\(^8\)

In the wake of independence, most conservative forces sided with the King of Morocco in the face of totalitarian and fanatic secularism that was coming from the Left. For instrumental logic that we shall see in subsequent sections, modernist groups of the center right particularly avoided salafism of the *Maghreb*, and they instead adopted the values of the *Mashreq* (Egypt, Iraq, or Saudi Arabi). The *salafi* movement in the *Maghreb* capitalized on an amalgamation of variegated Sufi orders which were themselves an adaptation of local cultural heritage. In that sense, it was different from the *salafi* doctrine in the *Mashreq*, which claims to have maintained Islam pure of cultural infiltration or innovation. Even when some scholars found the will to include Sufism as an important cultural constituent from a purely academic position, they could not find the way. A renowned Moroccan scholar and an Islamic activist admits he could not incorporate any Sufi teachings - not even from a critical standpoint - in the curriculum that he helped design for the first Islamic department at the University of Mohamed IV at Rabat. He says the establishment of the department was so much resisted by the administrators --who were mostly leftist-- that he sought finance from the Saudi government, which stipulated the exclusion of any Sufi teachings (Personal Interview. MB. Summer 2003). Therefore, we notice the educational policy advocated by the modernists were not less alienating for the Moroccan (or the Sudanese) than the colonial policies.

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\(^8\) Hourani asserts, “The development of Arabic social and political thought in modern times offered a special interest but presented special difficulties. It involved tracing two lines of influence: one which ran from medieval Islamic thought to the modern age, and the other which came from outside the Arab and Muslim world, from western Europe and in particular from England and France” (Hourani 1981: xiv).
Rather than aim at completely thwarting the authority of the periphery, the British created a hierarchy that facilitated the flow of administrative directives, as well as giving them enough discretion to manipulate the political platform (see Chapter 3). In Sudan, the British also felt threatened by Sufi Islam, which provided the yeast to most of the millenarian movements, such as Sudan, Egypt, and India. They nonetheless felt compelled to include just enough Islam to link the public to the indigenous leaders and link the latter to state authority. Accordingly, students were allowed to spend the first three years of their primary education in Qur’anic schools (*katateeb*), which provided them with solid education in Qur’an and Hadith. These schools gave them moral upbringing through their one-on-one interaction with the sheik, who in most cases belonged to one of the Sufi *tareegs* (Personal Interview. DH. Spring of 2004). Therefore, an important merit of the British system is that it provided a link between the student’s traditional habitat and his soon-to-be modern environment, between Sufi Islam of the periphery and orthodox Islam of the city. This link was lost with the standardization of formal education that required the enrollment of students to the school from grade one, as happened after independence.

The decision by Sudanese national leaders (Arab nationalists in the late 1960s, and socialists/communists in the 1970s) to eliminate Qur’anic schools --from being an integral part of the educational system-- marks a significant disjuncture between popular and high cultures. A prominent educator, who was once a Minister of Education and at one time belonged to Islamists groups, asserts that the education at the time of the British was generally better because it produced highly cultured and well-rounded individuals (Personal Interview. DH. Spring of 2003). Furthermore, from an Islamic perspective, it
was more profound than the scholastic Islam introduced by the current regime (1989-2005) because the former taught general Islamic principles rather than impose one particular ideological orientation (Personal Interview. DH. Spring of 2003).

Most of the early national leaders of Sudan, regardless of their secular approach to governance, were literate in Islamic studies, mainly the Qur’an and Arabic language. More importantly, they had a sensitive look to the Sudanese culture, at least as it pertains to northern Sudan. This may explain their conservative approach to governance. For instance, President Mohamed A. Mahjoub, who led a coalition of traditional parties (of mainly Sufi background) in the 1960s, established Omdurman Islamic University. He made no attempt to influence the curriculum, recruiting criteria, or even claim it as a political achievement. Ironically, it eventually developed into one of the breeding grounds of Islamists who adamantly resist the inclusion of local heritage regardless of how profound that may be. A renowned Sufi sheik and a distinguished Sudanese professor, who was once the President of Omdurman Islamic University, contends that staff members do not tolerate even the mention of Sufism --“they would rather listen to the barking of a dog than to the praise (madh) of the Prophet” (Personal Interview. AG. Summer 2003).

Typically Islamists blamed Sufism for the intellectual and political decadence that Muslims reached at the time of colonialism, and accused Sufis sheiks as being collaborators with the invaders and dictators. It is important to understand the circumstances which led to such accusations. In most cases, they found collaboration with the authorities as the only available tool to deflect harm from reaching their followers. Sufism was not a bulwark in the face of development as it was one among
many organs in a body inflicted with despotism. But it was definitely a strong fortress against the hegemonic forces of colonialism. Azzahi asserts that a Salafi fagih (scholar) may dismiss a Sufi dance as innovation in the *deen* (religion), but a sociologist cannot. It is by listening, dancing, and, most importantly, invoking the name of Allah that Sufi sheiks unite the body and the soul and entrench its equivalence in the intellectual unconscious (Azzahi 2003:138-139). This ritual makes a person’s cultural, social, and religious existence become real in a non-confrontational manner. It attempts to address the *zoug* –taste-- as well as the mind.9

Most contemporary Islamists (scholars who study Islam, be it Muslims or non-Muslims) contend that Sufi Islam is the mode most qualified in resisting the encroachment of imperialism --as it had done with colonialism. A renowned Moroccan scholar and an Islamic activist found it fair to admit that he resisted Sufism for 30 years, only to recently come to recognition of its vitality in resisting the institutional forces - both local and international - that are trying to erode the richness of the Muslim heritage. He now recommends listening to *madeeh* (praise poems of the Prophet introduced with instrumental music), and watching and participating in Sufi festivals (Personal Interview. MB. Summer 2003). Salafi groups in Sudan spent almost four decades trying to convince the masses that instrumental music is prohibited in Islam. Sheik Abd al-Raheem Al-Burai introduced Islamic teachings in the very symphony that Sudanese enjoyed. His *madeeh* -- songs including praise of the Prophet and enhancing morality-- dominated the public

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9 The President of Malaysia is believed to have suggested that Muslim countries reduce their military budget to only one percent, and instead direct it to educational services. He wants to give the world hyper power no excuse to force. Mernissi correctly asserts, “The supremacy of the West is not so much due to its military hardware as to the fact that its military bases are laboratories and its troops are brains, armies of researchers and engineers . . . power comes from the cultivation of the scientific spirit and participatory democracy” (Mernissi 1992: 43, 44).
arena from the beginning of the 1980s until now. With limited resources, this genius succeeded in what the state failed to achieve with omnipotent presence.

While ideological Islam fit the modernist ideology that attempts to increase visibility of the society --thereby making its members more manageable-- Sufi Islam encourages diffusiveness in thought and practice. Hence, it allows the individual room to reshape the moral boundary without having to transgress against the community or compromise his own individuality. By capitalizing on the good qualities that every disciple possesses one way or the other, the Sufi sheik allows the mureed to voluntary get rid of the negative aspects. A prominent sufi sheik, AG, asserts that Sufism puts the individual through spiritual training to ultimately liberate him/her from anything but the love of Allah (Personal Interview. AG. Fall of 2003). This concept of freedom is different from positive freedom, as defined by Western philosophers, or, for this matter, negative freedom as ill-conceived by Islamists. Western philosphers put emphasis on rights, Islamists bear more attention to duties. The sufi regard to the moral code is a way of fulfilling the covenant with Allah and not watching out for the morality, as defined by society and/or enforced by the police. To take an example, the word ayeb (morally

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10 "We have communal actions and rituals, but not communal faiths. Expressions of faith are public but the essence of faith is mysterious and private . . . True faith is contingent upon individuality and liberty. Their decline is tantamount to the decline of faith, just as their rise amounts to the rise of faith" (Soroush 2000: 140,141).

11 The adamancy of the current Sudanese state to push morals politically has caused a moral decline unprecedented in the history of the nation. A report of international humanitarian agency --that was not made public-- include a 400 percent increase in the number of children born out of wedlock (Personal Interview. SM. Spring of 2003). Outraged by this social tragedy, a businessman who I interviewed said that “at the time of the British when Sudan had open bars and licensed prostitutes, the public had a better public (and private) morality than today” (Personal Interview. SA. Spring of 2003).

12 A distinguished member of the Istiglal Party (mid of spectrum Moroccan politics) says unlike Islamists (Justice and Development Party, right of spectrum) they do not judge the individual, that is, party member, by his personal conduct, only by his creed. She thinks a person can become morally upright at anytime provided he has the right conviction (Personal Interview. NK. Fall of 2003). She said this in reaction to an accusation of a member in the Justice and Development Party that they do not care anymore about the
scornful in Arabic) has a deeper psychological effect than haram (prohibited) in making the individual morally conscientious of his moral responsibility to the “other.” It is a divine rule interceded by the society’s conception of morality that is deliberative, adaptive, and which follows an evolutionary learning path. Such philosophy characterizes the sufi approach to moral upbringing (tarbeya) and reveals the secret of its success. Unlike Islamists who use (scientific) rationality to distinguish themselves and thus gain a superior status, Sufis are more egalitarian and use communicative rationality to allow room for cohesiveness. In their debate with the Sufis, Islamists are very “rational”; in their contestation with the seculars (socialist/communists), they are very “moral.” The more gimmicks they attempt, the more obvious their political intricacies become.

I may not have adequately answered the questions about individualism and secularism within the capitalist tradition, nonetheless this section is aimed at highlighting the distinction between “structural” and “subjective” secularization. Structural secularism, applies to the institutional arrangements of society and subjective secularism to the subjective experience of secularizing forces by individuals (Robinson 2003). Structural secularism, defined as the “institutional separation of church and state,” may have been the midwife who helped with the birth of subjective secularism. But it is definitely capitalism, functional differentiation, and more recently mass communication that helped with the conception of such child in the European continent. (Forcing the personal conduct of their members. Most Islamists parties started with such a conviction, soon as they reached the populist level, that is, their parties in number, they could not afford to follow with the moral upbringing of their party membership.

13 Personal Interview with a prominent sufi sheik, who was also the President of Omdurman University for Islamic studies (Personal Interview. AG. Spring of 2003).
birth of such child in the Muslim world has caused the death of both the mother and the child. It is a child born out of wedlock at best and abortion at worst.)

**Traditional Leaders in Modern Clothes**

In spite of persistent attempts to block sufi heritage, Sufism continues to shape the cultural, social, and intellectual unconscious of most of these Muslim societies. By omitting Sufism from formal educational curricula in North Africa, modernist groups have not benefited from its richness, and they are not exempt from the ills that such resentment created. Elites were unconsciously maneuvering in a socio-cultural sphere that treated the “leader” as a sheik whose basera (vision) provides guidance in gloomy circumstances. His ideology is the tareega (spiritual discipline) that maintains harmony and discipline among part members. The party is the zawya (platform) from which the sheik dissipates his blessed teachings (Azzahi 2003:233).

In his prize-winning book, *Az-zawia Wal-Hazib*, Azzahi, a Moroccan sociologist, asserts that A’lal Al-Fasi of Morocco (the national leader of Morocco in the 1950s) was revered by the masses as a religious leader. His vision inspired the nation to stand by the king thereby connecting to its history, more so its spiritual heritage (Azzahi 2003). A’lal Al-Fasi announced from Cairo the beginning of a military revolt led by the masses as soon as King Mohamed IV was sent into exile by the colonial authority in 1952, thereby wasting an opportunity for the French Protectorate to drive a wedge between elites and the Makzn. He made a political gamble by supporting the king at a time when the king was mostly weakened, which Mohamed IV won because rather than following the wish of the Protectorate, the king decided to stand by his people. Al-Fasi displayed a “mystical

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14 Zawya is the Sufi religious center; Hazib is the party.
quality” of being able to predict political events. He thus was both a sound sheik and a loyal disciple. Whereas he could have used his popularity to replace the king, A’lal knew that the king capitalized on a heritage that went beyond his temporal existence, one that extended 1,200 years into the history of the nation (see Chapter 3 for details).

Al-Fasi used his political skills and religious credentials to establish himself as the undisputed leader of the Istiglal Party, which monopolized Moroccan politics long before it was challenged by the Socialist Union. He overcame the challenge Bal-Hassan Al-wazani once presented for the chairmanship. Even though the latter was assigned the vice-chairmanship, Al-wazani chose to leave and establish his own party. These were not simply two-party members competing for an administrative position. They were two religio-political figures competing for the sheikdom of a worship place (zawya) called Istiglal Party (Hizb Al-Istiglal). They did not stand for themselves, but also represented two renowned Fasi families, and they shined as beacons for their societal groups. Similar to the Moroccan saying, “Two snakes cannot reign in one den,” the defeat of one meant the departure of the other. It was only logical to do so because it is by a strict following of the instructions of the leader (Aza’eim) that the party remains intact. Any dispute of his orders violates the social logic that governs the political dynamics in the party and in the nation as a whole.

The lively presence of the characteristics of the zawya in a national party makes it difficult for a leader to be challenged, or be excused from his position in their lifetime. This patrimonialism applies to religious as well as non-religious parties. Looking at the

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15 Abdel-Salaam Yasin, who for a long time was a member of the botsheshya tareega, is said to have left it when the followers refused to make him the sheik, and instead chose the sheik’s son after his father’s death. He now has his own party and accepts no dispute of any of the party members.
political landscape in Sudan, you cannot point to a party that succeeded democratically in removing its leader, not even the Communist Party. It is a problem if a leader is alive; it is a curse if he is dead. The death of a leader resembles a tragedy for some parties. For example, 20 years after the death of its leader, Sharief Hussein Al-Hindi, the DUP in Sudan looks like an orphanage whose inhabitants still suffer from the death of a fatherly figure. Al-Hindi is by far the noblest sharief who has walked over the Sudanese landscape. He had the political asceticism of Al-Hassan and the warrior courage of Al-Housein --the two sons of Imam Ali. However, it is not the magnanimity of his character: generosity, tolerance, sincerity, political strategies, intellectual shrewdness.\(^\text{16}\) None of those characteristics were qualities that the lineage to the Prophet (\textit{Sharifism}) immaterially manifested. But they were supernatural qualities that he genetically inherited from his father and ancestors who supposedly kept the party united and its manifesto appealing to the public. More than one follower, most of them educated individuals, reiterated that Al-Housein was magically convincing and capable of foretelling. Some say that he physically met with Great Grandfather, the Prophet Mohamed, before his death (Personal Interview. SA. Fall of 2003). The followers insisted ascribing these qualities to him, even though he consistently rejected some of them.

Unlike Al-Hindi, Assadig Al-Mahdi (the leader of the Umma party in Sudan) tried to capitalize on his genealogy while failing to manifest noble qualities. He publicly said (while being President of Sudan in 1985) that his birth date coincided with that of Jesus (the son of Mary) and that Said Yahya, his cousin who was only four, announced many times among family members that a \textit{muhajr} (someone who travels in the path of Allah)\(^\text{16}\) I can finish this dissertation before I will be able to enumerate that great man’s good qualities.
will soon be born. It was presumably understood this *muhajr* would be a savior for the Sudan and the Umma party. Anytime Al-Mahdi enters a public place, he is followed by an entourage of people who cheer “long live As-sadig for the Sudan.” Nonetheless, this slogan has become so embarrassing, due to his repeated failures to govern the country, that sometimes he pretends to wave to his followers to silence them. We have to realize, as Azzahi says, that a leader exists in the African/Muslim world even before his birth time. As-sadig was suckled this illusion by his mother, who is the daughter of a great chieftain, Abdallah wad-Jadallah. Notice, *Sharifs* do not just get married; they give birth to future leaders.

By the time Assadig becomes a president of the Umma Party, the party members would have no way escaping this octopus-like psychological hold. While giving a leader ample political maneuverability, in the secular sense, these myths are supposed to serve the purpose of a strong religious shield in the face of criticism from political or party opponents. However, too much dependence on these superstitions has caused Said Sadig¹⁷ to relinquish an important political quality that distinguished his great grandfather Imam Mahdi, from among all other Sudanese leaders: choosing the right time to strike an offensive against an enemy or pulling the army back as an appropriate defense strategy. Assadig could not confine himself to becoming a religious leader like his uncle, Al-Hadi Al-Mahdi, and he could not consistently follow secular logic, that is, accessing politics from a political rather than a religious door. Consequently, Assadig fell in between the

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¹⁷ Said is a reverence title used for the descendents of the Prophet Mohamed. Ironically Said Abdel-Rahman, the paternal grandfather of Sadig Al-Mahdi, asserted that they were descendents of Ja’far ibni-Talib, the Prophet’s cousin.
two cliffs; he could not impress academicians in spite of concerted efforts to show scholarship,\textsuperscript{18} and he could not be perceived by religious clerics as a pious man.

In spite of the political acrobatics to diffuse the power of \textit{alboytat} (big families who were once in exclusive control of traditional or national parties, either from a tribal or religious background), the self-proclaimed Islamic movement was subconsciously looking for a leader whose credentials could fit the definition of a sheik. They found Hassan Atturabi. In addition to being a Sorbonne graduate, he is married to the daughter of Assiddig --Imam of the Ansar (who in turn has coached him into becoming an aristocrat-- that is not to deny his proclivity for becoming one). The Ansar largest sect in Sudan and one of those \textit{boytat} that they have long defied. His father is a judge of the third degree, and his great-grandfather claimed to be a Mahdi some 400 years ago (Mahmoud 1997). They boosted some of his credentials and even invented others. No wonder Turabi became a deity. He now has a \textit{huwar}, a term used for a disciple or religious follower (with the only difference the disciples --\textit{huwareen}-- of the sheik are not peasants, they are graduate students, military officers), lives in a \textit{thraya} -a huge monumental building according to Sudanese standards. According to Turabi, in the 1960s, it was a clear example of extravagance. He now says prayers for the dead, consummates marriages, and engages in \textit{judeya} --reconciliation in disputes. This is something that a chieftain or a

\textsuperscript{18} Awad Abdel-Mageed, who was the Minister of Economics and Finance in 1984, told a senior Umma Party officer that As-Sadig once requested a scientific paper from him about an economic matter. He provided As-Sadig the paper only to find out that the latter published it in his name a few months later (Personal Interview. AM. Spring of 2003). I am pointing this out to show that while traditional at heart, these leaders spare no effort to appear in the most modern cloth. They want to be religious clerics, as well as academic shrewds. In the process, they miss what is expected of them: administrative skills, especially when they come to power. This applies to Turabi of the NIF, and many others, since they are only interested in the glamour of “modernity,” not its content.
religious leader (fati) would do in a rural area, with the slight difference that Turabi gets paid for doing it (he is paid by his party for his occupation as a professional politician, a privilege that few political leaders enjoy in Sudan). Short of distributing forgiveness plates, he promises people who die in Jihad a place in the Heavens.

Abdellah Hammoudi, a Princeton anthropologist, remarkably explains the anthropological dynamics that go into the zawyia between the master and the disciple (Hammoudi 1997). He asserts that in Sufi heritage two sheiks cannot reside in the same maseed or religious circle if the disciple reaches the degree which is to be determined by the sheik. This is what causes the rivalry because the disciple is always under the impression that he reached the status of a wali, that is, righteous man, and that the sheik is just envious of him. When in most times it becomes evident that the mureed has become a man, that is, he shows a karama (mystical quality), the sheik has to accept it for fear of losing others, especially if the karama miracle is shown in front of the sheik. The karama of Ali Osman is that he became a vice president. In the absence of moral upbringing (tarbeya) that a sufi sheik infuses in his follower’s heart through the emphasis on spiritual discipline (tareega), the mureed Ali Osman --Vice President of Sudan-- could not help but to expel his sheik from power and put him in jail (Personal Interview. SK. Spring of 2003). One does not know whom to blame: the sheik who chose his mureed on the criterion of “obedience” or the mureed who endured humiliation until he could become a sheik. The superb credentials that Turabi contributes to himself made him expel strong rivalries, people such as Jafaar Sheik Idris or Arrasheed Attahir, and despise or at least

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19 Turabi received 6, 500, 000 Sudanese pounds for taking part in the judeya among the sons of Al-Sheik Mustafä Al-Ameen (AM: summer of 2003). This is something that sheik Abdel-Raheem Al-burai does on a daily basis without taking a penny.
distance himself from the closest aides. A handpicked assistant, Ali Osman, was waiting for the moment to see the man in himself, what Abdellah Hammoudi, a Princeton anthropology professor, calls the delivery moment: one at which the female awaits the birth of the male (Hammoudi 1997).

Under the influence of urgency, Turabi and his group adopted the techniques of his political and religious rivalries. They adopted the modernist approach of the Communist Party while wearing the gown of a sheik. Consequently, they relinquished the spiritual ethics that traditionally link a Sufi to his sheik and were not exempt from the competitive tendency of modern politics. In the absence of rules that can mediate conflict, the relationship between the leader and party members took the worst form of a sheik-disciple relationship, and it reflected negatively on the performance of the polity. Instead of facing the cultural and social stagnation, ideological parties tried to bypass it; consequently, they fell victims to it. They have escaped the authoritarianism of traditional leaders, mainly sectarian leaders of Umma and DUP, only to find that sociological intrigues do not dissolve merely by giving a party a modern name or importing an ideology.

As much resilience as these cultural traits may have exemplified, they were only made stronger through the adamant attempt of Islamists to mix a sacral understanding of politics with a sacral understanding of religion, which has become inoperationable by modern standards. As much as legislation is no longer the responsibility of religious leaders, religion has ceased to become the exclusive domain of the theologians (Galyoun
1991). Modernity has not as much announced the death of God as it has influenced a
demarcation between cosmology and history. Soroush contends,

The notion that the new world gradually rids itself of religion is only half true. It is
true in so far as the modern world condemns ignorant and vulgar religiosity to
extinction. However, it also allows a different kind of religiosity, a learned and
examined religion, to prosper on a higher level. Scientific treatment of political and
economic affairs does in no sense preclude a well-defined role for God and religion
in political, social, and natural affairs. Determining the limits of that role and the
exact form of that relationship remains to be worked out by scholars. (Soroush
2000: 61)

Western civilization, evolved out of a position against religion to establishing a
truce with it and now it is facing the challenge of incorporating it as an important and an
essential part of its value system. The debate in the public sphere cannot help but show a
fervor for religion; for instance, in the United States people, are following the debate
about moral issues on a daily basis. Although they have reached a point of maturity
where they can rationally handle religious issues, Americans cannot overcome the
historical predicament of western nations with religiosity. Eastern nations face exactly the
opposite scenario. Muslims are so intrigued by the changes that modernity, mainly
 technological advancement, has introduced into their lives that they would want to
preserve religion unexamined and its status unquestioned (Vatikiotis 1981). The
reluctance of Muslims to entertain values other than religious ones has impoverished the
polity, as well as deprived religion of a constructive role it could have played in public
life.

