The Internet and Politics in Morocco
The political Use of the Internet by Islam-oriented political movements

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Contents

List of Tables

List of Screen Shots

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Introduction

The importance of mass media in political, social and economic development has long been recognised by social scientists (Lerner, 1958).[1] Key to their argument is the belief that the media's influence has a great potential to transform traditional political structures and ultimately lead to political modernity.[2] This basic assumption applies to the developed as well as to developing countries, including the countries of the Arab and Islamic world (Lerner, 1958). However, some communication scholars doubt whether the advent and deployment of mass media in the Arab and Islamic world would be in the service of political development (Hafez, 2001: 10). Others argue that these accounts sound rather unconvincing and simplistic, since mass media would have a very limited effect on politics, society and culture in the Arab and Islamic world. Most Arab regimes place the media under the dominant political authorities and institutions, and employ media channels for political propaganda and entertainment, at the expense of other functions and services.

Few studies concern themselves with mass media, politics and Islam in the Arab and Islamic world, as research on Islam often generally ignores the media dimension. In the 1960s, there was no systematic study which brought together media, politics and Islam. This situation was understandable given the highly restrictive media policies applied to media systems in the Arab and Islamic world. In the 1970s, the acknowledgement of the role of mass media in the Arab and Islamic world was both specific and limited. William Rugh analysed the role of print media in the struggle for power by means of a typology based on three distinctly different types of Arab press (Rugh, 1987). The first type refers to the "mobilizing press" which is marked by its complete subordination to the political regime. This type is founded in revolutionary countries such as Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Syria South Yemen and Sudan.[3] It was widely recognized that under such conditions, those media institutions had exerted no impact on the political modernisation in the Arab and Islamic world, except to serve as mobilising tools to support and to applause economic and social policies of the regimes.

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[1] In The Passing of Traditional Society, Modernizing the Middle East, Daniel Lerner (1958), argued that the way of living in the Third World could change under the influence of the mass media.
[2] By political modernity we simply mean a whole new set of institutions or "institutional clusters" that change the political processes that characterized the pre-modernized world (Giddens, 1990).
[3] Before May 22nd, 1990 Yemen was divided into two parts, the North Yemen and South Yemen.

The second type is the "loyalist press" which is privately owned yet it supports the political establishment and is subject to censorship as journalists could be punished if they transgress the red lines. Rugh found this kind of press in countries like Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates. Instead of criticizing basic policies of the government, party and the military, the "loyalist press" advanced the regime's political, social and economic programmes (Rugh, 1987).

The third type is the "diverse press" and is characterized by diversity of opinions articulated by a certain degree of liberty. Only three Arab countries enjoy this kind of press diversity, namely Lebanon, Kuwait and Morocco.[4]

Like the mobilising press, the loyal press had not initiated political change towards democracy in the respective countries where it operated. An additional similarity is that both defended authoritarian regimes. Despite being privately owned, the "loyalist press" reifies conditions for the "Big Lie" of political propaganda to the public, a common practice in the Arab world. From a pluralistic point view, the role of the "loyalist press" is minimal. This is also true of the privately owned "diverse press". The operation of the "diverse press" in a context of authoritarian political structures and restrictive media policies strips it of its democratic political function.[5] Thus, the role of the "diverse press" operating in tight political setting is not much more important. As a political actor, it is currently incapable of triggering political change in direction of democratisation and thus modernizing political systems. From a democratic theoretical perspective, both perform very limited political functions for failing to promote political development towards democracy.

It is to note that Rugh's typology would be applied only to press media. Almost all broadcasting systems in the Arab world were state-owned. Audiovisual systems were almost entirely developed by the regimes in power for their political calculations (Ayish, 2003). The audiovisual systems of Arab countries share some common characteristics. They are distinguished by high incidences of state ownership, financing, regulation, production and distribution. The regimes have monopolised the most influential channels of mass media in the Arab world. The intertwined relations that the media institutions and

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[4] It is to note that some communication scholars agree that this typology - developed in 1979- is still workable yet it needs some adaptation, since the media landscape in the Arab world has undergone profound transformations (Hafez, 2001: 5).
[5] For a detailed discussion see chapter 2, particularly pp. 82-102.

organizations maintained with the political regimes can also be regarded in the context of the authoritarian regimes in the last three decades.

There is a shared belief among communication scholars that the role of mass media in the Arab and Islamic world had fallen into ineffectiveness failing to bring about political modernisation (Rugh, 1987). In fact, mass media itself has served in many ways to enhance authoritarian structures and regimes. The common argument advanced by the ruling elites was that mass media, a significant dimension of the process of social and economic modernisation, was in the service of nation-building. It was legitimatized and deployed by the regimes as a mobilising tool towards building modern states. Thus, mass media was conceived as an integral part in the architecture of the power apparatus. Against this background, political opponents were denied any means of communication and access to public broadcasting.

For this reason, the study of mass media was apparently not very promising and unworthy of either empirical research or theoretical reworking. Sreberny rightly notes that

> "The corpus of work on media in the region remains empirically and theoretically thin, what research exists being predominantly descriptive and devoid of significant analytic framing" (2000: 70).

The studies conducted thus far on mass media have more or less been limited to survey-like accounts carried out through the optics of descriptive handbooks or historical monographs of media systems, including press and broadcasting in the Arab and Islamic world (Boyd, 1982, 1999; Kamalipour and Mowlana, 1996). They focus on the media systems with little reference to political developments. These studies looked at mass media in isolation disregarding the complex intersections between it and the political and social practices and policies it engaged with.

The "missing" link between media, politics and Islam was established during the 1980s. During this period Islam-oriented movements seemed to acquire progressively influence among the youth due partly to the Iranian Revolution of 1979.[6] It was the aspirations of Islam-oriented movements throughout the Muslim world, since it boosted their confidence and increased their political awareness. Consequently, Islam-oriented movements have gathered strength at local, national and global levels. As political movements, they are getting bolder in their challenge to political regimes.

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[6] For more details see chapter 3.

Since the early 1980s, there have been signs of renewed interest in studying the role of media in politics in the Arab and Islamic countries. This interest sparked off quite a variety of studies in connection with this issue. These studies on media in relation to religious movements concluded that the highly repressive political context and lack of direct access to the audiovisual systems, where radio and television have been state-owned, have forced Islam-oriented movements in Iran, and to a lesser extent in Egypt as well as in many other countries, to use audiocassettes as popular mobilisation tools in the political and cultural battle for the "reconstruction" of a religiously-based collective identity, public sphere and society.

The French Islam expert, Gilles Kepel demonstrated in his study the extent to which Islam-oriented preachers, activists and groups exploit the latest information and communication technologies for their political aims. He showed the role of cassette recordings of the sheikh Abdal-Hamid Kishk's sermons in circulating Islam, thus creating a mass following for Islam-oriented movements (Kepel, 1984). Sheikh Kishk popularised the teachings and tenets of Islam through his cassettes, which have echoed in the population not only in Cairo's streets but throughout the Arab and Islamic world.

With the publication of "Small Media Big Revolution" in 1994 by Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ali Mohammadi, audiocassettes have become accredited as a serious agent not only of political change, but of a revolution with global ramification. Here again, the focus was not on mass media in general, but on the special role played by what has been termed as small media. By small media, the authors mean cassette tapes, photocopies, tape recorders, and telephone usage (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi, 1994).

Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ali Mohammadi argue that by distributing religious sermons of Ayatollah Khomeini in the late 1970s the audiocassettes' range of distribution has contributed to the fragmentation of political as well as cultural authority of the Shah's regime. The Iranian Revolution of 1979 has illustrated the particular effectives of audiotapes at spreading the messages of Ayatollah Khomeini and the importance played by the small media in fostering political and religious discontent, thus triggering radical political change.

Given the fact that Islam-oriented movements in the Arab and Islamic world have no direct access *to* the public sphere by means of mass media, the importance of small media media has increasingly grown. Moreover, in centralised, hierarchized and closed information environments, these informal networks of small media have undermined the

formal efforts to control the flow of information. Situated outside the strict regime's control, the small media has provided the much-needed means of political communication for political opponents, particularly Islam-oriented movements, activists and preachers, who have been blocked off by rigid media restrictive policies. Audiotapes, for instance, have easily reached the illiterate population in a way that print press never could and functioned as a resource of political, religious and cultural resistance. By dint of these alternative small media tools, Islam-oriented movements have created for themselves a place in the "communication system" to construct an Islamisizied public opinion and have thus triggered political change and even a revolution in the Iranian case.

One of the most recent debates in contemporary political sciences concerns the extent to which nationally diverse patterns of politics can be sustained in the face of the power of the new electronic media, particularly the Internet (Castells, 1996; Bellamy and Taylor, 1998; Shapiro, 1999). Some social scientists have sought to track discernible structural impacts of the new electronic media on patterns of political culture, organization and behaviour (Rheingold, 2000; Dutton 1996). Their central claim is that rapidly moving information, respective of national borders and political boundaries, (a) abrades the existing political hierarchy's monopoly on powerful national information system, (b) challenges the most glaring authoritarian structures and values within closed societies, and (c) perhaps thus strengthens other political forces that have been deprived for many decades from obtaining access to the mass media to articulate their political ideas and to reach large numbers of people.

In the 1990s, the media landscape in the Islamic world and particularly its Arabic-speaking part underwent structural transformations. The media and communication systems of Arab countries have been reorganised or reconfigured as a result of commercialisation, liberalisation, competition and technological diffusion (Ayish, 2000: 415). The Gulf War of 1990-91 left significant impacts on the structures, production and distribution technologies of Arab media systems, particularly radio and television broadcasting systems.[7] The greatest surge in the number of satellite television channels took place in the past few decades in the Arab world. Before December 2nd, 1990 there were virtually no satellite television channels in the Arab world. By the end of 1997, there were sixty Arabic satellite television channels (Ayish, 2001: 124). By January 2000, all Arab regimes operated a broadcasting satellite channels (Ayish, 2000: 417).

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[7] The American news channel CNN served as a catalyst for the proliferation of satellite television networks.

The launch of direct broad satellites and cable networks through television delivery systems has been in the vanguard of the opening process to freedom of opinions. The Qatari-based satellite news channel, *Al-Jazeera*, and other satellite channels have made a plurality of news available to Arab citizens. It provided alternative viewpoints to national broadcasting. There has been an increase in political information on controversial issues presented via interview programs, open minded pluralistic programs and show talks such as *Al-Jazeera*'s *Opposite Direction*. As a result, *Al-Jazeera* has often drawn the ire of many Arab regimes for its hard-hitting coverage of political and social issues considered taboo in the Arab world.[8]

Since the 1990s, the diversification in the media landscape has helped some civil society groups mount pressure for increasing their shared air time on public-owned broadcasting systems. Politically engaged organizations have demanded the creation of private radio, as well as television stations (Guaaybess, 2001: 71). Under the pressure of these regional and local demands, Arab political regimes have begun to loosen their grip on media systems, by relaxing their inhibitive press codes (Ayish, 2001: 122). The apogee of this was exemplified by the abolition of the Ministry of Information and Culture in Qatar in 1996 (Ayish: 2000: 416).

The increasing prominence of new electronic media in the Arab world is now widely recognised and reflected in an expanding body of literature. Unlike former studies of the Arab mass media, the new studies analyse the political potential of new media technologies. In recent years, communication scholars and media practitioners have turned increasing attention towards understanding the impact of new electronic media on politics, society and culture (Alterman, 1998; Eickelman and Anderson, 1999; Hafez, 2001). Their scholarly books have sought, in different ways, to elaborate on the central dimensions of new media in the digital age on a discussion of the possible emergence of a public sphere characterised by an accelerated pluralism that had been until recently unknown in the Arab world. They have attempted to assess the effectiveness of new media-based communication in Arab and Islamic societies, and particularly, the impact of the satellite. While the various authors disagree about the exact implications of mass media on the

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[8] The list of the Arab regimes, which had media conflicts with *Al-Jazeera* is long. It includes Kuwait 1999, Tunisia 2001, Jordan 2002, Morocco 2002, Libya 2002, Egypt 2003, Palestinian Authority 2003 and the member countries of Gulf Cooperation Council 2003. For more detail see Ayish, 2003.

political change, there is wider agreement on the principle that the new media can increase chances for participating in public debate.[9]

While satellite television remains crucially important in the continuing struggle for political change in the Arab world, the Internet may have more political character in the new electronic media regime. But to clarify the political role new electronic media has played in the Arab world in recent times, we shall draw a broad contrast between the Internet and satellite-based political communication. Where does the Internet differ from Satellite?

Let us examine the case of the Internet in political communication as a way to clarify what is at stake and to remove some likely confusion about the general attribute of new electronic media. True, satellite has allowed oppositional groups, dissidents and activists access to the public, but this access is conditioned by a number of constraints such as time-space framework. Oppositional groups have greatly benefited from their use of satellite channels as a platform to distribute their political and social issues. But these satellite-based communicative capacities have not allowed these oppositional groups to control the transmission and communication process. Without this central control over the process of sending and receiving information, they can not develop effective communication strategies. Since they still do not control the diffusion of content, their messages were made adaptable to the vicissitude of the satellites. The greater these oppositional groups and activists depend on satellite in distributing their message and communicate to the audience; the more they are forced to adapt their communication message.

Another area where the Internet excels is that even without studios and expensive equipments, oppositional groups are able to produce content for their websites, since the production of online content requires small production units that consist of one voluntary person. Oppositional groups, including human rights activists, political dissents and Islam-oriented movements across the Arab world have set up a number of websites, yet only a very few have operated a satellite channel.[10] Because the cost of owning and setting up a

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[9] Such studies have focused on the role of mass media in redefining Islamic public life and elaborating the rise of political and religious pluralism. Still almost no attention has been devoted to examine the potential impact of the new electronic media in initiating democratic change in Arab countries, where this has not yet taken place.

[10] The famous exception is *Al-Manar* satellite, operated by *Hizb Allah* in Lebanon. Islam-oriented movements in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Saudi-Arabia do not possess a satellite. Even Ben Laden, who can afford the financial resources to operate a satellite, has not yet launched a satellite.

number of websites is relatively low, these groups can be given unprecedented communication abilities to communicate directly with their political and religious audience en masse and to network for common causes. With the Internet, they can get in touch with people with less effort, cost and without time constraints. They have successfully reached much beyond what their limited resources would otherwise allow. The potential for the distribution of political content is far more evident with the Internet than with the satellite.

Examining the actual capacities of the Internet reveals how it embodies a great number of features which can not be found in the satellites. The satellite undermines rational debate, a precondition of the public sphere, through stress on action and visualisation rather than rationalisation. The satellite also restricts participation in public debate, since it generates information for the general media audience under the impact of processing information as a commodity. Table 1 summarizes the main points of comparison.

Table 5: Satellitized and internetized political communication

Comparable characteristics	Satellite	Internet
Function of content	Content as commodity	Content as message
Mode of presentation	Framed message	Original message
Type of emphasis	Emphasis on Form	Emphasis on Content
Type of emphasis	Non-text-based	Text-based
Mode of debate	Emotional	Rational
Spatial-temporal framework	Limited	Unlimited
Base of audience	Broad	Narrow

Mass media, including satellite televisions function well in the hands of the regimes to *reinscribe* their authority. The Internet fits oppositional groups. Though much less widespread than satellite television and beyond the financial and educational reach of many. A number of marginalized groups have extensively and intensively utilized the Internet to circulate their messages, images and religious lectures.

As stated above, since the late 1970s and early 1980s Islam-oriented movements have been actively engaged in mass communication, possessing the requisite

communication competence and access to the public sphere to introduce their messages in to social and political circulation. Since they have been strictly barred from accessing the mainstream mass media, they have resorted to the Internet as a new kind of small media to disseminate their religious sermons and political information, thus create an Islamisized public opinion. In today's context of new electronic media, the list of small media can encompass the Internet, e-mail, mobile telephones and all communication gadgets.

As in the case of small media of the second generation of communication technologies, Islam-oriented movements were also pioneers in the use of the small media of the third generation of communication technologies for religious purposes. The scanned translations of *Qur'an* and *Hadith* in the early 1980s were posted on the Internet by Muslim students and professionals in North America, Europe and Japan (Anderson, 1999). By placing the foundations of Islam on-line, they paved the way for widespread access and later use.

The Internet gained momentum in Arab politics in 2000, when a number of Islam-oriented movements posted their information material on their websites.[11] That paved the way for these movements to orient more of their energy towards the Internet. The publication of these materials would have been unthinkable in the early 1990s, when the communication sphere was blocked against Islam-oriented movements.

But the political use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements in the Arab world raises two issues that may limit its potentials. The first issue is that of access and the second concerns Internet control and online censorship by authoritarian regimes in the Arab world (Goldstein, 1999; Kalathil and Boas, 2003).

Irrespective of the ongoing debate on what digital divide actually represents, the Arab world is a poorly served region, when it comes to Internet infrastructure. The Arab world is characterized by high level of disparity in access to the ICT and usage, low level of digital and information literacy and limited availability and affordability of the physical network including telecommunications networks. The region is home for about 5 percent of the world's population, yet it shares less than 3 percent of the phones, 1.5 percent of the world computers and barely over 2 percent of the world's Internet users (ITU, 2003). Disparities within Arab countries are even worse since the digital divide trails the contours of their economic development: over 75 percent of Internet activity takes place in the Gulf

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[11] Also in Iran the December 2000 marked the real beginning of political use of the Internet by dissident clerics. The famous case was that of Ayatollah Montazeri, who posted his 600-page memoir on the Internet (Rahimi, 2003: 108).

countries, about 12 percent in North Africa, and the remaining countries share 11 percent of its use.[12]

The Internet's diffusion in the Arab world was slow, but considering recent developments regarding infrastructures, coupled with the liberalisation and deregulation of the telecommunication market, the Arab world is catching up (ITU, 2003). In some Arab rich countries the Internet is in the process of becoming a new mass media, in particular among educated people (Wheeler, 2001). Educated Arabs are increasingly becoming familiar with some Internet features including E-mail, databases access, electronic bulletin boards, electronic mailing lists and chat rooms (Wheeler, 2001). The expansion from 1995-2004 has been rapid and the Internet access has been considerably improved and widened. The number of Internet users in the Arab world grew by an estimated 60 percent from 2000 to 2001. There were an estimated 8 million Internet users in the Arab world, a figure expected to double by the end of 2006. Many policymakers in Arab countries are aware of the digital divide, and believe that universal access is a goal their governments are vigorously pursuing. They are sanguine that the Internet will be within a decade a mass medium.[13]

As Peter Dahlgren argued the public sphere on the Internet is generally small in scale compared to the traditional mass media (Dahlgren, 2001: 50). The argument that the Internet has a limited and concentrated audience appears strong, however further analysis will show that the argument has two flaws, particularly when it is applied to Islamic countries. First, the circle of those who could read newspapers and books in nineteenth century England was extremely limited, yet the print media had largely contributed to the emergence of the public sphere in the Habermasian sense, which was restricted to the educated, who could participate in it. Second, even the public affairs in highly developed democracies had "only a minority following concentrated among certain social groups" (Curran, 2002: 226). Whether in nineteen century England or in the highly developed democracies or in today's Arab and Islamic world, it is the educated minority that is behind the emergence and dynamisation of the public sphere. And it is exactly this educated minority which has at present access to the Internet.

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[12] The Gulf countries have one of the highest per capita rates of Internet use. United Arab Emirate of Dubai has fashioned itself as a regional hub for the Internet. In 2001, it launched an Internet City and one of the region's first online e-governments.

[13] Ahmed Nazif, Egyptian Prime Minister, personal interview with the author, March 10, 2004, Hanover, Germany.

The second dimension of the argument that the Internet can not contribute to the political change in the Arab world concerns the online censorship practised by authoritarian regimes (Kalathil and Boas, 2003). Recent years have seen a rising tide of dispute about the freedom of press and the use of the Internet for political objectives in the Arab world. Journalists and scholars have voiced increasing unease that the Internet has come under attack from established political regimes. Regional and international Human Rights Organizations seem to share this concern.[14] In 1999, Human Rights Watch published a survey on Free Expression and Censorship and the Internet in the Arab World. The report analyses the relation between the censorship and the Internet in some Arab countries and concluded that the situation of online expression is depressing (Goldstein, 1999).

Some Arab regimes introduced rigid Internet's regulations. These regulations gave the regimes discretion to arrest and punish political expression. A recent example was the arrest and trail of Zouhair Yahyaoui, the founder of the websites TUNeZINE (www.tunezine.com), Tunesia's most popular dissident website. He was sentenced to two years in prison for spreading false news on the Internet. Arab regimes also used technical tools to block news sites, filter political contents and police chat rooms. But the most common high tech method has been the use of proxy servers to ban websites deemed dangerous. Since 1999, the Saudi regime has closely surveyed the Internet by screening all consulted websites and blocking any website that contained threatening material that contradicted with the tenets of Islam.[15] It was reported that 400.000 websites had been blocked (Economist, 2004: 37).

Arab regimes across the region have employed various techniques to control information online. But these restrictive efforts and methods seem increasingly futile when savvy surfers evade them by using sophisticated hacking techniques, dialling in to outside servers, or using encrypted sites. There will always be a way to distribute political and

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[14] In 2004, the Arab Network for Human Rights Information published a research survey on Internet censorship in the Arab world. The research showed how most Arab countries continue to tighten controls on the Internet expression (http://www.hrinfo.net/).

[15] On February 12th, 2001 the Saudi Council of Ministers issued a resolution that put all Internet users in the country in the obligation to refrain from publishing or accessing data containing "anything contravening a fundamental principle or legislation, or infringing the sanctity of Islam and its benevolent *Ash-SharIa*, or breaching public decency, anything contrary to the state or its system, reports or news damaging to the Saudi Arabian armed forces, propagation of subversive ideas or the disruption of public order or disputes among citizens" http://www.al-bab.com/media/docs/saudi.htm.

religious message on the Internet as well as to get access to online information.[16] Internet users circumvent the regimes' ban by logging into proxy servers. An illuminating example is the use of the Internet by Islam-oriented militant groups in Saudi Arabia, where the regime's sophisticated firewalls, designed after the Singaporean model, have been unable to control Islam-oriented militant groups' Internet-based mode of communication, propaganda and operatives. In addition, the use of anonymous e-mail accounts allows cyber activists and dissidents to publish on the Internet without being tracked.[17]

To understand contemporary Arab politics, political analysis must direct attention to the effects of the Internet. Even before the Internet rose to prominence, some analysts suggested the importance of investigating the critical role of the new electronic media in Arab contemporary politics (Waterbury, 1994; Vatikiotis, 1997). The study of politics and the Internet is a relatively new area of research, because the corpus of work on it is theoretically and empirically thin. However, it is growing fast and taking a solid foot in the ground of political sciences, as some political scientists argue for its importance in political analysis (Margolis and Resnick, 2000: 205). While the first and huge part of the literature originates from the US, there has been little research on politics and the Internet outside of America. This domination is related to the early development of the Internet in this country.

In the case of the Arab world despite growing interests, this kind of study is generally very much in its infancy. There have been few rigorous attempts to evaluate the precise effects of the Internet on Arab political life in general but scholarly attention has not yet been attached to the "conscious" political use of the Internet by organized oppositional groups such as political parties, civil society groups and Islam-oriented movements in their political and cultural battles against authoritarian regimes in the Arab and Islamic world. This study attempts to redress this lacuna by analysing the use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements in Morocco.

Of great concern to the study of Moroccan politics in the last two decades are those questions arising from the impact and implications of the use of the new electronic media. The Internet's arrival was heralded as an important force in the Moroccan political life

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[16] It was reported that software programs whose function was to enable Internet surfers to safely get access to forbidden websites without being tracked by the regime, were available in Syria for just one dollar (The Economist, July 10th 2004).

[17] Neofuturists present anonymity as a "plus" for political communication, since it will liberate the political communicator from security gaze of the institutions of the state. See chapter 1 for further detail on this theoretical position.

(Elmandjra, 2001). One of the most distinctive features of the Moroccan society after its independence from French colonial rule in 1956 was the total dominance of monarchical political power over the social, economic and religious fields. The forty-nine year hegemonic domination of the regime has significantly influenced the post-independence development of the national information system. Consequently, radio and TV broadcasting never gained complete freedom from the regime. The regime had, with a great success imposed and implemented a closed, centralised and homogenised information system in which contesting political and religious ideas were actively controlled. At normal political times, relaxed control mechanisms were implemented to emphasise the liberal and tolerant aspects of the regime. On the other hand, when confronted with acts of political contestation strict censorship was enforced.[18]

One of the more obvious outcomes in the rise of the new information system is the emergence of a new symmetry between political forces. With the steady advance of the ICTs the deconstruction and possibly disintegration of the monopolistic structures of the old, controlled and homogenised national information system is currently underway. The national information system has undergone a fundamental redefinition of its important institutions, nature and functions. The national information system has been stripped of its *dirigist*, unquestioned authoritative and centralising tendencies. This means a relative restriction of the organizational competence of its executive corpus.

Consequently, the constellation of the national information system has begun to change. Many political forces that were disadvantaged in the old national information system have been seeking alternative types of communication to evade tight control and censorship and reach a large segment of Moroccan society. These forces have challenged the scope and capacity of the regime, as its regulatory ability can no longer effectively control the flow of information.

The imperatives of the new information system will condition the new constellation of oppositional groups and the political regime. The direct outcome of this pluralism of access offers immense possibilities to new actors within the Moroccan political field, through transmission of their political and religious messages. This change is likely to be intensified in the coming years, as oppositional groups will be able to distribute their political ideas and opinions, gaining access to the Internet savvy educated population. Thus

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[18] For a detailed discussion see chapter 2, particularly pp. 82-102.

a dynamic conflict between the political regime and Islam-oriented movements concerning the power position in the new and open information system has risen.

Within the last few years, the potential threat posed by the Internet and its immense possibilities of communication has received a great deal of attention from the regime. The regime's main concern centres on the suggestion that the political use of Internet has considerably grown. This concern concentrates on the strength that Islam-oriented movements have gained from the application and use of the Internet in their political conflicts against the regime.

How will the political regime fight back against these challenging informational and communication trends that have been generated by the rise of the Internet should be included in any analysis on the Internet and politics in Morocco. Traditionally, the regime has always attempted, with the help of many strategies, to re-centre the distribution of information and narrow channels of the national information system. But in the Digital Age, characterised by the de-centralising effects of the "technologies of freedom" (Ithiel de Sola Pool, 1990), the task of controlling information flows through the control of the Internet is becoming untenable. Digitised political information takes place in cyberspace that recognises no borders as of yet.

The focus of the research on Islam-oriented political movements stems from the fact that cultural battles are the power battles of the information age. Power, in the form of the ability to create and disseminate information, has been given to relatively powerless segments of society through the use of Internet-based technologies. In line with Castells's argument, cultural forces armed with electronic political communication strategies can produce, legitimate and implement political contents. He identifies power as a "battle around cultural codes, symbols, which relate political and social actors, institutions and cultural movements, through religious leaders and symbols" (Castells, 1998: 348).

Power is founded not only upon the state and its institutionalized monopoly of violence, but also upon its monopoly of information flow. Social movements that have developed the capacity to control their pipelines of information and gain their relative autonomy *vis à vis* political power could form, and are forming their political and ideological constellations. Internet-based media are becoming the ground for power struggle (Castells, 1997: 337). At the centre of political struggles is the communicative power that social actors are gaining since the arrival of the Internet. To put it in a

Castellian statement: The rise of the network society has made the powerless state face the power of identity.

The potential power of the Internet had also not gone unnoticed by Islam-oriented political forces, which have enthusiastically adopted the Internet as a tool of political communication. In fact, based on word exchange with some leaders of Islam-oriented movements, it has become clear that the quick attention of Islam-oriented movements to the communicative potential of the Internet in the Moroccan political field manifests strongly their sense of understanding political communication.

Armed with the belief in the strategic importance and high utility of the Internet, both actual and potential, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*, the leading Islam-oriented political organization in Morocco, set up a variety of websites beginning in the year 2000. From that moment onward, it was clear that the Internet represented a new medium, whose political utility would become ever more dominant in the coming years. In fact, the significance of the electronic political communication has been enhanced by a number of political and technological developments in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Islam-oriented movements, which have traditionally been consigned to the periphery of the national information system, will benefit from the use of the Internet. This situation increases the opportunity to expose their political values and religious principles to larger audiences, because there are now resources and access to the communication spaces. Islam-oriented movements saw and still see the value in using the Internet to further their political and religious goals, as well as disseminating what they claim as true "Islamic values and norms".

Islam-oriented groups have enthusiastically and quickly adopted the Internet as a new medium of political information, communication and recruitment to gain and secure strategic positions in the emerging information system (Alterman, 1999; Anderson, 2000). The Internet gained momentum in Moroccan politics on 28 January 2000, when *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*, the leading Islam-oriented political organization in Morocco, had launched a website to release a memorandum, a voluminous and a critical letter, entitled "to whom it concerns" in many European languages on the Internet under http://www.yassine.net, after the regime banned the umdependent newspapers, which published the full text of the memorandum. It also launched other websites that contain a range of information concerning its religious writings, cultural activities and political discourses.

It has been argued that political communication scholars have not been prompt in studying the changes brought about by the Internet (Vedel, 2003: 41). Changes in communication technology have a significant influence in a number of communication areas. Political communication scholars attempted to predict the direction, intensity, and form of that influence. The literature on the political use of the Internet is still in a nascent state. However, in recent years, political communication scholars have paid attention to the political uses of the Internet by political parties and social movement actors (Horrock, et al., 2000; Van de Donk, et al., 2004). The new era of Internet-based political communication is marked by an increasing flow of political information, which has made political actors rethink their communication strategies to react to every issue in real time. Another dimension of Internet-based political communication is the use of the Internet by citizens to actively search out the information they want, compare sources and look for alternative views. The various uses of the Internet by citizens is still in the process of being formed and need to be stabilized so that political communication scientists can respond to the impact of the individual use of the Internet on political behaviour.

The working definition of the political use of the Internet that guides our case study builds on the efforts of David Resnick (2000, 14). He distinguishes between three levels or types of Internet politics. The first refers to the politics within the Net (which covers "the operation of the Net or some portion of it"). The second refers to politics which impacts the Net (which concerns the government activities actions and policies to make the cyberspace governable). The third type is the political use of the Net (which comprises the use of the Net to affect politics offline). Of primary importance for this research is the third type. This third type is invoked by Islam-oriented movements. This use reflects the relationship of media access and the affairs of public life that are played out through it (Castells, 1997). This work departs from the assumption that the marginalized political forces in the information national system, in particular Islam-oriented movements, can play a leading role in the Internet's use.

The above questions are thought to animate the entire research. To address and answer these questions is the task of this work. This endeavour requires data describing Islam-oriented movements' use of the Internet. For the study of how Islam-oriented

movements use the Internet for political and religious purposes, various methods of data collection have been adopted.[19]

The first method is the archivisation of Islam-oriented movements' websites under systematic observations over a period of thirty months. Data were collected by downloading whole websites (N=12). From the downloaded websites, an archive was built, which functioned as a database. The archive was created to track and record content and design of the websites, which by their nature continually shift.[20]

The second method was interviewing. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with a wide selection of Islam-oriented leaders who were involved in creating the communication content of the organizations. To obtain more information on Islam-oriented movements, data were collected from interviews they had given to news media. Journalists who also interviewed members of Islam-oriented movements were interviewed to gain deep information surrounding the interviews. Higher government officials at ministerial levels were also interviewed to understand the control mechanisms used by the regime. Managers from private Internet enterprises and Internet cafes were also solicited to understand the regime's policies with regards to the use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements. Altogether thirty-one people were interviewed in Berlin, Rabat, Casablanca and Hannover. Some were conducted via the Internet, including e-mail interviews of webmasters of Islam oriented websites, because they are directly involved in shaping the Internet political communication of their movements. All interviews were conducted individually, except one which was performed with two people. The interviews took between forty minutes and an hour. All interviews were performed in Arabic, tape recorded and transcribed.

The third method was opinion research conducted by the author between 2000 and 2002. This survey was made of a sample respondents randomly selected from Casablanca (200 students) and from Rabat (193 student). In total, there were 393 respondents to the survey. Taken in the Moroccan context, the sample may be too small to be adequately and satisfactorily representative. However, it may reflect the overall behaviour of Moroccan students. The questions were in Arabic and were posed to the respondents and written down by the author as means to reach a reasonable degree of administration and control necessitated in an environment unfamiliar with research polls. The questionnaire included

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[19] See Chapter 5 for a detailed methodological reflection, particularly pp. 166-170.
[20] Helpful guidelines and inspirations stemmed from Richard Davis's methodology used in his book "The Web of Politics" (1999).

questions about e-mail use and frequency, Internet access and use, chat and relationships in the virtual environment, and about the general view of Moroccan students towards the Internet and the political use of the Internet. This small-scale study is designed to capture the extent of diffusion of political information among the current 2 percent of Morocco's educated population, who regularly use the Internet. We focused on students for two different reasons: Students belong to those who regularly use the Internet, and, more importantly, Islam-oriented movements regard students as their primary group for recruitment and mobilisation.

Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, this study employed open-ended questions interviews, survey research and content analysis of websites. Using multiple methodologies allowed for increased richness of data and a clearer picture of the phenomena under investigation. The rationale is that the weakness of any single method is balanced by the strengths of other methods (Sudweeks and Simoff, 1999: 37).

The most effective research strategy to study how Islam-oriented movements use the Internet for their political objectives is to begin with their websites. A content analysis of Islam-oriented movements' websites was conducted to examine systematically their virtual political, social, economic and religious content. The content analysis has been by far the most popular method in communication studies, in general and Internet-related political studies in particular. Instead it was chosen because of its strength, which relies on the ability to connect the content in the message of the organization and the intentions of individuals.

This work benefits from a multidisciplinary approach that borrows from many disciplines, including political science, communication studies and Islamic studies. As Norris correctly put it research on the Internet is a challenge without integrating research findings drawn from numerous disciplines including those of "communications, sociology, anthropology, history, social psychology, market research and business studies, computer studies, and industrial design, as well as political science" (Norris, 2003). It was clear from the outset that the present study would be most closely identified with the field of political science.

The main objective of this research is to analyse the political application of Internet-based communication forms and strategies of Islam-oriented movements in the Moroccan political field. The core assumption is that the undertaking and utilisation of the Internet will play a critical role in the positioning of some forces in the Moroccan political

field. This study provides empirical evidence to understand how political actors and cultural forces have adopted these technologies and how they are using the Internet to mediate, edit and frame their political discourse, without being *mediated*, *edited* and *framed* by traditional mass media over which they have no direct control.

This case study on the political use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements enables us to gain a deeper insight into multiple related issues, including Islam-oriented movements' communication motivations, their digitalized political, social, economic and religious content, their online strategies in informing and communicating with their audiences, their political activism in mobilizing their members and their constituencies and their religious *Dawa* in recruiting new members. In so doing, we will know about how these new electronic media will affect future political developments in Morocco and by extension in other comparable Arab countries. Last but not least, the case study allows us to elaborate general conclusions and predictions about the future modernisation of the whole Moroccan political system, as well as its eventual re-traditionalisation.

The arrival of the Internet on the Moroccan political field raises some key questions.

1. Why and how have Islam-oriented movements adopted the Internet?
2. How has the regime reacted to the political use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements to maintain and enhance its hegemonic power within the national information system?
3. Will the Internet disrupt the regime's monopoly and control of the national information system?

This work is devoted to a systematic exploration of the Internet and Moroccan politics. It is structured into three parts.

The first part (chapter 1 and 2) prepares the way, both theoretically and historically. The second part, composed of chapters 3 and 4, describes from a historical perspective the rise of Islam-oriented political movements and prior-Internet communication channels used by Islam-oriented movements. The third part consists of the core chapters (5 through 7) which offers a case study based on a empirical investigation of what could be called the political use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements and what impacts it has had on

different aspects of the Moroccan politics such as the public sphere and identity formation as well as how the regime reacted to this new situation. It also presents a survey on how and why students use the Internet.

Chapter 1 is based on a presentation of the theoretical discussion on the meaning and implications of the information and communication technologies, particularly, the Internet, on politics. In this sense, this chapter provides the intellectual foundation and theoretical orientation for addressing the central questions raised in this study.

Chapter 2 traces the emergence and development of the national information system. It also charts how the information infrastructures, read "infostructures", have gradually spread from the research and administration circles to be widely used within the society. The last section in this chapter concerns itself with the political use of the mass media by the regime to strengthen its political and religious hegemony and how it excelled in tightly controlling the access to the mass media for oppositional forces and groups.

Chapter 3 investigates from a historical perspective the rise of Islam-oriented movements covering the period from 1970 to the late 1990s, with special attention paid to the two leading organizations. It also examines their organizational structures. Chapter 4 examines Islam-oriented movements' prior Internet communication strategies to distribute their political message and how the regime has censored these channels.

Chapter 5 links the Internet and Islam-oriented movements, by using empirical material to examine the political significance attached to the Internet by Islam-oriented groups and to explore how have Islam-oriented movements used the Internet and why. We develop the argument that the use of the Internet in the political field by Islam-oriented movements has helped the growth of new networks of communication and information flow by examining the political, social, economic and religious content of the websites. It also discusses the role of the Internet in facilitating their political discussions and communication, as well as establishing a new Islamic virtual community, "virtual *Umma*". It investigates what is happening to the structure of Moroccan public sphere under conditions of electronic and horizontal political communication. This chapter is considered to be the research focus because it pursues the central question.

To establish the common missing link common in the Internet and political studies, chapter 6 provides us with demand side of the use of the Internet. This allows us to get a concrete idea about the relation between supply (chapter 5) and demand (chapter 6) dimensions of the Internet and political analysis. Why and how Moroccan students used

the Internet for political reasons is the subject of chapter 6. The argument is pursued in this chapter, where we examine the use of the Internet and its impact on the relationship between the public sphere and the media.

Chapter 7 shows how the regime has responded to the Islam-oriented movement's new communication alternative. This is fruitfully executed by examining its forms and strategies, including legal and technical ones such as blocking websites.

In the final chapter, we draw conclusions from the research material, and reflect upon some of the major issues arising out of the analysis provided by this study. We will also reconsider and assess the complex relation between the Internet and politics in the Arab world in the light of the results arrived at in this case study.