While the state is trying to force its vision on the public sphere using Islamic
slogans, individuals experience secularism in a subjective manner. For example, a regime

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20 “Modern humanity aims to create the world in its own image rather than accepting it as it is . . . . Our
acute anxieties are born out of this conflict” (Soroush 2000: 56).
design like that of Morocco, which is secular at the core and is just using Islam for legitimization purposes, could have existed unchallenged before the rise of Islamic activism and its demands for equity and social justice. Even then, the efforts of the society and the state were not mutually exclusive because individuals were experiencing Islam subjectively through their societal interaction and experiencing secularism in the modern formal institutions. A regime design like that of Sudan after 1989, which is theocratic at the core and is just using liberalism for legitimization purposes, could have remained unchallenged had it not been for the transformation that occurred in the public sphere. Eickelman asserts that no one group or leader in contemporary Muslim societies possesses a monopoly on the management of the sacred (Eickelman 1999). The proliferation of the media and the means of communication have contributed to dissolving prior barriers of space and distance and opening new grounds for interaction and mutual recognition. If “modernity” is defined as the emergence of new kinds of public space, then developments in Turkey, Iran, and Indonesia, and elsewhere in the Muslim world suggest that we are living through an era of profound social transformation for the Muslim majority world. Buzzwords such as “fundamentalism,” and catchy phrases such as Lerner’s “Mecca or mechanization” are of little use in understanding this transformation. It nonetheless signals the dilemma Muslims are experiencing as a result

21 Though the state can compel people to act in unison, Soroush contends that it cannot make them understand Islam uniformly (Soroush 2000:143).

22 The media has transformed the "sociology of Islamic knowledge" in an unprecedented ways (Soares 1998: 401). First, it ended the scholarly manipulation of the canonical doctrine, thus giving Muslims a chance to directly approach the Islamic text. Second, it created cultural communication among communities; thus overcoming urban/rural boundaries. Hakan contends, "The fragmentation of the Islamic movement is the outcome of democratization, expanding market forces, the introduction of alternative worldviews and increased education" (Hakan 2000:1). That all of this is tied to the epoch of modernity is not a coincidence.
of their inability to come to terms with the reality of modernization or globalization. The question often asked: With the use of education as one specific indicator, what role has modernity played in helping the Muslim individual escape the hold of medieval theology - that “amalgam of Sharia legalism and tariqa mysticism that Ghazzali had legitimized” and promoted as authentic? (Geertz 1965:104)

**Can Modern Rationality Shape New Religiosity?**

Depending on the political orientation of state elites, five educational policies exist in the Islamic World. Secular elites ban religion from being taught in public schools thinking that its influence will fade away with development, thus capitulating to modernity. Theocratic regimes ignore secular education, undermining the significant role that science can play in directing the course of society and politics. Quasi-secular regimes build secular schools with a place reserved for religion, giving precedence to reason in faith matters. Quasi-theocratic regimes build religious schools with a place reserved for secular education subordinating secular knowledge to religious knowledge. Embedded democracy equally values religious knowledge and secular knowledge. For the purpose of this comparative study, I shall limit my focus to the more problematic cases, mainly comparing educational systems in Morocco and Sudan, before I move to the middle point where secular norms and principles of rationality are perceived as applicable to religious jurisprudence (Soroush 2000: 149).
Table 4.1: Typology of Political Incorporation of Islam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regime Typology</th>
<th>Secular</th>
<th>Quasi-Secular</th>
<th>Embedded Democracy</th>
<th>Quasi-Theocratic</th>
<th>Theocratic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Culture</td>
<td>Oppressive Turkey</td>
<td>Schizophrenic Morocco</td>
<td>Syncretic Indonesia</td>
<td>Ideological Sudan</td>
<td>Dogmatic Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Policy</td>
<td>Only science</td>
<td>Science/Rel</td>
<td>Sci-Rel</td>
<td>Religion/Sci</td>
<td>Only religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position from Modernity</td>
<td>Capitulating to it</td>
<td>Seduced by it</td>
<td>Neither capitate nor reject</td>
<td>Envious of it</td>
<td>Rejecting it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A century ago, Turkey perceived the madrasa as a strong and active parochial school system that promotes the ideals of a militant and totalistic Islam.\(^{23}\) Accordingly, he abolished it and advocated a separation of secular education from religious influences. He was merely content with the teachings of the Enlightenment, which the founder of the republic envisioned as the only means by which he could influence his society to venture into modernity. Hakan contends, “The Turkish project of modernization has been characterized more by concern for its Western appearance than by the actual social and philosophical roots of modernity” (Hakan 2000:3). The state disregards the needs and aspirations of society --as the exclusive determinants of law in the secular sense-- by borrowing a constitutional order from the West, that is Swiss code. It also abandons political socialization as a necessary process that links the citizen’s imagination of the

\(^{23}\) Political authorities treated religious culture as a “parasitic teaching matter: its time allocation is small; its prestige low because it is not judged by schools to be a criterion of scholarly aptitude; the caliber of teachers is low; the curriculum is dull, designed to have students memorize a few sacred texts and learn some acts of devotion rather than inculcate values” (Emmanuel Sivan 1990:8).
religious communal with the national self. An educational curriculum that undermines the role of religion as an important basis of morality disconnects an individual's moral consciousness from his civic duty. Another curriculum that encourages submission and reliance on rigid interpretation of the scripture can produce zealots and despots whose narrow vision of faith may justify discrimination, intolerance, and oppression.

More paradoxically yet, it is not a rigid separation of education from religious influence that will make it possible to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s in an Islamic society but the further integration of secular and religious learning in modern schools. It is through such schools that Islam, on the sociological level and in consequence on the intellectual level as well -- for ideas cannot develop in a social vacuum, will be able to enter the modern world. To cut the *umma* off from this critical regenerating institution in its midst by a strict adherence to a state-sponsored and –directed secular school system and by vague hostility to “Quranic” schools as “backward,” “feudal,” or “fanatical” is to ensure the rigidification of Islamic institutions generally and, in consequence, of Islamic thought. (Geertz 1965: 107)

The official attempt to reform education in both Morocco and Sudan has been politically dogmatic and intellectually unimaginative. It has treated education in isolation of activities in the wider political sphere thus preempting the opportunity for these governments to develop an educational policy. This policy could gradually adjust to the change in circumstances and to revitalize the public culture by way of bridging the gap between reason and revelation. King Hassan II tried modernizing Al-Qar’aween --the traditional Islamic School of Fez-- but he was faced with resistance from the (religious scholars) *ulama*. There are various reasons for their adamant refusal to adopt changes of

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24 “Nations are neither primordial nor perennial, but entities that have crystallized from ethnic origins in modern times. . . . Structurally generated processes of integration and cultural assimilation, supported by the new modes of communication made available by the novel technology, made it possible and necessary to imagine communities. . . . The crisis of the nation-state in the World of Islam has been due to its inability to generate this complex of integration-assimilation-communication functions which could have contributed to the formation of a national identity” (Tibi 2002: 127).

25 “Traditional values systems growing out of long-standing religious commitments represent a much more important problem in the modernization process than had been anticipated by most of these modernizers” (Geertz 1965: 106).
any kind. First, they probably felt they would lose their status as “guardians of the scripture.” Second, some felt that modernization would corrupt the context of the Islamic text, especially since the type of modernization pursued by Hassan II was synonymous with westernization. There were no indicators --institutional or behavioral-- that could expel the fear of those religious scholars (or anyone else who may be committed to Islam morally or intellectually), and make them feel that the political establishment is keen about introducing changes that could rationalize the understanding of Islam. What they could notice is a systematic retreat from Islamic principles by way of illusion and political camouflage. Hassan II has given up on the scholars of Al-Qara’ween and established his own Islamic school (Dar Al-Hadith Al-Hassania) in Rabat. Surprisingly, there was no difference in the curriculum of the old school in the city of Fez and the new/modern school in Rabat. The only noticeable difference is that the students at Fez sit on the floor and the students of Rabat sit on benches. Only the administrative setup was changed, not the educational philosophy. The chairman of the Rabat school (Dar Al-Hadith Al-Hassania) reveals that his struggle to include social sciences was resisted by the religious establishment. Unless some innovative measures are introduced, the chairman of Dar Al-Hadith Al-Hassania asserts the religious theology, as it exists today, will be completely impotent in providing solutions to endemic social and political problems (Personal Interview. AT. Fall of 2003). When they were asked to provide a plan to implement the Zakat, for example, religious scholars copied what was in the old antique books and presented it to Hassan II. He got discouraged because it was evident to him that these scholars were not in touch with modern reality (Personal Interview. AJ. Fall of 2003).
Along the same lines, as previously discussed, Sudanese traditional parties established Omdurman Islamic University, but they made no attempt to influence the curriculum, recruit criteria, or even decide upon general policies. The DUP and the Umma Party knew that they wanted an Islamic University. But they were not clear as to the purpose that such a school could serve in the wider context of democratic politics, apart from them answering the demands of a religious public. The school made no attempt to revive the pluralist, liberalist, and tolerant Islam that prevailed 10 centuries ago and which was buried (alive) for political reasons that I discuss in Chapter 3. It taught scholastic Islam, which, according to Arkoun, Aljabri, and others, is dogmatic, fundamentalist, and encourages a monotheist vision of the world.\textsuperscript{26} (The rationalist school of Islam was compromised 10 centuries ago for reasons that are still prevalent in the Muslim world.)

As Ernest Gellner correctly argues, what reshaped the cycle was modern mass education, which in widening access to the written cultural traditions, ended up strengthening the hand of fundamentalism. For the policies upon which this education was implemented were such that, instead of opening minds to critical inquiry and rational approaches, they favored a return to premodern views and attitudes. (Filali-Ansary 2003: 3)\textsuperscript{27}

Unsurprisingly, we have graduates who bear the responsibility of protecting Islamic theology but are ill prepared to adopt it to today’s terms.

\textsuperscript{26} In his examination of the educational systems in Syrian and Egyptian education, Emmanuel Sivan notices, “Concerning school curricula, the radicals voice the all-too-expected complaint that the teaching of science, though not openly critical of religion, is subverting Islam quite efficiently, precisely by being oblivious to it. Science offers an alternative explanatory model, supposedly value-free and objective; it does not even deign to try to reconcile this model with Islam. The implication is, of course, that by transfer through training, the same approach will be applied to other spheres. In like vein, the radicals attack the teaching of philosophy for giving too much place to Western thinkers and above all for having Islamic philosophy such as the Mu’tazila school, Avicenna and Averroes, branded as deviationists in their own times” (Sivan 1990: 6).

\textsuperscript{27} “In this neo-Khaldunian view, the chances of liberal, secularized Islam are, therefore, very limited. And, indeed, taking Ibn Khaldun’s theory as a starting point is a path to reestablishing classical essentialism; it is another way of asserting that Islam always leads to similar patterns of behavior, as it did in the past, and as it must do in the present” (Filali-Ansary 2003: 3).
In their attempt to reconceptualize the educational curriculum, the Sudanese government introduced Islamic studies in all disciplines and at all university levels, but with no attempt to imaginatively and courageously bridge the gap between secular and religious sciences. Students do not see the relevance between their field of specialization and “Islamic subjects.” The government made no attempt -- needless to say, creative attempt-- to see which part of the sharia can aid the medical student in his understanding of biology, or how can the student of astronomy help advance his understanding of some aspects of the Qur’an. They picked some subjects and threw them into the curriculum hoping that the students can make sense out of them somehow one day (Personal Interview. HJ. Spring of 2003).28 Ironically, the government resisted attempts to incorporate social sciences into any of the so-called Islamic disciplines. Even worse, to counterbalance the intellectual weight of “secularism,” the Islamist government in Khartoum compromised the scientific integrity of schools under its control, such as the University of Qur’anic Sciences (UQS), by giving doctorates to unqualified students. He said the amounts of doctorates that the UQS gave the last five years (1995-2000) is equivalent to the number the University of Khartoum gave in the last 50 years (Personal Interview. AK. Spring of 2003).

Those religiously educated may more recently have been accredited in the eyes of the public, however, their capability to provide solutions for worldly problems has recently come under scrutiny. The public may not perceive individuals such Al-Jabri

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28 When students dared to explore the limits of critical thinking, they were discouraged by the “guardians of faith.” I spoke to one of the professors at Omdurman Islamic University, who was furious because the faculty of the Department of Arabic rejected the proposal of one of his students; they justified their refusal saying that in an Islamic university, a student should not be studying the literature of a secular ba’theist Iraqi poet, such as Al-Bayati (Personal Interview. MM. Spring of 2003).
(socialist) in Morocco or Kamal al-Juzouli (communist) in Sudan, as “Islamically authentic,” but can relate to the scientific rationality and political feasibility of their logic. Thus, these countries are now faced with a classic problem of religiously educated elites who are alienated from the reality of politics, and secularly educated elites who are alienated from the masses. Inasmuch as it bifurcates legitimacy and effectiveness, the religion/science dichotomy explains the plight of governance in the Muslim world, which will be discussed further in Chapter 5. “Islam faces today the worst ordeal in its existence--its complete absence from all realms of human existence-- menaced to be reduced to insignificance and relegated to the dustbin of history” (Emmanuel Sivan 1990: 2). Is there a philosophically balanced educational policy that can help the Muslim population come to terms with the modern world without rejecting or capitulating to it, but becoming part of it? Do we detect an avenue in contemporary debate, and with what objectives?

There are three tendencies that have primary historical precedence: 1) *apologetic*, which aims at reforming popular religiosity without reexamining orthodox religious beliefs; 2) *radical*, which, in the process of asserting Islam’s authority in the political sphere, combines “premodern epistemological views with modern ideological attitudes,” and 3) *enlightened*, which abandons ahistorical essentialism and accepts the methods and suppositions of modern scholarship (Filali-Ansary 2003:6).

Imam Mohammed Abduh (1849-1905) is the first among the traditionalists to have genuinely attempted to grapple with the issue of bridging the gap between “reason” and

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29 While religious beliefs cast a light upon human life from the outside, man acts as a receptor of this divine truth. Being the fallible being he is, man's perception of the truth will follow an elusive labyrinthine path, a theory Soroush calls the "Expansion and Contraction of Knowledge" (Soroush 2000:133). This is consistent with Geertz's suggestion that, as opposed to other sorts of beliefs, ideological, philosophical, scientific, or commonsensical, religious beliefs are not inductive, they are paradigmatic; the world does not provide evidence of truth but an illustration of it (Geertz 1965: 98).
“revelation.” Abduh refused to abide by taqlid (the traditional interpretation of the Qur’an) and exhorts those believers with the requisite knowledge and intellectual equity to interpret the Qur’an in light of the modern current of thoughts. Though he limits ijithad (independent interpretation) to ibadat (matters of worship), he argues that any statement in the Qur’an has to conform to the canons of reason in mu’amalat (matters of life dealings). In case of conflict between the two, Abduh gives precedence to reason over the literal meaning of the Sharia (Adams 1965: 127). Nonetheless, he applies this methodology to family issues, such as divorce, polygamy, law of testate and intestate succession, that are explicitly mentioned in the Sharia, and conflict with the dictates of natural law.

According to Euben, “Abduh reinterprets Islamic concepts in terms of Western ideals and vice versa, linking, for example, maslaha --reform in the interest of the community-- to utilitarianism, shura --the principle of consultation-- to parliamentary democracy, ijam’ (consensus) to public opinion” (Euben 1991:17). This epistemological eclecticism explains some of Abduh’s apparent inconsistencies. Though he views science as an autonomous mode of thought from religion, Abduh treats governance as an extension and specification of the religious perspective. This position invites a critique from the right side of the ideological spectrum.

Unlike Abduh, whose training as a scholar was limited to religious education, Qutb received his intellectual training in the United States in the 1960s. Not long after his return from his studies, he was persecuted by Jamal Abd al-Naser, President of Egypt. Said Qutb, the intellectual father of modern Islamic activism, considers the scientific rationality of the Enlightenment and its objectifying attitude toward the world as
permeating Western social and political thought. This rationality, Qutb asserts, is defined in opposition to faith. It rejects the foundations of knowledge --epistemology-- that transcends human existence and power. Qutb argues that reinterpretation of the Qur’an to accord with the dictates of reason of this kind will destroy both the substance and authority of revealed truth (Euben 1997: 23).

Qutb sees the West living in a state of “jahiliya” (complete ignorance) for the following reasons. The economic institutions of the West are fully governed by material rationality, a belief that defies the ontology of any religion. Secularism rules political institutes as a sovereign mistress, thus denying social norms and especially religious values a role in designing public policy proceedings. The Enlightenment’s vilification of religion, according to Qutb, has at a minimum caused moral relativism, and at a maximum culminated in the moral impoverishment of Western societies. In his own way, each scholar rejects the separation of faith and reason. While Abduh portrays science as an expression of Islam, Qutb tries to counter the cultural hegemony of the West with an Islamic ideology that subordinates science to Islamic creed. Qutb admires the processes associated with modernization, for example, rationalization as well as technical capacity of the modern state. But he sells his version of modernity --a set of socially encoded values emphasizing sympathy for traditional values over economic efficiency, power, and profit (Euben 1992: 30).

Soroush, a contemporary Iranian scholar, differentiates religious knowledge from religion and makes the former an integral component of human knowledge. By envisioning religious knowledge as evolving with other branches of human knowledge, he welcomes the application of secular norms and principles of rationality to religious
jurisprudence (Soroush 2000: 149). Thus he escapes the reluctance of Abduh to apply secular knowledge to sharia matters and Qutb’s unweary effort to subordinate sharia to modern political proceedings. That is to say, should people decide to abide by sharia, whose understanding of it should prevail. How is that an elite few (scholars or Islamic activists) or the members of parliament should decide on behalf of the people?30

With his "expansion and contraction of knowledge" theory, Soroush escapes the epistemological eclecticism of Mohammed Abduh and the epistemological relativism of Said Qutb. Is Soroush then establishing an epistemological pluralism? By differentiating religious knowledge from religion and making it an integral component of human knowledge, Soroush attempts to articulate a relationship between religion and politics. This articulation avoids extremes, secularization of religion, or the ideologization of politics. Is such an ideal feasible? Can religion set the cultural accord within which the political discord takes place without interfering in politics (Tocqueville 2000: 73)? In his words, this genius asserts,

Once the status of reason, particularly the dynamic collective reason, is established; once the theoretical, practical, and historical advances of humanity are applied to the understanding and acceptance of religion; once extra religious factors find an echo within the religious domain; and finally, once religion is rationalized, then the way to epistemological pluralism --the centerpiece of democratic action-- will be paved. (Soroush 2000)

To the extent that the transition --from an epistemological revolution to political democracy-- substantially transforms rights and duties, it is morally contentious. The transition can help the society members systematically and consistently go through the “thick layers of interpretation,” rather than make frog loops that achieve nothing other

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30 Soroush asserts, “It is the religious understanding that will have to adjust itself to democracy not the other way around; justice, as a value, cannot be religious. . . .Justice, then, is a metareligious category, and the right and acceptable religion should, inevitably, be just” (Soroush 2000: 131-132).
than agitate the political environment and make it more tumultuous than it already is. For example, “Whereas in the West the women’s issue is largely seen in the framework of social justice and equity, in the Magreb countries the women’s issue is part of the a different discourse involving Westernization, modernization, and secularism” (Banuazizi et.al 1994:28).\footnote{31 Muslim women in particular seem to be squeezed between Islamic fundamentalism and modernity, and between modernity and postmodernity (Ahmed and Donnan 1993: 14). Civic society organizations, at least in Morocco, have started authenticating their demands Islamically, they quote the Quran and the Sunna. As much they resist being demoralized as “secular,” they strongly believe they can demand their rights using Islamic precepts. Ramadan asserts, “A movement is afoot that clearly expresses the renewal of the place of women in Islamic societies and an affirmation of a liberation vindicated by complete fidelity to the principles of Islam” (Ramadan 2000: 141).} It is the personal status laws, especially those elements relating to marriage, divorce and inheritance, which are the most oppressive and which are the most intractable in the current period because of the prevailing literalist interpretations of the Qur’an (Lacey and Coury 2000). Filali-Ansary contents, it is “not so literalist as it is simply premodern in an epistemological sense” (Filali-Ansary 2003:3). Reformists and activists of the 19th and 20th centuries never questioned the historical authenticity of the established orthodoxy. This remains to be tackled by prominent scholars of the 21st century who make a distinction between the eternal message of the Qur’an and its contingent reality (Abu-Zaid 2000). These scholars investigate the structural factors that influenced the imagination of the scholars who authenticated the Sunna almost a century after the death of the Prophet (Arkoun 2000). They also expose the variegate approaches to the interpretation of sharia that got harmonized under politically malignant circumstances (Attunsi 2002). They also examine the characteristics of the “model” that Islamic modernists present to the masses as Islamically authentic (Al-Jabri 2001). By depicting the views of these scholars, this sections aims to penetrate the various strata --
often referred to in this dissertation as “thick layers of interpretation”—in the chronological order of their formation.

Oftentimes when Muslims say the Qur’an—Islam’s revealed book—is valid for all times and applicable to all geographical locations, they nonetheless approach it with methodological and conceptual tools that inadvertently indicate it is above time and space. For a long time, Muslims have stopped reading the Qur’an and instead were satisfied reciting it. Reciting the Qur’an provides the readers with tranquility; the reading it enhances their understanding of reality. There are conceptual as well as psychological reasons for this kind of intransigence. First, Muslims are still reading the Quran through the interpretation of others—mainly generations that existed 10 centuries ago—without making any effort to decompose or reformulate it in a way that benefits from modern methodological and epistemological breakthroughs. While Europeans have moved from the Kantian, to the Hegelian, Marxian, structural, and ontological expositions of the mind, Muslim theologians are still caught in the rationality of the middle ages, that is, there is an absolute truth that doesn’t undergo transformation (knowingly Allah is ever-changing) and the approach to it is monolithic (Arkoun 2000:37). They find it difficult to make a distinction between the theological status of the Qur’an and the linguistic condition of the mind that produces human expressions (Arkoun 1993:96). Second, Muslims cannot approach the text with the liberty of the founding fathers of faith (Kubba 2003:3). As sacred as the Quran is, Muslims find it difficult to believe that the revelation captured the picture of a society—the Arabs—that was undergoing transformation. Nasr Hamid Abu-Zaid contends that analyzing the text requires the understanding of the culture to which it belongs, and, more importantly,
tracing its progression to help the text speak to modern reality (Abu-Zaid 1996). This historical contingency, he asserts, does not nullify the divinity of its origin. As a containment for human experiences Qur’anic language can be transparent, but is definitely not neutral (Al-Sharafi 2000:24, 36).

Since the Sunna was authenticated a century after the death of the Prophet, Arkoun strongly suggests exposing the contingent factors, both philosophical and imaginative, that influenced the compiling of the words, deeds, and sayings of the Prophet. Philological studies explain that, in its appeal to reason, logic undergoes primary adjustments when societies shift from expressive and oratory narratives to written and metaphorical connotations (Arkoun 1993: 85). Needless to say, the move from innate spirituality to rationalized religiosity (Al-Sharafi 2000:183) occurred under politically turbulent circumstances, as was explained in chapters 2 and 3.

Although the protectors of orthodoxy want to promote their understanding of sharia as puritan, scholars agree that it was only historical coincidence --economic/structural as well as political/institutional factors-- that saved the orthodox synthesis of medieval theology from facing the destiny of other schools of thought that was forcefully pushed to the background. The “amalgam of Sharia legalism and tariqa mysticism” (Geertz 1965:104) that Ghazzali legitimized and promoted as authentic was formulated under circumstances that were anything but egalitarian. The patriarchal nature of the society permeated the scholars’ perception of the rights of disenfranchised groups, such as women, slaves, and others (Arkoun 2000:54s), accordingly we find issues of marriage, divorce, and inheritance among the most oppressive in today’s sharia. Rather than perceive religion as a “historically situated expression of spiritual visions and ethical
ideals” (Filali-Ansary 2003:10), solutions that the scholars found as suitable for their times were made as the archetype passed from the Prophet and his righteous companions (Al-Sharafi 2000:128). Abu-Zaid argues that the quintessential mistake of the salafi (orthodox) groups is their perception of history as regressing toward the worse in all aspects. He asserts that this is an ideological position that supports backwardness and resists development (Abu-Zaid 1996:223). Nothing betrays the moral ideals of the salaf more than this theological rigidly that forbid Muslims the right to administer their life because earlier generations were spiritually better enlightened.