Figure 2: Islam-oriented movement's strategies *before* the arrival of the Internet
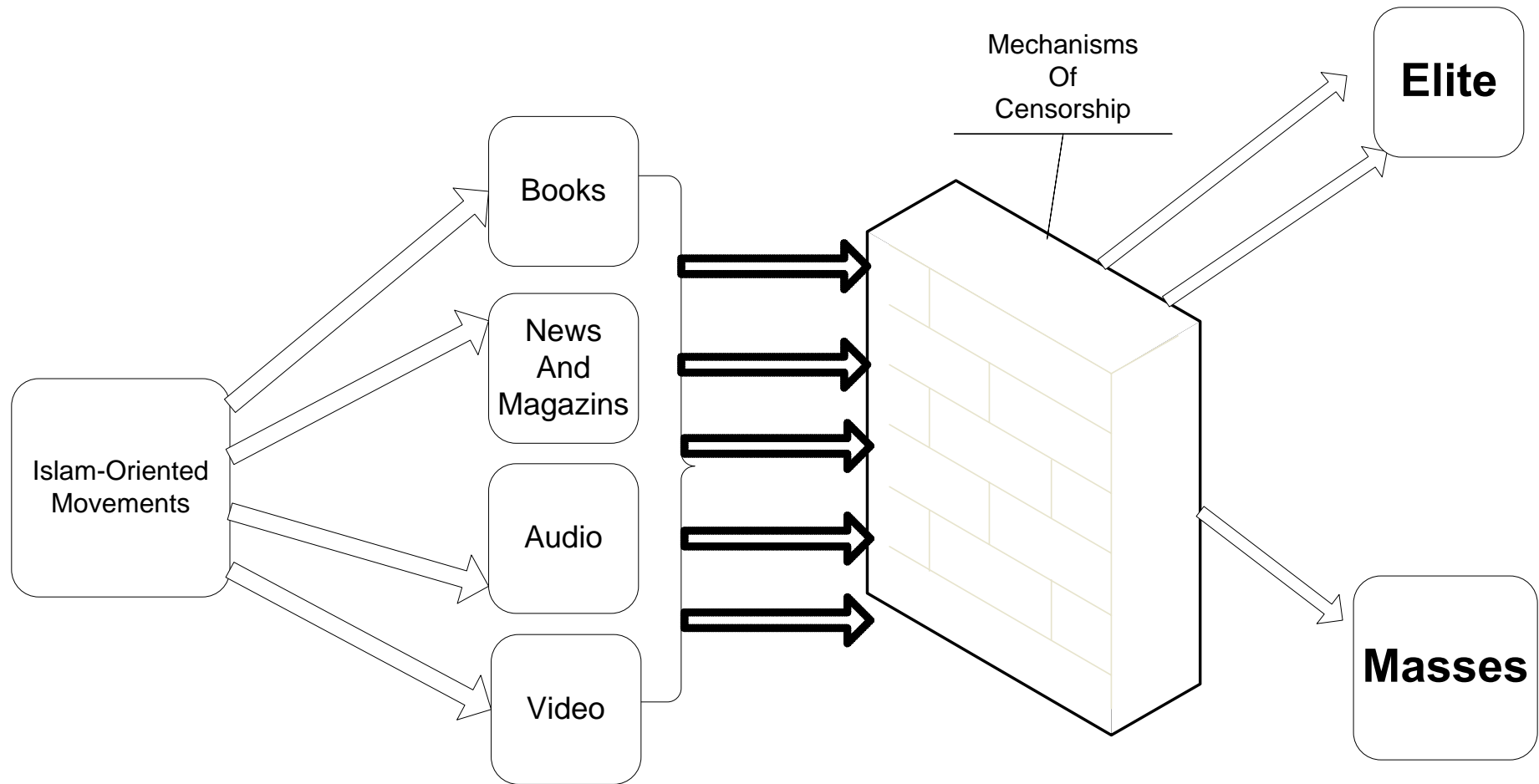
Figure 3: Islam-oriented movement's strategies *after* the arrival of the Internet

Elite

E-mails

Boo**Masses**

News
And
Magazins
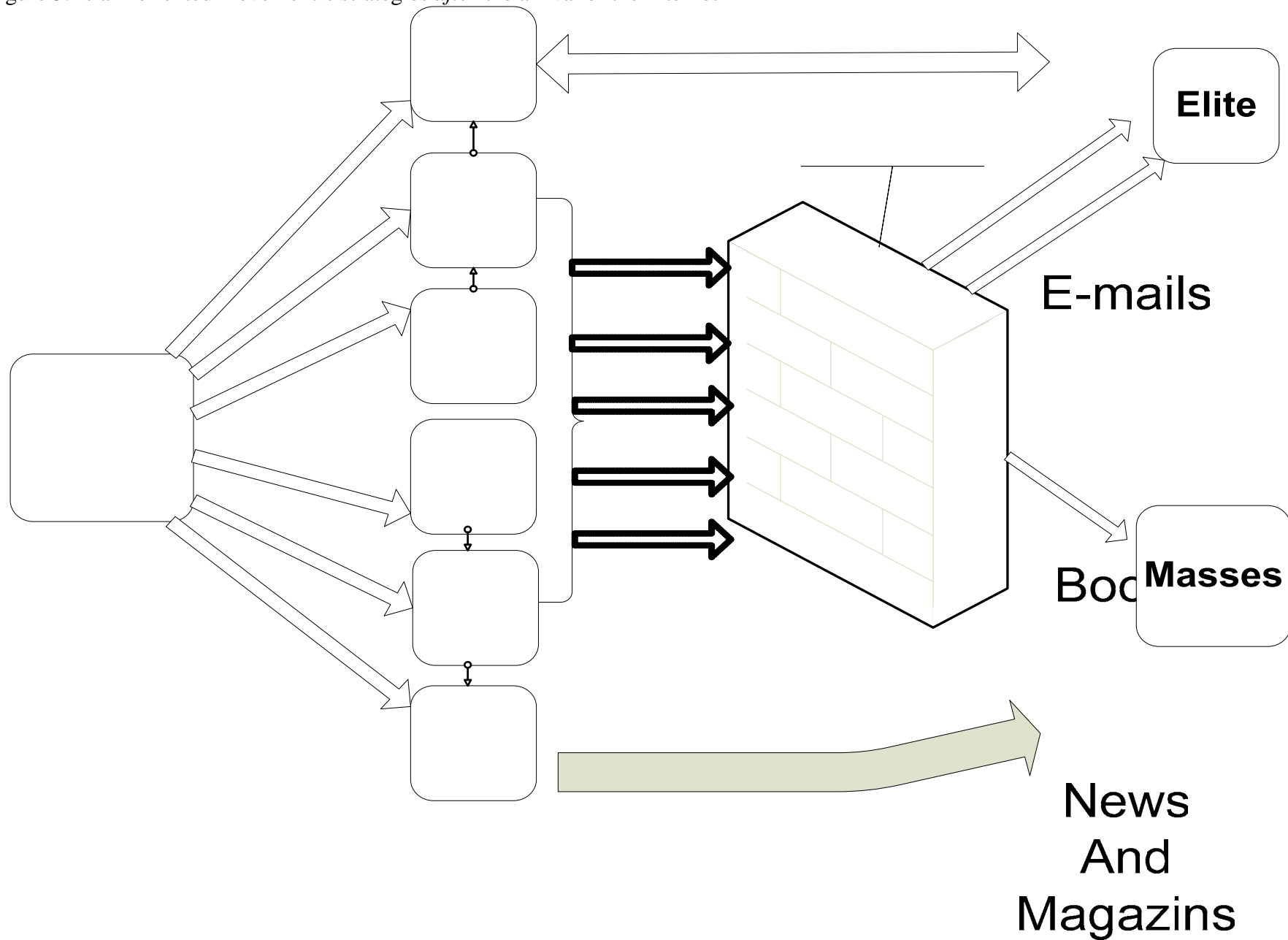
1. Theoretical debate: Overview

A debate on these issues has developed in which it is possible to distinguish three broad normative accounts. Building on Anthony Wilhelm, we refer to these three different accounts as the neofuturists, dystopians and technorealists.[21] It is difficult to identify the body of these positions. However, the core trends and fault-lines seem to be clear. By concerning themselves with the political significance of the Internet, each account has presented general interpretations of democratic potential of the Internet and its implications for the whole political system, including political participation, the citizens and related issues. The review focuses specifically on some interrelated sets of questions and issues with respect to democracy, access, information, communication and community.

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[21] There are other labels such as cyber-utopians or cyber-dystopians.

Figure 1: The structure of the theoretical debate on politics and the Internet

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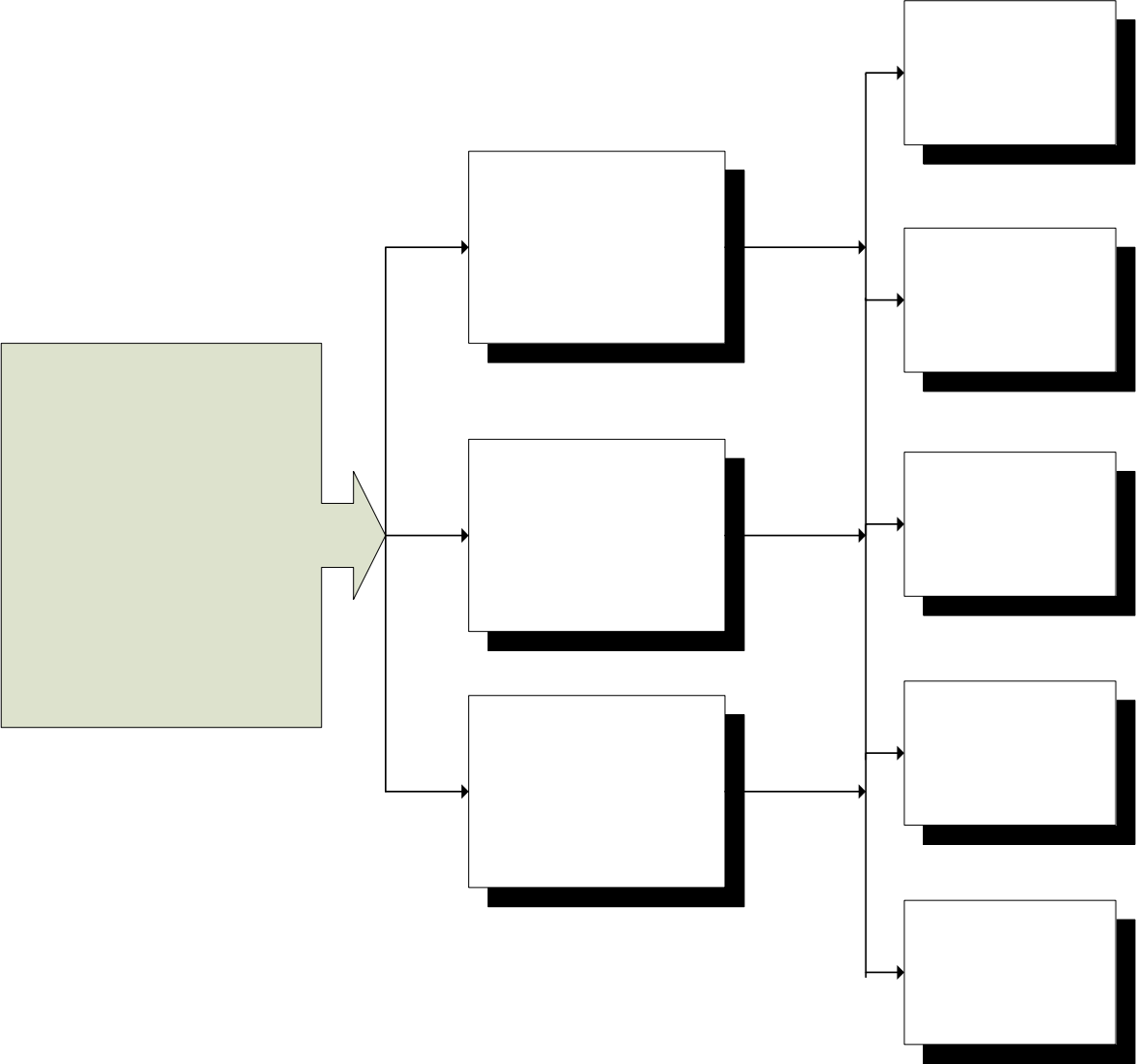
INTERNET   POLITICS

1.1 Neofuturists[22]

1.1.1 Reinvigorate democracy

Since its arrival on the political field, the Internet's potential contribution to democratic and participatory politics is gaining recognition. Typically, neofuturists have been quick to welcome and applaud the use of ICTs in the political field, arguing that the application of ICTs such as electronic mail, electronic campaigning, online political discussion lists and chat rooms in the political process may end the ills of democracy and will revolutionize politics (Toffler, 1980; Negroponte, 1995). This echoes Alvin Toffer's core argument that political problems can be solved by technology (Toffler, 1980). Neofuturists regard the ICTs as a technology of democracy par excellence, for ICTs could resuscitate declining citizen participation in public affairs and broaden involvement in public life (Schwartz, 1996). Networked technologies are citizens' technologies, because they empower individuals and groups that are currently marginalized from mainstream politics by providing the public and individuals, even those who live in remote rural areas and poorer neighbourhoods, with access to information and sources (Schwartz, 1996; Winnar, 1993).

As they envision the democratic politics in the future, neofuturists believe that the application of emerging ICTs would nurture a profound transformation in modern political institutions toward direct democracy. Neofuturists regard the adoption of the Internet as a strategic way for governments to connect and interface with citizens in the digital age. By promoting electronic voting for elections, by allowing great use of referendums and initiatives and by offering citizens opportunities for deliberation and direct decision-making, ICTs are reinventing an Athenian-like democracy and that direct and popular participation is about to become a reality. A strong argument of the Neofuturists is that ICTs will bring more people into active involvement into public life. Optimists emphasize the Panglossian capacities of the Internet for generating new channels of civic engagement to strengehnen the process of democratization.

The neofuturists argue that the Internet will improve the quality of democratic participation by making governments more responsive to citizens and creating new

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[22] Neofuturists are also referred to as the neo-Luddite position by their opponents.

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political relationships characterized by the responsiveness of adapted political institutions to the emerging digital information and communication channels (Slaton, 1992). In this respect, many neofuturists share a conviction that ICTs are constructing new forms of political organizations that are supplanting, or that will eventually supplant, traditional political organizations such as political parties, mass media and trade unions. For the neofuturists, ICTs initiate a new epoch of political life in which traditional forms of politics, political organization of institutions have been regarded as obsolete and will soon be replaced by push-button politics.

1.1.2 Universal access

The neofuturists take the view that this major transformation in the political life is likely to evolve further, since governments have an affirmative obligation to facilitate Internet access for all segments of the population on terms of non-discrimination. In light of the Internet's vast potential for empowering people to exercise the right to free expression, the furtherance of digital infrastructures lies at the heart of national policy-making in all countries, whether developed or developing (Dalhgrenn, 2001).

In democracies, the concern over access is particularly expressed by governments. Democratic governments have invested intensively in providing their people with ICTs hardware and software. With Moore's law fuelling a continuous drop in prices, barriers to access become ever lower.[23] Computer illiteracy has been declared as top priority in their social political agendas. It makes access to huge amounts of information very easy, cheap and uncontrolled. For the neofuturists, the Internet may also prove a boon to economic and social developments, a leitmotiv for the public sector to intervene to level the playing field for access. A number of reports issued by the International Union of Telecommunications (IUT) argued that policies should focus on segments of the population that are not connected to the Internet, since these people could most benefit from the Internet for finding jobs, housing, or other services. Governments are attempting to solve the unequal access to the Internet in the short term by ensuring that schools and libraries provide access to computers and the Internet. In addition, community-based initiatives have been directed

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[23] In 1965, Gordon Moore, by 1996 Intel Corporation's Emeritus Chairman of the Board, predicted that processing power would double every eighteen months (Jordan, 1999: 91).

towards the provision of Internet services in low-income groups through public facilities and community technology centres.

In recent years, the imperative to expand Internet access remains commercially driven and the marked enthusiasm of telecommunications companies to offer high-quality access to less-profitable consumers in low-income areas is becoming increasingly apparent. The argument was that policy-makers have resolved the conflict between, on the one hand, ensuring commercial competition in the provision of telecommunications services and on the other hand, establishing public policies geared towards the delivery of universal access provision. Utopians point to the recent explosive growth of the Internet as evidence of inevitable democratisation of access beyond these initially restricted social groups.

1.1.3 Availability of information

The neofuturists see no barrier to universal accessibility to the information superhighway. They celebrate the ease of access to common information about almost all relevant policy areas and public life. The main potential of the ICTs lies in disseminating information about the operation of government as well as public services. The core argument is that if people are properly and fully informed, they will be actively involved in public life. Armed with such a quantity of information, people become more politically aware and thus can better communicate with elected officials and contact government agencies directly through electronic means.

Even more grandly, neofuturists are sanguine to the point of arguing that the ICTs are vital to democracy by radically democratising the access to political information, when average citizens have as much access to information as political elites. They emphasise the fact that the ICTs are "great equalizer" forces, since they make individual users equal to the state in the cyberspace (Rheingold, 2000). Selnow, for instance, argues that the ICTs provide more choices for the citizenry in terms of information available to the same citizenry (Selnow, 1998). Thanks to the digitalisation of governments' data, the relation between the state and the citizen is undergoing dramatic change. As a direct result of universal access to government documents and other information sources from around the world, citizens are better informed to be politically active and attentive to politics.

The digital proliferation of relevant policy information and data is believed to have improved the citizens' rights to be informed and thus increased the choice. The increase in terms of choice may have maximized the citizenry ability to make sense of public affairs and broadening involvement in public life by eroding some of the barriers to political participation and civic engagement. They contend that the ICTs can significantly assist governments in enabling citizens to exercise the right of being fully informed to make informed choices. The exercise of this right is enhanced by providing citizens with access to draft laws, transcripts of parliamentary debates and governmental files and reports.

As advocates of electronic government and electronic democracy, neofuturists cite a number of advantages for participating in online politics, for example such as an immediate wealth of on-line news sources, multi-addressee mailing lists and online public political discussions: ICTs will offer people a rich data in quantity and quality, including preparatory reports and experts' advice. The citizen is becoming able to get information from other alternative sources rather than those of entrenched state, television and broadcast media. For neofuturists, the Internet is proving seductive in its effectiveness as a medium for political communication in the current crisis of mass media, since, it is claimed it can contribute to a move away from a political communication based on consumption to one focused on production.

1.1.4 Horizontal communication

The neofuturists see that in the virtual and borderless world of the Internet it is not vertical communication but horizontal communication which will prosper and flourish. The central claim advanced in regard to the political decentralisation is that this process is ineluctable. Toffler argues that "it is not possible for a society to decentralize economic activity, communication, and many other crucial processes without also, sooner or later, being compelled to decentralize government decisions making as well" (Toffler, 1980: 234).

ICTs will reduce the cost of communication, political actors such as political parties, civil society groups and activists can target their constituencies. By means of the interactive features of the Internet, these actors can bypass the media by directly sending and receiving communication messages. Among the most distinguished feature of the Internet is its interactivity. Unlike the traditional mass media such as newspapers, radio

and television, the Internet is highly interactive. Indeed, it is inherently interactive. The digitalized and networked process of information flow has empowered grassroots organizations and groups, such as environmentalist organizations, human rights groups, peace activist and women's movements (Rheingold, 2000). As a matter of fact, interactive potential of networks enhances grassroots networks of civil society in communicating. Citizen-to-citizen communication is strengthened through the use of chat rooms and through electronic bulletin boards. There is a widespread optimism from commentators like Toffler that government's growing electronic presence strengthens political accountability and makes governments more responsive, more efficient, and less bureaucratic (Toffler, 1980: 234). This will lead to greater accountability and transparency by allowing people to exert close scrutiny over decision-making processes.

The Internet has facilitated the transmission of political information between the leaders and the led. Lawrence Grossman argues that the Internet has reduced the distance between governed and government. Those who argue along these lines believe that we stand on the threshold of a major transformation of our political communication. Public feedback mechanisms, such as e-mails and interactive services, are influencing the overall structure of political communication by facilitating direct communication between citizens and their public leaders. Citizens can access government websites without wasting time visiting government offices, since they government websites are up 24 hours a day. Institutions of governance are becoming more accessible and transparent by digitizing their date and delivering services via the Internet. Digitally transmitted information can be customized for specific users, allowing citizens to access information of personal interest to them.

Internet-based political communication seems rosy, especially viewed against the current crisis of mass media-based political communication. New forms and formats of Internet-based political communication have appeared and politicians and political parties have incorporated the multimedia capacities of the Internet into their communication strategies.

1.1.5 Virtual community

The growth of the Internet population generated a substantial literature theorizing about the potential consequences of virtual communities (Rheingold 2000; Schuler 1996; Tsagarousianou et al., 1998; Bimber 1998). The term "virtual communities" is traditionally associated with Howard Rheingold. According to Rheingold virtual community means "the social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient feeling to form webs of personal relationships in the cyberspace" (Rheingold, 2000: 5). Virtual communities are organized around interests rather than geographical boundaries. The logic of the virtual communities does not accept conventional understanding of nationally and geographically limited boundaries. The neofuturists are convinced of the long-term transformative nature of the ICTs to foster political communities and identities based not on territorial or national interests, but on narrowed and specialized interest groups. The Internet has considerably helped groups to organize themselves in a global structure, downplaying the role of physical distance as an essential determinant in creating and sustaining communities.

Howard Rheingold emphasizes the potential of virtual community. According to him, bulletin board systems are democratizing technologies to exchange ideas. For most neofuturists, if the current evidence demonstrates anything it is that political organization is in the process of being changed. Grassroots political organizations and transnational advocacy networks can, thanks to the networking potential of the Internet, organize themselves to articulate vested interests. Negroponte (1995) even sees the potential of the digital technology to be a natural force drawing people into greater world harmony.

1.2 Dystopians

1.2.1 Access: Digital inequality

Any assessment of the impact of the Internet must begin with considerations of access. Digital divide is a keyword in the lexicon of the dystopians. Given the exiting digital divide there are good grounds to be sceptical about the Internet's potential for democratic

participation. The dystopians contend that as commercializing trends sweep the Internet, large segments of the population will fall outside the parameters of the information society. Under the compact of commercial Internet logic the gap between the so-called "information haves" and "have-nots" is widening. This division between information-rich and information-poor is argued to be a hindrance to a more democratic architecture of political power. The strongest claim of the dystopians is that the familiar socioeconomic biases will be reflected in the Internet. Dystopians have pointed to the fact that the Internet has been the historic preserve of an elite stratum, that is, for the most part, white, male and professional. As such, its potential to deliver a socially inclusive mechanism for communicative exchange is severely circumscribed. Following this line of argumentation, they argue that even if access gradually widens to reach the electronically disadvantaged, the gap between the electronically literate and illiterate seems unlikely to disappear.

According to the proponents of this view, the lack of universal access is identified as the source of structural inequality (Loader, 1997; Van Dijk, 2000). The use of the Internet is likely to widen the scope of the digital divide and reinforce existing differences in the use of Internet technologies. Therefore they will reinforce the dominance of polarisation in terms of the network access between those who have access and those who do not. This new configuration of power relations is held to be crystallizing as the 'the information rich and poor' division. They base their arguments on the existing uneven level of access to the Internet and the fact that large segments of the population are not wired. Digitally poor people are structurally denied access because of their rampant illiteracy in terms of the new technical literacy. The dystopians conclude that if the existing uneven levels of access persist and people are systematically denied access, the claim about the positive influence of the Internet in transforming the weak representative democracy into a strong digital democracy deserves a thorough re-examination.

A group of dystopian scholars regard the Internet as a Pandora's Box unleashing new inequalities of power, reinforcing deeper divisions among information-rich and –poor individual and groups, because telecommunications infrastructures and Internet access are driven more by profits and less by the needs of people and communities. For them universal access to the Internet sounds good, but it is expensive, and questions of how it will be funded are yet to be resolved. Furthermore, access is not just a matter of telecommunications equipment; it is also a question of media literacy and computer skills. What the evidence actually suggests is that the much-heralded potential of the Internet to

deliver a medium of inclusive public deliberation remains, for the time being at least, seriously open to question.

1.2.2 Information overload

The accessibility does not necessarily mean that problems related to the growing popular disenchantment with existing forms of democracy will be solved. Arguing that the solution lies in granting people easy and efficient access to the information is incomplete. Closely linked to this first hurdle is a second– known as the "information overload" issue -, which has further heightened the debate. The Internet will flood people with a huge amount of information. The overabundance of information does not guarantee an informed and responsible citizen, because it has become difficult for citizens to distinguish between the "legitimate from the illegitimate" (Shenk, 1997). Quite the contrary, it has caused what David Shenk describes as *data smog* (Shenk, 1997). He regards *data smog* as the dark reality at the heart of today's information society (Shenk, 1997: 30-1).

Tim Jordan has distinguished between two types of information overload: that which arises from excess volume, and that arising from information so "chaotically organized" as to be useless (1999: 118). Jordan concludes that the information overload results in a "spiral" that will reproduce the existing power relations of the Internet (Jordan, 1999: 128).

On this reading, the Internet and by providing a sheer quantity of information is a boon to democracy; rather it is inimical to participation. It has rather complicated the matter to the extent that citizens are discouraged to participate. People plagued with an information avalanche, such as data and news can be easily forced into political irrelevancies. It was argued that the burgeoning flows of data and information that computers have made possible are serving primarily to numb people with a glut of unnecessary and often inaccurate information.

The quantity of information is not necessarily in the interest of democracy, for information is simply not a sufficient condition to declare the existence of democratic participation. What makes information relevant for political participation is the quality of this information. Thus attention should not be put on the sheer amount of information provided by the use of the Internet, but on the relevance and the needs of the citizens to

this particular information. The future of informed and participatory democracy in the information age is far from rosy. For Shenk information overload serves only to strengthen existing relation of relation power (Shenk, 1997: 15).

The dystopians conclude that even the easy access to governmental records and forms could not increase citizen's knowledge of what governments really propose. They are sceptical about the prediction advanced by neofuturists that the day is fast approaching when the enlightened citizenry will be finally realized.

1.2.3 Atomisation of the community

The dystopians focus their attention primarily on the negative aspects of the Internet regarding online communities and question whether growing numbers of people will seek new forms of community. One consequence of these community networks is the gradual fragmentation of society into narrow and specialised interest groups. Sunstein (2001) argues that the Internet may create a high degree of social fragmentation (balkanisation), group polarisation and local cascades, which may produce severe risks for democracy.

The multiplication of inherently limited virtual communities is likely to disrupt the social basis of political life. Virtual communities based on the voluntary association of like-minded people do not have any degree of permanence of traditional communities based on families and face-to-face neighbours. Consequently they are volatile since members can freely get in and out of virtual communities in cyberspace. For some scholars, these Internet technologies are labelled as technologies of individuation, for they contribute to the disconnection of individuals from their social being and thus further underline the meaningful sense of togetherness.

The Internet further isolates and disaffects individuals from their communities. It distracts people from social problems and collective-action remedies by giving them a false sense of political effectiveness. Bonds that are defined along professional and recreational lines have been increasingly seen as unvalued. As virtual communities grow more powerful, some fear that common bond will be increasingly de-emphasised and will be replaced by network communities coalesced around narrow interests.

1.2.4 Weakening of democracy

Dystopians suggest that ICTs will weaken, not reinvigorate democracy. From that more sceptical perspective, dystopians find the plebiscitary democracy enacted in push-button democracy wanting. The strongest claim advanced by dystopians is that the simple head-counting democracy runs the risk of segmenting people into smaller and smaller groups and factions in the same way mass media is dividing audiences by narrowcasting messages. Dystopians argue that the essential conditions for strong democratic life such as community, access to the public sphere and reasonable amount of information are deteriorating due to the use of the Internet. Democrat y is dangerously menaced by the intensive and continuous state control and surveillance. Dystopians express fear and anxiety that the "Pandora scenario" will prevail.

The big question posed by the dystopians is that the digitalisation of political and social life will not improve the quality of democracy rather it will damage deliberation, debate and the quality of public sphere. In fact, dystopians argue that the neofuturist's prediction of a utopian democracy through the intensive use of ICTs is not only unworkable but also dangerous.

ICTs are identified as technologies of control and surveillance. According to this line of dyspotian thinking, technological advance is closely linked to more centralized control. On this reading, the ICTs are better regarded as crucial facilitators of controlling, monitoring and supervising (Wright, 1998). The recent adoption of the ICTs in the public administrations is not designed to empower citizens and enable governments to interface with their citizenry, as the neofuturists argue; rather it is to strengthen the power of civil servants. Dystopians fear from what they prefer to call a Cyborg or the rise of the surveillance state.

1.3 Technorealists

One of the most interesting developments in the debate during the last few years has been the emergence of a normative approach that "avoids both the extremes of high-tech doom and cyber elation". A new, more balanced consensus has quietly taken shape. Andre Shapiro and David Shenk are two of the leading technorealists (Shapiro, 1999; Shenk,

1999). One of the most important statements of this school of thought is that the Internet is revolutionary, but not utopian. From the technorealist standpoint, the Internet offers remarkable opportunities and brings new capabilities for political activity, but equally it holds new threats, presents restrictions, and sets limits (Shapiro, 1999: 230).

1.3.1 Universal access

Technorealists argue that technological advancement and convergence in the communications sector has lowered the cost Internet technologies and thus has opened new access opportunities. Governments are involved in emphasising the importance of the penetration of the technology assuring access to all citizens. The spread of the Internet's use by a great number of people can only be almost expected to continue. Modern telecommunications infrastructures are regarded as the best condition for economic development. European governments have pledged to invest huge resources to "informatize" their economies, and since the Internet has become a crucial component of these economies, Internet infrastructure will surely benefit from these investments.

It is argued that the Internet is shifting the centre of information gravity away from states, corporations, and media towards individuals. In the words of a leading technorealist: "the Internet is putting individuals in charge of changing the world we know" (Shapiro, 1999: 230).

The Internet empowers individuals to the point that they can carry lots of things without some intermediaries (Shapiro, 1999: XV). It helps to change the form and substance of information. It displaces the information source from one to many sources. In comparison to neofuturist and dystopian accounts, the technorealists make no claims about the future of trajectory of politics, nor do they seek to evaluate the present in relation. By comparison to the dystopians, the technorealists are of the opinion that barriers to Internet access will be a minor concern.

Such caution about the exact future of politics in general and democratic politic in particular is matched by the conviction that contemporary infrustructures of ICTs are historically unprecedented. In arguing that the Internet is transforming the authority of governments, the technorealists reject both the neofuturists rhetoric of utopian perspectives of electronic democracy in a digital age and a dystopian's and Orwellian surveillance and

atomisation of social life. In a context where global capitalism has dominated the communication channels and information flow not by states, rather by mega-corporate businesses, the need for the Internet is felt, for it brings the control to individuals.

1.3.2 Democracy

Universal access alone will not solve the problem of democratic participation. A full democratic participation will not be achieved solely by universal access (Shapiro, 1999: 224). According to this line of thinking, the technorealists typically lay emphasis on the development and enrichment of traditional political institutions, such political parties that promote local communities for strengthening representative democracy (Shapiro, 1999: 232). They contend that easy access increases the power of individuals to demand more access. Easy Internet access means that the power of individuals will expand in cyberspace. This transfer of power from government to people supports a process of change towards stronger democratic forms. The difference is that the change is not a revolutionary one that the modalities of politics will radically change so that we enter a fundamentally new form of politics.

At the heart of the technorealists thesis is a conviction that, at the dawn of a new digital age, ICTs are central driving forces behind the rapid political changes that are reshaping modern institutions of governance. According to the proponents of this view, the "Internet is an extraordinary communications tool that provides a range of new opportunities for people, communities, businesses, and government" (www.technorealist.org). They suggest that ICTs will open the political landscape to new parties, new interest groups and new forms of political organization.

The objective of this school of thought is to minimize the risks and maximise the chances of the ICTs. This can be achieved if technology can be *critically* understood and applied *in a manner more consistent with basic human values*. The state has the right and responsibility to play an active role in "integrating cyberspace and conventional society" (www.technorealists.org). Technorealists ascribe an important role to individuals in "balancing their new power with new responsibilities to society at large" to secure democratic institutions (Shapiro, 1999: 233).

1.3.3 Communication

In line with Shapiro's argument, the Internet is generally characterized by a many-to-many interactivity (Shapiro, 1999: 15). This means that the people can communicate actively and interactively with other people. Indeed, it represents a new kind of communication, characterized by the centrality of the interactivity. Technorealists see the importance of the Internet not as an information-disseminating tool, but as a medium for interactive communication. That is to underscore the very interactive nature of the Internet in contrast to the inter-passivity of the other mass media (Shapiro, 1999). With the rise of the Internet, the active discovery of information is replacing the passive reception of it. Its interactivity makes it unique and gives it the advantage to be the liberating medium in the realm of the mass media. It is not a mass medium but a master medium (Shapiro, 1999).

The interactivity quality of the Internet manifests itself in the fact that it enables organizations to provide people with information and at the same time makes it possible for these governments to collect information from people (Schalken, 1996: 50). Interactivity offers political communication new opportunities for exchange of information between political organizations and people. Surfers can interactively interface with political leaders.

Central to the very nature of the Internet is its empowerment of people to produce rather than consume. People do participate in the production process of content. This means that the people are becoming producers of what they consume. To put it in a positive way, people are content-producers rather than just passive consumers (Shapiro, 1999: 15). They receive information, but they can also transmit information. They mould it as their interests generally dictate. They decide the nature of the information content. The Internet is highly political and involves the extension of possibilities for interaction through persons.

The interactivity, which has distinguished Internet-based political communication from the traditional media-related political communication, will bring the role of all mediating agencies and organizations such as political parties and mass media into a crisis.

1.4. Political use of the Internet

The Internet has been viewed by many experts as the most efficient tool of the third generation of the information revolution. Like other mass communications technology innovations, the Internet has been heralded as the most potent tool for communication to date (Davis 1999: 27). It is hoped that the development of effective Internet-related political communication is the first step in overcoming modal definitions of TV-centred political communication. Political communication is heading towards reliance on the Internet (Bimber, 1999; Norris, 2000).

The relations between the mass media and politics are being transformed under the impact of the Internet. The Internet is generally hailed as a very cheap publishing medium. This is where poorly resourced political organizations and groups can turn this quality of the Internet into their advantage. They can send messages without costing them extra money that they generally do not have. Hill and Hughes point out that the Internet as a mass medium is positioned to revolutionize the process of political communication by changing the dissemination of political information (Hill and Hughes, 1998).

Thanks to these inherent qualities of Internet-centred political communication, the Internet is likely to be an important force in the political process. The rise of the Internet in this rapidly changing media environment will gradually displace the locus and modalities of political communication from TV-centric political communication towards Internet-centric political communication (Norris, 2000). With the arrival of the Internet the role of some old mass media is undergoing a substantial change. Traditional political communication channels are giving way to Internet related political communication.

Expanding on the critical mass measurement of Valente, we can argue with Merril Morris and Christan Ogan that the Internet has achieved critical mass of the 20 percent of the population to be considered a mass medium (Morris and Ogan, 1996: 6). A recent study conducted by the Pew Centre for the People and the Press, an independent, non-profit public opinion research organization in the US, in May 1998 suggested that 36 millions users, about 20 per cent of all American used the Internet regularly for online news (Norris, 2000: 128).

The trend toward using the Internet politically, as a feature of political communication that has dominated North America and Europe, was not limited to these

regions. Indeed, similar processes have been observed in the emerging democracies and authoritarian regimes of Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe.

The next sections of this chapter seek to explore the role of the political use of the Internet in three different political contexts. The aim of this exercise is to explore the impact of the Internet in democratized countries, newly established democracies and authoritarian regimes.

1.4.1 Political use of the Internet in developed democracies

1.4.1.1 Context

Liberal democracy has acquired global recognition as an efficient form of political rule (Held, 1996). This is evident in the increase in recent years of countries that have adopted a liberal democratic form of government (Potter et al., 1997). The recent conversion of many communists and some authoritarian regimes into democracy represents a historic moment in the process of the global revolution of democracy. The end of history and the celebration of the victory of liberal democracy have coincided with an academic debate about the crisis of democracy. The central question around which the debate revolves is whether we are witnessing the end of liberal democracy as we have come to understand it (Guéhenno, 1993).

Across the world liberal representative democracies have seen the crisis of democracy and its core political institutions. A great number of citizens express a low level of confidence in the political institutions and they are growing dissatisfied with parliament and political parties (Inglehart, 1999). Affiliation to political parties has dramatically waned, which means a declining membership, especially among the young. This is a serious problem in parliamentary democracies like that of Germany and England. Many commentators have expressed anxiety about the decline of trust in these institutions. Even in long-established democracies, characterized by a high level of electoral stability, a gradual decline in voter turn-outs has been witnessed. Some have identified that the liberal

representative democracy is in a crisis (Castells, 1997). Others are the conviction that this development can be understood as "anti-politics" (Axford, 2001).

1.4.1.2 Positive

Contemporary democratic theory is conscious of the crisis of the legitimacy of democratic political life or what many prefer to term a democratic deficit. The saviour, as many suggest, is technology. Two leading scholars, Barber and Grossman, underscore the role that the ICTs can play in the process of revitalizing democracy and the public sphere and accountability (Barber, 1984; Grossman, 1996). Benjamin Barber (1998) stresses the potential of the Internet for strengthening channels of direct democracy, such as online deliberation and virtual communities. Robert Dahl has suggested that the use of ICTs may solve two structural problems of democracy, namely the mal-informed citizen and political apathy, shown for example by low voter turnouts (Dahl, 1989). These authors argue that a clever exploitation and use of the ICTs may make the prospect of strong democracy not only possible but also brighter. ICTs will increase the possibility of more participation and more deliberation. New forms of direct democracy can be made possible by electronic means of communication.

The role of the Internet in political campaigning in democratic countries is gaining significance. Dozens of political parties have now established websites (Gibson and Ward, 1998; Hoff et al., 2000). It is often argued that politicians in the digital age are turning to the Internet by intensively using campaign websites. Cyber-campaigning may dominate political campaigning, offering political candidates unmediated and direct access to the public, outside the multiple constraints of the traditional mass media. During the last two presidential elections in the USA, the use of the Internet became visible (Kamarck, 1999; Margolis and Resnick, 2000). Campaign websites have been employed for creating a community of supporters, for recruiting, for fundraising and for interacting with the electorate directly without any press distortion. The Internet will help politicians to redirect their attention to political issues rather than wasting their resources in fundraising to finance the high cost of political advertising in the television channels.

The Internet can reshape the public sphere by reinvigorating public debate. Direct outcomes of such debates are a series of projects, aiming at measuring the practicability of democratic ideas about civic deliberation (Tsagarousianou et al., 1998). The implications of such developments are complex, yet they represent the potential positive contribution towards enhancing the notion that Internet-based political communication is gradual public engagement and thereby the revitalisation of democracy. The Internet is enhancing local democracy by enlarging and stimulating local public debate through forum on municipal websites or though Electronic Town Meetings or Halls (Tsagarousianou et al., 1998). By so doing, the Internet has changed the political participation and public deliberation. Since horizontal communication thrives in the Internet, it is expected that the Internet encourages political participation by facilitating communication between citizens, representatives and civil servants.

1.4.1.3 Negative

The foundations, upon which liberal democratic polity has been construed, such as political parties, parliamentary institutions, labour unions and mainstream media are in the process of being eroded. Political institutions are in the process of losing their traditional role as intermediaries, since they have become unresponsive in the face of many political, economic, social and cultural challenges produced by technology-driven globalisation. Politics will be dependent on the use of the Internet which means in the long term that the importance of traditional political institutions will fall prey into irrelevancies and thus their political significance will continue to decline (Bimber, 1998). Citizens will dispense with politicians since interest groups will rely on electronic media to organize and articulate their political advocacy (Bimber, 1998). Bimber summaries the core of the populist discourse like this:

> "The greater the capacity of citizens to communicate directly with government, the more likely they are to be engaged in politics, and the more engaged they are, the greater their direct influence as individuals" (Bimber, 1998: 6).

Hill and Hughes analysed American Usenet and reported that the right-wing has been amongst the heaviest users of the Internet. They are more willing to join community groups. Lacking specific data, they could not provide an explication for this phenomenon, yet they related the preponderance and the sophisticated use of these groups with the fact that it is these groups that show no trust in the mainstream media (Hill and Hughes, 1998).