It was at the time of Abbasid,32 as I explained in Chapter 3, that this historical contingency about Islam was raised to the status of an authoritatively normative model (Filali-Ansary 2003:2). Any opposition against the ruler was seen as an abrogation of religion. Consequently, all aspects of Muslim governance became personalized and the implementation of sharia became synonymous with despotism. Al-jabri has done an excellent task decomposing that period, as well explaining its characteristics (Al-Jabri 2001).33 Should Muslims decide to be the makers of history and not its victims, a revision of such heritage may prove inevitable. If the external threat is an illusion, then the internal danger is imminent (Harb 2000).

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32 Secularity of early Muslims made them resist the Caliphate of Ali or for this sake Al-Abbas because they did not want to combine a spiritual authority blood lineage to the Prophet with temporal authority, which is a place of debate (Al-Sharafi 2000:103).

33 Mainly the notion of a Leviathan who should be entrusted with implementing the sharia --which by this time has ceased to be a mechanism and has become God’s law in the very theocratic sense. It has become a political tool by which Islamists demoralize their opponents, not only so but incarcerate them in the domain of God’s city.
Conclusions

To study how education affected political stability, this chapter has traced the development of religious theology, identifying historical benchmarks that characteristically witnessed a tension between the liberal and the literal traditions. Depending on the socio-political and historical conditions, there were moments of ebb and flow that favored one tradition over the other. The attempt of the ruling elite to establish theocracy at the beginning of the 10th century, that is, find religious justification for political decisions, has led to the bifurcation of rationality and politics. This gave scientific endeavors a break from the intense heat of politics. It allowed Muslim scientists to excel in all fields, especially during the exceptional period of time referred to as the “Golden Age of Islam” which coincided with the rule of the Abbasids. It did not, however, entice the fagihs to theorize about political institutions. Those who did were executed. Social values such as equality and justice, which were frequently emphasized in the Qur’an and highly emphasized by the Prophet's companions (salaf), were ignored by Muslim rulers. The rulers preferred to focus on the moral values associated with the religion. Consequently, we notice great emphasis on duties and little or no emphasis on rights, thereby causing a disjuncture also between morality and politics. Although this deemed authoritarian politics ineffective, it brought about an enormous outburst of human qualities: breadth of spirit, tolerance, and deep appreciation of the human condition (Brown 2004; Tibi 2002). The consequence, however, was to leave the moral consciousness of the Muslim to grow in a direction opposite to that of the state. Ever since those early days, rationality and morality in Muslim religion and law have remained two separate tracks. They have failed to interact in a dynamic manner. Neither colonial nor post-colonial state elites, in their effort to stabilize politics, made an attempt to
ameliorate this problem. On the contrary, they consciously or unconsciously reinforced it further.

The educational policies espoused by both the French and the British gave rise to a generation of elites who, in spite of their ideological differences, were not appreciative to the Sufi heritage. This caused an ideological polarization that negatively affected political stability. On the left of the Moroccan spectrum were groups influenced by French communism and socialism; on the right were groups that took their lead from the Salafism of the Mashreq. Although in its dialectic with the Mashreq, the Maghreb developed its own version of salafism. The first breed of Moroccan intellectuals embraced the salafism of the Mashreq for instrumental reasons, as discussed in this chapter. The effect of this orientation, however, was to reinforce the ideological polarization in the country, leaving the elite at odds with the indigenous populations. The Sudanese spectrum was not as ideologically polarized because the British --unlike the French-- were pragmatically concerned with producing clerks, not philosophers. The first breed of Sudanese “intellectuals,” by virtue of their limited exposure, was not critical of the status quo. Consequently, they did not feel a threat from the right who at that time lacked political clout. Sudanese politics in colonial and early post-colonial days was not as intensively polarized as in Morocco. The absence of a strong central authority that could manage the political process effectively, together with a wide gap between elites and masses, left the country in political turmoil and deprived the political elite --mainly modernists, who preferred the state as a vehicle of change-- of an opportunity to promote a sustainable national development.
"Ideologization" in the form of secular authoritarianism or religious autocracy inhibits the ability of the state to move from rhetoric to politics and from politics to policymaking. Hence, the state misses the opportunity to influence the allocation of values in a community, reshape its identity, and deepen the normative boundaries of its moral acceptability. Denying Islam access to the public realm, as in the case of Morocco or infusing it forcefully, as in the case of Sudan, has complicated political socialization processes. More importantly, it has wasted the most genuine of efforts to reform education. So far, regimes have taken the reckless route of banning or imposing it. There are few or no attempts to incorporate religion with reasoned sets of proportions. It still remains unclear how this objective can be achieved without a major reconceptualization of the role of Sharia in Muslim societies. Islamists treat Sharia as “eternally valid and immutable standards of conduct” (Anderson 1973:24), thus using it as a tool to rationalize tyranny and assume political authority over disenfranchised Muslim populations in the periphery. It is fair to say there is a direct link between pre-modern and modern Islam, in the sense that contemporary versions of Salafi and Sufi Islam are really reproductions of the high and low Islam of centuries ago (Filali-Ansary 2003:4).

The all-encompassing nature of Islam was used by Islamists as a political tool that can defeat secular opposition, as well entice the periphery (sufis) to gravitate toward the center. (This is an old gimmick tried by the Mahdis. It proved especially useless in a modern context where there are demands that the state not only provide spiritual but also material salvation.) Those seeking a revival of tradition and an authentic Islamic state have become inflexible in their interpretation of the Qur’an, leaving them ill equipped to handle matters which have a basis outside the Qur’an and Sunna. Scholars in the early
20th century limited their understanding of *ijtihad* (independent thinking) to reviving Islam’s liberal thought. Modern scholars regard an epistemological revolution as necessary, according to which Muslims would benefit from modern European thoughts in penetrating the “thick layers of interpretations” that for a long time have stood between the Muslims and their religious text. This is a huge task that cannot be confined within the domains of the academy. It requires an institutional reform that would provide the link between the theology studied by the scholars, the law investigated by genuinely elected legislators, and legal provisions enacted by administrators who are accountable to the public, not a religious guru or secular despot. *Ijtihad* makes possible the erection of an immutable and fair system that will balance itself by maintaining the levels of jurisdiction of the people, religion, and government. If the people want a strict state, they will choose a strict leadership that will vote on a strict interpretation of the laws. If this does not fit their liking, then the next term they can choose a more lenient government that will vote for a more flexible interpretation of the sharia. It no longer is the role of an ecclesiastical class to draw the moral boundary, but the society’s moral and religious consciousness that is a direct outcome of a philosophically well-balanced educational policy. It is yet to be seen if such an arrangement, when adopted, will produce a socio-historical understanding of sharia that is facilitated by a rational approach of governance.
CHAPTER 5
GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES IN ISLAMIC COUNTRIES: THE CASE OF SUDAN

While chapter 4 dealt with the institutional basis of obedience that gave rise to different regime types in Morocco and Sudan. Chapters 5 and 6 will examine governance indicators associated with stabilizing these countries. As indicated in previous chapters, critical issues of political socialization in countries torn between a literal and liberal tradition have created a gap between elites and the masses. This was thereby instilled a deductive logic that subtracted effectiveness claimed by modernists forces from representativeness owed to traditional parties. There is a tension among and in between parties. These two tendencies manifest themselves differently when both countries attempted to overcome governance challenges immediately after independence, during the Cold War, and with the rise of Islamic revivalism. Both countries have had to deal with a region that has combated the authority of the government --Western Sahara in Morocco and the southern region within Sudan-- yet in one case this rebellious region is itself Islamic; in the other, it is dominated by animist and Christian faiths.

As they were deeply torn between the literal and liberal legacies, the elites in both Morocco and Sudan had contrasting visions about the design of a constitution/law that will secure political order, that is, help the geographic periphery gravitate towards the center, as well grant citizens their civil and religious rights. The tension was mediated differently depending on historical and geographical idiosyncrasies. While the British may have used the already existing racial hierarchy (Arabs/Africans, and so forth), and later introduced a religious divide (Christians/Muslims) to facilitate exploitation of the
Sudanese colony, the French used cultural domination as a vehicle to creating cleavages that were not clear or simply non-existent in Morocco (see Chapter 6). Since there was no ethnic demarcation between the Berbers and the Arabs, only linguistic, the French attempted inventing a religious divide --though unsuccessfully-- by preaching Christianity to the Berbers. The French felt the Berbers would be less devout because they were non-Arabic speakers. To the extent the colonials succeeded in their strategy of divide-to-rule, though with various degrees of success, they disoriented the nationalist plans by creating a gap between the elites and the Sufi majority.

The principal issue in Morocco has been how to create political space under the umbrella of a divine monarch. The main issue in Sudan, on the other hand, has been how to establish a strong enough central authority while retaining space for religious and ideological diversity in the political arena. How have they fared in balancing influences from secular and religious sources since independence? Which are the key factors that explain success or failure? These are the more specific questions that this chapter tries to answer.

In doing so, some governance issues manifest themselves more explicitly than others. I shall therefore look at the extent to which the countries have been able to maintain political stability, as influenced by their position along the ideological spectrum that extends from left to right, and measured in negative terms by the number of coups and political assassinations that have occurred. There is a direct correlation, as will become evident in the course of this chapter, between respect for political rights measured in terms of rights of ethnic and religious minorities and civil liberties measured in terms of rights association, and expression. The more a country is pressured to
guarantee civil groups their rights in the center, the more it uses an insurgency in the periphery as a subterfuge to avoid democratization. The reverse is also true. Each country has had its own governance dynamics, and it is necessary to address in some detail what has happened in each place before conducting a comparison toward the end of the chapter. Thus it begins by looking at Sudan (see Chapter 5) and then Morocco (see Chapter 6) using the focus identified.

Sudan’s Travel Along the Full Ideological Spectrum

The striking point about politics in Sudan is its shift along the full ideological spectrum from secularism to religious fundamentalism. The country began after independence with a quasi-secular constitution and ended up some 40 years later with a constitution that prescribes a form of Islamic totalitarianism. For the purpose of this chapter, Sudan's political development since independence can be divided into three periods: 1) secular governance (1956-72), 2) sultanistic governance (1973-89), and 3) religious governance (1989-present). Each has its own characteristics and dynamics. What happens in one period is a cause of what happens in the next point. Therefore, despite all the twists and turns, there is a path dependency stemming from the peculiarities of Sudanese society and its position in the global system: its division between an Arab North and a non-Islamic South, its peripheral relation to the center of Islam in the Mashreq, its colonial legacy, and so on.

The rest of this chapter will trace Sudan's full travel along the ideological spectrum. It will be devoted to an account and analysis of each of the three periods with a focus on what happened to political stability, political rights, and civil liberties. An attempt will be made to explain why and how these periods were affected by the political dynamics in their respective times.
Secular Governance 1956-1972

Lord Kitchener the British army general, who defeated the Sudanese forces in in the late 1880s, is quoted to have said, “When God created Sudan he laughed.” He means that God created Sudan, but could not make sense of its existence as a single entity. The British had their instrumental logic in promoting such a myth. They exploited the cleavages between the north and the south --ones that traced its roots to the days of slavery (and which was coordinated by the Arabs and Europeans 500 years ago). While it tried to centralize political authority under the leadership of the Umma and the DUP (see Chapter 2), the British Colonial authorities made no effort to integrate these two regions either politically or economically.

Although the British proposed secession as a solution for an existent problem, the overwhelming majority among traditional forces (both from the south and the north) chose to postpone the issue until after independence. The vote of southerners was conditioned upon giving the issue of the south special consideration. Among the many options, southern elites thought of regional autonomy as an option that would feasibly diffuse unnecessary tension between the two regions. However, the political rivalries after independence between the two major parties, the DUP and Umma, made them overlook their immediate responsibility of designing a constitutional order that would
grant southerners their rights. Moreover, the growing tension between modernists and traditional elites who shared the same party platform reflected negatively on the overall performance of the polity. The modernists depended on the traditionalists to obtain a mandate with which it could rule effectively (Holt and Daly 1988; Kasfir 1977).

The public perceived traditional parties as incapable of constructively channeling their ideological differences (which spanned a reasonable range and were inflated by personality conflicts). The public was especially critical of the democratic government after an insurgency broke in the south in 1955 (Beshir 1974). The insurgents killed “traditional leaders” from their own natives for they accused them of being collaborators with the north. This juxtaposition was necessary if soldiers and junior officers among southerners were to find a political position in an otherwise traditional society that revered its leaders. As we shall see, the more aggression committed by the central authority against its southern citizens, the more authority these “modern” elites would gain. This left traditional authority no option but to succumb to a political agenda that may be antagonistic to its vision of political order. I make this point early on lest the reader assumes that the traditionalism/modernity dichotomy that characterized Sudanese politics for a limited time before and after independence is limited to the north. It includes the south and permeates its politics until today. Nonetheless, it is downplayed in the face of a greater danger --an enemy with a primordial vision that threatens the existence of the southern people as a whole.1

As minimal as it was, the insurgency gave the already frustrated political leadership an excuse to wink to the aristocratic leadership of the army to take over power. Without

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1 I do not intend to say that traditional forces are apt to be more literate than liberal, however, in the face of extremely coercive measures, they may find it difficult to adjust to a new reality.
understanding the sectarian logic that dominated the Umma party and Sudanese politics in general, it becomes inconceivable for an observer to understand how an incumbent president would prefer passing power to the army than to allow the continuity of democracy. This was less a moment of personal frustration than it was the wisdom of Abdallah Khalil, the General Secretary of the Umma Party. Khalil thought that without some coercive measures that can draw dissent within a reasonable range, the government will not be able to confront the growing insurgency in the south. Consequently, he handed over power to General Aboud in 1958. This was a smooth transition of power from a civilian president, who is an ex-officer, to a military leader who maintained the hierarchical formation of the army, as well its integrity and non-partisanship.

Along with other high-ranking officers, Aboud created a mission of discipline. Force was the only solution they could offer to the problem in the south. They expelled all the foreign Christian missionaries and started the process of Arabization in the south (Personal Interview, BS, Spring of 2003). This process of Arabization/Islamization, which reached its apex with the arrival of Islamists to power in 1989, would serve no purpose other than boost Christianity in the south. It reached a point where southerners fully identified themselves with Christianity to counteract the imposition of Islam (Deng 2001:15). Except for Communists, who are on the liberal side of the ideological spectrum, most northern elites saw homogenization of cultural identity as a solution to the problem.

While General Aboud used force in the south, he used other means of coercion in the north. He attempted and succeeded to a certain extent in bypassing sectarian leaders to their traditional constituency. These sectarian leaders to some extent were unsatisfied
with party politics, and moreover they perceived the gradually rising modernists elites as threatening to the socio-political order. Thus, it is fair to say that General Aboud made no attempt – at least figuratively – to represent influential figures or co-opt new emerging elites. Unlike Nimeiri and others who followed him in later years, Aboud didn’t build a “machine of persuasion.” He offered an alternative to politics, but did not offer an alternative to partisan politics. As sincere and good intentioned as he was, the general put the elites/masses between two strict options: a civilian or army rule. Northern elites could be seen to sympathize with the south. Even Hassan Turabi, who was then a law professor at Khartoum University, publicly said that the problem was less a problem of the south than it was the adamant refusal of military dictators to negotiate a constitutional order that will bring peace to the country as a whole. It wasn’t clear then whether he thought the problem of the south required special consideration or if he like, as with many other ambitious young leaders of the October revolution, wanted to use the problem of the south as a pressure card against the military aristocracy that was ruling Sudan at the time.2 Regardless of the motives, modernist forces that dominated labor and professional unions mobilized the masses with the blessing of sectarian leaders and arranged a civil strike that negotiated the removal of the benign dictator and the patriotic Sudanese, General Aboud, in 1964.3

2 A southern leader who worked with Turabi in constitutional committees says that Turabi was more concerned with his ideological Islam than with giving southerners their rights. He further says, “Turabi didn’t pay attention to our existence in those committees” (Personal Interview. AL. Spring of 2003).

3 In the process of suppressing dissent, one university student was shot dead, which caused the immediate resignation of General Aboud in 1964, who felt he did not need to kill people he was assigned to protect. Ironically, the same modernists forces will later bifurcate into the left that ruled Sudan in between 1969 and 1971, and the right who are ruling Sudan now, would consume thousands of lives without thinking about apologizing, needless to say resign. A case in point is Darfur. The Islamists regime consumed so far the lives of 300,000, and is not even prepared to submit the criminals to justice, be it national or international (Personal Interview. AM. Spring of 2005).
The new government with the leadership of Sir al-katim al-Kalifa, Interim President (1964-1965), was delegated the responsibility of arranging a conference that would discuss the southern question, as well as lay ground for a constitution draft that would be approved by an elected parliament. Although it was clearly decided in the Round Table Conference (March 1965) that the south is to be granted some form of federalism that would help it preserve its historical distinction and cultural heritage, northern politicians tried finding ways of escaping their political and moral obligation. In addition to the administrative difficulties that this kind of an arrangement raises, there was a conceptual problem. Somehow they felt that autonomy is a prelude to secession not national integration through voluntary and peaceful means. Muslims would not adjust to the new reality that demanded they relinquish their abstraction of a “community of believers” to expand their imagination/conceptual frame as wide as a “nation of citizens.”

While the leaders of the traditional parties in the north --of whom toady’s Islamists were a subordinate group-- were consumed with the idea of an Islamic state, Sudan’s Communist Party opposed it for intellectual and ideological reasons (Warburg in Voll 1991). Abdel-khalig Mahjoub, the leader of the party, was among the first Sudanese intellectuals to have explained that without careful articulation, the idea of an Islamic state can be detrimental to the unity of a country like Sudan that is culturally heterogeneous. Second, he could see that given the dependence of national parties on sects, religion can be a liability that precludes policymaking (Nugud 2002). Traditional parties were completely oblivious to such objectivity, as communism in the 1960s was tantamount to blasphemy or atheism. They allowed themselves to be played in the hands of Islamists, who were then living under the umbrella of traditional parties and resorted to
the emotions of the masses to counter the argument of the communists. By fabricating a story of a communist who allegedly slandered Ai’sha, the wife of the Prophet in a public debate, the Islamists succeeded in rallying a critical mass which removed elected members of the Communist Party from the Parliament. The Supreme Court ruled such decision as unconstitutional and ordered the immediate return of the members of parliament (MPs). Political leaders of traditional parties, who were then the nation administrators, ignored such rule.

At this moment in history, the country was experiencing a point of high tension between the political and the religious leaderships of the Ansar, between the President of the Umma Party and the Imam of the Ansar. By virtue of being the Imam, Al-Hadi al-Mahdi had full control of the party. Sadig Al-Mahdi, a recent graduate of Oxford University who wanted quick access to politics, demanded complete separation between religious and political responsibilities. This made him appeal to the Sudanese elites who perceived this as a necessary step to maintaining a balanced relationship between religion and politics. Al-Hadi, a man of limited intellectual capability, refused this from an instrumental point of view. He argued that the one who controls the party would ultimately control the sect (the reverse is also true). Later he conceded to having a political leader report to him. This step annoyed politicians like Al-Mahjoub who felt, by virtue of Al-Hadi siding with his cousin that they would inevitably lose their political advantage. Some people even accuse Al-Mahjoub who was then the Sudanese President

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4 In the absence of functional differentiation (not separation), secular and religious leaders encroach on each other’s domain, causing a political turmoil and spiritual disarray.
of having signaled to the Free Officers -some of them his relatives, mainly Hashmab- to take over in 1969.

Whether this conspiracy theory holds water or not, the empirical evidence points to the following facts. First, the heavy handedness of sectarian leaders was more felt in the Umma party than the DUP, which explains the frustration of party leaders with parochialism, moreover the disappointment of democratically elected presidents with civilian rule in general. It is worth noting that Sudan followed a parliamentarian system which made the Prime Minister dependent on members of parliament in obtaining a mandate to stay in office. The complete absence of democratic proceedings within the party system in general made political/administrative leaders easily succumb to pressures that existed between the parties. Until recently, MPs have been inclined to follow the directive of the Imam.

Second, the Umma was less tolerant of liberal views. Therefore, it was not receptive to the views of the communist regime that seemed radical and somehow antagonistic to sectarianism, if not religion. In addition to the nationalist component, there was the regional fervor of Naserism (and the agitation of the Cold War) that supported --though inadvertently-- the rise of radicals against conservative forces all over the Arab world. It even supported Nimeiri’s regime by sending him a fleet of combatant aeroplanes that annihilated an estimate of 12,000 of the Ansar in their presumed rebellion against the regime in Aba in 1970.

This is a point of high tension in the history of Sudanese politics. Given its political instability, the regime resorted to force in suppressing dissent. Therefore it violated the civil liberties of citizens in the north and left the south skeptical about the feasibility of
obtaining its political rights in such turmoil. The state’s ability to govern in the Muslim world is very much dependent on its willingness to cultivate Islamic heritage. However, it was not clear how such objective can be achieved while being tolerant of “divergent” views. The lack of tolerance of the right of liberal views --emanating mainly from the Communist Party-- created a violent response from the left. This not only thwarted democratic proceedings, but was also intolerant of literal views embraced by the majority of the population.

The communists adopted a version of secularism (totalitarianism) that dismissed all traditional parties and assumed control of the public sphere. They infused a revolutionary fervor that treated as incompatible the conception of modern reality and the adherence to traditional views. Arab nationalism was emphasized, in the media and educational curricula, at the expense of religious/traditional values. In addition to thwarting the dialectic between the society and the state, this ideological imposition of political views stressed the relationship between the center and the periphery. This was evident in the great welcome that Nimeiri received in all regions of Sudan as soon as he dared to get rid of the communists’ cadre in his regime (Personal Interview. AS. Spring of 2003).

**Sultanistic Governance 1973-1985**

The communists ideologically supported Nimeiri’s coup d’état, but they could see he was not swiftly adopting their policy initiatives. Nimeiri felt the Communist Party’s program was too radical. He could envision the danger of following a Leninist approach in a conservative society such as the Sudanese society --one in which politics was more of a consensual exercise that followed a bottom-up pattern than a top-down trickle approach. The failed attempt of 1971 by the communists cadre to topple Nimeiri’s regime has given him popularity in a society that had distaste for radicalism (Personal Interview,
AM, Spring of 2003), regardless of its ideological twist. This earned him the support of the regional and international community.

It is to this kind of mandate that Nimeiri responded, especially after he lost the ideological support of the Communist Party in 1971, that made him move to the middle of the ideological spectrum. In the city of Abu-Nea’ma, he promised to put forward the issue of the “implementation of Sharia” for a plebiscite, and made his position clear from Islam (Personal Interview, AS, Spring of 2003). By starting the Islamization process, albeit in a non-ideological fashion, Nimeiri appealed to the bulk of the Sudanese population that supported the idea of an “Islamic constitution” (Duran 1985). It is important to note that for historical reasons --that I address in Chapter 3-- the majority of the Sudanese periphery, mainly Sufis who were not politically incorporated in the traditional party system, chose to indirectly participate in politics. They provided Nimeiri with some of the most honorable cadre he hired through his entire career as a president (1969-1985), such as Ali Shomu, Aoun As-sharif, As-sharif Al-Khatimi, Arrasheed Attahir. All these elites will aid Nimeiri with the gradual introduction of Islamic values.

The process of Islamization included changing civil laws (the penal code was introduced at later stages) and dismissing socialist jargons (not necessarily abandoning socialist programs, but withdrawing support of some radical reform strategies). These civil laws were infused during the time of the communists --Nimeiri’s early partners. Family laws, such as marriage, divorce, adoption, and inheritance arrangements, were Islamic since the time of the British (1916). This applied to Sudan as well as all the colonies, including India in which Muslims were a minority. Nimeiri established a ministry (deewan) for the Zakat (a portion of money that Muslims give to the poor from
their annual income). The distribution of the Zakat was for long time left to the society. He exempted all masjids of water and electricity bills. Nimeiri encouraged and financially supported the study of the Qur’an, the building of masjids, and assisted governmental officials with performing Haj, a basic pillar of Islam. His process of political socialization included revitalizing the educational curriculum to meet Islamic objectives, which were only “progressive” to the extent it eliminated Marxist material (see Chapter 6).

Nimeiri wanted to advance the Sharia while paying careful attention to the issue of national unity. His continuity in power (and others to come) depended greatly on stopping the civil war in the south (Kasfir 1977). He tried enticing southern elites to join in ministerial positions (similar to the trick attempted by traditional political leaders). But these southern elites refused to join without a clear position of Nimeiri’s regime from the problem of the south. Nimeiri was quick to adopt the terms that were reached for by political leaders --at the time of democracy before he attempted his coup d’etat-- in the Round Table Conference. He signed the Addis Ababa Agreement on June 9, 1973, under the auspices of Emperor Haile Selassie and some Christian missionaries from the Vatican. “Though it was an agreement between him and Joseph Lago, in those days it sufficed to bring peace because problems were not as complicated” (Personal Interview. AL. Spring of 2003). It gave the south an opportunity to manage its own affairs --cultural, religious, and economic-- under the auspices of a secular constitution. Consequently, the country witnessed an uninterrupted peace for almost a decade.5

5 “The Addis Ababa agreement is impressive testimony to the willingness of Sudanese leaders to achieve peace despite growing hostilities, but no one could have reasonably expected the agreement to do more than transfer entrenched suspicions from the violence of war to the maneuvers of politics. Unforeseen controversies have provided new challenges. Those creating the greatest obstacles to effective
According to a cabinet minister, Nimeiri’s regime resembled a moment of harmony (if not the only one) in the relationship between the north and the south (Personal Interview. AS. Spring of 2003). The diffused tension has facilitated cultural integration in an unprecedented manner in the history of the nation. An eyewitness says that the first time he attended the commencement at the University of Juba, it was opened by a reading from the Bible; a year later, this same informant saw in addition a southern youth -- wearing the traditional dress of Al-Azahar religious scholars-- reciting some verses from the Qur’an. To his surprise, in the evening AS saw the same ladies who only last year wore suksuk in the trim-trim (traditional dance) enjoying the breeze of the occasion with Sudanese saris. AS emphatically explains, “what more of an acculturation do these Islamists want?”

As a vice president, Abil Lair (southern politician) attended Ramadan dinners wearing the turban and Muslim garment (Jalabia) out of respect for the feelings of northern officers at officers club in Khartoum. Southerners in those days attended the social occasions of the northerners. Nowadays, due to the grievances that southerners have, one can barely see a southern elite in a predominately northern gathering (Personal Interview. AL. Spring of 2003). What made Sudanese politicians relinquish a process of political socialization that could have gradually integrated the country, thereby providing stability and giving it a sense of integrated development?

institutionalization of the Addis Ababa Agreement concern the extraordinarily delicate task of unifying former enemies into a single military force, creating acceptable administrative relationships between region and center, and financing sustained economic development in the Southern Region” (Kasfir 1977:148).

6 Islamic University at Cairo.

7 Traditional southern dress that covered only the belly area of a woman’s body.
According to an education scholar, primary students, for example, in the south were taught up to the third grade certain subjects in their own mother’s dialect, along with Arabic (Personal Interview, JO, Spring of 2003). This was stopped in 1983 when Nimeiri announced the September (Sharia) laws and started the process of homogenization that advocated Arabic as the only mean of communication in classrooms. What pushed Nimeiri along an ideological route, which made him renege on the Addis Ababa Agreement? This agreement was his paramount political achievement --one that for sometime stood out as an African success story. It gave Sudan an undisturbed peace for a full 10 years (1972-1982)? What made Nimeiri insert a barabani (steel rod), to borrow his own expression, in the play field of Sudanese politics (Personal Interview, SB, Spring of 2003)? (Why did not anyone dare to pull the barbandi out and level the field of politics?) Why did Nimeiri need to push the issue of Sharia so much that it upset the balance of his power? A layman can say that Nimeiri went nuts, a political scientist cannot.

To explain this we need to first study the behavior of the agent from an anthropological perspective. Second, we need to scrutinize the structural factors that supported the regime and which came into contradiction the more Nimeiri advanced to the right of the ideological path.

Nimeiri became a devout disciple (mureed) of the renowned Sheik As-Sharif Mohamed Al-Ameen Al-Khatemi, and visited the sheik’s city, Karkoug, in major religious ceremonies. For as long as As-Sharif Al-Khatemi was alive, he ensured that the moral recovery of the president from alcoholism and the brutal killing of his communists
colleagues in 1971 would not become a plight for the nation. He tried to redeem himself by expediting the process of Islamization. After the death of his sheik, Sharif Mohamed Alameen, Nimeiri moved into religious dogma. By this time, he was a political orphan who needed adoption. A clique of urban sheiks, dogmatic clerics, and loyal legal advisors provided him exactly this opportunity (Duran 1985). This was a precarious move that brought the whole system to a halt.

Nimeiri was especially devastated when traditional leaders --mainly from Umma, DUP, and Muslim brotherhoods-- attempted a coup d’etat with the financial and logistic help of Colonel Kadaffi in 1976. Nimeiri decried this as an invasion and incursion on national sovereignty since the machinery was transported to Khartoum through the Libyan-Sudanese boundary, that is, of western Sudan. The threat this time did not come from the army; it came from traditional and modern parties that enjoyed religious legitimacy. It emanated from leaders who accused Nimeiri of giving in too much to the demands of the south by granting it federalism. Ironically, he did nothing more than to adopt the proposal that these leaders outlined before coming to the May Revolution (1969). So the opposition challenged the religious legitimacy of Nimeiri. The opposition asked: Whom does Nimeiri represent? The opposition leader did not just want to know

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8 After all, Nimeiri had neither intellectual nor pedagogical training in Islam, and to a large extent needed the guidance of a guru (Personal Interview, AA, Spring of 2003).

9 “Although a number of explanations have been given for the sudden introduction of Sharia law in 1983, it seems that Nimeiri’s intention was to outmaneuver the Muslim Brotherhood because this remained its demand” (Salih 1990:212). It was his last political bullet; he played roulette and shot himself in the head.

10 “Power rests, as ever, in the hands of a few families in Khartoum. They come from three small ethnic groups in northern Sudan, and are connected to certain religious sects, which, in modern times, have become political parties. Politics is a game of musical chairs between and within these families as they jostle for alliances – or to betray one another” (Economist; 08/19/2000).

11 Nelson Kasfir asserts, “Opposition to the agreement in the North seems to have been more a device to attack Nimeiri than a genuine concern with Southern affairs” (Kasfir 1977:145).
what steps have taken to implement in *Sharia* or advance Islamic cause.¹² They also challenged the secular foundation of his regime: his ability to maintain the national unity of Sudan. Federalism of the south was seen by traditional leaders as a prelude to disintegration. (This only shows their lack of vision. National party leaders were not providing leadership; they were only reacting to events.) By this time, Nimeiri was politically exhausted and therefore he accepted an initiative for reconciliation. However, the opposition leaders were not in agreement as to the least acceptable and agreeable terms. Sharif Hussein, without any hesitation, refused any agreement with the regime. He saw Nimeiri as incompetent and incredible. The latter was discouraged because, after all, sharif Husseain is the man who presented the strongest the threat to the regime. This was a blow to Nimeir’s attempt to diffuse the power of the opposition, but he nonetheless proceeded to make an attempt for national reconciliation. What mattered most to Nimeiri at that moment is overcoming passive resistance of the DUP.

As a descendent of a prominent *Sufi Sheik*, Sharif Hussein had an appeal in the periphery, mainly *Sufi* orders that resided within the locus of Sudanese politics (which, as I said many times, was a bit off-centered due to the colonial legacy that favored some and excluded others), and merchants who until then had economic power in the center (Cudsi 1983). Nimeiri did not get political support at the time when it was most needed. He did not get it from *Sufis* to whom he distributed spoils or from the United States that he remained faithful to. Toward the end of the Cold War, Nimeiri was considered --but not vitally seen-- as a strategic ally. He faced pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to remove amenities and start the program of privatization

¹² By 1978, ninety percent of the criminal laws were Islamic, it only needed to be extended to a legal banking system.
Striking of labor unions and demonstrations by university students only added to the plight of the decaying regime. The regime resorted to its last card of pushing a full gear on the process of Islamization. But what could Nimeiri do that he had not done do already? His answer was propaganda. He decided to borrow the Saudi style of governance: implement Sharia mercilessly enough to frighten political opponents, if not completely eliminate them.\(^\text{13}\) (Even Saudis saw Nimeiri’s approach as a bit precarious.)

This is a critical juncture in the history of Sudan. I mark it as a datum that signaled the advent of religious zealotry in the country’s modern politics. In 1983, Nimeiri announced martial laws that included a curfew and charged special courts (mainly judges who were not under the authority of the attorney general) with implementing Sharia laws. There was simply no judicial review. The callousness with which the punishment was carried had fallen, not surprisingly, on the shoulders of the poor, the majority of whom were from southern (and western) Sudan. Southern elites and concerned Muslims became critical of the injustice that their natives endured. Immediately after the highly contentious version of Sharia law was promulgated in September 1983 (Salih 1990:206), rebellion started in the south, which saw the Sharia reducing them to second-class citizens. Therefore the economic/political dispute --that started with Nimeiri’s decision to divide the south into three regions,\(^\text{14}\) and build refineries in the north to process crude oil explored in the south-- was infused with serious cultural tension. This tension recalls memories of slavery, humiliation, and so forth.\(^\text{15}\)

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\(^{13}\) Mohammed Ayoob contends, “To be fair to the Saudi rulers, they had envisioned Wahabism as a socially conservative and politically quietist form of Islam” (Ayoob 2004: 4).

\(^{14}\) Thus breaching the Addis Ababa Agreement, which stipulates that the south should remain united.

\(^{15}\) “The total abolition of all Islamic laws was among the Sudan Peoples’ Liberation Army (SPLA) most important preconditions for any political settlement to the civil war in the South” (Salih 1990:212).
Rebels made their case clear to the international community that started becoming alert of the phenomenon of Islamic revivalism.\textsuperscript{16} They attacked oil refineries in the south. After incurring human and material losses, Chevron --the American oil company-- reconsidered its investment in Sudan.\textsuperscript{17} The issue of Sharia was especially embarrassing to Sudan’s Arab neighbors, Egypt and Libya, who saw it as fueling Islamism (which was not then equated with terrorism). In all fairness, Nimeiri wanted enough Islam to consolidate his power, and, if possible fulfill his personal aspiration of becoming an Imam, or a disciple who can rule in the image of his deceased sheik. It was at this moment that Turabi and his group could proclaim themselves as partners. Previously, they were advisors at best and parasites at worst who wanted to feed from the spoils of the black market. They, along with bureaucratic leaders and remnants of the Communist Party, gave Nimeiri the oath of religious allegiance (\textit{baia’}) and made him the Imam or Leader of the Faithful. What can be more telling? The military officer who was welcomed in office (1969) as a savior from sectarianism himself became a Mullah in 1983.

What do we need to understand about the relationship between religion and politics that makes us recognize that an imbalance can be detrimental to both? Nimeiri’s regime endured all sorts of contradictions that were fully exploited at the trial of Mahmoud Mohamed Taha. Taha questioned the credibility of the Imam and challenged the

\textsuperscript{16} Immediately after the announcement of Sharia, and few months before the demise of his regime, Nimeiri was paid a visit by President Bush, who was then the director of the CIA. This visit was not scheduled and did not carry a specific agenda apart from the importance of the security of the horn of Africa. Though he was not denounced publicly by the “leaders of the free world,” Nimeiri was seen as an imbalanced ally (Personal Interview. BS. Spring of 2003).

\textsuperscript{17} It was later cashed out by the Islamists regime, which under the banner of “nationalization” sold it to one of its tycoons, Jar al-Nabe Ahmed. The latter, a native of western Sudan, failed to liquidate his assets and finally lost his privileges to the northern clique currently ruling Sudan in the name of Islam.
authenticity of his “Islamic doctrine.” The execution of Taha exposed the moral and political bankruptcy of the regime (Personal Interview, AS, Spring of 2003). Nimeiri was eager to use force, but the Sudanese people gave him no further cause to do that (Personal Interview, KZ, Spring of 2003). He was ousted later. The fervor of religion, however, was not going to wane.

The April Intefada (1985) interrupted the efforts of Turabi and his group to have a full and unchallenged grip of the state, as they had started infiltrating Nimeiri’s regime since the time of the National Reconciliation in 1977 (Holt and Daly 1988; Warburg in Voll 1991). While all other Sudanese parties were financially and politically exhausted, the National Islamic Front (NIF) utilized resources it accumulated over the years to influence the direction of events from this point onwards (Personal Interview, KZ, Spring of 2003). The leader of the SPLA, John Garank, was one of the few intellectuals who saw the interim period (1985-1987) as a continuity of Nimeiri’s regime. To say the least the leaders of the interim period, 1985-1986, had neither the will nor the vision to resolve any of Sudan’s epidemic problems. They did not succeed in establishing rapport with Garank, and they were unable to defeat him militarily. By articulating a nationalist

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18 Ustaz Mahmoud Mohamed Taha was the leader of the Republicans, a modern religious organization that composed of university teachers, students, and clerks. He had liberal views and called for rejuvenation of Islamic teachings. Taha was an astute supporter until Nimeiri brought Turabi and his group in power. Also, he was hated (but not confronted) by Sufis who saw his teachings as clear innovation in the religion. Taha was critical of the excessive measures that Nimeiri used to ensure implementation of Sharia, mainly beating people for violation of the private moral code, jumping into their houses to fetch for alcohol, amputating their hands for theft at a time of economic hardship (Duran 1985). Turabi had his own vision of an Islamic state, but he did not see a justification to Nimeiri’s relinquishing of the process of political socialization. Taha could see that the Muslim Brothers, his political rivalries (and religious, because he treated their ideology as outdated) as taking advantage of Nimeiri, or playing to his naivety, if not his ills. He felt that it was hypocritical of them to give Nimeiri, somebody who was until recently alcoholic and only started praying a few months before he was announced Leader of the Faithful, a chance to become an Imam. I do not present the Republicans in the ideological spectrum because at this moment they have neither the intellectual nor the political weight.
agenda he could capture the attention of the northern audience and pacify Egyptians --at least temporarily-- who feared that the secession of the south would jeopardize its strategic interest in the waters of the White Nile.

In the limited time they had, the army officers, along with the civilians, who were ruling the country made a careless move of providing pastoralist groups, mainly Arabs of western Sudan, with light weapons to counter the insurgency. This was a precarious move that undermined the local tribal authority, opened the door for looting and killing, and destroyed the ecological interdependence between the Baggara of western Sudan (of whom Darfur is a major part) and the south. The government understood it was its responsibility was to counter the insurgency. Nevertheless, the government went ahead and distributed arms to civilians because it was militarily weak and needed to exploit the ethnic/religious cleavages between the south and the north, as superficial as they were, to “restore order.” The decision of the government to side with one group of citizens against another marks a turning point in the approach by the central authorities to the rebellion in the south. What started as an insurgency in the 1950s escalated to a civil war into the 1970s, and finally developed into a war between two nations with equally capable armies.

Previous administrations were careful not to exploit the cleavages because they well understood that its inflammatory nature could bring the nation to ruins and ashes. At

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19 By refining their objectives to mean a just distribution of political and economic resources, southern elites thought they would get support from disenfranchised groups in western and eastern Sudan.

20 Unlike the leaders of Angaga I and Angaga II, who voiced their rebellion in the 1950s against Arab invaders (mandakuru), the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the political wing of SPLA, was joined by a high caliber of southern intellectuals (and later northern elites who escaped the brutality of Turabi’s regime), who could help it better articulate its demands.

21 I do not want to speculate about the motives but I have to say officers such as Burma Naser, a military officer and a member of the revolutionary council (1986-1987), who until this moment does not deny it, sided with their Mesarya clans.
the time of his hallucination (with Islam), Nimeiri referred to the conflict as nothing but “insurgency.” He understood the tensions underlying the conflict and particularly avoided agitating them. In this sense, Nimeiri was a good ruler. It was only after the demise of his regime that the Sudan started facing a governance problem. Some people argue that problems started in his time, but only exploded after he was ousted. This may also be true. It is important, however, to point out a major difference between the authoritarian regime of Nimeiri and the succeeding totalitarian regime of Omar Al-Basheer (the Islamist officer who came to power through a coup d’etat in 1989). Unlike President Basheer, Nimeiri did not have an ideology. He wanted just enough Islam to consolidate his grip on power, but was reluctant to impose his vision on the nation as a whole, only on the north. He elevated himself above the subjects and by so doing maintained the integrity of the army for some time as an honest arbitrator in African/Sudanese politics.

In the course of 16 years Nimeiri fired 300 officers, only those expected of conspiring against the regime. Basheer fired 3,000 officers and replaced them with an Islamist cadre (Personal Interview. YAY. Spring of 2003). Most of these officers were not affiliated with any party. Their only crime was that they probably belonged to a region, such as the Baghara of western Sudan. This region is traditionally and historically affiliated with the Umma Party, or suspected of primordial belonging to an army like eastern Sudan that is dominated by the DUP. The army has gradually changed from an institution that protected the national interest of the Sudanese people into a militia that represented the political-ideological views of one particular group, that is, the Islamists. The loss of the national character of the army caused northerners for the first time ever in the history of Sudan to carry arms and stand side by side on the battleground with
southerners against northerners colonizing the center. Previously, northerners gave only diplomatic and political support to the rebels. This time they felt compelled to physically join the conflict. Muslims in the northern part of the country have for a long time seen the agenda of the SPLA justifiable, yet they couldn’t rationalize their joining in the fight from a religious Islamic perspective. They were trapped in the dilemma of “lawful and prohibited,” as a result of being oblivious to issues of economic injustice, political marginalization, and degradation that afflicted the southern human soul.

A prominent member of the southern elite said, “his insecurity is increased by the silence of his neighbors, meaning the people of west Sudan.” He further argued, My best guarantee to peace, development, unity, and security is to see all regions demanding their rights. For justice to prevail, things must be done on the basis of citizenship. Today we notice somebody is wise enough --less than being a god-- to decide on our behalf. This is not acceptable. (Personal Interview. AL. Spring of 2003)

It was not until the plague of subjugation and economic injustice reached them that the people of western (and eastern) Sudan decided to carry the guns. (Even though the petrol is drilled in their backyard they do not get a drop of it.) Even then, the Arabs of western Sudan were slower in responding than the population of Negroid origin, mainly Zagawa, Masaleet, and Foor. In spite of the injustice, the former group (understandably) did not see itself at the bottom of the racial pyramid. Those who were co-opted by the regime

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22 I asked President Saddig Al-Mahdi (1987-1989) of his justification to join an army (SPLA) that targeted the soldier that only recently saluted him as a commander in chief. Of the criteria, Al-Mahdi explains, that defined a national army, the Sudanese army, the Islamists, only preserved the uniform (Personal Interview. SM. Spring of 2003). (Often times this uniform, as in the case of the Janjaweed, was distributed to groups for camouflage purposes.) He continues, “Basheer made the Sudanese soldier a target of public dismay by publicly challenging the Sudanese people and saying whoever wants power he should rather come and get it as we took it by force.”
saw an opportunity to square against the groups that for a long time (since the 1980s) were involved in looting and killing peaceful citizens.23

As soon as the interim period (1985-1986) was over and democratic leaders were elected, the SPLA reinstated its terms of negotiations with northern leaders in a clear and inconspicuous manner. The stipulations were as follows: 1) removal of September laws (it is not actually the Sharia laws as much as the grievances that followed it); 2) cancellation of military pacts with Libya and Egypt to avoid regionalization or internationalization of the conflict, especially since northern leaders are accusing Garank of having clandestine deals with Israel; and 3) holding a national conference to discuss urgent issues (Personal Interview. JO. Spring of 2003).

Neither the Umma nor the DUP succeeded in confronting the masses with the importance of reconsidering these laws to at least questioning their validity from an Islamic perspective. Parties that depended on Islam for a popular mandate could not approach the issue of September laws with political or even intellectual objectivity for it was their source of mobilization at three levels: the sect, the nation, and the Umma. Influenced by Islamic Revivalism, which was then prevailing throughout the Muslim world, all national parties --except for Southern Parties and obviously the Communist Party- advocated an Islamic agenda for the national election of 1987: “Islamic Enlightenment” (sahwa) was the platform of the Umma Party, and “Democratic Islam” that of the DUP. Salih asserts,

23 Police in Darfur followed the traces of ninety percent of the incidents of aggression to villages that were populated by the Zagawa. I am still doubtful that such reports would incriminate the Zagawa as a race; it nonetheless says something about their character as a group that can resort to violence as a mean of achieving its political (or economic) objective. To express his disgust with the ruling junta, one businessman in Khartoum told me, “we all welcome what the Zagwa are doing to these fagots, i.e., killing of government officials in western Sudan, we just don’t have the courage the follow them’ (Personal Interview. SM. Spring of 2003).
The majority of the Umma, some DUP elements, the NIF, and a few other minor northern parties, wanted to maintain the supremacy of the northern Sudanese Muslims and to retain Islamic law in one form or another. They were opposed by the southern and other regional parties, together with the ‘left’ and secular organizations, and increasingly by the liberal wing of the DUP, and this camp generally believed that an equitable end to the war had to be followed by the return to a united secular and heterogeneous Sudan, in which the non-Muslim regions would have a large measure of autonomy. (Salih 1990:214)

Said Mohamed Osman, in his capacity as a party leader and under pressure from his party members (who were more on the liberal side of the spectrum), made a daring move and approved the meeting of his people with the leader of the SPLA. He started bi-lateral negotiations with Garank and in the course of six months, more precisely, June 16, 1988, they agreed that all issues are to be confronted in a national conference that could decide about the constitution and legally related issues including the September laws. 24 (The conference was supposed to take place on August 16, 1989, and the NIF attempted its coup d’etat July 30, 1989.) Failure of Sadig Al-Mahdi as the prime minister to give the treaty the required mandate, out of sheer personal jealousy or personal weakness, gave the NIF the opportunity to decry it in the eyes of the public (Personal Interview. YAY. Spring of 2003).

Although Nimeiri took political measures toward the end of tenure that disturbed the balance of power, his regime was imbued with political stability (it is considered less stable than Aboud’s and more stable than Bashir’s). He violated the civil liberties of people in the north, but did not attempt to completely thwart the opposition. Nimeiri maintained his ties with southerners, who nonetheless doubted his ability to grant them

24 When the treaty was prepared, a political aide of Osman recalls that Osman called and said he would not the sign the document if southerners insisted on erasing the word “Sharia” from the document. After consultation among themselves, southerners agreed to leave that to the conference (Personal Interview. YAY. Spring of 2003).
their political rights now that his legitimacy became questionable in the south. Southerners always had to make a tradeoff between legitimacy and effectiveness. They can either strike a deal with a military officer, who has the will to enact an agreement but lacks the legitimacy, or reach for agreement with civilians who have the legitimacy but cannot sustain their will in the face of local turmoil or agitation from neighboring countries.