Germany is a good case to illustrate this undemocratic potential of the Internet. The Nazis are strongly represented in the Internet (Chroust, 2000). This is achieved through the intensive use of websites. Their websites inform about their programmes, profiles and activities as well as communicating and mobilising their supporters. The Internet is also used to connect these neo-nazis with other right-wing ideologies across Europe and the Atlantic to establish an international electronic network of "hyper-nazis" (Chroust, 2000). Chat rooms are providing the neo-Nazis with an ideal platform to discuss and publish many political ideas among a large number of people. Chroust concludes that new media such as computers, video-games and the Internet play an important role in the modern propaganda of right-wing groups (Chroust, 2000).

In Germany, the use of the Internet for political purposes has been legally restricted. However, the complex nature of the Internet makes the attempt to regulate this cyberspace and to ban those websites, which contain material harmful to the German political stability, untenable (Siedschalg, 2004). The German government has passed a law designed to prohibit websites that propagated political theories of the right wing ideologies, but has faced two problems in its fight against these trends. The first is that many right wing websites are operating from the USA. The second is that such websites are growing rapidly. Their number has increased from 200 in 1998 to 300 in 1999.

The growth of anti-modern political ideas and groups that are active in mobilizing marginalized groups has negative implications for democracy. In the world of the Internet it appears that there are countervailing forces at work which represent an on-going struggle for an authoritarian regime. This fact has pushed many democratic governments, particularly in Europe to impose several restrictions, including monitoring, controlling and policing the Internet.

The privacy, essential for democratic life, is dangerously menaced by the intensive and continuous state control and surveillance. Some voices express fear and anxiety that the e-government may turn out to be the ultimate Big Brother nightmare, a development has come to be termed "the Pandora scenario" (Barber, 1999), where "government

consciously set out to utilize the new technologies for purposes of standardisation, control, or repression" (Barber, 1999).

1.4.2 Political use of the Internet in developing democracies

1.4.2.1 Context

Studies in democratisation routinely cover topics such as constitutional reforms and political parties, but give little space, in some cases none at all, to the ICTs (Slater, 2002). Given the potential significance of the ICTs to democratisation in developing democracies, surprisingly little empirical research has been conducted and hardly any theoretically-informed literature was written to examine the structural link between the ICTs and the democratic transition and how they affect each other and to explore the ICTs' potential to consolidate democratisation. Shanthi Kalathil and Taylor Boas noted that political scientists in their studies on democratic transition have neglected the relationship between the ICTs, particularly the Internet and the process of democratisation (Kalathil and Boas, 2001: 1).

The third wave of democratization will be put in its historical context by describing the problems these newly established democracies have encountered during the consolidation period. The presumed role of the ICTs was to help solve these problems. Before looking at the relationship between the ICTs and democratisation, it is useful to assess the historical response of the civil society to earlier examples of such technologies. It has been suggested that the ICTs have been integrated from the very outset of the democratic transition into the political strategies of those political and social forces that were involved in the first stages of the democratic transition.

Most of the debate is centred on whether the ICTs will promote and reinforce emerging democratic institutions or will jeopardize the democratic process. To examine these central questions, it is useful to look closely at which political forces are benefiting from the exploitation of the ICTs. Are they democratic forces which plan to consolidate democracy or are they any anti-democratic forces which are working toward reversing the process and are attempting to challenge democracy. Significant also is to examine whether

democratic political parties in the newly established democracies are using the Internet for their democratic objective, particularly during election campaigns. This is very important to see to what extent political parties are capable of using the Internet in targeting effectively niche audiences among specific population groups, particularly young people. Are these political parties cooperating with other democratic social parties across the world? Another important question is to what extent can the use of the ICTs diminish the deeply uprooted totalitarian political culture to instill new civic culture instead and how are anti-democratic political forces employing the Internet to defend their anti-democratic aspirations.

All these issues are to be examined to provide a precise account of the democratising or anti-democratising effects of the ICTs. However, John Downing remarks that studies on the role of the Internet in newly established democracies like Russia are doomed to be speculative, because of the relative novelty of this complex topic (Downing, 2002).

1.4.2.2 Positive

Some early studies show that some political groups are using the Internet for political reasons in Russia (Stafeev, 2003). According to Stafeev, democratic parties, social movements and pro-democratic activists are used the Internet massively. These groups dominate the world of the Internet in counties with newly established democracies. Their use of electronic bulletin boards, e-mail and newsgroups is relatively intensive.

The role of these ICTs is to be assessed in terms of strengthening democratic political parties and civil society, working in favor of consolidating the democratic process. Political parties have begun to experiment with Internet-based political communication, by establishing an electronic presence on the Internet. The challenge of the Internet has forced political parties to rethink their communicative strategies and approaches to political communication. In the context of elections the number of websites has increased. These websites are created to advance their social and political programs.

Political websites can mobilize political solidarities within the territorial boundaries, challenging existing structures of authoritarianism, pursuing political emancipation. Computer networks can greatly facilitate small-group participation-within

groups, between groups, and between groups and their constituencies. They thus help to strengthen the forces of civil society. The use of the Internet by grassroots networks of civil society has been growing in the last decade (Schmidt, 2003). Due to the networking capabilities of the Internet, Russian civil society groups have developed global networks that provide them with know-how and logistical works. In 1999, for instance, the Center for Civil Society International produced a guide to Grassroots Organizations and the Internet to provide a step-by-step guide to successful Internet use for civil society groups (Schmidt, 2003).

Since little research has been carried out, no assessment about the true democratic effects of the ICTs in newly democratic countries can be accurate. But the basic point to be made about the Internet in regard to consolidation is that Internet technologies such as chat rooms and e-mail and listserver applications are of special significance to civil society in a context where the recent gained liberties were rolled back. Putin's doctrine of "dictatorship of the law" has considerable weakened democratic forces and has led to a re-establishment of Soviet-type dictatorship on information (Schmidt, 2003). The big role of the Internet in Russia is to subvert the censorship of information flow. The mass media in Russia is under tight control, yet the country is experiencing a democratic transition. Since the mass media was silenced during the Chechen war, the Internet has provided many anti-Chechen-war groups with an outlet to report on the war and provide unbiased and accurate news about the fighting and the massacre of the Russian army. Due to the new medium people are supposed to be well informed, because there are many information sources and possibilities for information.

The political use of the Internet is rapidly expanding from political discussions on the Internet to political use of e-mail and list-servers. The Internet may be, as some commentators have suggested, one of the important tools of political communication in Russian politics. The accessibility is at stake in discussing whether people are responding to the digital communicative strategies of democratic parties. The problem is that the penetration of the Internet in Russia is still limited to a small number of percentages of people due to lack of telecommunication infrastructures, the prohibitive cost of services and computer illiteracy (Schmidt, 2003).

Given the huge technological development in terms of digitalisation and broadband technology, along with the new communicative possibilities of the Internet, the political use of the Internet seems likely to continue and proliferate, so that almost all political

actors maintain websites. However there are many obstacles that hinder the political use of the Internet in Russia, namely the inadequate and expensive telecommunications system and the lack of computer managerial skills. Many scholars assume that the Russian government can not control the use of the Internet by civil society groups in the same way the Soviet regime could not keep away American and European broadcasting such as BBC, Radio Free Europe or Deutsche Welle (Schmidt, 2003).

1.4.2.3 Negative

Some argue that the Internet is associated with the re-emergence of some old reactionary political forces and energies. The Internet creates an environment in which political organizations, political solidarities and mobilization of non-democratic forces across and within these countries can thrive. Its potential of connecting like-minded groups at a global level is evident in the massive growth of transnational right wing violent movements such as neo-nazi movements across Europe.

The Russian government has shown no hesitation to tightly regulate the Internet. The Russian government has developed a number of pieces of regulation to establish strong control over the political use of the Internet. In terms of legal restriction, the Russian government adopted in 2000 a media policy designed to restrict certain information flow. In addition, the Russian government has developed a range of technological methods to restrict access to certain websites. In 1999, the KGB forced Internet Service Providers to install surveillance and encryption software technologies to keep a watchful eye on any type of online activities. If the Internet Service Providers resisted these measures, they would lose their Internet licenses (Sussman, 2000). A widely famous case occurred in February 2000, when one Internet Service Provider was temporarily blocked, others were hacked and destroyed by the Russian government.

1.4.3 Political use of the Internet in authoritarian countries

1.4.3.1 Context

Most of the research on the Internet and politics has been limited to democratic countries. Since the mid 1990s an ever increasing body of literature has sought to assess the effectiveness of the political use of the Internet in American politics (Davis, 1998, 1999; Hill and Hughes, 1998; Shapiro, 1999; Wilhelm, 2000). In Europe, many studies have analysed the use of the Internet in political matters, and the impact of the Internet on political life in these countries (Tsagarousianou et al., 1998; Ward and Gibson, 1998; Hoff, Horrocks and Tops, 2000). A growing literature in the last few years has started to analyse the presumed role of the ICTs in bringing about a new wave of democratisation. Given the potential significance of the information and communication technologies to democratisation in the authoritarian regime, surprisingly little empirical research has been conducted on how the ICTs trigger democratisation in authoritarian regimes.

Authoritarian regimes in Asia, Latin America and the Islamic world are believed to be under threat in the late twentieth century and early twentieth first century, threatened by the ICTs. In authoritarian states all over the world, where national media systems are tightly controlled, websites of oppositional groups are flourishing. Certainly part of the impetus for the political use of the Internet came from the fact that the Internet provides groups and organizations, which have been politically involved such as political activists, interests groups and social movements, with huge opportunities to collect information and interact with a large audience. But it is also true that the dismantlement of the mechanics of information control on the one hand and the rise of information pluralism may play a revolutionary role in authoritarian regimes.

1.4.3.2 Positive

Since its arrival in the world of political communication, the Internet has been regarded as the biggest potential for political communication in the information age, particularly where the state still monopolises the informational system. In fact, some argue that this tool will

undermine the authoritarian monopoly of its information control. The decentralizing effects of the Internet will eventually bring about the breakdown and collapse of the highly hierarchical and centralized national information system and thus initiate political change towards democratisation. Decentralising effects of the Internet are responsible for the quick dispersion of political information into all directions regardless of information national boundaries.

Since the arrival of the Internet in China in 1994, Internet use has grown rapidly. The estimated number of Internet users has increased from 400,000 in 1997 to 22.5 million in 2000 (ITU, 2001). More and more people are increasingly turning to the Internet, particularly young urban professionals and well-educated segments of Chinese society (Yan, 2000). About 270 universities are connected to the Internet. Newspapers are also coming to terms with the Internet. By the end of 1998 some 82 newspapers had launched their own sites to provide their services online (Yan, 2000).

This exponential growth of the Internet in China has implications for the information sovereignty. Indeed, in most respects, it is in this area that its impact is the greatest. The Internet is about the diminuation of sovereignty in the sense that the Chinese authoritarian regime's ability to manage international and global information flow is weakening. Thus it would seem that the information revolution represents a fundamental assault on the traditional conceptual barricades of information sovereignty.

Dissidents and pro-democracy groups such as the Chinese Democracy Party and religious sects like the *Falun Gong* were at the front run in adopting the Internet to disseminate alternatives to state-controlled information at a low cost and to rapidly mobilize members. A famous example dated back to 1999, when one of the most prominent Chinese democracy activists sent e-mail messages to Chinese government agencies and ministries. It was also reported that another Chinese dissident has distributed from his exile a newsletter to over 250,000 Chinese mail accounts (Yan, 2000). In an act of defiance, a pro-democracy group celebrated the eighth Tiananmen Square in June 1997, when they published an online-magazine, *Suidao*, (Chinese for "Tunnel"), which contained anti-government material. This might lead to the emergence of what has come to be termed as "Cyber dissidents" culture, which is taking foot in China. In the context of an emerging information system characterized primarily by a plurality of discourses, political discussions that are critical of the government are slowly generating.

Being aware of this new and unprecedented situation, the Chinese Communist party's bureaucracy which controls the Internet and the information flow responded with a number of restrictions, including content and access regulation, a wide use of technological filtering and monitoring methods (e.g. *the great Firewall*) (Dai, 2000).

Like many other authoritarian regimes across the world, China has imposed a relatively high number of regulations on the political use of Internet technologies, particularly the Internet, on the basis that monitoring and limited Internet access is necessary to protect the political values and cultural identities of its society. The government has attempted to block websites deemed to have politically sensitive content and websites of some international news organizations like CNN, *the New York Times and Human rights organizations* (Sussman, 2000).

The Internet is gaining popularity amongst Chinese young educated people as a tool that supplies unrestricted access to the pipeline of information. The freewheeling nature of cyberspace may erode their control over the population.

Hill and Hughes suggest that the use of the technological diffusion and the political use of the Internet in developing countries have encouraged the development of more critical citizens who question traditional sources of authority, including government. The growth of the number of Internet users among the younger generation has been marked by a gradual decline in support for traditional sources of political authority, including established hierarchical institutions.

The use of the Internet will increase demands for new forms of political engagements via social movements and other groups. The implication of this intensive use of the Internet by these groups is that the erosion of faith in authoritarian egimes is in an irreversible process. Studying whether there is a relationship between a nation's level of democratisation and the percentage of anti-government messages found in the country's subject newsgroup, Hill and Hughes conclude that the Internet "*will* bring a wider democratic revolution in the world".

1.4.3.3 Negative

It is true that powerful ideas are easily circulated online. It is easy to distribute political reports that are denied access in the mass media. However, in China, sending any message on domestic political or religious issues and containing critical content pertaining to the Chinese government's official position, is illegal. China is developing and experimenting with new proactive strategies (Kalathil and Boas, 2001). As Kalathil and Boas observe such measures are implemented by the Chinese government in order to serve many objectives. The first is to strengthen the Communist party's central authority. The second is to circulate the pro-party propaganda campaign, counter-information on government and nationalist material through the use of electronic means such as regime-sponsored web site or government-orchestrated chat rooms. The aim behind these proactive methods is to revitalize the regime's legitimacy in a rapidly changing environment.

Evidence presented by Kalathil and Boas demonstrates that by the mid 1990s authoritarian regimes, such as many countries in the Islamic World, Africa, Latin America and East Asia, were well positioned to control the flow of political information on the Internet (Kalathil and Boas, 2003).

2 The Moroccan national information system

The development of the national information system in Morocco has followed in the footsteps of many third world countries. The forty-four year domination by the regime has significantly influenced the post-independence development of the national information system. The treatment of the national information system in this work is to demonstrate how the traditional media system has operated and how this situation has been advantageous only to the regime and not to other political forces, including Islam-oriented movements.

This chapter first provides a historical review of the national information, by reviewing the major stages, with a particular focus on the stage under the reign of King Hassan II. It then examines critically, albeit briefly, the various roles of the national information system in in the Moroccan political field, including the process of political independence, nation-building and the democratic transition period.

The first section of this chapter describes the formation and emergence of the national information system, following its historical development from early pre-colonial stages until the present time, with particular emphasis on the "rise of the network society" that contributes to the emergence of an autonomous information system characterised by a wide range of pluralism. The second section examines how the regime has used the media system for its political objectives. It also analyses how the regime has functioned and which interests it has represented, by demonstrating the relationship between the opposition and the regime and the growing insignificance of its information system.

2.1 Historical Development

2.1.1 The Press

The Moroccan information system has its roots in the colonial period, when newspapers mainly served the causes of the foreign colonial rulers, namely French and Spanish. It was colonial administrators, who introduced the print press, in its modern sense to the country at the beginning of the nineteenth century to North Morocco. It is no coincidence that press came to Morocco from its Northern cities such as Tetouan and Tanger (OMHD, 1995: 12).

After independence in 1956 the French left Morocco, but left indelible influences on the country's mass media. French papers continue to be published to this day under new names and new owners. For instance, the *Istiqlal* party established in 1962 a French daily *La Nation Africaine* turned in 1965 *L'Opinion*. The aim of the publication was to reach French settlers living in Morocco and to make the French public in France aware of the plight of Moroccan populace. National Union of Popular Forces (NUPF) published since 1960 in Casablanca an Arabic paper called *Al-Muharrir,* which in 1983 was renamed as *Al-Ittihad Al-Ishtiraki.*

The development of Morocco's modern print press clearly indicates the close relationship between the press and politics. Newspapers have been regarded since the turn of the last century as tools at the heart of politics. The print press is free yet traditionally highly partisan. Most papers were party-owned. Political leanings strongly characterized the Moroccan press. Most are associated with political parties or politically-motivated organizations. Almost all political parties have their own publication. They have maintained two papers, one in Arabic and one in French. The press editorial spectrum ranges from secular leftist, religious conservative and nationalist.

In the mid-1980s newspapers were established. These papers were edited by political leaders themselves and they have served as an important means of communication with the Moroccan public. The most widely distributed and read papers functioned as political tools for the party. Political motives were behind the establishment of newspapers. The political motives of those engaged in politics often accounted for the creation of papers. The journalists were also party members. In 1979, the Independents Party

established its paper *Al-Mitaq Al-Watani* to represent the views of the new created party (Rugh, 1987: 109).

It has been frequently pointed out that Morocco's national papers are very similar in content and lack aggressiveness in putting forward their political opinions. One explanation for this similarity is that the political values and standpoints of these papers reflect the interests of their readers who are party members. Thus, these papers print articles that reflect the political views and ideas of these particular parties. As one commentators put it "Typically, private newspaper owners are of the same social class and status as the ruling forces. As such, they have a shared vested interest in the status quo" (Kavanaugh, 1999).

As a result of the political change of power in the late 1990s, the print media was greatly transformed. This transformation was marked by the appearance of an avalanche of new publications, including general newspapers and special interest magazines. During the 1990s Morocco has witnessed an explosion of private owned papers and publications of independence steak. They were backed by private individuals, influential families and ministers.[24] In one year alone (1997) there were, reportedly, as many as 96 new publications.[25]

In general, newspapers concentrate on political news, particularly political actors, though they also include other features such as investigative stories and science features. The print press became considerably diversified and relatively competitive and gradually developed into a professional press. The mood of specialization characteristic of Morocco also affected the booming magazines industry.

The majority of the weeklies consider themselves independent publication. The democratization process gave these papers a circulation boost. Rapid growth occurred in both the number and in the circulation of independent magazines. Independent press has targeted a middle class mass market, filling the void left by the party press. Major Moroccan magazines targeted different kinds of audiences and specialized topics such as women, health, films and businesses. In addition, advancement in information and

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[24] A significantly marked phenomenon in the Moroccan print press is that many ministers function as directors of newspapers. The Prime Minister directs *Al-Ittihad Al-Ishtiraki*, the Minister for Human Rights is responsible for *Al Mitaq Al-Watani* and the former Minister of Education is the director of *Bayan Al-Yawm*.
[25] According to the Moroccan Ministry of Culture and Communication on press, the number of individual newspaper and magazine titles increased substantially from 155 in 1985 to more than 715 in 1998, including 21 dailies, 568 weeklies, and 238 monthlies, 523 of these publications in Arabic, 187 in French, 2 in English and one in Spanish.

communications technologies has inevitably advantaged certain newspapers. The newspaper industry in Morocco has been undergoing rapid modernization with the adoption of advanced printing technology.

The political democratization led to an emphasis on more market-oriented policies, one consequence of which has been the growth of capital market. Gradually stories and topics taboo under King Hassan's reign appeared in the newspapers. Before the onset of recent democratisation, Morocco departed from the rigid and closed national information system.

2.1.2 Radio

The French were the first to start broadcasting in Morocco in February 1928, when radio signals were sent from the city of Rabat with a two–kilowatt medium-wave transmitter. News programs were tightly supervised by the Résident General, who was positioned to appoint the director of Radio Morocco (Alami, 1985). Similarly, in the north of the country, the Spanish colonial power established *Radio Dersa Tetuan*. From this point on in the international zone, Tanger witnessed an emergence of several radio stations, such as *Radio Tanger*, *Voice of America* and *Radio Africa Maghreb.* These, like the earlier foreign owned Arabic newspapers, offered a variety of programming to boost colonial intentions, while criticizing competitive colonial powers over Morocco (Alami, 1985: 22). All these radio stations were in the hands of foreign powers.