Toward the end of Nimeiri’s regime, the Sudanese polity was disoriented. The parties had especially lost touch with reality (unlike Aboud’s regime which only continued for only six years, Nimeiri’s regime lasted 16 years). Neither the state nor the political parties had enough resources, needless to say intellectual stimuli, to design strong institutions that could mediate between society and the state. Although the democratic government tried being accommodative, it did not provide a liberal enough a vision that could accommodate the south, nor was it capable of channeling emotionalism that was increasing with the rise of Islamic revivalism. In the absence of an appropriate institutional arrangement, both at the national level and the party level, the proliferation of democratic values proved detrimental to the issue of political stability in Sudan.

While traditional leaders opted to obtain military support from the Arab world, Garank was gaining ground in neighboring countries. The escalation of the war in the

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25 As I indicated in previous chapters, the Sudanese democratic system was born handicapped. First, parliamentary politics was not representative of the wider Sudanese spectrum --both politically and demographically-- as it gave sectarian leaders complete monopoly over power. Second, the party system was divided along ethnic, religious, or regional lines. A northerner could not join southern parties, and whoever joined the DUP, Umma, or NIF from among southerners was looked upon by his group as being assimilated.

26 President Saddig Al-Mahdi (1987-1989) made his first trips to Iran and Libya. Said Mohamed Osman, President of the DUP, gained popularity as a politician by importing weapons from Iraq that helped the Sudanese army regain Kurmuk and Geisan (two major cities in the southeast).
south weakened the ability of the state to exert coercion that would contain dissension within a reasonable range. The more polarized the political environment became the more difficult it was to keep the internal conflicts from going beyond the constraints of the national boundaries. Consequently, the southern agenda was articulated by the International Authority for Drought and Development (IGAD), the northern agenda manipulated by the Egyptian-Libyan authorities. The NIF portrayed such a stretch as a compromise of national sovereignty. It vowed publicly to take necessary measures to secure the safety of peasants who were increasingly intimidated by Chadian forces crossing the boundaries of Darfur/western Sudan to register one final victory against the rebels of southern Sudan. The NIF wanted to restore the dignity of the Sudanese people by pronouncing in unambiguous terms the Islamic components of its identity.

Religious Governance 1989-Present

The fogginess of the political environment caused by these fumes, that is, radical proximity between Islamists and Mahdists, encouraged the SPLA --by way of testing the political will of an unstable regime led by a poor administrator and an unaccredited Mullah, Sadig Al-Mahdi-- to attack the city of Naser (in a remote boundary area). Islamists created a fuss about this incident as soon as they were removed from power. They claimed the morale of the army was consumed by the government’s acceptance of secular views that aimed at cancellation of the Sharia and inclusion of an “Imperialist

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27 The United States and Israel were passing weapons to the SPLA through their proxies in the region, such as Kenya and Uganda. Surprisingly, Garank appealed to the communist regime in Ethiopia (Salih 1990). He could manage to straddle well between the East and the West, so long as the Cold War was over.

28 The war had catastrophic results on the population of southern Sudan. More than 2 million people were displaced in this same period, and reached a record of 4 million by the year 2000. Surprisingly enough, southerners moved towards the north, and in the direction of the presumed enemy, the Arab invaders.
agent.” It was only under pressure from the army that President Al-Mahdi excluded the Islamists and hurried to form a coalition with southern parties and the DUP. By then it too was late because the NIF attempted its coup d’etat only a few months after the formation of the new government (whose main objective, as mentioned earlier was to pave the way to a national conference). The National Islamic Front, in collaboration with an Islamist cadre in the army, aborted the democratic experience in the evening of July 30th 1989. It vowed to suppress the rebellion in southern Sudan on less than year. It has so far been fifteen years and the SPLA has grown stronger. (In comparison, when the first rebellion broke out in 1955 in Toreed, Headquarters of Sudan Military Defense, it was suppressed in less than a month). Before the Addis Ababa Agreement in 1972, the forces of the Anyanya (rebel forces) had no footing except in neighboring countries. They did not control a single land spot (markaz) on which to raise their flag (berag). After the announcement of the September Laws in 1983, the rebellion started from Bor, a major city, but the rebels left fleeing on their faces. In 1988, the city of Naser fell into their hands. Naser was only a station in a remote geographical region but the rebels never had

29 In reference to John Garank.

30 The highest authority in the Sudanese Army submitted an ultimatum (muzakira) to President Sadig Al-Mahdi that explained to him that the army is too weak to pursue the course of war as a strategy, and that progress needed to be done at the negotiating table with the SPLA. Although this was perceived by the Islamists as an attempt to remove the NIF from power, we now know that it was done to save the third democratic experience from falling victim to the whims of some adventurous officers. (The NIF attempted its coup d’etat with 4 officers and 200 soldiers; this indicates the recklessness, if not conspiracy, of so called democratic leaders. For instance, the Minister of Interior Affairs, Mubarak Al-Mahdil, was not only notified of the coup d’etat, but was also transported outside the country by his brother-in-law, Gazi Attabani, a senior Islamist. Both remain safe until today in spite of the miseries that afflicted the Sudanese population. I simply intend to say there is a complete lack of commitment to democracy on part the of ‘democrats.’ I asked a senior DUP official whether or not we should view the involvement of the army as an abrogation of democratic proceedings. He replied, “it was a needed step” (Personal Interview. TMS. Personal Interview. Spring of 2003). This leads us to an important point: the role of the army in stabilizing African democracies. Since it is one of the few, if not the only, institutions that has maintained some level of discipline in spite of the anarchy in the overall environment, the army may as well be included in the government. Similar to that of the Turkish political system, in government.
control over it. In 1989, they won at Akako (Personal Interview. YAY. Spring of 2003). As a result of the regime’s intransigent policies and its intoxication with phrases such as “Oh America, leave us, our army will protect us” (ya america kalina jishna bihamina), Garang gained important sources of finance that boasted his military and political capabilities. After 2003, the SPLA moved to occupy Yaye, Maridi, Yambyo, Nimoli, Toreed, Kaboyta, Rombaik. In June 2004, Garank received the French Secretary of Defense in Kurmok. Remember that Islamists created a fuss about the occupation of this city in the 1980s (Personal Interview. YAY. Spring of 2003).

The decade and a half to follow highlights the major distinctions in their approach to Islam between the parties in the center and those to the right side of the ideological spectrum. Rather than adjusting their vision to fit the Sudanese reality, Islamists tried adjusting Sudan to a doctrinal vision that did not extend beyond an elite few, mainly a council of 40 members. In 1989, the Islamist regime substantially changed educational curricula, media program, and the rules of interaction in the public sphere. The Sudanese government suppressed views that may have been critical --not even dissenting (Personal Interview. GA. Fall of 2003). It censored TV programs to remove Western debauchery. It prohibited dances of some Sudanese tribes that may seem erotic, and made mandatory the wearing of hijab (Islamic dress for women). The government also prohibited the intermingling of men and women, and determined a curfew time for night parties. The government increased its visibility in the public sphere that nonetheless spurred a moral decline unprecedented in the history of the nation. Contrary to the assertion that an “Islamically conscious citizenry would readily submit to an Islamic

31 On more than one occasion, the vice president, Ali Osman, declared that they needed to reconceptualize the Sudanese fabric (Personal Interview. ABN. Spring of 1994).
state” (Naser 2001:141). The opposition became more critical of elites whose actions
defied every principle of Islamic ethics. Needless to say the public had utter disgust with
opportunist economic policies that favored only the NIF members (Haj-Hamad 1998).³²

Unlike the time of Nimeiri when Turabi had to share power with the Sufis,
communists, and bureaucratic figures, at this point he ruled as he pleased. He brought an
“Islamic cadre” to all public institution and fired those whom he perceived as opponents
or being neutral. Ideological commitment of governmental agents became of paramount
importance. Army personnel (and police) were replaced with loyalists for fear of future
military coup d’etats.³³ To allow for programs to be carried out effectively, the
bureaucracy was infiltrated with party members who spared no effort to eliminate all
rules of transparency or accountability, which could hinder the attainment of personal
wealth or secure privileges that party members could pay back without the need of
promissory notes (Personal Interview. MK. Spring of 2003). The capitalist or pre-
capitalist class, which is said to have received preferential treatment over the peasants at
the time of Nimeiri was now completely eliminated. (Nimeiri was steadfast in
maintaining his grip on his power, however, according to the opinion of his opponents -
among those he detained and persecuted --he did not favor any group over another.) Even

³² In his evaluation of the Islamization process in Pakistan, Seyyed Nasr says, “Islamization served the
interests of weak post-colonial states at a critical juncture (in the 1980s). It allowed those states to survive
serious challenges to their authority, and provided them with ideological tools that allowed them to expand
their power and reach and to create greater harmony in state-society relations at a time when the society
was turning to Islam . . . . On the downside, Islamization allowed states to avoid fundamental reforms in
their economies, political structures, and policy making as it facilitated expansion of state power through
successful manipulation of ideology rather than rationalization of the structure and working of state
institutions” (Nasr 2001:168).

³³ The government will admit at some point that it made the mistake of firing a great number of qualified
officers and substituted them with loyalists who oftentimes were amateurs (Personal Interview. YAY.
Spring of 2003).
if peasants in the past did not receive the profit they deserved, they at least got enough to survive.

To have a fair assessment of the misery that befell the population of Darfur, for example, we have to realize that these peasants are dependent on subsistence economy and subsidies to pay for their living expenses. Although the NIF was critical of the structural adjustment programs, it hailed them as a panacea for Sudan’s economic problems as soon as the party came to office in 1989. But even if it preached liberalism, the NIF practiced protectionism for the ruling junta. Rather than enhancing the productivity of the society, the state created a consumerist society that benefited the parasitic class in the center. In the period 1998 to 2000 Sudan imported artificial fertilizers for less than $2 million, toxic materials for killing germs for less than $7 million -- about the same amount that was spent on importing cake, biscuits, and candies -- and tractors for less than $10 million. On the consumption side, Sudan imported daily products for $40 million, cooking oil for $30 million, fizzy drinks for $17 million, tobacco for $40 million, radio and TV sets for $149 million, importing car for $90 million -- twice as much as spent on importing sacks (Kabag 2003: 2/19). Money spent to bring oil from Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and so on, was more than that spent on toxic materials, 1.25 times more than on tractors, and three times as much as paid for fertilizers (Center of Sudan Studies, February/1994).

In addition to the extreme weather conditions, the lack of attempts by the Sudanese authorities to provide the peasants with resources that can improve their crop productivity has made the population of western Sudan completely destitute. To save the region of western Sudan (which comprises Darfur and Kordofan) from the plight of an expected
famine, the NIF government increased the agricultural area designated for zora (sorghum) in the Gezira Scheme from 200,000 to 800,000 fedans (four fedans are equivalent to one dunam). Knowingly, the cost of transporting these products could have revolutionarized agriculture in western Sudan, a deprived region, which, in spite of its use of medieval tools, non-existent infrastructure, plummeting health and educational services, and absence of security, exceeds other regions of central Sudan that use advanced machinery in production terms. For example, the production of zora in western Darfur in 1999/2000 exceeded that of Al-Kadarif (central Sudan) by 160 kilos/fedan: In the following year, Darfur exceeded the production of the same area by 75 kilos/fedan.

On page 292 of the report from the Center of Strategic Studies at Khartoum, which is a government think tank to which many experts are invited, the report explains that the authorities have abandoned the pricing of agricultural products for the market mechanism. As a result the peasants fell victims of the mercy of middle agents who in turn found their way of devaluing the products in spite of the decline in supply - not an inherently market characteristic. (Kabag 2003:4). Due to astronomical inflation rates coupled with privatization of education and health services, people in the rural areas have found it increasingly difficult to make ends meet.

The reluctance of the state elites to provide service to the poor has definitely added to the plight of the whole nation. What is especially disturbing is the distribution of economic benefits, which has revealed racist preferences on the part of the decision-makers. Kabag’s examination of the distribution of health facilities per 100,000 citizens in 2000 reveals that although Darfur’s contribution to the national income is 6 percent, it is assigned one-fifth the number of doctors assigned to northern Sudan and River Nile region that contribute only 2.5 percent. Also, Darfur hospitals are allocated 74 beds, compared to 402 in northern Sudan (Kabag, 6:33). Knowingly, Darfur resembles 18

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34 The state can only improve productivity if it develops its citizens and aims at improving their skills (Personal Interview. IK. Spring of 2003).
percent of Sudan’s population, the northern region 3.75 percent. The disparities in educational services are equally marked: of the 15 percent of the population that resides in Khartoum, 32 percent obtained a passing record in the Sudan General High School Certificate, compared to 15 percent in Darfur of which only 5.9 percent passed. Of the 1,350,000 students between the ages of 6 and 13 who were eligible for education in year 2000, only 400,000 were included, that is, less than 29 percent. Which means almost 70 percent will go to the street as did their parents in agriculture or pastoralism (Kabag 2003: 6/31). If the trend continues, Darfur will not have a scientist in the next 20 years (Kabag 2003: Article 6, page 31). Even if democracy is restored, it will be awhile before an institutional balance occurs that restores the confidence of the people in the state as an important central authority.

By dominating politics and the economy, the NIF has eliminated student, labor, and professional unions, and bureaucratic figures and economic elites as the backbone of the civil society. Thus, it has relinquished the link that the Sudanese (autocratic) state traditionally maintained with society (Personal Interview. AB. Spring of 2003). The NIF has marginalized traditional parties that sustained a spiritual link with the periphery.35 It has left the northern parties --even some southern groups-- with no alternative but to fall in the arms of Garank. Consequently, all opposition leaders met in Asmara in 1994 and decided to escalate the war until the failure of the ideological regime would fall. Not only does Garank now control the south, but he also has a strong influence on the politics in

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35 Abdullahi Gallab contends, “it might look paradoxical that the regime’s absolute claim to Islam and its attempt to marginalize and suppress other religious, Islamic and non-Islamic, expressions has led to the most serious rival claims that embedded themselves in Islam. Based on its presumption that it can credibly fuse the religious and the secular, the regime believed that its program of Islamization would wipe out its political and religious enemies and rivals and would lead to the creation of an “Islamist conformity.”” (Gallab 2001:13).
the north. He is the uncontested champion of Sudan’s politics today. Nothing could be
more tragic than the reign of a “Leninist czar,” to borrow Ali Mazrui’s term, on the
throne of the Sudanese nation. 36 Not only has the regime been defeated militarily, but it
has also given regional/international powers political preponderance. The regime has
ignored the long-standing demand of parties for a national conference that would reach
for a comprehensive solution for Sudan’s problems. Instead, it has done piecemeal
approach that discusses issues in seclusion of their causes, moreover prolongs the life of
an already decaying regime. For example, the current presidential administration of
George W. Bush recently moved from the position that it had in the past as an observer to
being a partner, which gives this administration increased influence in monitoring and
overseeing the bilateral treaty between the NIF and Garank.

The treaty of 2003 calls for an immediate end of the fighting and allows the SPLA
to share power with the current regime. Furthermore, it gives southerners the right to
choose self-determination after a period of six years. 37 The treaty has come in a timely
manner because both parties are exhausted (the war has consumed the lives of at least 2
million), the regional powers want to stabilize the Horn of Africa to avoid turbulence in
their own backyard, and the West wants to have access to the oil reserves in southern and

36 Khalid Duran contends, “Garank’s ideological commitment became the subject of much speculation. It is
not difficult to guess what promoted so many observers to aver that he was not the Marxist he professed to be,
that Marxist rhetoric was but a means to endear himself to the Ethiopian --and thereby the Soviets-- in
order, to obtain weapons and logistic support” (Duran 1985:593).

37 Although six years are not enough to build roads and highways, nor bridge the psychological gap
between the south and the north, the shortcomings of the incumbent regime will be weighed against its
limitations, which are immense. The central authority will be looked upon by the south through the
spectacles of 47 not 6 years. It is the inner feelings about the interim period that matter: Will the state elite
try to buy time or will it look for ways and means to fulfill its obligations?” Given the political recklessness
of this regime, and the absence of the IMF, the government may look for a way to win the election rather
than follow a specific national agenda. The government may look over its immediate responsibilities, thus
scatter the opportunity to bail Sudan out of the quagmire it was brought into (Personal Interview. AL.
Spring of 2003).
western Sudan. The Bush administration has attempted to bypass regional and international parties that have for a long time been concerned with the Sudanese issue, such as Norway, Kenya, Libya, and Egypt. This has only caused these groups to take measures that would indirectly disrupt the peace process. The Chinese are taking a hands-off approach but have secretly provided the Sudanese regime with arms in its unsuccessful battle with the rebels. Libya is clandestinely supporting the revolt in western Sudan. Germany and France are voicing their contempt of the “genocide” committed against the “black” population of western Sudan. Each of these countries has found moral and political motives for the involvement in the internal affairs of Sudan.

To guarantee political immunity for themselves, the ruling junta risked the country’s national interest to the same groups that they long denounced as imperialists, expansionists, and dubious entities long contaminated with the incurable vice of greed. In the course of 16 years, this group has oppressed Sudanese society, has attempted the assassination of neighboring leaders, and has harbored groups in terrorist camps. These activities, however, came to an end after the dramatic events in New York City on September 11, 2001.\(^\text{38}\) Though the move is understandably tactical, it is unclear how they justified it religiously. How have they declared a treaty engineered by the United States in 2003 as Islamically legitimate while denouncing all previous agreements, in particular the Mirghani-Garank treaty of 1989?\(^\text{39}\) What makes one treaty Islamic and the other non-

\(^\text{38}\) After September 11, 2001, the government dropped the flag (\textit{bairg}) to prove its innocence though in a cowardly manner (Personal Interview. JO. Spring of 2003).

\(^\text{39}\) To refresh the memory of the reader, the Mirghani-Garank treaty called for a national conference, freeze of September laws, and cancellation of military pacts with Libya and Egypt (especially that northerners are complaining about Garang’s dealings with Israel). While Garang requested that the Americans in the eighties stop oil explorations until an agreement was reached, the Islamists brought Chinese and Malaysians as investors and more recently brought back the Americans as idea brokers (Personal Interview. JO. Spring of 2003). China imports fifty percent of Sudan oil.
Islamic? Why was the Mirghani-Garank agreement seen as an abrogation of the *deen* (religion) while the current agreement a reverence of the Ten Commandments?[^40] Not surprisingly, this lack of consistency left its mark on politics.

As the head of the legislative branch, Hassan Al-Turabi suggested some changes that could take Sudan out of this deadlock (Personal Interview. IS. Spring of 2003),[^41] such as devolution of authority as the only way of bringing the locus of power close to the center of Sudanese politics. He was the first among Islamists to have realized that Sudan could not be governed by a minority group lacking any democratic standing, but he also obviously did not want the old traditional brotherhoods to come into power again. He therefore decided to create an organization called the National Congress (NC) in which many political groups were admitted on the ‘sole’ condition that they would not oppose the creation of a modern Islamic society (Bashir 2000:4).

President Omar Al-Basheer resisted loosening his grip of power and took the step to put Turabi in jail. He announced his nation relieved of the constraints of dogma.[^42]

[^40]: What caused a group of ideologically committed scholars to go and meet with John Garang in the name of ‘Group of Muslim Ulama’ is the theocratic logic that allowed the Caesar absolute authority of his subjects, moreover gives him monopoly over the truth. Noticeably, these scholars have already compromised their integrity in two ways: firstly, no one elected them Ulama’, secondly, no one agrees to consult these Ulama’ outside the domain of their expertise (Personal Interview. MN. Summer 2004).

[^41]: “Turabi’s movement has always been driven by a strong, sophisticated and pure philosophical ideology which makes compromise difficult...Within the military-Islamist regime, Turabi represented the moderate faction. More extremist, anti-democratic and pro-army factions were led by Ali Osman Mohammed Taha and Osman Hassan Ahmed, who could more plausibly be labeled Islamic “fundamentalists” and whose support for Bashir was total” (Stephano 1999:5).

[^42]: “Turabi was so astonished to be put in jail, he told an elderly Islamist “what kind of Islam is this? How can they deny a human being his basic rights and put him in jail?” (Personal Interview. IS. Spring of 2003). IS says that Turabi objected to torture and persecution that was committed in the name of Islam, even when he was in power; he could relate to the harshness of all of that when he was ousted. A prominent southern elite told me all people are democrats when they are out of power (Personal Interview. AL. Spring of 2003).

[^43]: Many Arab and Muslim countries feel threatened by the Islamic alternative --embodied by Turabi as leader of the PIC (Pan-Islamic Conference)-- which is considered to be more destabilizing than the pan-
To make up for the void of the political and religious guru, the regime appealed to groups, for instance Muslim Brotherhoods and Ansar Assuna, that for a long time had resisted being part of the amalgamate of ideas (secular, and non-secular) that Turabi used to give his rule a modern/liberal appeal.44

In an attempt to maintain its power, the defunct group --Turabi and his gang-- supported the “blacks” of Darfur, whom they had always considered a potential ally against the “Arabs,” who were the predominant part of the Umma Party. This led to a brutal response from the incumbent regime, which, in addition to equipping Janjaweed militias, used the weaponry of the state --mainly aerial bombs-- to combat guerrillas it could not identify from afar. Consequently, these aerial bombs killed 300,000 Sudanese Muslims. Sadly enough, the Islamists chose Darfur as a backyard, in which they could square against one another.

The NIF had high aims of obtaining parliamentary seats in Darfur at the time of the third democracy (1987-1989). It assumed that given its religious flair, it could appeal to constituencies that shared the *Mahdia* heritage. In the process of attempting this, however, the NIF alienated itself from the Arabs and instead aligned itself to indigenous African groups like the Zaghawa, who were determined to overcome their historical heritage --a group that until the 1950s was kept in a buffer zone by the British-- to advance their political/economic agenda (Personal Interview. AM. Spring of 2005).

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44 According to the opinion of one prominent politician, ‘to the extent they tried, President Al-Basheer and his Vice President Ali Osman couldn’t follow Turabi’s zigzag line’ (Personal Interview. KZ. Spring of 2003). Their thinking is as dogmatic as it was on the evening of July 30, 1989. They are only giving in to pressure --sometimes beyond the limit permissible by Islam and patriotism-- to stay in office (Personal Interview. SA. Spring of 2003).
However, it was not until the NIF dismissed democratic politics in 1989 that it succeeded in having a free hand in Darfur. The NIF supported Arab pastoralists, who herd on predominately African land, for example, giving Reizighat authority (emirates) among the Foor or Masaleet peasants. Alternatively, they choose to support blacks, such as Zaghawa, who under the pressure of desertification, have moved to the eastern part of the Darfur region, specifically Dar-Reizigat. The faction that occurred in 1999 between Turabi and Basheer exposed the ethnic tension they long managed to conceal behind the veil of ideology. It separated Islamists along primordial lines with Turabi and his group siding with the “blacks” and Vice President Ali Osman siding with the “Arabs.”