Radio, in turn became the key form of Moroccan communication and resistance against the French in their fight for independence. Nationalist leaders voiced their ideas from radio stations based in Spain and Italy. As a response to this new situation, the French colonial power issued the *Dahir* of July 1929 to extend and define the scope of the monopolisation to include all signal transmission tools whether they are audio or visual, since the first *Dahir* was limited solely to telephony and telegraphy. This restriction was designed initially to prevent Moroccans from using Radio for political uses. Moroccan nationalists intensified their radio use in the independence battle by using the *Voice of Cairo*, which allowed them to communicate their political messages to influence others to fight for the independence (Alami, 1985: 22).

As early as 1960s, a central radio station characterised the development of radio broadcasting in Morocco. The development of the national information system in Morocco was decidedly framed and formed by the regime. In 1962, the regime reorganized the county's broadcasting structure under a radio service in Rabat by the name of *Al-Idaa Wat-Talfaza Al-Maghribiya* (Moroccan Radio and Television, *MRT*). During the Protectorate, the technical infrastructure of the studios was respectable in the light of the time. The airing covered only the coastal region of Casablanca and Rabat and some big cities such as Fez and Meknes. The regime bought the exiting infrastructure of some studios in Tangier and in Tetoun and gave priority to the broadcasting system. Consequently, the regime took a series of actions to restore and develop radio broadcasting services.

King Hassan II took reference of the development of radio in Morocco between 1962 and 1970. By 1960, however, the regime began the process of establishing a Moroccan radio system. The early stages of radio operations were from Morocco's early introduction to the radio came from the colonial power and from foreigners living in the country.

To build a national network, the regime established several regional radio stations in this period. The regime installed in Marrakech (1958), Fez (1961), Oujda (1962), Agadir (1971), Laayoune (1976), Dakhla (1980) and Tetuan (1982). In today's Morocco, the radio sector consists of a national network radio station in Rabat and nine regional radio stations.[26] The national radio covers via long waves 95 percent and on a medium wave about 85 percent of the country (Jaidi, 1999: 226).

Already in 1952 Radio Morocco broadcasted about 171 hours weekly 75 in French, 60 hours in Arabic, 20 in Berber and half in Spanish and 5,30 in English. With the development of radio in 1960s the potential of the radio as a national propaganda tool appeared obvious. Radio became the most important and popular talk and cultural medium and thus occupied a significant place with Moroccan society.

Much of the post-independence broadcasting development in Morocco was based on the framework set down by the French. In 1957 Moroccan Radio had three programs: the A program in French and (75 hours per week), the B program in Arabic (60 hours) and Berber (20 hours), and the C program in Spanish (10.5 hours) and English (5.5 hours). In

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[26] In the 1960s, the modernization of the broadcasting was the result of the cooperation between Morocco and European countries such as France and Italy. The governments of both these countries were largely responsible for building the infrastructure and upgrading radio facilities. From a network of three stations at the time of independence, Morocco's radio had grown into a major network of almost nine radio stations.

1958 Radio Morocco were officially renamed as Moroccan National Radio (Jaidi, 1999: 226).

Up until 1981, radio was organized as *MRT* and operated under the information ministry. As a second national radio program, the private broadcast Medi 1, which has become within years the most popular radio broadcast in Morocco. Its program's offerings are in the areas of information, culture education and entertainment. The airing programme of *Medi 1* is actually about 23 hours daily from 5:00 A.M. and remains on the air until 2:00 A.M. Since 3 March 1993 the Programmes were broadcasted by means of satellite and were also available on the Internet. Daily airing hours have been extended from 20 hours in 1991 to 23 hours in 2002.

Radio broadcasting enjoyed its golden age during 1970s. People used to listen to radio almost the whole day. The number of radio receivers in the country increased from 512,000 in the late 1960s to three millions in 1980s. The number of receivers peaked in mid-1990s. In 1997 estimates placed the number of radio receivers at 6, 62 Mio. This calculates to one radio set for every three listeners in Morocco. There were 3, 6 radio receivers for every 1000 per. Today, 80 percent of Morocco's population of about 30 million people can receive radio signals. The regime extended radio services to reach most Moroccan citizens especially in isolated areas were a top political priority. The advent of TV and satellite broadcasting, however, dramatically affected radio. The number of radio listeners declined substantially in the 1990s.

In addition, Morocco offers a program under the name of *International Channel*. This station airs programming on short-wave 19 hours daily, 16, 3 hours French, 1.3 hours English and one hour Spanish broadcast. 50 percent of the program consists of music and entertainment, 50 percent consists of culture, sport, education and talks. 90 percent of the programs are live broadcasts. The program reaches many countries and is designed for audiences in and outside Morocco and in particular for Moroccan immigrants in the European countries.

The program of *FIC* went on the air on 13th October 1987. This station initially broadcasted 10 hours; from 12:00 A.M. to 22:00 P.M. But since Mai 1989 it increased its broadcast time from 10 to 22 hours. *FIC* provides mostly music (70 percent) but it also broadcasts cultural programs and news on current event. The Program broadcast mainly for the Casablanca area and its environment and is available online.

2.1.3 Television

The beginning of Moroccan television can be traced back to the early 1950s. In 1951 the first license was given to a French private television company, *TELMA*. It began its operations in March 1952 and was regarded as the first Arab and African TV. Due to the tense political situation and severe financial difficulties, it stopped broadcasting in Mai 1955.

The development of the broadcasting media differs from that of the print press. The years following the independence have seen the arrival of television as part of Morocco's effort to modernise. On March 3rd, 1962 the national TV channel went on the air.

In 1971, a new Sequence Couleur à Memoire (SECAM) equipped was installed in Morocco, and color television transmission began in 1972. In 1973, television only covered 33 percent of the national territory. The Green March, a mediated event, has pushed the regime to invest in upgrading the broadcasting infrastructure. In the 1980s, this trend continued to meet the needs of this event. The channel *MRT* signals reach 88 percent of the total area of the kingdom in 1996.

At the early stage of television development, the price of a TV set was out of the reach of the overwhelming majority of Moroccans. Thus, television was a luxury for most people in Morocco. During the first decade of its introduction in Morocco, the number of TV sets grew from 5000 to 151.000 (Andaloussi, 1998: 58). The general public began to have access to ownership in the late 1970s. With lowered prices made possible by domestic mass consumption, television sets soon found their ways into all avenues of Moroccan society. There were an estimated 3.1 million TV receivers in 1997. Today, virtually every urban Moroccan home has a television set.

Until the late 1980s, Morocco's entire TV yield consisted of one television station channel. The regime, which had allowed only one channel for a long time, introduced the Arab world's first terrestrial pay-TV channel, *2M International* which begun transmission from Casablanca on 2nd, March 1989 (Poindexter, 1991). The regime licensed the privately owned and profit-oriented channel to compete with the national one. The ideas behind the new channel were several: to break the monopoly of the Moroccan TV, and to introduce commercial television. Thus the main arguments were based on a wish to protect Moroccan culture from the growing threat posed by the foreign satellite channel. In the

spring 1996, *2M* was taken over by the regime.[27] After the arrival of the satellite revolution in the mid nineties, *2M* confronted serious financial difficulties as a number of its subscribers turned to free satellite channels. *2M* called on the regime for assistance and thus was moved into the hands of the political regime. *2M*, which came to symbolize the freedom of press, is currently under the direct control of the regime.[28] It has become a public chain and has broadcasted its programs in clear since January 11th, 1997.

The reasons behind this were the emergence of information and communication technologies and competition from foreign channels.

Like in many Arab countries, television in Morocco has been largely dominated by programming imported from the United States. Foreign films comprise the main part of prime time every night. Overall, television is filled with foreign movies and soap operas, which are highly popular and achieve high audience ratings.

However the existence of one single private channel would not lead to any salutary competition and it remains to be seen whether the regime can go as far as allowing the emergence of more than one private channel in order to give the public a substantially wider range of choice than what is currently available on both *MRT* and *2M* and on satellite television. *2M* has specialized in providing additional services and programs.

With the introduction of *2M* in 1989 leading to further absolute and relative increase in TV broadcast hours, more internationally imported programs have filled the hours. The proportion of national to international programs has continued to be around 20:60.

Reports from the Moroccan Culture and Communication Ministry have indicated that there is a steady decline in the proportion of imports to locally produced programs. Since 1999 the percentage of local production to imports has been estimated by 60 percent of *MRT*; 72 percent are in Arabic language.

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[27] *2M* is most eligible for "re-privatization" given its private background.
[28] It was reported that the regime owned more than 70 percent.

2.1.4 Satellites

During the 1990s new media technologies changed the landscape of the national media. It was not just in the field of territorial television that change was evident. In the 1990s, satellite channels begun to come on stream. Many communication experts argue that the development of television satellites in other Arab countries had forced the regime to open up in a number of ways (Ayisch, 2003). As a response to the explosion of satellite television in the Arab world, the regime launched its satellite channel in 1996 and its signals can be received in the Arab world and in Europe.

Since the legalisation of the ownership of satellite in 1992 and the abolition of the tax on its possession, satellite dishes have mushroomed on the rooftops of buildings and houses in urban centres and villages of the country. The developments that began to emerge in the early 1990s and intensified in the late 1990s will become even more widespread and pronounced during the coming years. Approximately 70 percent of the Moroccan households owned a satellite dish. The "parabool" as the Moroccans call the satellite, has turned into a social phenomenon.

The program is a compilation of programs in Arabic and is sent above all to Moroccan communities, especially in Europe and in the Arab world. The programs were so poor that it was reported that only a tiny minority of Moroccans showed interest in its programs. In contrast, increasing interest in a number of regional channels satellites such as *Al-Jazeera* and *Al-Arabiya* represent a heavy blow to the Moroccan satellite. The regime has reacted to the increasing popularity of Arab satellite televisions with an improvement of its programs, but these attempts failed granted the few financial and human resources.

2.1.5 The Internet

Traditionally in Morocco, almost all public telecommunications infrastructures were controlled by the regime and its administrative authorities, which acted as monopolists (El-Yahyaoui, 1995). In Morocco, these were not separate functions until after the reorganization in 1984. *Al-Maktab Al-Watani Lil-Barid Wal-Itissalat* (National Office of

Post and Telecommunications, NOPT) was created in 1984 as an autonomous public enterprise and was run not by professional managers but by bureaucrats to reduce central government intervention in day-to-day operations (Kavanaugh, 1998: 33).

Until the privatising process swept the Moroccan telecommunications sector, telecommunications services had been provided by a state-owned company. Consequently, the market was controlled by the incumbent monopoly carrier NOPT, which provided all telecommunications services including wireless and international long distance. There was an increasing gap between the supply and demand of working telephones along with poor quality and a limited variety of services.[29] However, forms of telecommunications, especially telephones, were viewed as a convenience and luxury for the elite and not as an essential part of the social and economic development (Elmandjra, 2001).

As in other developing countries, the modernisation and expansion of the telecommunications sector play an important role in Morocco's economic development. The regime realised that Morocco's economic and social development had been hampered by the lack of a modern telecommunications infrastructure. Under the impact of global trends toward deregulation and privatisation, the Moroccan government believed that the telecommunications sector represented a key element in the growth of Moroccan economy and society.

The modernisation of the telecommunications sector and the upgrade of the telecommunications infrastructure have become top priorities of the previous government's reform agenda. The liberalisation, which has already been initiated since the mid-1990s, has made almost every type of telecommunications services available in Morocco, initially in urban areas but spreading to the rural areas as well. The policy encourages and assists the set-up of telecommunications infrastructure first by up-grading public telephone booths, ensuring universal access to everyone, who would like to use it.

2.1.5.1 Fixed Telephone

The number of telephone lines in Morocco decreased from 1.47 million to 1.19 million in 2001. With 1.19 million main telephone lines, Morocco belongs to the top five Arab

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[29] Millions of applications waited for telephone lines for up to 80 months. The high cost of telephone services was mainly due to the unproductive personnel employed by the state, many of which were employed to meet the ends of social problems.

countries with telephone lines, ranked after Egypt and Saudi Arabia. But in 2001 Morocco had a telephone density of only 6 per one hundred inhabitants, one of the lowest rankings among the Arab world, with an average teledensity of around eight percent (ITU, 2002). In 2002 the number of fixed phone subscribers was 1.6 million, or 32 percent of the 5 million Moroccan households (Rochdi, 2001).

Telephone service is highly concentrated in the Casablanca-Rabat area. By 1999, some Moroccan villages had telephone service and there were 70,000 village telephone lines for about 14 million people (Elmandjra, 2001).

Despite large investments to bolster the telephone line infrastructure, they are still substandard and insufficient. The fixed telephone lines are currently exclusively provided by *Ittisalat Al-Maghrib* (IAM), which is the incumbent operator. Thus, *IAM* still holds total monopoly of the fixed telephone lines. However, the expected advent of competition will benefit telephone services.

The regime plans to increase the number of main telephone lines to 2 million with a teledensity aim of 10 percent, by launching a bid to buy a private fixed-line licence. In response to the growing demand for fixed-line services, Morocco is expected to spend more than 1 billion USD in the next two years (McDawall, 2003: 29).

2.1.5.2 Mobile phone

In 1989, the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications introduced mobile telephone in Rabat and other major cities with a total of 700 mobile phone subscribers (Kavanaugh, 1998: 59). In the late 1990s, the IAM shifted its emphasis from providing basic telephone to value-added services that include multimedia integration of voice, text, data, graphics and images. The service initially developed quite slowly, but recent reports indicated that Morocco has enjoyed one of the strongest growth periods in its number of mobile phones (NTRA, 2002; ITU, 2002). The number of mobile phone subscribers soared from 42,924 subscribers in 1997, to 3.05 million in 2000, and to 3.3 million by the end of January 2001 (NTRA, 2002). Teledensity of the mobile phone has swiftly progressed from 0.4 percent in 1998 to 16 percent in 2001, reflecting an increase of 3820 percent in 2001 (NTRA, 2002).

These figures exceeded all public and private-sectors estimates at the time that the second GSM licence was being awarded.

The total number of mobile phone subscribers exceeded the fixed telephone line subscribers of 4 million in August 2000. By the year 2002, it was forecasted that there would be about 6 million mobile phone subscribers in Morocco with a penetration rate of 18 percent, greater than the international average of 15 percent (NTRA, 2002). The mobile phone network now reaches more than 85 percent of the population. Many remote areas with no previous telephone services can now be reached with the mobile phone network.

Growth rates in the Moroccan mobile market have exceeded 242 percent for the last four years making the mobile market one of the fastest growing, not only in Africa and the Arab world, but also in the entire world. As the head of the Arab regional office of the International Telecommunications Union, Ibrahim Kadi, put it "the Moroccan experience has become a landmark for all other countries to follow" (McDawall, 2003: 34).

2.1.5.3 Computers

The first modern computer was introduced in Morocco immediately after the country acquired its independence in 1957 (Sadiqi, 1990: 19). Morocco's information revolution was initiated in the 1980s with the growth of the computer-use in the Moroccan financial, administration and educational sectors (Sadiqi, 1990: 28). This computerisation effort was the forerunner of what is called ICTs today. Data research was scarce, yet over the years the number of computers increased to about 11,000 units in 1990 and then to 45,000 units in 1995. That figure is likely to have doubled by now.

It was reported that in 2000, only a small percentage of the population had a personal computer at home about (545,000) (NTRA, 2002), yet Morocco carries the average of computer ownership in the Arab world.

In acknowledgment of PC potential in the information society, the regime has undertaken the task to increase the density of personal computers (number of PCs per 100 households). The PC growth is expected to be triggered by a drop in PC prices. Computer packages were launched in 2000, and many people have responded positively.

The major driver in the diffusion of home computing in Morocco has gone from games and videos in the late 1990s and early 2000s to the Internet. PC prices are coming down and the growing awareness of the Internet is pushing up sales. It is estimated that about 200, 000 PCs were sold between 1995 and 1998. PC Sales in Morocco rose from 70,000 in 1999 to 163, 000 in 2000, for a total value of 175.23 million USD (Jankari, 2002). In 2000, desktops accounted for the vast majority of PC sales in Morocco with 92.8 percent share of the overall PC market. Estimation is forecasted that by 2005 the number of PC sales will reach 250,000 units. In addition, to encourage the diffusion of PCs in Morocco, 100,000 PCs were imported in 2001. The Moroccan market for PCs was the third largest in Africa and the fifth largest in the Arab world. It had a growth rate of 10.6 percent in 2000 over the five-year forecast period ending in 2005 (Jankari, 2002). As a result, the home penetration of the PC increased to almost eight percent (Jankari, 2002).

2.1.5.4 The Internet

The history of the Internet in Morocco dates back to the early 1990s. Research universities were the starting-points for the development of the Internet in Morocco. "Mohammadia's High School for Engineers" in Rabat was a pioneer in establishing the first national Internet connection to Morocco in 1993. At the very outset is Unix-to-Unix Copy, (UUCP) an e-mail connection to the global Internet via European Universities.[30] The first connection on the basis of TCP/IP was in 1995 through the *Al-Akhawayn* University in Ifrane, which marked the official birth of the Internet in Morocco.[31]

Like most Arab countries, the Internet was initially regarded as a research instrument for scientists to communicate with international scientific communities and colleagues. Typically, Internet access was limited to universities and research centres, to computer scientists for research communication at top universities.[32]

The Internet has been available to the Moroccan public since November 1995. Its first widespread use was by students and researchers, who employed it for sending and receiving e-mails. The Internet's diffusion in Morocco was slow primarily because

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[30] Mahdi Elmandjra, Progressive intellectual and human rights activist, personal interview with the author, December 22, 2001, Rabat, Morocco.
[31] Elmandjra, personal interview.
[32] Elmandjra, personal interview.

computers were still rare. Furthermore, Internet costs were quite high during these early years. Thus the Internet had to overcome these hurdles if it was to enjoy popularity in Morocco.

Meanwhile, almost all Moroccan universities and higher education institutes had been connected to the Internet via an X.25-Internet gateway operated by the ISP MTDS in Rabat. Eight national high schools, 16 regional pedagogical centers and about 35 training centers are wired. Almost all high schools (557) and secondary schools (790) can connect to the Internet through leased lines and dial-up. In addition, 312 primary schools have already been connected and the rest will follow by the end of 2003 (Jankari, 2002).

A considerable number of Points of Presence (POPs) were being established in minor cities and small towns. The number of Internet users is also spreading in small to medium cities and some villages, but Internet users are still concentrated primarily in the Rabat-Casablanca area.

In 1996 the average cost of Internet subscription was 50 USD per month (Rochdi, 2002). The cost of an adequate system for Internet access is beyond most Moroccan's means. In early 1998, Internet access in Morocco cost about 40-50 USD per month for a subscription, which included fifteen hours online plus the cost of the telephone connection (approximately 2 USD per hour). By 1999, the average subscriptions had dropped to about 20 USD per month for unlimited access, with telephone charges remaining at about 2 USD per hour. In 2002, cost of a monthly Internet subscription dropped to about 6 USD per month (Rochdi, 2002).

The NTRA introduced competition with the hitherto monopoly of the telecommunications carrier IAM by allowing several Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to enter the public Internet access market. In 1997 approximately 20 companies were granted licenses to become ISPs.[33] In 1998 about 60 percent of the ISPs started their business activities and with their recent proliferation, there are about 130 ISPs (NTRA, 2002). In terms of the number of hosts, Morocco is now in the third position in Africa and the fourth position in the Arab world.