This fight contributed to debilitate the social and political bond among populations. Who by virtue of their economic interdependence, intermarriage, religion, and so forth, these populations had lived in peaceful coexistence for more than four centuries. Darfur can be described as the pancreas of the Sudanese nation in the sense that it provides the cultural elements needed to overcome the differences between animist, Christians, and Muslims, given its geographical position between the north and the south. Nevertheless, under the effect of ideological Islam, it has failed to fuse its identity components, thereby putting Sudan face to face with its actual original dilemma: overcoming the dichotomy between Arabism and Africanism.45

This section shows that with the coming of the NIF to power, Sudan reached its peak of indoctrination. By declaring jihad in the south, the regime sought to culturally

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45 The pancreas is a small organ, approximately six inches long, located in the upper abdomen, and connected to the small intestine. It is posterior in the body, against the spine, and it is this deep location that at times makes diagnosis of the disease difficult. The pancreas is essential to the digestive process in two ways: first, it produces enzymes that help digest protein, fat and carbohydrates before they can be absorbed through the intestine; second, it gets absorbed through the intestine; third, it makes islands of endocrine cells that produce insulin which regulate the use and storage of the body's main energy source, glucose, or sugar.
assimilate southerners. By accusing its political enemies in the south of apostasy, the totalitarian regime was determined to completely thwart opposition in the south. These moves, however, have created their own backlash. Many Sudanese have become openly opposed to the totalitarian tendencies. Although the country still lacks an organized civil society and a multi-party system, the politics under Turabi and al-Basheer has ended up in a blind alley. The chance for Sudan to begin a new chapter is there although the social and political forces have still to come together in such a project. This determination continues to occasionally be weakened by the regime’s political maneuvers, mainly taking a piecemeal approach rather than aiming to reach a comprehensive solution to the resolution of Sudan’s epidemic problems. Sudan’s oil reserves have given the regime plentiful resources it can use to emasculate the military opposition. The involvement of regional/international powers that take advantage of the regime’s lack of legitimacy has added to the political turmoil. The Darfur tragedy has definitely caused its international partners embarrassment. In short, it looks as if Sudan has reached another milestone in its history as an independent nation. The question is, this time will it be able to bring about a more stable political evolution toward democratic forms of governance.

Conclusions

What are the conclusions one can be drawn about governance in post-independent Sudan? In trying to answer that question it is important to comment on the extent to which its fate is best explained by a misfired human agency or structural constraints. This chapter has shown that attempts to upholding political stability, let alone respect for

46 At one time, it spent $6 out of every $24 earned from petrol in secret service (Kabag 2003: Article 3, page 19).
political rights and civil liberties, have met with little success. It would be easy to blame it on the pragmatic nature of Aboud, the unpredictable character of Nimeiri, or the uncompromising stand taken by Turabi and al-Basheer. No doubt, they have all played their part in bringing Sudan to the rather unfortunate situation in which it finds itself today. In fact, one can easily argue that each successive regime has triggered an acceleration toward political decline in the sense of growing instability and less respect for the rights and liberties of Sudanese citizens. The different shades of political opinion that used to be present in Sudanese politics have been effectively silenced in the past two decades. The glimmer of hope for democratic governance that existed in the transitional years 1985-1989 was quite brutally extinguished once Turabi and his group took over. As previously suggested, the Islamist policies have run their full course and no longer serve the purposes of legitimizing the regime. These policies, however, have brought disaster to the country in the form of the Darfur crisis. The crisis led to many innocent people being killed. It has also allowed external actors to exercise greater influence on the course of events in the country, a factor that the regime in Khartoum dislikes. In addition, Garank's successful political maneuvers have acquired new influence over the country's politics.

Politics, however, is not independent of underlying structural conditions. Not everything can therefore be blamed on the political leaders. Much must be explained with reference to these structural factors. As with other countries that are characterized by multiple ethnicities and religions, Sudan remains difficult to govern. The legacy of a party system that is dependent on sectarian groups, which are heavily influenced by the literal Islamic tradition, has been one such structural factor that has not been easy to accommodate with more modern liberal/secular influences. Another factor, which has a
cross-cutting matrix effect (see Chapters 1 and 2), has been the disproportionate force that the modern state has in sabotaging societal will for reform. The instability and the sharp changes that have taken place in Sudanese politics since independence can be fully understood only against this background. It has allowed state elites to indulge in religious maneuvers as a way of gaining political support, a move that is quite feasible in the conditions of poverty and despair that most Sudanese people experience. This instability makes feeble the liberal will for reform and thwarts the potential of societal actors. In short, it is easier to get away with such demagoguery under the structural conditions that prevail in the country.

The discovery of oil and its expanding role in the economy might be seen as a counterfactor, but oil is as much a curse as a blessing. Much of the fighting between the north and the south has been over control of areas supposedly containing oil reserves. It has exacerbated political instability, and despite the recent agreement between Garank and the government in Khartoum, it is not clear how easily a move toward greater political stability --and possible democratic governance-- will be. Oil is likely to internationalize Sudanese politics in new ways. This could be either a positive or negative factor. As long as the main political actors view external actors as merely impinging on their sovereignty, political stability will be in jeopardy. But if they are able to accommodate their views to those that other key actors have who are interested in the country, the possibility exists for these external actors to have a stabilizing influence. The bottom line of Sudanese governance, however, tragically remains that political rights and civil liberties continue to be violated at will by political actors who find their own interest overriding the principles contained in the Qur’an, as well as the international human
rights regime. Unlike other countries of a similar multi-cultural background, Sudan is still in search of a formula that would pave the way for greater respect of the rights and liberties of its citizens.
CHAPTER 6
GOVERNANCE CHAPTER IN ISLAMIC COUNTRIES: THE CASE OF MOROCCO

Chapter 5, I showed that Sudan did not have a central authority. It is by trial and error that Sudan overcame ideological polarization, which hindered economic and political development for almost five decades. But this polarization also enhanced the nation’s maturity as an important political asset. Sudanese politicians have learned the hard way that rationality not religiosity is the proper access to politics. Although there are no signals that can assure us that politicians will arrange different forms of legitimacy in a way that will not affect crosscut in the future. In contrast, religious authority was gradually entrenched in the Moroccan society to the point where it besieged the political domain, thus allowing for progression of different types of legitimacies --national, religious, and “democratic.” The practice of politics, as discussed in this chapter, within a spiritual boundary may have helped Morocco tackle major challenges, such as the shift from colony to independent nation and the Cold War that started with Arab nationalism and ended with Islamic revivalism. Such political practices may also have thwarted efforts to introduce genuine democratic reform.

This chapter explains that the Moroccan political system went through three main development stages. In the first phase, radical forces were crushed in the name of protecting Islamic identity from the evils of socialism (1972).¹ In the second phase, change in the regional and international circumstances encouraged national players to

¹ They were radical in the sense that they did not recognize the Monarch as the sole proprietor of political authority.
demand political freedom that was overcome through the articulation of the *ba'ia* as a religious oath. This oath made to the Leader of the faithful (1975), who is also the king, to claim an “annexed Muslim land” --Western Sahara. In the third phase, political dynamics almost died out before being oxygenated with some liberties (1989) to absorb the tidal wave of Islamic revivalism and obtain enough mandate to introduce liberal economic policies. (Genuine democratic reform that was long promised is currently resisted for fear of Islamic fundamentalism.) However, the introduction of the *Mudawana* in 1999 exposed the contradictions of the system. If the *Makzn* continues its “politics of compromise”, it may risk destabilizing the very robust system it helped create over the years.

A French scholar is reputed to have said everything – and therefore nothing – changes in Morocco. The presence of a centralized religious authority has thwarted political dynamics in Morocco, sometimes at the risk of putting the country in complete political stagnation. This notion of what is going on in Morocco, however, is too simplistic. Politics in Morocco is full of dynamics. The interplay between religion and politics well explains the oscillation on a governance spectrum between “suppression and dissent.” The king gains his strength by making active the rivalries among various groups. Before situations get out of control, he plays the mediator role and urges parties to watch for the national interest of the country (Personal Interview. FA. Fall of 2003).

I identify three phases in Morocco’s political development, although some phrases overlap: 1) nationalist governance (1966-1974), 2) sultanistic governance (1975-1999), and 3) democratic governance (1999-present). An account of each of the three periods will be made with a focus on what happened to political stability, political rights, and
civil liberties. Despite the seemingly small shifts in ideology, the state navigated a tumultuous global and regional environment, ideological differences, and most recently a linguist/ethnic division between Berbers and Arabs.

Figure 6.1: Moroccan Ideological Spectrum (L-R)

Nationalist Governance (1961-1974)

Hassan II assumed authority in 1961. Unlike his father, who was content by being a fatherly figure for a political life managed by the Istiglal (Independence) Party, Hassan II was determined to rule. To achieve such an objective, Hassan II had to subordinate the army that until then was the backbone of the monarchial system. Hassan II then had to confront the left --in contrast to any other country in the Muslim world-- that had not only an intellectual base but also a popular presence. While the Istiglal party accepted the monarchy and made efforts to institutionalize it, the Socialist Union (to avoid confusion I am using the contemporary name) was influenced by the French Revolution. The Istiglal Party thus dismissed the traditional system as backward and spared no effort to displace it. In the process of claiming political authority, Hassan II not only confronted the left, but he also marginalized the right that was represented by the Istiglal party. The party was center-right in those days and occupied the ideological center the more the Islamists gained political power in the late 1980s to the early 1990s). To bypass the political
center, the young ambitious king restored the traditional spiritual and economic ties that his ancestors had with the Sufi sects.

The political leaders, as astute as they were, were not oblivious to what the young king was doing. They realized that his scheme would have a profound impact on the design of the political landscape. They nonetheless could not perceive of a move that would stop him from marginalizing them without disrupting the social order, which Istiglal Party very much resisted. The left, as we shall see, confronted the king militarily. When that attempt failed it mobilized its intellectual and popular forces to resist the king’s incursion in the public domain. A trustee of King Hassan II, a loyalist of France, Mohamed Aoofghair, attempted a coup d’état against Hassan II in 1972. The failed coup which gave the king the mandate he needed to present himself as a protector of the “Muslim identity.” This attempted coup consolidated his coalition with the popular --not political-- right that had become distrustful of the effort by the left to forcefully want to impose its vision over a conservative society. Most importantly, international forces perceived Hassan II as a bulwark against the march to the left in Africa. Aside from internal conflicts, the hardliners against Israel during the Cold War aligned themselves with the Soviet Union, the sympathizers with the United States. Though he was announced the Chairman of the Quds (Jerusalem) Committee in 1979 --the committee in charge of the legal status of Jerusalem-- king Hassan II had long played a role in the peace process in the Middle East. Through his undeclared support of the Jewish State (Israel), the king earned the respect of Moroccan Jews, who in turn played an influential role in granting him political, economic, and logistic support of the United States
(Vermeren 2002). He established official communication channels with Israel in September 1994.

Whereas the king managed to promote himself as a secular and a rational leader in the international arena, he cleverly used the media machinery to present himself as the savior of the *Umma* (nation) at the national level, that is, as a traditional leader. After all, he managed, at least temporarily, to rebut the left. In addition to his personal charisma, Hassan II capitalized on a long tradition of spiritual central authority to affirm such an image. To the extent that the king is believed to be a *sharif* and a scholar (he had undergone traditional pedagogical training), his close associates contend that *baraka* (blessing) was transmitted to him by Sheik Hamza who was a master of the *boutsheshya* sufi order. Before passing his last breath, the sufi sheik told his *mureeds* (students of a spiritual leader) that the king will be saved from an air strike --the work of the communists-- aimed at ending his life. The sheik entrusted them with a *masbaha* (a set of beetles that Catholics and Sufi Muslims use for invocation of the name of the Lord or Allah) that they should deliver to King Hassan II. Metaphorically speaking, the gift indicates that Al-Hassan II is a continuity of the sheik's spiritual duty, or so it was be perceived.

The compound institutional heritage put its prints on the personality of Hassan II, that is, the all-encompassing influence of religion, which gave him little choice but to embrace a traditional role while being secular at heart. Though the king was aligned politically with the right, he was intellectually closer to the left, given his upbringing and academic training. It was only a matter of time before he completely thwarted the authority of the right (Tuzi 1999), and harshly oppressed the left (so long as it did not
recognize him as a central constitutional figure). Hassan II was unable, however, to overcome the political opposition altogether. Consequently, he faced a severe opposition from the left that had intellectual weight among university students and professors, professional and labor unions, and so forth. Unlike the left in any other part of the Muslim world, the Moroccan left had popular support. It enjoyed considerable presence in all cultural domains: art, music, literature, and scholarly circles. Much of this presence can be explained by the colonial legacy already discussed in Chapter 4. The intellectual activity one notices in Rabat or Casablanca can be attributed by the geographical proximity to Europe --only 12 miles. Its Islamic heritage (the antique Qaraween University in the city of Fez at one time, however, attracted distinguished scholars from different parts of the Muslim world). Through the encouragement of King Hassan II as an intellectual, much of this dynamics can be attributed the French emphasis on cultural domination. The French government continued its cultural presence even after independence. More recently, France spent 40 percent of the budget it allocates for cultural exchange with Francophone countries on Morocco (Personal Interview. AJ. Fall of 2003).

Historically speaking, the French had tried to draw an ethnic demarcation between the Berbers and the Arabs. When, the French failed they settled for an erection of a linguistic divide. They preached Christianity to the Berbers, whom they felt would be less devout to Islam --for no clear reason other than they were non-Arabic speakers. This was a bold but largely unsuccessful move that impacted the Moroccan psyche and disoriented the nationalist educational plans for years to come. Nationalist leaders reacted by boycotting the colonial educational system. Istiglal Party elites, who basically received
religious education at Qaraween University or other universities in the *Mashreq* (mainly Syria, Egypt, Iraq, or Saudi Arabia), adopted their own schools. These schools taught the Arabic language and Islamic studies, and put emphasis on Moroccan heritage—with the exclusion of the Sufi heritage (and western heritage). The Salafi definition of rationality was too strict to accommodate the inhabitants’ intrinsic motives, and their horizon was too low to entertain an indigenous vision of development. Through its emphasis on a monolithic understanding of Islam, the nationalist movement thus suppressed subcultures and hindered their potential for growth. Nationalist leaders followed the modernist model in their approach to nation building; therefore they used Arabization/Islamization as a tool to homogenize the cultural identity in Morocco. In this sense, King Hassan II was not less ideological than A’lal Al-Fasi (Istiglal Party leader and one of the most prominent leaders during independence era, see Chapter 3).

The battle over cultural rights continued after independence by the left which thought that it could resist the oppressive attitude of the political authority. While the political right supported the king in defeating the left, it also compromised its own political rights. Apart from organized elites, most groups preferred indirect involvement in politics, occasionally not paying attention to the violation that this passive attitude may cause against their own identity rights. Al-Housaein and Aza (2001:114) mention the story of a Moroccan lady who came to visit her son who was held in custody for some political activity. The guard instructed her to speak in Arabic, knowing that she spoke no language other than Berber. Such humiliation made many Moroccans react not only to the authoritarian approach of the state but also to the Arabic language in general. The solidarity that the Berbers exemplified in their resistance to the process of
homogenization, which was attempted by the French, was mistaken by Arab nationalists as an acceptance of cultural dominance or forgetfulness of language rights (Al-Housaein and Aza 2001:59). It was not a resistance to the Arabic language as much as it was a refusal of the ideological approach that promoted it at the expense of suppressing other cultures.

Berber elites kept fighting for their right for almost five decades. It was not until the modernist model of development became obsolete that the Berbers succeeded in getting the authorities to listen. Again, as with most of the issues that I discuss in this chapter, it was sealed behind an ideological curtain. When released, it got caught up in the tension between Islamism --a term that for some reason became equivalent to Arabism-- and secularism which thought of expressing itself in any language other than that of the Qur’an. Hassan's successor as monarch, Mohamed VI, assigned a committee to decide upon the mechanism of incorporating the Amazigh/Berber heritage. This committee was an amalgamate of activists, politicians, and scholars who are specialists in this field (Personal Interview. AJ. Fall of 2003). The decision to teach the Amazigh language in Roman-like letter (tafinag), a language that is supposed to be non-partisan, paid more attention to the political quarrel over this issue than to true policy objectives. According to one prominent educator, by choosing the Roman alphabet, the Amazigh language has lost its connection to more than 26 Arab countries that could have bolstered its ability to revive itself (Personal Interview. AJ. Fall of 2003). Even the Arabic language, he pursues, is likely to become more a means of communication than a medium of scientific authentication. Therefore, economic necessity, along with the cultural
diversity, has challenged the ideological constraints of the Arabization/Islamization scheme.

The period of nationalist governance in Morocco was one of great political volatility. The country was politically polarized between a strong right and an equally strong left, inspired by the French conception of modernity and secular thought. There were attempts to overthrow the king. But ironically it was precisely the polarized nature of Moroccan politics that gave the monarch, especially Hassan II, an opportunity to enhance his own political authority by playing one party against the other. This tactic paid off in terms of a stabilization of politics, but it took place at the expense of respect for political rights and civil liberties. The rights of the leftist opposition were violated as were their liberties. Torture and other means of extracting confessions from political prisoners were used regularly, much as the French had done in neighboring Algeria.

**Sultanistic Governance (1975-99)**

The fact that the king came to enjoy both a religious and a political legitimacy was not trouble-free. It raised the concern of many as to the nature of the constitution: Is it secular, religious, or both? The many politicians I interviewed gave me a different answer. Even those who belong to the same party differed in their assessment of the constitution. As expected, politicians on the left side of the spectrum highlight the secular nature of the constitution. Those on the middle --mainly Independence Party-- try to bring out the religious/spiritual component of it, although from a historical perspective; those on the right, finally, approach it from a purely religious/theocratic point of view.² The

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² The Just and Benevolence Party demands that the monarch follow the example of Omar ibni Abdel-Aziz, who was the Umayyad Caliphate some 1,400 years ago. The party wants the king to bring back money his family embezzled and hold accountable others in his entourage (Personal Interview. AF. Fall of 2003). To
Development and Socialist Party --Communist Party on the left end of the spectrum-- puts more emphasis on the unwritten aspect of the constitution (see Chart 6.1), that is, the authority of the king to work out the tension between religious and secular demands, rather than on the provisions of the document. The Socialist Union sees the constitution Islamic only in terms of allegiance (baia’) but not in a legal sense. Independence Party considers Islam as one of the main sources of legislation. The Justice and Development Party, which is the Islamist party on the right side of the spectrum, attempts to rejuvenate the Islamic nature of the constitution. The Just and Benevolence Group considers Islam the only source of legislation (Personal Interview. KN, MA, NK, MR, and FA. Fall of 2003). It seems the constitution is purposely left ambiguous to allow the king room for maneuver: He can choose to activate the religious aspect when needed, and also downplay it whenever necessary.

When the demand for political freedom increased in the 1970s, King Hassan II restored the tradition of the baia’ (oath of allegiance), which in the past was limited to religious scholars and chieftains. He expanded it to include army generals, politicians, and bureaucrats. This revived an old Islamic tradition, which assumes that the believers are obligated to obey the Leader of the Faithful at all times. This is one of the many incidents in which there is more emphasis on duties than rights, applicable especially in circumstances such as when the sovereignty of a Muslim land comes under attack or becomes disputed. In the absence of an authentic claim, the Moroccan king articulated the baia’ to indicate that the Muslim population of the Western Sahara once paid allegiance to the Moroccan kings (Personal Interview. MT. Fall of 2003). This claim to the extent that this seems rudimentary, it embarrasses the monarch because it questions his religious legitimacy.
sovereignty by the indigenous population (Sahrawis) in Western Sahara set in motion a process of violation of political rights and civil liberties across the whole entire country. From the mid-1970s until the mid-1980s, the country witnessed its worst record of violation of human rights --detention in the Sahara or underground prison cells, persecution, kidnapping, rape, and killing.

Western Sahara has been a very sensitive matter among the Moroccan elite, which I experienced in trying to discuss the issue. Apart from one scholar, none of the informants I interviewed in 2003 dared to discuss the historicity of the matter. They took it for granted that the Moroccan king had to right to send hundred 120,000 soldiers to forcefully extend his political authority over the Western Sahara. The king seems to have inculcated an ideology that regarded as unpatriotic any discussion of the political and economic feasibility of continuing such an imperialist presence in that area. Spain colonized the Western Sahara in 1884, and drew its boundaries with France, which in 1912 was then occupying Algeria and Mauritania. When Morocco got its independence in 1965, Spain refused to give up its colonization of the Western Sahara. The Istiglal Party insisted on regaining the region and used this issue as a leverage in its dealings with the king. Given its vision of a large Maghreb and its concerns with the importance of Muslim unity against the colonialists, Moroccan authorities waited for Algeria and Mauritania to gain their independence before raising their claims for control of the Western Sahara. The leaders of all three independent states Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania agreed to meet in July 1973 to decide about the destiny of 80,000 Sahrawis who were transient citizens. The political opposition then became very critical of the king, who in response refused the idea of a plebiscite, moreover called for a Green March
that attracted some 300,000 Moroccans who carried out a peaceful "invasion" of the region (Vermeren 2002: 198-200).

Under the terms of the Madrid accords of November 1975, Spain ceded Western Sahara to Mauritania and Morocco, and it was the latter’s occupation of the territory over which it claimed historic sovereignty that resulted in strained relations with Algeria. Since Hassan II considered the Sahrawis were Moroccan secessionists being sponsored by Algeria, he declined to view Western Sahara as a decolonization issue, and refused to agree to direct talks with the Polisario (the nationalist) representatives. (Zoubir 1990:226)

However under pressure from the United States that clandestinely provided the logistics of the war, the king felt obliged to open talks with Polisario. He conducted these talks privately and never involved any of his Cabinet members. This indicates that not only has the king considered the issue his own affair, but he wanted to use it for political ends (Zoubir 1990:237). While pacifying his international/regional partners with unsubstantiated talks, that is, deals that lacked genuine will, the king used the issue of the Western Sahara to further consolidate his power. He extended the opportunity of “repentance” for Polisario members whom he considered as disobedient believers who breached their contract with Allah, the Almighty.

Central to the thinking of Hassan II was his attempt to manage the public realm as a sanctuary. He did not allow any religious activity to escape his attention. He did not interfere with activities of a secular nature that may have directly violated the Islamic creed. For instance, according to one informant, as the Society of Moroccan Astronomers was scheduled to meet in one of the university yards to discuss the sighting of the moon, as it relates to the month of Ramadan, the group was denied the right of assembly. On the day of the meeting, the minister of Religious Affairs, Abd al-Kabeer al-Madgari, asserted that the topic was the sole responsibility of the Leader of the Faithful (Personal Interview. MB. Fall of 2003). It is not clear as to how the contribution of some academic scholars
would interfere with the authority of the king, who is also the Head of the Council of Islamic jurisprudence (*mufti*). The general assumption would be that such advice can only inform his decisions better. Some argue that Al-Madgari may have acted on his own, but his behavior falls in line with the attitude of the state toward civil society and its attempt to nationalize religion. Thus, it is not likely to be a coincidence.

To the extent that such an approach homogenizes the public opinion (especially as it relates to issues of a religious nature) and eliminates dissent, it deprives religion of its ability to enrich intellectual debate or enhance public morality. It is not clear whether Hassan II established Islamic scholarly circles (*Al-Majalis Al-elmaya*) to initiate and encourage deliberation among people or different groups or if he has done so merely to create the illusion of debate. Abbas Al-Jarari, a distinguished Moroccan educator, contends that the attitude of members in various scholarly circles presents a golden opportunity for dialogue between secularly educated elites and religious scholars, between the Imams and the public. The absence of such a dialogue exposes the country to misunderstanding and the potential danger of extremism (Personal Interview. AJ. Fall of 2003). The attempts to herd people within the confinement of Islamic orthodoxy have failed. While showing conservatism, the government does not wish to lose the income it indirectly receives from *hasheesh* (drugs) that gets transported to Europe, or tourism that gives rise to illegal prostitution. The government generates money from alcohol consumption, and nudity beaches (to use traditional Moroccan standards of modesty).