In 1996 there were about 50 websites, but at the end of 2001, there were 4500 registered domain names in Morocco (.ma, .com, .org, .net, etc.), with 3500 of them having the « .ma » extension (NTRA, 2002).

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[33] ISPs offer a variety of services, generally ranging from e-mail, access to electronic bulletin boards and such Internet features as the Use-net News-groups and electronic mailing lists , hosting and supervising websites.

Morocco's first Internet café opened in 1996 in Rabat, with the NTRA issuing licenses for 50 cyber-cafes by the end of 1996 (Rochdi, 2001). Cyber-cafés have been mushrooming in major cities and also in small towns; however 42 percent of these cafes are located in the Rabat-Casablanca area. The total number of cyber-cafes increased from 500 in 1999 to 2500 in 2001. This is a 500 percent growth rate.

Cyber cafés have become favourite hangout stations and meeting places for Morocco's Internet users, particularly young people. They are open to all, there is no age limit and the fees vary according to location, ranging from 50 cents to 1 USD per hour. The increased competition has triggered a general downward trend in user charges, resulting in good prices. A recent study found that more than 50 percent of cyber-café are frequented everyday by between 30-70 persons (Jankari, 2002). A study conducted by the IEC Marketing in 2001, showed 58 percent of all Internet access in Morocco is via cybercafés (Pastore, 2002). The arrival of cyber cafés resulted in a popularity explosion of the Internet in Morocco. Many experts believe that Morocco is by far one of Africa's most advanced countries in terms of the Internet. The widespread availability of cyber-cafés has triggered the competition (Elmandjra, 2001: 137).

Although the growth of the Internet began slowly, it is currently picking up momentum. Estimates put the number of Morocco's Internet users at 10,000 in 1996 (Rochdi, 2002). In 1998, that number increased to 35, 000 which is about 0, 14 percent of the population. In 2001, the number of Internet users has progressed from 50, 000 in 1999 to 400, 000, reflecting a growth of about 700 percent (NTRA, 2002). According to statistics of the Moroccan Secretary State of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technologies, Morocco is heading to reach 1 million Internet users by 2005 (Jankari, 2002). Morocco plans to reach 10 million Internet users by 2010. Yet this growth is only hopeful speculation, since the number of actual Internet users in Morocco was only 1.3 percent in 2001. Still, over 3 percent of the Moroccan educated population has some form of net access.

In 1998, there were only 400 Internet subscribers (Rochdi, 2002). In 2000, only 7,000 Moroccan households had an Internet access, about 3 percent of households with computers. The recent data published on NRAT's website gives the number of Internet subscribers at 53,000 (NTRA, 2002). It is estimated that the home Internet connections will increase to 150, 000 by 2005. The number of Internet subscribers does not take into account the possibility, but instead the fact that a single account may be shared by multiple

users. According to a study, 29 percent of Moroccan Internet users have Internet access at home (Pastore, 2002).

The use of the Internet remains the domain of relatively elite circle mainly of those who are highly educated. More than two-thirds of Internet users (71 percent) had a high school diploma or more. With regards to occupation, 20 percent said they were professionals and 20 percent of Internet users are university students.

In the early days, the use of the Internet was limited to males in their twenties or thirties with an engineering degree. According to the IEC Marketing, 70 percent of the Moroccan Internet users are aged between 21 and 35. Since 2000 the female Internet user-base has grown, supported by a new study that found that one-quarter of the Internet users are women (Jankari, 2002).

There is lack of research on the Internet in Morocco, but a study conducted for the NTRA found that 85 percent of the Internet surfers from cyber-cafes are chatters, followed by e-mail-users at 60 percent and entertainment at 50 percent (NTRA, 2002).

As elsewhere, the main use of the Internet today is e-mail-based communication. In 1995, there were about 2,000 e-mail users in Morocco and today, Morocco accounts for about 300,000 e-mail addresses. Some estimates say that 150,000 Moroccans have at least one e-mail-account.[34] As e-mail services become more widespread, it will also generate more users as well.

As mentioned earlier, although Morocco witnessed an important growth in the use of the Internet during the last decade. Morocco's internet diffusion and use is still low by European standards, not to mention American ones. To promote the Internet diffusion, several hurdles need to be surmounted. Serious hurdles include the lack of adequate Internet infrastructures, the low-level penetration rate of PCs, computer illiteracy and the high-cost of Internet access. Other problems are Internet traffic "jams" and congested data networks, caused by limited bandwidth. Many Moroccans refer to the Internet as the "World Wide Wait".

Another key problem to consider is the content of the websites. Policymakers admit that there is a lack of useful Arabic content websites. While English is pre-eminent in the Internet, literacy in English in Morocco is limited.

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[34] Rachid Jankari, journalist of the Moroccan Portal and bloger, personal interview with the author, December 11, 2001, Casablanca, Morocco.

The regime had launched several campaigns to promote the use of the Internet in every aspect of daily life. It spent money on increasing the number of household computers and broadband Internet access throughout the country. The promotion of the Internet use was made possible by the grant to operate cyber-cafes in small and major towns.

2.2 The regime's use of the media

It is clear that the modern nation state has greatly benefited from its use of information through control and monopoly (Thompson, 1995). The modern national media system in Morocco has not deviated from this practise. Like many other developing countries the regime has excelled at using the national information system for its political objectives.

From the beginning, the regime realised the huge potentials of the national information system. The political hegemony of the regime has considerably relied on the regime's use of the national information system, especially the radio and television. Soon after Morocco gained its independence in 1956, it has become clear that the broadcasting system could serve the regime by becoming an important communication vehicle to promote regime-directed policies and to serve what the regime considered vital development goals of the nation.

King Hassan II firmly believed that the national information system was a fundamental piece in the architecture of his political power. He was sensitive to the potential of the broadcasting system. He explained on many occasions that he regarded it as a "very important element in the process of nation building" (Ben Ashour, 1992). Morocco's national radio was designed to perform the important national mission of creating common ground for the regime, shaping the structure and forms of Moroccan society. Radio was particularly preferred to propagate a sense of national identity around the person of the king. It is suggestive that the date of the launch of *MRT* coincided with March 25th 1962, the Crown Celebration day. Radio stations have been the privileged domain of the political regime. Due to its convenience as means to disseminate news and information and to imbue the public with the value of Moroccan nationalism, the regime has become dependent on them to reach Moroccans. The regime has attached these communication means an extra significance (El Yahyaoui, 1998: 152).

From the very beginning, when it was first introduced into Morocco in 1952, TV also appealed to the regime as an effective mass medium. Its effectiveness has been recognised as a tool for social integration and control of people. Endorsed by King Hassan II as a bridge between his government and his subject, television became at once the official mouthpiece of the regime and the most popular form of entertainment for Moroccans.

Hassan's II mobilised mass media for national development. Radio was extensively used in political education, such as preparing the population for country's first general election and referendum:[35] In a campaign for the referendum of 1962, the regime broadcasted daily commentaries of the magazines "*Les Phares*", directed by the Minister of Interior. The regime also distributed TV sets in public cafés to promote the campaign for the constitution (Ben Ashour, 1992: 90). Under King Hassan II's reign, the mass media's function was to serve the regime by imposing ideological hegemony. The regime's influence on the broadcasting system has been presented as important for the promotion and realization of the task of nation building.

2.2.1 Monopoly of the information national system

The regime has monopolized the use of the broadcasting system since its early inception. Morocco had a long tradition and history of exercising media monopoly (Sami, 1990: 12). Since its early inception, the political regime has attempted to impose and implement a closed information policy in which contesting political ideas had been actively controlled. The regime's efforts had been motivated by a number of different concerns. Defence of Moroccan sovereignty and national security were the chief among these. The regime's initial attempts to monopolize access to the print press were a direct reaction to the colonial powers. In 1885 the Moroccan Sultan Hassan I planned to ban the foreign press, but was incapable because of his political weakness in the context of imperial concurrence over Morocco (Laroui, 1993: 204).

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[35] This is understandable in the Moroccan context where the rate of illiteracy is among the highest in the Arab world; about 65 percent of Moroccans are illiterate according the estimates by the UNESCO (UNESCO, 2000). Daily newspaper circulation for the entire country of about 30 millions is about 250,000 (Minister of Communication and Culture).

Meanwhile, on November 25th, 1922 a *Dahir* was issued to give the regime the exclusive right to assign radio frequencies. The 1922 Telegraphy provided the regime with exclusive monopoly of the legal regulation and the power to control all matters related to the telegraphic services. The project of the *Sultan* was to acquire a total hegemonic control over the political, economic and social field.[36]

Throughout the early years of independence, the regime had been hostile to radio and TV communication outside of its control. Thus, the regime completed its monopoly over the audio-visual system by instituting rigid regulatory policies applying to all broadcasting stations and exercised tight control over the radio networks. The regime controlled all radio channels by entailing various restrictions originating in radio's role as an official voice of the regime. Political intervention in the running, content and the output of broadcasting system in Morocco was a normal thing.

On October 22nd, 1959, the regime issued a *Dahir* through which it monopolized the radio transmission activities and ended foreign radio stations in the country (Alami, 1985). Indeed, on December 31st, 1959 many private stations were closed. The regime's advocacy of a closed information system had been designed to justify the information closure it intended to implement to protect the people from "alien and pernicious" ideas, particularly political ones. Restrictions on the information flow has demonstrated the fear of losing its domestic monopoly power over political information for the purpose of staying immune to new information presence.

The audiovisual was a major focus of the regime. Defined by the regime as an instrument of national development, the national media system was promoted as an instrument of economic development and social modernization. The discourses of legitimation for the monopolisation and centralisation of the channels of information and communication stemmed from what was subsumed under the so-called "developmental communication". As a result, broadcasting must not be left to oppositional forces, which may misuse it. The control of the regime over audiovisual has been a subject of an extensive and long-standing conflict in Morocco for many decades. The regime has claimed that the audiovisual system *is* a national institution transcending narrow political interests, whereas the opposition has advocated the position that the radio *is* clearly an ideological apparatus of the regime.

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[36] The term king was initially introduced into the Moroccan political jargon in 1958.

Political and economic change in the power structure during the 1960s and the emergence of new social and political groups began to affect media relationship between the political regime and the opposition. The party print press criticized the politically conservative role of the Moroccan mass media, particularly audiovisual. They accused the broadcasting system of ignoring the needs of the majority of Moroccans and of propagating an alienating culture that benefited the political interests of regime.

In 1963, the regime decided that the broadcasting system should stay away from any involvement in any political debate during the campaign election (Ben Ashour, 1992: 90). From their parts, leaders of the opposition demanded the possibility to use the channels of the broadcasting system in the election campaign. King Hassan II refused their demand, arguing that the leaders of the opposition should not forget that they had used the channels of the broadcasting system in 1962 not as leaders of political parties but as ministers of his majesty (Ben Ashour, 1992: 90).

During 1962-65 Morocco experienced a high degree of partisan political activity (Darif, 2000: 105). The opposition leaders regarded and used the print press, particularly their newspapers as chief weapons of political agitation because there was no other media alternative for articulating their challenges against the regime (Clausen, 1996: 257). After independence, King Hassan II argued that his aims were to unite the Moroccan nation by unifying the information channels. He conceived the national information system as power resources in the Moroccan political field. Partisan newspapers reflected their opposition to the legalised monopoly of the broadcasting system.

The rivalry of the information dominance between King Hassan II and the opposition had intensified during the emergency period of the 1960s. In 1965 the parliament intended to abolish article 77. The *Istiqlal* and other political parties succeeded in amending the press code by dispensing the regime of the power to suspend or cancel publication. In addition, the opposition succeeded in suppressing two French dailies, *la Vigie Marocaine* and *Le Petit Marocain* (Rugh, 1987).

These amendments led to a parliamentary crisis. This in turn sparked the king's decision to take personal control of the government in June and suspended the parliament and, declaring a state of national emergency on June 7th, 1965 (Waterbury, 1970: 157). Repressive measures were utilized against trade unions and the various opposition political parties. The media were particularly affected by censorship. Using his royal derogatives, King Hassan II suspended freedom of expression.

Television has always been the subject of hefty struggles between the opposition and the regime especially during elections. The opposition had been denied access to television during election campaigns and its activities have long been ignored. In 1976, the opposition campaigned for the parliamentary election without access to the audiovisual channels. In 1982, King Hassan II accepted to open broadcasting and allowed the leaders of political parties to contact the electorate directly by means of radio and television. They could benefit from a certain amount of air time to present their political, social and political programmes. The access to the broadcasting system was conditioned with the respect of the "rules of the game" (Ben Ashour, 1992: 90).

The national information system is organised as a state monopoly to maintain and consolidate the authority and legitimacy of the regime. Broadcasting has been virtually a regime monopoly (Rugh, 1987). With the nationalisation of the news agencies the regime could monopolize its information control by selecting and distributing news from overseas wire services. This was furthered by the acquisition of the Maghreb Agency in 1971:[37]

The regime has been marked by vertical control of communication and information, exemplified by a top-down media system that acted as a conduit carrying the regime ideas to the masses. The information on domestic political events is a part and parcel of the orchestration of politics. The political regime has often sought to impose genuine and full information flow control, by tending to institute more rigid control systems and by attempting to prevent and limit journalists' access to information sources, as well as newsgathering and publication. Like in many authoritarian regimes, King Hassan's II information strategy assumed that the mechanism whereby information were handed over and distributed in society essentially determined the working of that society.

2.2.2 Control of the national information system

The central importance of the media to the regime is evident from the seniority of those who have served as information ministers. To show the close relation between the political regime and the national information system, it is very interesting to look at the name of those persons who held top posts at the Ministry of Information. Since its inception, the

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[37] The regime's controlled News Agency formerly privately owned and founded is the sole gatekeeper and distributor of news.

Ministry of Information had been held by loyal persons such as Ahmed Guidera, one of the staunchest royalists, who was the first Information Minister in 1960.

Hassan II and his Interior Ministers had set the policies under which the media system has operated. The authorities have further exerted influence on the national information system in many ways, including the selection of the Radio and TV chairman. The information and media system operated under royal hands, because the chairmen have been carefully selected and officially appointed by royal *Dahir* (Rugh, 1987). The appointment was an outcome of a strict control on the political qualification which explained that all members of the appointed board of directors bore political credentials and have been closely tied to the regime. The broadcasting has always been confined to a tightly circumscribed body of elite, a closed community around the Interior Ministry. These two media institutions have been regulated by the most monarchy loyal persons. Consequently, the selection of the directors of the TV and Radio never escaped the influence and orientation of the monarch.

In the wake of independence press law did not change for the better. The first attempt to control the national information system in post-colonial Morocco was made in November 1958. The promulgation of a press code by royal *Dahir* represented the first legal framework and basis of media control.

Thus the history of the national information system is intertwined with the history of the political regime. Although after independence in 1956, Mohammed V declared that freedom of press would be guaranteed (Hidas, 1992: 220), the political regime gradually changed its policies. In the domestic political sphere, the regime hardened its position vis-à-vis the press freedom, because the press became too critical of the actions of the regime. The political regime stated that a completely free press would threaten the country's security and national unity.

The authorities, therefore, not only re-enacted some of the colonial press laws, but also added further constraints to them. The newly independent Morocco inherited a number of colonialist laws for controlling and regulating the press. The regime has adopted the French colonial media policies to suppress leftist publications and, later, to regulate progressive critical ones as well (Hidas, 1992). All the texts that have regulated the media landscape under the French colonial rule were adopted by the regime (Hidas, 1992: 220). This trend was consolidated by the promulgation of the *Dahir* of June 1st, 1959. A *Dahir* introduced new regulations to take action against newspapers for certain controversial

editorials. In December 1959, an editorial of the daily *Al-Tahrir* criticized the rampant corruption in the administration and emphasised the accountability of the government to the people caused the arrest of the paper's editor and managing director (Waterbury, 1970: 211). It is suggestive that the release of the director of the paper Mohammed Basri coincided with the modification of the press code on 28 May 1960 (OMHD, 1995).

In 1960, the article 77 of the press code of 1959, was modified to give the Minister of Interior the power to seize and censor any publication, representing a danger to the public life (Alami, 1985). These measures evoked protests and a press strike, which led to a concealment of the press code (Rugh, 1987: 107).

The amendment of 1960 had allowed the authorities the opportunity to deal with the press from a security perspective. It instituted a rigorous system of censorship, which was enforced by the powerful Ministry of the Interior, and operated under the aegis of the Ministry of Information. Due to the 1960 amendment, article 77 prohibits the distribution of publications, which may destabilize public order. It also empowers the interior minister to censor, monitor and confiscate any printing detrimental to "the institutional, political or religious basis of the kingdom". Similarly the prime minister can forbid any circulation of foreign periodicals if the publication offends the authorities.[38]

All areas of broadcasting fell under the control of the Ministry of Information. This ministry contained a range of special departments of supervising and monitoring the press, radio and television. From time to time, the Ministry of Interior issued directives to the broadcasters and monitored their execution through informal mechanisms. They are accountable to no parliamentary standing committee on information. They are instead answerable and guided in terms of programming solely by top regime officials. Additionally, the bureaucrats and functionaries of the broadcasting system themselves exercise a high degree of self-regulation.

The national information system was and is still used to consolidate the control and the power of the regime legitimating its political and religious policies by defining politics and religion on its own terms (Rugh, 1987). During the years of King Hassan's total hegemony, the broadcasting system has been an important part of the system of political power and has been fully integrated into the overall structure of power. This was linked to

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[38] According to article 77, the Interior Minister can order the seizure a newspaper likely to "disturb the peace". Due to the 1960 amendment, article 77 prohibits the distribution of publications, which may destabilize public order. It also empowers the Interior Minister to censor, monitor and confiscate any printing detrimental to "the institutional, political or religious basis of the kingdom". Similarly the prime minister can forbid any circulation of foreign periodicals if the publication offends the authorities.

the growing presence of the Ministry of Information in the direct supervision of the public media.

Unlike many other Arab regimes that adopted totally closed information policies, the regime has adopted a relatively liberal attitude toward print press. Diversity and media pluralism have for several decades been part of the logic of the regime media policy. By Arab world standards, the Moroccan print press is diverse and reflected the plurality of the Moroccan politics (Rugh, 1987). The regime has always tolerated this kind of pluralism characterised by a multitude of papers.

Some newspapers and some weeklies are associated directly with political parties. The party print press has served primarily as a means of communication among political elites and the populace. King Hassan II's summoned the function of the party press in "articulating the opinions of the parties and explaining their political principles" (Ben Ashour, 1992). They should not criticize the regime. Both of them have taken advantage of the press freedom to make their views known. It has also gained more social power thanks to its resistance to political control and its fight for freedom of the press. Yet the print press has not reached beyond an already highly politicised and educated readership.

Diversity in the print press has emerged as the independent press started to break up the existing party press structure. The authorities seemed willing to relinquish control over certain categories of specialized, professional, lifestyle and entertainment publications.

In fact, the regime has implemented direct and indirect censorship mechanisms, practices and techniques. The regime has a dismal reputation for excellence in developing indirect censorship techniques (Eickelman, 1999: 31). In the words of some analysts, these masked and subtle forms of censorship and control mechanisms were preferred by the regime for many reasons. Chief amongst them is the avoidance of being looked at as a non-free country.

Media developments closely reflected the dramatic authoritarian turn of national politics in general. And during the first half of the 1970s, terms as such as transparency, editorial autonomy and press freedom became taboo and political control was reasserted. Some oppositional newspapers questioned the major policies of the regime and attacked the personalities at the top of the regime's hierarchy.

The regime reacted with the suspension of the *Istiqlal* daily *La Nation Africaine* in February 1965 for publishing anti-monarchical standpoints (Waterbury, 1970: 129). The Minister of Interior banned *Al-Maghreb Al-Arabi* and closed its offices, because it

published in its pages an attack by Khatib, criticising Ahardan for "tribalism" (Waterbury, 1970: 252). *Al-Muharrir* was banned in November 1965. The editor was sentenced to ten months in prison and the paper was suspended for six months (Waterbury, 1970: 129).