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3 The cross-trafficking of *hasheesh* is considered an illegal industry that brings a revenue of almost $6.6 billion.

4 Islamists used economic feasibility to convince the Moroccan Parliament that the prohibition of alcohol may not necessarily harm the economy. I think economics cannot be the bridge to two groups with different cosmological visions. A belief in the blessing that a Muslim receives from obeying the laws of Allah cannot be perceived instrumentally; it is about faith. The government already has a law that prohibits
Aside from carrying the debris of the satellite industry, such as debauchery, moral laxity, and so on, the local media overlook the cultural characteristics of the nation (Personal Interview. NK. Fall of 2003). The minister of Cultural Affairs (2003), Mohamed Al-ashari, who is a socialist, says something to the effect that he would personally object to recruiting a hijab-wearing lady (head cover) for public TV, as such an appearance sends an ideological message (Personal Interview. MA. Fall of 2003). The appearance of Moroccan hijab on television is limited to religious or folklore programs. Educational programs have long been an area of confrontation between traditionalists and socialists. In proximity to Europe, it is difficult to stop the influence of liberal norms, but the government takes few measures, if any, to enhance the Islamic identity or at least stop the erosion of Islamic values. The Moroccan identity is deeply anchored in history, family values, sufi prayers, and great Islamic traditions which helped to keep it relatively intact.

The main point, however, is that Moroccans experience pressure to conform to the norms of the state (and the society) that are becoming increasingly Western, liberal, and dogmatically secular (Personal Interview. MB. Fall of 2003). To reconcile conflicting cultural (or moral) codes, people compartmentalize life into temporal and spatial domains to suit different styles of life or simply adjust the moral code to their level of comfort. In the introductory chapter of his book, Monarchy and Political Islam in Morocco, Tuzi speaks of an old lady who started praising Allah the moment she felt her airplane was experiencing air turbulent, but as soon as the plane stabilized, she asked for a glass of

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selling alcohol to Moroccan Muslims. This law may seem suitable in a country like Sudan with non-Muslims representing one third of the population, but it obviously does not make sense in Morocco where the Muslims are 99 percent of the population. Knowingly, the consumption of alcohol increased after it was prohibited in Sudan, some argue it may have increased among people who were already drinking.

5 He says he will not allow a woman, as such a dignified being, to be reduced to a piece of cloth. I wonder how can the modernization of women be limited to the removal of that piece of cloth?
whiskey (Tuzi 1999). A Western man sitting next to her saw the contradiction in such behavior by a Muslim believer, so he asked her for an explanation. She answered: God's Praise is good for my soul and the whisky is good for my health. This is a simple reflection of the way the society handles the issue of spirituality and the issue of religion.

An observer cannot find any people who are as religiously devout as Moroccans during the months of Ramadan or the time of Pilgrimage. However, as soon as the month is over, men and women leave their traditional dress to Western cloth and enjoy life as they please the rest of the year.\(^6\)

This is less the problem of the Moroccan society than of a dysfunctional political system. The system unnecessarily ties individuals between two poles without providing them the means to educate their religiosity or change corrupt social norms to meet their convictions or moral standards. It is often said that King Hassan protected the Moroccan “Muslim Identity” at the time when the country faced difficult challenges (Personal Interview. DK. Fall of 2003). It can be argued, however, that Moroccans preserved their Islamic identity in spite of Hassan II and not because of him. Hassan II depended on religiosity to carry the traditional crowd and intellectualism to convince the modern audience. To make himself indispensable, he purposely kept the two groups apart.\(^7\) This succeeded at the cost of completely deriding the energy of the public realm. With the tension of the Cold War diffusing, international monetary agencies began to exert pressure on Morocco to adopt liberal economic policies. The king needed a mandate

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\(^6\) A Moroccan intellectual, who is also an Islamist, says he finds difficulty in stopping people from queuing for alcohol after the month of Ramadan (Personal Interview. BK. Fall of 2003).

\(^7\) This is what people mean when they say, “Hassan II was firm in both modernity and traditionalism” (Personal Interview. IM. Fall of 2003). No one could afford to do so, except for a good actor like his excellence. It is difficult to speak different languages to different crowds and still be consistent.
which he could not have received had he not loosened his authoritarian grip and allowed for some political freedoms, at least superficially. In his own words, Hassan II announced, “the impulse of the country is about to stop.” He signaled the need for political consultation --and not necessarily contestation-- to help revive the economic health of the nation. We have to bear in mind that Morocco is a country in which the population has gotten used to depending on welfare, such as free education and health services for the public, subsidized food, transportation, and housing for students (Vermeren 2002). The king in short wanted to pass the blame of introducing drastic economic measures on to someone else because he was afraid that the new policies could turn the population over to the opposition.

The changes were seen as more far-reaching than previous challenges to his authority. The king knew that it was time for a politically authentic figure, somebody who is credible in the eye of the public so he called on the leader of the Socialist Union, Al-Yousifi, as the man to carry responsibility for the reforms. Since he had opposed the regime for more than two decades denouncing the “triumph of capitalism,” who would be more credible than him? But why would someone like Al-Yousif take responsibility for introducing changes he ideologically had opposed for more than two decades? Demands to introduce genuine democratic changes had been resisted by the king in the late 1980s. In the 1990s, however, there was a resurgence of Islam in neighboring Algeria that the socialists in Morocco saw as particularly threatening. That is why they were ready to compromise with the king not only over economic policies but also over the Constitution. The reforms that they approved allowed the King the right to dissolve the parliament and
recruit the first minister of a “democratically elected” parliament (Personal Interview. MJ. Fall of 2003). Moreover, the palace (Makzn) did not agree to provisions to ensure transparency in governance and accountability to the governed.

To counter the weight of the left, the king gave Islamists the permission to establish their own party under the supervision of Abdel-Kabeer Al-kateebe, a loyalist of the palace who had sympathy to the right. The king also allowed the establishment of an Islamic party --after adamantly refusing for 20 years-- to avoid having an opposition outside the system that is purely Islamic (Personal Interview. BK. Fall of 2003). This would have put conservative Islam, of which he is the representative, against political ideological Islam that the Justice and Development Party and Just and Benevolence Group represented. In addition to it heightening the tension, this juxtaposition would affirm the progressive image that the king had long been so keen to portray. As much as possible, the king wanted to reduce Islam to a religion (thus denying the presence of a political Islam) when it became necessary to accept its inclusion in politics. However, he did it in such a way that he divided the Islamists into moderates and radicals. The Justice and Development Party was admitted into the system (see Chart 6.1). But the Just and Benevolence Group was denied the right to participate for no other reason than its refusal to recognize the monarch as a legitimate entity (Personal Interview. FA. Fall of 2003). The Makzn remains sensitive to the opposition of the Just and Benevolence Party.

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8 Members of the Justice and Development Party I interviewed say they exercised restraint and only nominated members in two-thirds of the districts for fear of being overthrown by the army. In a way they received warnings that the Algerian scenario may be repeated if they won a majority that would qualify them to rule. Some say prior to elections, arrangements are made between the Makzn and senior islamist to avoid embarrassing the king (Personal Interview. AH. Fall of 2003).
Far from being resolved, the ambiguities in the Constitution became clear in the draft of 1996. As it existed, the Constitution had an open-ended clause that indicated that Islam is the religion of the state. With the exception of the Independence Party and Islamists who were not in the Parliament, all parties wanted to exclude a close-ended clause that states, ‘No law should be issued that contradicts the sharia.’ The king interfered to remove this clause. As ambiguous as it was on this issue, the Constitution was nonetheless signed (Personal Interview. MB. Fall of 2003). Thus, the Islamists in Morocco have remained divided, and the more radical wing in the Justice and Development Group is being kept outside of policy influence. The story of what happened to the Islamists in Morocco is different from what happened in other Maghreb countries, not the least in Algeria. The Islamist movements of the Maghreb, Layachi asserts,

    developed in different domestic economic and political environment, followed different patterns (than those of the Mashreq), and received different responses from their respective states. In general, the development and expression of the Islamist opposition in the Maghreb has stemmed from a clash between popular movements desiring change and conservative regimes with declining legitimacy, rather than from the simple desire to establish an Islamic state. (Layachi in Lacey and Courey 2000:24)

    The advent of Islamic revivalism has made it difficult for any leader to reduce Islam to a religion (or religion to dogma) and deny its social and political utility. Establishing an Islamic bank has for a long time been the aim of Islamic groups, but it was not until the time of the tawafug (a political compromise that occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s) that they could bring it to the attention of the king. Islamists almost convinced the king of the idea of the Wafa Islamic Bank, which was intended to provide small or mid-level investors with non-interest loans, but he backed off in the last moments for political and economic reasons. He may not have wanted to give credit to
Islamists. Besides, there is always the difficulty of having banking systems operate in the same country under two different laws, an issue that is currently being suggested in Sudan. In Sudan, for example, the government has gauged its success of Islamization of the economy with the introduction of an Islamic Jurisdictional Committee inside the Central Bank of Sudan (Personal Interview. AZ. Spring of 2003). There are also other practical concerns. What arrangements do national banks make to ensure successful incorporation in a global economy that is predominantly interest-based?

King Hassan II wanted to experiment with an issue that is technically less complex, politically not sensitive, and can help alleviate economic hardship. At one of the Hassani lessons (sessions held during the month of Ramadan at the Masjid of the Tomb), he expressed the government’s interest in wanting to administer the Zakat. Zakat is the amount of money (2.5 percent of annual income) that the Qur’an stipulates the rich should give to the poor. If distributed reasonably, this money is believed to contribute to resolving part of the problem of the poor (Personal Interview. AJ. Fall of 2003). However, the mechanism of collecting --as well as distributing-- it has become problematic in a modern context that requires rationalizing/institutionalizing governmental actions. A committee, for instance, was formed to investigate the relationship between Zakat and tax (Personal Interview. AT. Fall of 2003). A school professor, who for more than a quarter of a century spearheaded the efforts to institutionalize the Zakat, says neither the first minister nor the minister of Religious

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A report once revealed that the amount of money that circulates the Moroccan banks (without being invested for a period one year) has been in the range of billions of dirhams (Personal Interview. AJ. Fall of 2003).
Affairs commented on their written proposal or interviewed them to verbally elaborate on the subject (Personal Interview. MB. Fallof 2003). He became convinced that while the king may have been “genuine,” conservatives in the government wanted to have full monopoly over what Islam really means. This has become evident in the handling of other issues, which, as apolitical as they may seem, reflected the social and economic utility of Islam. The Makzn sought to become the facilitator and guarantor of a principled outcome rather than assume a direct participatory role, that is, if they had other alternatives, given the change in political circumstances. Consequently, the Makzn had done as way with hardliners. Not long after the death of his father, King Mohamed IV excused Abd al-kabeer al-Madgari from the ministerial duties of the religious affairs that he controlled over three decades. Nonetheless, this would not suffice to eliminate the contradictory nature of the Moroccan political system (Tuzi 1999; Hammoudi 1997; Sabeela 2000; Layachi in Lacey and Coury 2000).

Once the nationalist spirit had given rise to more immediate and practical concerns in the 1970s, the issues of governing Morocco became more complicated rather than less complicated. External forces such as the Cold War and later on calls for economic reform forced the king to become even more personally involved in running the country. He found it increasingly difficult to stay above politics. The balancing act between the right and the left was no longer possible to perform without falling off the scale. There were attempts on the king's life and other forms of violence directed against his government. This period was the height of political instability. It was, consequently, also a period in which political rights and civil liberties were abrogated, but with some caution because

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10 As apolitical as it may seem, the issue of Zakat was resisted by the minister of Religious Affairs, Abdel-Kabeer Al-Madgari (Personal Interview. MB. Fall of 2003), presumably the citadel of conservative Islam.
the king also realized the costs of becoming too authoritarian. His style of governance, therefore, is best described as sultanistic. He tried to co-opt various factions and thus keep them in check. His way of using the Socialist Union leader to carry out liberal economic reforms is a good case in point. Toward the end of this period, radical Islam was perceived as the main challenge. Events in neighboring Algeria had made both the King and the secular left aware of the danger that something like that could also happen in Morocco. The need for successful co-optation, therefore, was especially imminent. Even though political rights and civil liberties in the early 1990s were not violated in the same naked fashion as in earlier years, it was clear that people held office or lived in peace thanks to the discretion of the king. In that sense, Morocco was far from being governed democratically.

The main exception to what has just been said about conditions inside Morocco is what happened in the Western Sahara. The human rights of the Sahrawis were violated. Aggression against the citizens of the Western Sahara included killing, rape, displacement, and political agitation. But in the political climate that his sultanistic form of rule engendered, the elite had in the end little to set against the will of the king, whether with regard to the Western Sahara or any other major policy issue. At the same time, with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and calls for democratic governance in various other places around the world, even the king had to listen. Hence, toward the end of the 1990s, governance began to change.
Democratic Governance (1999-Present)

Ironically, it was the Western Sahara that became a harbinger for the political reforms. It is a region rich in phosphates\textsuperscript{11} and has oil and gas resources that the United States. Kerr-McGee and France Total have been exploring under a contract with the Moroccan government. Although Morocco's sovereignty over the Western Sahara has never been confirmed, the international community has not been able to prevent the Moroccan government for exploiting the resources of the region. Because of the volatility of the situation, however, Morocco has avoided engaging corporations from other Maghreb countries and has instead relied on European or American companies.

Although Europeans had always admired the king’s moderate policies, they have in recent years conditioned their economic partnership on political freedoms. This means that slowly and incrementally, democratic procedures have been introduced. Such reforms have helped attract investments and paved the way toward economic integration in the global economy. Vermeren asserts that any incorporation in the global economy, at least for Morocco, needed to go through Europe. In 1998, Morocco achieved a record two-thirds of its foreign exchange in trade with Europe, and received 65\% of its foreign investments from Europe, the rest coming from the Arab world. To this should be added the fact that as much as two thirds of Moroccan \textit{imports} find their way back into the European Union tax-free (Vermeren 2002:220). Finally, an important source of income remains the hard currency that Moroccan expatriates pour into the Moroccan banks every year. Between the late 1980s and early 1990s, the amount of hard currency had almost

\textsuperscript{11} Knowingly, Morocco possesses three-quarters of the world’s resources of phosphates and it is the second export of such valuable energy resource after the United States. The export of phosphates, with at least $2 billion a year, is provided 29.5\% percent of the world sales in 1998 (Vermeren 2002). Though a sizable portion of the phosphates are believed to be in the Western Sahara --the disputed area, other areas close to Casablanca and the Atlas Mountains resemble the current productive margin.
doubled, from one billion to two billion U.S. dollars, almost the equivalent of the income Morocco receives from tourism (Vermeren 2002:85).

This kind of economic activity comes with its own cultural baggage. For instance, it brings with it a liberal attitude that challenges the literalist (moral/political) boundaries imposed by the state. Hassan II managed to infuse his version of conservatism so long as he handled a state-oriented economy, that is, during the 1960s and 1970s. The advance of the liberal economy in subsequent decades has transformed the relationship between society and state. It has provided individuals with some level of independence that enhances their capabilities to demand political and cultural rights. Globalization has provided opportunities -- in terms of communication across national boundaries-- for individuals, civil society actors, and international organizations to exercise influence over policy. These opportunities have necessitated revising the contract that long governed the relationship between children and their parents, husbands and wives, women and men in the wider public realm, not to forget the one between subjects and ruler. Before Mohamed V became King in 1999, the state --through the hegemonic influence of Hassan II-- had been reluctant to revise its relationship with the citizenry. Instead, as previously discussed, it was mainly concerned with managing the horizontal relations at the elite level.

With the changing economic and social conditions, it became evident, for instance, that the Mudawana, which handles family laws from an Islamic perspective, needed to undergo basic revisions. As soon as the left could get into office, it took upon its shoulders the responsibility of making these revisions. Although they were sensitive to the cultural issues, the communists perceived the economic factors that determine the
social relationships in the Moroccan society as paramount. The right was not oblivious to the economic reality but preferred to operate along the cultural component to make what it thought would be quick political gains, while gradually seeking autonomy from the Istiglal Party.

As expected, the left proposed a dry program that concentrated on policy issues and as much as possible avoided value-related topics that it ruled out as emotional, but which were of importance to the public. Influenced by the experience of Islamic activists in other countries, Moroccan Islamist parties adopted secular names instead of titles that signaled religious affiliation, for example, the National Islamic Front, but they do not to seem to have changed their agenda. The right, mainly the Justice and Development Party--because the Just and Benevolence Group is prevented from political participation, gave Islamic issues (such as public morality, and Islamic laws) paramount importance. But the right also gave policy matters a low profile. The Independence Party could not strike the balance between policy and cultural authenticity so it missed playing a role it was mostly qualified for, both from a historical and political perspective. By concentrating more on political pragmatism, it ignored religious emotionalism, which, according to a prominent politician in the party, characterized leaders of the caliber of A’lal Al-Fasi (Personal Interview. KG. Fall of 2003). As a result, it shied away from criticizing the Makzn's “conservative” agenda, and could not articulate a program passionately enough to reverse the apathy of the Moroccan public.

Saeed Assa’di, a communist who was the secretary of Women and Family Affairs in 1999, proposed a plan, which was radical, according to the opinion of most conservative Moroccans, for the “inclusion of women” in inheritance. (Personal
Interview. SO. Fall of 2003). It put forward the issue of revising laws of inheritance, which give women half of what men receive from the will of the deceased parent (or at least that is what the plan chooses to highlight). It proposed changing divorce laws that are oppressive. It suggested setting an age limit for girls who may rush or be forced (by their parents) into marriage, hence denying them an opportunity to get educated before they decide to endure such responsibility and bear its consequences. Discussing the details of these provisions is beyond the scope of my study. Suffice it to explain how the Mudawana came into the middle of the tension between the left and the right -as both were fighting for a position in the newly emerging political configuration. A representative of the Justice and Development Party (on the right) has asserted that the Development and Socialist Party (on the left) wanted to take advantage --especially after the International Conference on Women in Beijing-- to locally demolish the “concept of sanctity,” thus liberate women along Western ideals (Personal Interview. SO. Fall of 2003). This attempt by a small section of the elite, largely on the left, to impose its taste on the public was strongly resisted. After failing to change the opinion of the communists in parliament, the Islamic right resorted to the street (Personal Interview. HA. Fall of 2003). According to preliminary estimates, Islamists mobilized 1.5 million Moroccans to stop the “Marxist proposal,” as they chose to call it. Many of the people who marched through the streets were not particularly radical. For instance, quite a large group of people sympathetic to the center-right Independence Party participated, although they would not necessarily have gone along with a number of the issues that the Islamic right embraces.
The electoral system is major reason why the Makzn can continue its guardianship over Moroccan politics and discouraging effective communication between the left and the right side of the political spectrum. Prior to the election of 2003, the Development and Justice Party has proposed a change from the plurality, first-past-the-post system to voting-list proportional representation system. All parties accepted this proposal under the assumption it would eliminate clientelism and allow voters a chance to focus more on policy proposals and not be distracted by slogans. However, the parties failed to realize that such a system breeds a partitioned parliament with no chance for any party to obtain a majority. Not surprisingly, the king--with the symbolic approval of the elected parliament--chose a non-partisan technocrat to the position of first minister. Second, in a country with more than a 60 percent illiteracy rate (literacy is not required to vote), the public is likely to overlook policy initiatives and focus more on the overarching themes that transmit from the debate among contenders.

The voting list proportional representation system suited members of the Justice and Development Party who do not have social connectedness--at least nothing comparable to that of Independence Party. But the party members can appeal to the masses with an agenda to stop the left from eroding the cultural identity of the nation and overcome the reluctance of the center to utilize its (religious) potential. The left preferred a partitioned parliament rather than see another party gain a parliamentary majority. After all, the left figured since it was the ruling party, it is likely to be penalized and a vote against it was likely to go to the Islamists. This arrangement would hurt the Independence
Party most because being the center party; it was likely to lose votes to the Islamists.\footnote{A senior of the Independence Party told me on condition of anonymity that he resisted the idea of proportional representation, but the party would not listen to him. He asserts that commitment of his party to such a notion is an unforgivable blunder (Personal Interview. AG. Fall of 2003).}

Under those circumstances, Islamists would have won an overwhelming majority had they not restricted themselves to nominations in only 60 percent of the districts (Personal Interview. HA. Fall of 2003). The Islamists nevertheless realize that people who vote for them are not necessarily committed to their cultural/intellectual project, but may ideologically be passing through their political zone. Islamists face less difficulty entering parliaments than intruding on cultural and intellectual domains that for a long time were dominated by groups on the left side of the spectrum.\footnote{People threw themselves in cultural enclaves by way of protecting their Islamic identity, only to realize that is the surest way to eroding one’s identity. An identity cannot remain static; it gains immunity through interaction.} They detached themselves from the traditional population by defying sufism and did not develop the intellectual impetus to comfortably relate to music, art, sciences, movie industry, scholarly circles, and so on.

To avoid the political upheaval that the issue of the Mudwana might cause, the king preferred discussing the issue behind closed doors. He formed a committee of secularly educated elites and religious scholars. For reasons discussed in the chapter 4, pressures that they experienced from outside, that is, beyond the boundaries of their meeting room, the committee members spent months massaging the issues before they would announce a stalemate. The king assigned a different committee the duty of reconceptualizing the provisions of the Mudawana in a way that makes it relevant to today’s age. The king is keen on ensuring that the efforts of the advisors do not stumble a second time. Even if it does, under no circumstance will the Makzn take the Mudawana to parliament because it
deprives the king of his reconciliatory role, reveals the contradictions in the political system, and presumably upsets the balance of power.

The *Mudawana* has become a thorn in Moroccan politics. It is at the height of the cultural divide that has long dominated the country. A member of the Socialist Union asserts that the *Mudawana* requires careful assessment because the society is too traditional to accept radical changes (Personal Interview. HN. Fall of 2003). Why has the society remained traditional after 50 years of a presumed attempt by Hassan II to modernize it? In spite of the proliferation of mass communication and exposure to various cultural schemes, is society really “traditional” or is the problem a political stagnation that is fixating societies in the swamp of traditionalism?

A lack of commitment to democracy on both sides of the ideological spectrum is definitely a factor. Parties on both the right and the left are not embedded in society, hence the meagerness of their chance of reaching power through democratic channels. While parties in the middle tend to use their strong Islamic background to advance a national vision, parties on the right or left remain to adjust to the national agenda set by others. This is a reason why their commitment to a more democratic system of governance continues to be more superficial. They don't have the patience to wait for their turn within the rules of the system because they cannot muster enough support to challenge the agenda set by the king and the middle of the political spectrum.

The first five years of democratic governance in Morocco has revealed a feature that is common in most Islamic countries facing the tension between a literal and liberal tradition: the need for a strong center to enhance political stability. Morocco, more so than Sudan, has been caught in the whirlwinds caused by the political storm between
leftist and rightist tendencies. The political system has become slowly more democratic. The newly adopted electoral system may help retain political stability. But because finding a stable majority is not guaranteed, there is always the risk of policy stalemates or deadlocks. The Mudawana issue is a case in point. It has been taken out of politics because no agreement could be reached. Even the experts have found it hard to reach consensus. In the end, it might be the king who will have to make the final stand on the issue, one that would expose him more to the differences of opinion that exist among the population and possibly even damage his legitimacy as the Leader of the Faithful.

Whatever happens with this and other controversial issues that no doubt will arise in a more democratic polity, there is still a good measure of political stability at the level of the system itself. What is more, political rights and civil liberties are no longer stepped upon as whimsically as in previous periods. That is not to say that Morocco is a model of respect for human rights. Some Moroccan Muslims feel that their civil liberties are violated in the ‘passive’ sense because of what they perceive as the watering down of their sense of morality. The most serious challenge to human rights in Morocco has come as a result of the bombing, attributed to terrorists associated with Al-Qaeda, in Casablanca in 2003. It is not clear whether or not it will set off a much stricter police regime, but the government is obviously under pressure from the international community, not the least the Bush Administration in Washington, to be vigilant against extremists. Despite these incidents, Morocco's track record has improved. As seen in a historic perspective, politics in Morocco is less "off-balance" than as in the case in Sudan.

Conclusions

The real challenge that remains in Morocco is for politics to become a mass phenomenon. The political parties have remained elitists. Even though the parties in the
middle may be more embedded in society, they have not managed to incorporate the Sufi periphery nor raise political consciousness to a point where ordinary citizens participate in a reasoned manner. The reason for this inadequacy is Morocco’s long history of being a country where politics has been dominated by the king and his need to play one political group against another. Politics has been horizontal without any real accountability rather than vertical with some form of public accountability. It is this latter governance dimension that remains undeveloped in Morocco.

Issues such as the Cold War and the Western Sahara that helped shape politics are no longer as important, but relations with the rest of the world have grown in significance and will have a more direct influence on what is happening, as the past five years have aptly illustrated. Trade and terrorism and their impact on national politics are issues that the government in Rabat can no longer ignore. These external relations will no doubt keep the tensions between the literal and liberal traditions alive. Given the distinctive versus diffusive understanding of Islam, that is, between “high” Islam and “low” Islam, moral issues will continue to be important fodder in Moroccan politics for the foreseeable future. Whether or not the country will be able to sail through these difficult waters without capsizing is too early to say.
CHAPTER 7
TOWARDS AN EMBEDDED DEMOCRACY MODEL

This dissertation has argued that the principal challenge to democratization in Islamic countries is to find a balance between the Islamic and Western legacies --what I call the literal and liberal traditions-- that characterize the contemporary Muslim world. It is the imbalance or lack of embeddedness in both these traditions that makes countries such as Morocco and Sudan “off-balance,” or enduring political instability and having a lack of respect for political rights and civil liberties. In this situation, there is always the risk of extremist responses by either secular or fundamentalist religious actors, swinging the pendulum even further in one direction or the other. The state has provided these modernist forces with disproportionate power they could use to separate their efforts from the geographic periphery, mainly dominated by Sufis. Thus, the political struggle in the Muslim world can no longer be seen by merely investigating an ideological continuum, it has to include political incorporation of the periphery in a cross-cutting manner.

My work has centred on two countries, Morocco and Sudan, which have dealt with the task that the state had undertaken, oftentimes at odds with the society, to reconcile the literal and liberal traditions out of circumstances that are both similar and different. The French colonized Morocco, the British colonized Sudan. While the French spared no effort to turn the linguist difference between the Berbers and the Arabs into an ethnic one, the British succeeded in erecting a racial hierarchy that drove forever a wedge between Arabism and Africanism in Sudan. Morocco has the regional conflict of western Sahara that started in 1975, the first rebellion in southern Sudan started in 1955. The following
observations will be made about these similarities and differences, and also will place these two cases in a comparative Islamic context. In doing so, I will address the following questions:

What Difference Does Peripheral Location in the Islamic World Make?

The dialectic between the *Mashreq* and the *Maghreb*, that is, the competition between the Abbasid and the Umayyad, continued over 1,200 years, allowed Morocco an opportunity to centralize its political authority, Sudan’s peripheral location in the Islamic world denied it the dynamics it needed to consolidate its religious authority, needless to say, to make it central. (The only time Sudan received any recognition from a centralized religious authority is when the Ottomans collaborated with the Egyptians to import slaves from southern Sudan at the end of 19th century.) Also, the military confrontation with Europeans --mainly Spanish and Portuguese-- made the Moroccan king the bastion in the face of Crusaders invading the Islamic territory from the Mediterranean Sea. This rivalry was gradually dissolved with the French colonization that spared no effort to assimilate at least the Moroccan elite into European culture. Sudan may have been saved the “evil of Westernization,” subsequently Sudan inherited a range of ideological polarization narrower or less strenuous than that experienced by Morocco. The ideological spectrum in Sudan extends from Islamically liberal to Islamically literate, that of Morocco extends from westernly liberal to Islamically literate (see Chapter 4).

Sudan went the full ideological course, thus allowing itself --at least theoretically-- to overcome the secular/theocratic dichotomy and entertain a liberal/literalist continuum, a position Morocco is qualified for intellectually, but besieged from politically (see Chapter 2), Morocco managed through the manipulative authority of the king to go center-right when the political circumstances both nationally and internationally favored
the left. The country then did a shift center-left when regional dynamics favored the right. At the time of independence, Morocco had one party, Istiglal Party, which occupied the middle ground. Though critical of an undemocratic practice of the Makzan, the Istiglal Party never disputed the authority of the king as a Leader of the Faithful. Moroccans very strategically used this duality to maintain stability while facilitate political dynamics. Overcoming the left was not as easy in Morocco because it had intellectual presence, as well political weight. However, with the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, the left needed to adjust its watch. It sought a marriage of convenience with the king, who needed popular support in the face of increasing popularity of Islamists, who pulled their heads out of the Istiglal Party that had sheltered them for decades.

Sudan’s middle ground was divided between the DUP and Umma, parties that were dominated by sharifs. They were the equivalent of the monarch, but without a throne. For ideological reasons that I discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, the DUP was closer to the left end of the spectrum and the Umma to the right end of the spectrum (see Figure 4.1). The lack of cooperation between the two mid-of-spectrum parties made them susceptible to seduction from either extreme. Also, the disjuncture between the elites and the masses within these traditional parties emasculated the ability of the leaders to influence change that would make this religious base better receptive of the rights of minority group that lives in geographically distinct region, southern Sudan. Inasmuch as the issue of an Islamic constitution was central to the political turmoil in Sudan, it explains the difficulty Muslims are having in adjusting to the transformation from a community of believers to citizens of a nation-state.
What Difference Does Political Stability Make to the Respect of Political Rights and Civil Liberties?

The ideological tension did not disrupt the social fabric in Morocco because the society is culturally homogeneous (it nonetheless affected its ability to handle the Western Sahara issue in a rational manner). As low as it appears, the ideological tension has put Sudan in total disarray because the society is culturally heterogeneous. In addition to reasons I discussed earlier, I want to say that Morocco has succeeded in better utilizing its geographical position and its history due to its low degree of cultural heterogeneity, mainly linguistic differences between Berbers and Arabs that the French spared no effort to exploit. Sudan has almost lost an opportunity to capitalize on its rich cultural constituency. As much as it is an asset, cultural diversity has fed in the hands of ethnic and religious entrepreneurs who are as effective --from a close or a large distance-- in disrupting the nation building process.

The presence of a centralized religious authority allowed the Moroccan authority monopoly (over cultural symbols) that it could use to draw dissent within a reasonable range, hence build institutions robust enough to do development. To the extent that this centrality of power can be useful, it gives the state manipulative authority over the polity and makes it dependent on extreme coercive measures in dealing with the periphery, for example the Western Sahara. The absence of a strong central authority in Sudan opened the door for ideological polarization that extended from the extreme left to the extreme right. Modernists forces, be it the left (seculars) and the right (Islamists), have ideological appeal but lack the popular mandate. Therefore, they use the institutions of the modernist state to affirm their authority. Thwarting the various process of deliberation has deprived the Sudanese state of a machinery, civic society, it could have used to synchronize
variegate voices or space it could have reconfigured to allow for a reasonable range of political socialization. The state destroyed the polity by not giving the political opposition a leeway to regroup and peacefully address their legitimate grievances.

The more the state elites insisted on dragging the locus of power to coincide with the center of politics the more politics became dysfunctional. Only through armed revolt -this time from the barefooted peasants in Darfur-- did elites recognize that the history of Sudan remains greater than that reached by ideological Islam, and its geography is wider than what was limited by the sectarian domain defined by the British. Despite the fact that traditional parties have difficulty incorporating the majority of the Sufi periphery, the brief moments of collaboration that they enjoyed ameliorated the tension between the peasants of Darfur, who sympathized with the center-left (DUP), and pastoralists who paid allegiance to the center-right (Umma Party). To grant themselves a foothold in Darfur, the Islamists exploited this vocational difference; consequently, it took the form of a primordial conflict, Africans versus Arabs, that renders as secondary the religious differences between Christians and Muslims (see Chapter 5).

The ability of northerners to rule --almost five decades undisputedly-- depended on their ability to exploit the religious (and ethnic) cleavage between the west and the south. It wasn’t until they were blatantly discriminated against that the people of Darfur, e.g., realized that the idea of an “Islamic state” was nothing more than a subterfuge Islamists (from the northern part of the country) used to continue their hegemony over the periphery. By eliminating bureaucracy, state elites (Islamists) have managed to use public institutions as a vehicle for private wealth. Not only so, but they also ceased to extend health and educational services to the poor. In contrast, the Moroccan bureaucracy still
enjoys relative autonomy in the distribution of resources; albeit it gives the nobility preferential treatment\(^1\) and erects an infrastructure that aims at gradually liking the coastal cities to the inner towns (Vermeren 2002).

**What Lessons, If Any, May Be Drawn from the Cases of Morocco and Sudan for the Rest of the Muslim World?**

It is fair to say that international actors during the Cold War had no commitment to democracy, only political stability could helped superpowers secure their economic interest. After the heat of communism passed (early 1970s), and before the breeze of Islamic Revivalism (mid to late 1980s), both Morocco and Sudan managed to stay in the middle part of the ideological spectrum. While taking coercive measures nationally, they facilitated development by attracting money from international agencies. Though it may be argued that their dependence on external sources influenced their political carelessness nationally (that is, lack of concern for democratic proceedings), the fact remains that it is in that period that Moroccan and Sudanese authorities attracted the most finances. Morocco was endowed with institutional stability helped it make sustainable investments, as well as solicit funds that helped it fight the war in the Western Sahara.\(^2\) Sudan’s inability to draw dissent within a reasonable range caused it to waste a huge potential for growth, while failing to deflect the human and material cost of civil war. Both the

\(^1\) Failure of king Hassan II to reform agricultural lands distributional system reflects the state’s intent to sustain the feudal aristocratic system that gave rise to the monarchy in the first place.

\(^2\) Zoubir contends, “The Western Sahara conflict had never brought the superpower close to a confrontation. However, unlike Moscow’s genuinely neutral attitude toward the conflict, Washington had pursued a rather contradictory policy despite its official neutrality, because though unwilling to recognize Morocco’s sovereignty over the Western Sahara, it had accepted its administration. More importantly, the United States has provided Morocco with considerable military and technical support since the beginning of the war” (Zoubir 1990:233).
Moroccan and the Sudanese authorities used their regional conflicts to dismiss as irrelevant the opposition’s demand for democracy.

However, terms like democracy and dictatorship do not mean much unless we examine the dynamics at both national and party politics (that is, go beyond the surface to investigate the relationship among and in-between parties). Nimeiri, the military dictator who ruled Sudan between the years 1969 and 1985 thwarted political dynamics at the national level through his adoption of the one-party system. Many Sudanese activists and scholars argue, at some stage, that the Socialist Union Party respected democratic proceedings--more than traditional parties that limited their understanding of democracy to the procedural not the substantive aspect of democracy, that is, the voter’s right of participation ends by casting a ballot on the day of election. Also, by virtue of being liberal and secular, the Socialist Union Party was more accommodating of the cultural diversity of the Sudanese nations than traditional parties that were divided along ethnic and religious lines. For as long they managed to maintain a politically moderate political agenda, state elites benefited from the Sufi leaders who preferred indirect access to politics. King Hassan II of Morocco and Nimeiri of Sudan made themselves indispensable by exploiting ideological differences at the elite level.

Elites, be it modernists on either the left or the right of ideological spectrum or even conservative, preferred an easy route to power, one that would save them the effort of having to communicate with the masses which they perceived as a “sack of potatoes,” to borrow Karl Marx’s expression. (We must not forget the gap in education and power, an important factor which I allude to in Chapter 4.) Depending on where they are in the ideological spectrum, elites allowed themselves to be played in the hands of despots, both
military and civilian. Modernist elites accompanied army officers in their occupation of the national palace in Sudan, and conservatives entouraged sectarian leaders to ceremonial events. Apart from parasitic and opportunistic tendencies, the absence of a lowest common denominator, that is, agreement about basic issues such sovereignty, national unity, respect of human dignity, and so forth, frustrated the democratic process, which as ideologically moderate as it is, was not sustainable because of the weak incorporation of the periphery to the center.

**What Might be the Ways and Means of Achieving a More Embedded Form of Democracy in the Islamic World, Based on the Experiences of the Two Countries Studied Here?**

This dissertation has identified two tendencies that influenced political stability. These are petal/fugal tendency (ideology) and the hierarchy/rebellion proclivity (power), which were influenced by spectrum of interpretation and history (see Chapters 3 and 4), the interplay between these factors was explained in Chapter 2. The first can be overcome using a bicameral system, the second adopting a presidential system, at least in the case of Sudan (since it does not have a monarch). A bicameral system allows Sufis to voluntary gravitate toward the center. It reduces ideological polarization and closes the gap between elites and the masses, thus fusing *representativeness* and *efficiency*. A presidential system may have the effect of stabilizing a country like Sudan; more importantly allows it to integrate its polity in a non-discriminatory manner. For instance, a ticket with a president representative of western Sudan, and a vice from southern Sudan, carries seventy percent of the populous vote.

The relationship between power and ideology is synonymous with the relationship between identity and development. Without reshaping identity it may be difficulty to reformulate the polity. The recently liberated Amazigh culture and still incarcerated
Nubian cultures can play a constructive role in helping Morocco and Sudan, respectively, regain their pre-Islamic and non-Islamic heritage while being loyal or possibly reinvigorating Islamic culture. In conclusion, governance in Muslim countries can prove elusive unless a cultural reorientation occurs that democratically links the individual with his inner self, the society with its various organs, and the state with its variegate components. A balanced socio-political philosophy -as the linchpin of my project-revitalizes the fluidity between the liberalist and the literalist traditions through a gradual process of political socialization that widens the scope of governance beyond sec/theo dichotomy to entertain lib/lit duality. (The wider the realm of governance the more embedded is democracy.) It is yet to be seen if the globalization political dynamics will facilitate a move to a humanist ideal that stresses individual rights as an incentive to fulfilling communal duties, thereby establishing footholds for an “embedded democracy” model as a necessary condition to doing sustainable development in the Muslim world. As progressive as we would want it to be, this is a process of political maturity that follows an elusive labyrinthine path.
APPENDIX A
GLOSSARY

‘Alim (pl. ‘ulamâ’): a learned man, in particular one learned in Islamic legal and religious studies.

‘Aql: “reason,” “reasoning”; in Islamic law, systematic reasoning is not limited to qiyâs (q.v.).

Amîr (also emir): a general or other military commander; after classical ‘Abbâsî times many independent rulers held this title; sometimes assigned to members of the ruler’s family.

Dhimmi (also zimmi): a “protected subject,” follower of a religion tolerated by Islam, within Muslim ruled territory, cf. ahl al-kitâb. The protection is called “dhimmah.”

Fiqh: jurisprudence; the discipline of elucidating the Sharîah (q.v.); also the resultant body of rules. A faqîh is an exponent of fiqh.

Îmân: religious faith; conviction, which a Muslim acknowledges both inwardly and outwardly through his actions.

Jazb: a state of Divine ecstasy.

Jihad: war in accordance with the Sharîah (q.v.) against unbelievers.

Mahdi: According to the belief of Muslims, he is a descendent of the Prophet from the lineage of Al-Hassan, who will join Jesus (the son of Mary) in his fight against the wrong Jewish Messiah. Many revolutionaries in the Muslim world returned to this messianic tradition in their fight against tyrants through the ages.

Sharîah: the entire body of rules guiding the life of a Muslim. In law, ethics, and etiquette; sometimes called Sacred Law (or Canon Law), The provisions of the Sharî’ah are worked out through the discipline of fiqh (q.v.).

Sharîfs: Descendents of the Prophet through his daughter Fâtima and his son-in-law Ali

Silsilah: spiritual chain.

Sûfi: an exponent of Sûfism (Ar. Tasawwuf), the commonest term for that aspect of Islam which is based on the mystical life.

Sufi Islam: “syncretic” Islam, one that coexisted with and was influenced by indigenous traditional beliefs.
Sunnah: received custom, particularly that associated with Muhammad; it is embodied in hadîth (q.v.).

Zawyia (or Khalwa): traditional school of religious sciences.
APPENDIX B
INDEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH ELITES, SCHOLARS, AND ACTIVISTS:
MOROCCO

AA: Dean of King Hassan II Islamic School
AA: Department of Tax administrator
AA: Head of the liberal arts school education section in Rabat
AA: Representative of the General Accountant Office
AB: Justice and Development MP, Agriculture Committee
AB: Justice and Development Party, MP
AG: King Hassan’s Arabic teacher and consultant
AG: Minister of Economics, 1980-1984
AM: Former minister of cultural affairs
AM: Former Moroccan Ambassador to Sudan
AR: Head of a religious group, Sharia professor
AR: Head of the high school curricula committee
FA: Justice and Benevolence Group spokesperson
GM: Head master of Dicard French School
HG: Movie Critic
HH: Editor of al-Asr newspaper, Justice and Development Party
HN: Head of Moroccan writers group
KN: Member of Development and Socialist Party
MA: Distinguished Professor, spokesperson of Socialist Party
MA: Minister of Cultural Affairs, Socialist Union
MA: Political science professor
MB: Dean of the Liberal Arts Department, Independence Party
MB: Head of Media Department
MG: King’s Economic Consultant
MK: Former Human Rights Organization President, political science professor
MR: Head of Justice and Development parliamentary group
MY: General Manager of Economist (a magazine considered the flagship of liberalism)
NK: Head of the Women Independence Group, MP
NY: Justice and Benevolence Party
OG: One of few people who signed Morocco’s independence document
SO: Vice Chairman of the Justice and Development Party
TA: Justice Department official
TA: Philosophy professor, member of Sufi group
APPENDIX C
INDEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH ELITES, SCHOLARS, AND ACTIVISTS:
SUDAN

AA: An activist among Ansar group
AA: Architect of Addis Ababa Agreement, Head of Regional Council (southern Sudan)
AA: Chairman of the political science department
AB: Friedrick Foundation (German funded NGOs)
AB: Political science professor
AB: Teachers Union
AH: Umma Party, Former Attorney General
AJ: Retired Judge, legal consultant of Nimeiri
AM: Minister of Defense, Vice chairman Umma Party
AS: Former minister of heath
DH: Retired judge, former minister of education
FZ: Communist Party
GO: Southern elite, educator, and prominent politician
GS: Human Rights representative
GS: National Islamic Front
HA: Former President of Omdurman University, head of Sufi group
HB: Supreme Court Judge
IS: National Islamic Front
KZ: Member of Communist Party

MA: Deputy minister of education

SM: Democratic Unionist Party

SM: Former president of Sudan

SM: Tribal Chieftain (Darfur)

SS: Ministry of Education

TZ: National Islamic Front

YA: Retired army commander
APPENDIX D
ABBREVIATIONS

DOP: Declaration of Principles
DUP: Democratic Unionist Party
ICF: Islamic Charter Front
IGADD: Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development
NDA: National Democratic Alliance
NIF: National Islamic Front
NSR: National Salvation Revolution
PDF: Popular Defense Forces
SCP: Sudanese Communist Party
SPLA/M: Sudan People’s Liberation Army/Movement
SSIM/A: South Sudan Independence Movement/Army
SUP: Umma Party of Sudan
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

I was born in Evanston, Illinois, in May 1965. My family moved back to Sudan when I was 3 years old. I attended San Francis, a Catholic missionary school in the city of Khartoum. In addition to teaching scientific subjects in English, the school placed emphasis on discipline. I resisted the conformity that the Catholic priests implied through their doctrinal approach to knowledge.

By the time I reached high school, I had to decide between going either into medicine or engineering. Since my father was a professor of engineering, civil engineering was my obvious choice. I entered the engineering department at the University of Khartoum; I pursued a master’s degree in structural engineering at the Illinois Institute of Technology. I then worked as a structural engineer with Carl Walker Engineers in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

In Kalamazoo I met Omar Badaoud, a chemistry student, who occasionally volunteered to lead the prayers at the city mosque. His recitation of the Qur’an and uniqueness of style captured my attention. He had received his pedagogical training in Jeddah from a sheik who had the shortest link of recitation to the Prophet Mohamed (PBUH).

I then became interested in studying with the sheik, but I needed; to completely memorize the Qur’an, that is to say; memorize the 6,666 verses of Islam’s holy book to memory. It seemed like a big hurdle, but I felt I could achieve this memorization without
much difficulty because I had a talent for memorizing long passage. I memorized the Qur’an in 100 days; setting a record for humanity and Muslim generations to come.

The Qur’an did not provide answers for the ontological questions I was asking, probably because I treated it as a manual of governance rather than a scripturalist text that provided man with the balance needed to seek answers for his own problems --a correction in the right direction.

However, until that point, it was not clear to me which discipline to further pursue in the social sciences. In 1997, I entered the department of economics at the University of Florida, only to find out that economists --in their attempt to modulate human behavior-- were emulating engineers. Michael Chege, the director for African studies at that time, suggested that I major in political science, and Leslie Anderson recommended me for the doctorate program in that field. I entered the program in 2001. In this field I could explore the dynamics that govern the relationship between man and his inner self, investigate the factors that had for a long time characterized the strenuous relationship between the individual and the community, between religion and politics, as well as examine the fluidity between traditionalism and modernity.

I was destined to bear the burden of trying to reconcile the tension between the two from the day of my birth. My father is a descendent of the great leader of the Baggara, Madibbo Ali. My mother is the daughter of the first governor of Khartoum after the British left, Ahmed Mekki. That definitely had its imprints in my character. Unlike some of my siblings who chosen one characteristic over the other, I was determined to make the best of both modernity and traditionalism. Only time will tell if I will succeed.
Apart from the difficulty that I encountered in overcoming the cultural embeddedness of the program, the intellectual training process was cumbersome. I believe intellectuality by nature is disturbing and unsettling, because it forces us to challenge our prejudices and expects of us nothing less than fulfilling our humanist ideal. Now that I have reached the final stages of obtaining my doctorate, I can say that this was a jubilating and rewarding experience.

In addition to teaching, I plan to establish a consultancy firm that specializes in issues that relate to democratization, developmental administration, policy evaluation, and conflict mediation. I hope to establish the consultancy in Dubai because it has become a center of cultural interaction aspiring to be a point of intellectual correspondence. My ultimate goal is to establish a prestigious social science institute in Khartoum that contributes to the unity of the African continent through the political socialization of its future leaders. I just fear that politics will consume my energies before I fulfill my academic dreams. If it does, that is the will of Allah, the Merciful and the most Compassionate.