IN 1965, the regime-press conflict peaked. The most damaging attacks on press freedom occurred during this political crisis. As most authoritarian regimes, King Hassan II established decisive control over the press. He also accused the criticism of the press as the cause for the destabilisation of the nation (Ben Ashour, 1992: 92). Opposition press were thus banned. King Hassan II set the patterns of press censorship and imposed a restrictive press environment.

It is very significant to remark that the state of exception was an immediate and direct outcome of the political problems which revolved around the press code. As early as King Hassan II in 1965, he invited diverse political parties to contend and criticize the government, journalists were encouraged to take greater editorial initiative and engage in investigative projects in taboo areas. In the subsequent crackdown, the most outspoken critics of the regime were vilified and cast out of their professions.

The offensive of the regime changed the situation dramatically in 1970, when control became the "Leitmotiv" of media policy. Censorship reached its climax. During the political crisis of the mid 1970s suspension was almost a monthly occurrence for some leading oppositional papers such as *Al-Alam*, *L'Opinion* and *Al-Muharrir* (Waterbury, 1970: 297; Rugh, 1987: 108). Newspapers were continually censored by the Ministry of Information.

In 1972, King Hassan II defended his handling of the print press of the opposition, by emphasising that "attacks on institutions rather than policies" cannot be tolerated (Tessler, 1982). As he put it in an interview with a European Radio station on August 25th, 1972, it is better to close a paper down than to bring it to trial. He conceded that the financial damage is great, but the political damage is deadly (Ben Ashour, 1992: 97).

The turning-point came when the general political climate created by the new situation as solution to the problem of Moroccan Sahara and the previous military Putsch. The new political map of Morocco, which began to be drawn after 1975, brought the country more closely in line with its formal constitutional norm. This period was characterized by a slow return to a civil life and royal overtures to the political opposition. The regime relaxed the implementation of its legal arsenal against defying publications which may represent danger for the stability of the country, national unity and territorial

sovereignty (Alami, 1985). The climate of repression, which had been a dominant feature of the pre-1975 period, had ended clearing a legal space for the opposition to operate. In the wake of this situation political parties were encouraged by such a change, they demanded press freedom as a condition to participate in the election of 1977 (OMHD, 1995).

This rigid control of the press prevailed until 1987, when the regime relaxed control to emphasis the more liberal and tolerant aspects resulted from the Green March. Still, many communication outlets were to be strictly filtered through the various levels of the information and Interior Ministry. Since 1987 the regime has followed the policy of giving a fixed subsidy to those papers that support its point of view. The intellectual leaning of party print press shows close tendencies to the parties. King Hassan II increased the amount of subsidies granted to the print press as a part of the political control.[39]

After the Green March, the media enjoyed more freedom and flexibility but also experienced a great deal of volatility. The transformation towards a free media environment began in 1977, when the regime officially ended censorship and had lifted some regulations on press freedom (Ben Ashour, 1992: 102). As a result, the print press could criticize policies, cover issues they previously avoided and reflected diverse interests. King Hassan II's control over the print press turned from direct to an indirect one.

The financial dependence of the mass media on the regime was thus normalized. By using regime subsidies, media are allowed to criticise the behaviour and policies of the government but only within certain limits defined by the powerful Ministry of Interior. The regime was also capable of exerting subtle forms of intervention pressure, when it attempted to force print media to comply and align with its own interpretation of events by withdrawing financial and symbolic support. Newspapers were forced not to differ much from the official ideological leanings. In so doing, they represented the officialist character of the Moroccan print press.

In 1988, a dramatic censorship mechanism was enacted for two opposition papers *Al-Bayan* and *Al-Ittihad Al-Ishtiraki*. Newspaper's directors have been successfully co-opted by the subsidies, if not they were harassed. In 1989, the director of the "*L'Opinion*", paper of the Itiqlal, was sentenced to two years jail and a bill for publishing a manifesto by

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[39] The decision of the king was largely due to the paper's position to Shammon Peres, the Israeli Prime Minister, to visit Morocco in 1986. It has become clear to understand the king's strategy in controlling the print press by supplying funding.

the Moroccan Human Rights Organization and for not respecting the king's media directives concerning the publication of some of Morocco's social problems that may damage the image of the country abroad (Ben Ashour, 1992: 99). As usual, the king pardoned the journalist and the paper, but this served as a warning for those who may ignore the king's taboos.

Morocco's history shows that periods of relative openness are often followed by periods of retrenchment, and it may be that recent media restrictions would be lifted with the advent of political reforms in 1992. Before the parliamentary elections of 1977, the main opposition political parties called for free and democratic national broadcasting system under an independent and autonomous authority.

Before the onset of recent democratisation, Morocco departed from the rigid and closed national information system. The most encouraging sign of improvement in press freedom appeared in 1990s. The ability to behold the hegemonic position will depend on the regime's ability to recognise the deep changes transforming the nature of power within the Moroccan political field and adapt to them. Toward the mid-1990 the demand for more decentralisation and for a new information system arose, demanding a respectable degree of pluralism. The emergence of this new information system has coincided with, and in many ways has contributed to, the present state of media affairs.

From the mid-1980s, national TV and radio banned many Moroccans such as the progressionist intellectual and the human rights activist Mahdi Elmandjra and the popular humorist Ahmad Snoussi (also known as Bziz) (El Yahyaoui, 1998: 123).[40] In 1996, it refused to air a program dedicated to the Union of Writer, an association of Moroccan intellectuals. *MRT* also refused to give free access to different political, social and religious voices. It instead privileges some political actors over others by allowing or denying access.

The relationship between the regime and the mass media took on radically different characteristics when the socialist led-government was elected to power in 1997. Before coming to power, the socialists had denounced the regime's monopolistic structures and its influence on the mass media. Once in office, however, the socialist led-government did not immediately offer an alternative media model to reflect the spirit of the period. Although

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[40] It is to note that the ban was lifted when Mohammad VI invited him to appear in a public advertisement for the Mohammed V Foundation. But the ban was not lifted for ever. He was interviewed by the *2M* during demonstrations against the war in Iraq in March 2003 but the interview was blocked. The transmission of an Al-Jazeera report containing an interview with Bziz was never screened.

they were subject to occasional restrictions from the side of the regime, oppositions and particularly left-wing opposition papers, for the most part, operated with considerable freedom during this period. In January 1995, the paper, *Le Maroc-Hebdo*, was censored, because it contained a critical essay on the Arab political situation, written by the prince Hisham. The regime defended its action, arguing that a member of the royal family could not articulate through the press without authorisation from the royal cabinet (OMDH, 1995).

At the height of political liberalisation in the late 1990s, the opposition parties led the drive to formulate a press law that promised to enhance the media transparency. The opening of the national information system has supplied the Moroccan society with new and unlimited communication opportunities. These information and communication options available to the Islam-oriented movements do reflect their needs of a functioning informational system. For them this will be achieved by the creation of an independent one.

To make the democratisation process in Morocco viable and thus no longer vulnerable is to make important political forces unable to gain access to information channels. Today, with the political democratisation under way, the national information system has entered a period of significant and probably irreversible change.

Appointments to top managerial and editorial posts in public television and radio continue to be made on the basis of political rather than purely professional criteria. On November 16th 1999, he appointed Mohammed Yassine Mansouri, a young friend of the king, as the head of the Maghreb Arab Press (MAP), replacing Abdeljalil Fenjiro, who had served as director of the Agency for more than 20 years. As head of the first national television station (TVM), the king appointed another friend Faycal Laraachi, replacing Mohammed Issari. The national radio remains unaffected.

The press in Morocco has remained under multiple official and unofficial constraints, despite the onset of democratization. Although the promotion of press freedom is amongst the strongest pillars of democratic politics, the democratic transition has not meant a complete liberalization of the press law. Islam-oriented movements had always found their needs and interests ignored. They are thus disadvantaged in terms of access to the public sphere. The Islam-oriented press, was forced to shut their magazines. Voices of various political actors are mainly heard in the papers outside the influence of the regime.

2.2.3 Homogenisation of the national information system

The regime has exploited the national information system to create personality cult and to promote the charismatic features of the king. The national information system has been designed thematically and symbolically to meet the demands of stabilising the political system. The predominance and the centrality of the figure of the king was obviously manifested in the news bulletins. The news bulletins were an occasion to document with a degree of certainty daily activities of the king, which occupied the bulk of prime time radio and TV news bulletins, followed by the activities of the ministers of his majesty. They covered his domestic and international visits.[41] Official pronouncements take up hours of air-time. Arab Human Development Report 2003 concluded that Arab news coverage is largely inadequate, with the main focus still on official developments and senior political officials. "News of interest to the majority of the population, and which relates to their daily concerns or which could enrich their scientific and cultural knowledge, is scarce. News was royal realism on video.

The salience of such news stories made it difficult to produce comprehensive, balanced news bulletins, which could mirror the real situation of the country. Every program would meet the "text and the context" of political and religious acceptability. The highly centralized and dirigist interest of the regime in media demonstrated how the regime manipulated media coverage rather than simply censor it. Television avoided politically and religiously sensitive issues and vocal dissenting views (El Yahyaoui, 2000). Editors had no choice but to become sensitive when dealing with political and religious issues and international current events. They have consistently taken care to avoid any expression of political opinion different to what the official image of politics and religion. The consequence was that the national information system has developed into praise-singers for the king in the name of national unity and the creation and promotion of national identity.[42]

This kind of covering constituted the most important occupation of the national information system. The authorities have exercised control over program contents. Media content were oriented to serve the perpetuation of the status quo by glorifying the regime

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[41] Some private events such as marriages of some of his family members were also covered.
[42] The broadcasting system was supposed to have a celebrating function quite different from that of the media in the Anglo-Saxon democracies.

and the political culture on which the regime legitimized its authority. The national information system was developed to function as an instrument of political, national and economic propaganda and thus designed basically to control and direct public opinion without causing any sort of politicisation.

The regime's core objective was to control information, by limiting the information horizon. It has never provided detailed accounts of alternative political accounts, unless it is from its own official perspective. Royal directives have determined the role that television should play. The concern of the media officials has always been centred on meeting the demands of the regime rather than the public.

The regime-owned Radio and TV had not provided balanced coverage of the news. One reason is that most political information, particularly TV, is in the form of propaganda (Waterbury, 1970: 295; El Yahyaoui, 1998). Every thing should be invested politically. Even apolitical subjects were intensively used to deliver a supporting political message. News considered in contradiction with the official political and religious discourse was banned. A notorious case in point was what the Moroccan print press called "Tabit-Gate", a sex crime scandal that involved a senior police officer in 1992. The scandal went unreported by the broadcasting system (Eickelman, 1999: 35).

Content was the most decisive factor in the pattern of control and liberalisation. Direct political coverage remained the least liberalised and thus the most controlled genre. In less sensitive genres like sports, entertainment and art, however, content control is relaxed as long as the program is not considered politically and religiously offensive. Genres that were traditionally close to the centre of political power enjoyed less freedom of expression than those at the political periphery.

Most of these program materials fail to address many important social issues facing young people, including drugs, illegal immigration and unemployment. News and information about political, social and economic situation in the Arab world is often simply not available (Arab Human Development Report, 2003). Because of the traditional forms of censorship and concealment, Moroccan society could not get the true picture of the state of the economy, the fate of the thousands of people kidnapped, tortured and murdered by the regime.[43] The media could not play its role by supplying people with a true picture of

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[43] The evidence either had been destroyed or was stored in secret data banks well hidden within the bureaucracy of the Interior Ministry.

the country, since the facts were simply not there or were concealed (Hidass, 1992: 255; Clausen, 1996: 261).

The television coverage has tended to homogeneity. This homogenisation of information has also affected the people's way of thinking on political matters. The practice of promoting a uniformity of political and religious values has reinforced nationalism as opposed to diversity.

In 1977, the king suggested that Moroccans did not know about many things that happened during the last two years. He stated that "the public could not know what I know. My government knows more than the public. But it knows less than what I myself know" (Ben Ashour, 1992: 99). The political regime used the mass media to control public and private information. Through this kind of rigid control of the information flow, the political regime planned to keep the level of political consciousness of Moroccan society very low.

The contours of the national information system were more sharply defined, largely in conformist terms. The position of the regime concerning the national information system has been characterised by a sense of traditionalism and conservatism. King Hassan II even legitimized his censorship by Islamic tradition. He claimed that the Prophet Mohammad had deterred journalists from engaging in criticising the regime. A Moslem should not attack other Moslems by month or hand. King Hassan II added to these organs the pen. Formally put, journalists who attacked the king by pen belong no longer to the Islamic community (Ben Achour, 1992:102).

King Hassan II's information policy did not favour the exposing of "Morocco's dirty laundry to the world" in the Moroccan print press (Ben Ashour, 1992: 98). Moroccan mass media, particularly the opposition print press was not allowed to expose Morocco's internal problems.[44] According to King Hassan II's media philosophy, mass media should not publish true facts, albeit true, if the publication may cause harm to the country by tarnishing its image (Ben Ashour, 1992: 99).

The official political and religious view was enshrined in newspapers with titles like, *Le Matin du Sahara du Maghreb*, the most important daily newspaper, practised an authoritarian style of journalism with strict political regime's control of news.[45] Since its creation in 1971, it can be regarded as the prototypical case of a newspaper closely

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[44] These media restriction should be understood initially not in a political context, they were rather motivated by the tourism industry.
[45] The political regime's press has enjoyed a circulation advantage because all public institutions were required to subscribe to it.

identified with authoritarianism, given its open and uncritical support for the regime. *Le Matin du Sahara du Maghreb* is the official organ of the political regime, acted as loudspeakers of the political regime. This newspaper has carried the regime's policies and important directives.

The mouthpiece tended to represent the views of King Hassan II's cousin Ahmed Alaoiu, its owner and editor. Its declared objectives are the propagation of the official ideology that should have dominated the national information system. Their admonitions from time to time set the standard and the tone for many other newspapers to follow throughout the country. It attacks domestic and foreign opponents of the regime. In the case of print press, however, the political regime has failed to build newspapers that have access to different sectors of the Moroccan society. While it seemed to exert no influence on Moroccan educated segment or on Moroccan society at large, it is the only publication in Morocco to be totally exempt from censorship.

In practice, ideological hegemony was accomplished by overwhelming the citizenry in every aspect of daily life with official information and interpretations of reality. Since King Hassan II's regime required the appearance of unanimity, the mass media served the function of explaining and justifying official policy, while still providing an important staging area where various factions could wage surreptitious battle over policy direction.[46]

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[46] Senior official at the Ministry of the Interior justified its control of the audiovisual by asserting that the regime should have at its disposal a medium of communication to defend its viewpoints against the opposition which traditionally dominates the print press.

3 The Rise of Islam-oriented political movements

In the last quarter of the twentieth century various and sequential waves of Islam-oriented political movements have sprung up in Morocco. Like in many other Arab and Islamic countries, Islam-oriented movements in Morocco have grown as an indigenous response to prevalent socio-economic and political discontent, not as a burst of pietism. Several different explanations have been proposed to account for the emergence of Islam-oriented movements, by concentrating on preconditions and root causes of this phenomenon (Burgat, 1986 Darif, 1992; Entelis; 1997; Munson, 1993; Shahin, 1997; Tessler, 1998; Tozy, 1999). Historically, Islam has always served as a vehicle for the expression of socio-political and economic dissent, particularly in times of crisis. Due to their agenda regarding state and society, Islam-oriented movements have increasingly become assertive.[47] In the context of the weakness of institutionalised politics, Islam-oriented movements have now turned to be the leading political opposition force in Morocco.

This chapter traces the rise of Islam-oriented political movements in Morocco and the multiple factors - political, economic, and social - that contributed to their prominence. Also included in this chapter is the analysis of their social composition and organizational structures. The analysis will focus on the most organized and political organizations that captured larger following and enjoy more influence, namely *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* (Justice and Benevolence), the premier movement of political opposition in today's Morocco. The second most influential Islam-oriented group in the country is the *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* party. The other organizations dealt with in this chapter have more or less relevance for the politics in Morocco. The third section is devoted to the regime's counter-strategies to control the religious field. The last section explores briefly the objectives advanced by these different groups.

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[47] The regime was aware of the growing significance of the Friday preachers, who begun to play a real political role by deepening people's awareness of their plight. In March 1987, the regime organized in Fez the first international congress for Friday preachers. The regime formulated new criteria which should be respected if the preacher could be allowed to deliver their sermons (For more details, see Darif, 1996: 42-48).

3.1 Genesis

3.1.1 Economic

Several studies view the rise of Islam-oriented movements through a context of socio-economic milieu (Tessler, 1998: 93). During the mid- 1970s, Morocco began to confront economic difficulties resulting from declining phosphate prices and from a decrease in the international prices of exports. The direct result was budget deficits. In the early 1980s, Morocco's economic situation continued to deteriorate. By the mid-1980s Morocco entered into the era of structural adjustment. The regime was forced to cut the budget deficit, by sharply curtailing public expenditures and decreasing state subsidies on a wide range of food items such as sugar, petroleum, and other basic commodities. This caused a sharp increase in prices of consumer goods amounting to 50 percent, which was accompanied by a decline in wages and purchasing power. The regime froze the salaries of public sector employees and devalued the currency by more than 40 percent.

The regime's disengagement in promoting food subsidies led to violent popular riots in Casablanca and other urban centers in 1981. The disrupting and dislocating effects of the structural adjustment policies were also readily visible in the violent disturbances of August 1983 and January 1984. Moroccans expressed their public anger in mass demonstrations and food riots in many urban centers. Economic fragility characterized by an enormity of economic problems and the increasing impoverishment of wide layers of the population created circumstances that were fertile ground for Islam-oriented movements. In the 1980s, the deep discontent felt by many ordinary citizens have taken an Islam-oriented attitude and thus resulted in the expansion of Islam-oriented movements. This paralleled with a passivity of the opponent political parties, particularly the socialist ones, whose role in mobilizing and organizing the protest was limited.

Even in the late 1990s and despite adopting the panacea of sweeping markets reforms, Moroccan economy currently remain stagnant with endemic problems of massive unemployment, ballooning national debt, widespread poverty, the deterioration of public services and rampant corruption. This economic situation can be considered by many observers as the appropriate ground for Islam-oriented mobilization and recruitment.

3.1.2 Social

As mentioned earlier, harsh economic conditions have continued dislocating effects on large segments of the Moroccan society. Since 1970 the rural exodus to the cities has been alarming. Under severe and long droughts during 1980s, living conditions in the countryside have deteriorated and forced several thousands of Moroccans to immigrate into urban centres, which increased the level of urbanization. In 1960, 25 percent of the total population lived in cities in 1984, 45 percent. Already in 1993, the Moroccan urban population exceeded the number of those living in the countryside. At present, two-thirds of all Moroccans live in urban centers and around 20 percent of the urban population live in shantytowns on the outskirts of the urban centers (Tessler, 1997: 96). Some sociologists warned from a concomitant "ruralisation of cities", which means that the unceasing tide of migration from the countryside to the cities has rapidly grown and is likely to grow (Darif, 1992: 176).

Newly urbanized population are devoutly religious people whose shift to Islam-oriented political movements is a consequence of their perceived hopelessness and despair. This despair has been closely related to the shortages of housing, high rate of unemployment and virtual lack of social services. Many youth lack even the most basic means of making a living, and Islam-oriented movements claim to offer a way out. A deep and abiding commitment to Islam has made them readily receptive to the Islam-oriented movement's symbolism, idioms and messages.

Morocco has suffered since 1975 from structural unemployment. Urban unemployment constituted a serious problem as it reached 25 percent. Employment among people of 20 to 40 years of age is very high, mounting to 40 percent of the total of the unemployed (Tessler, 1997: 94).[48] The well-educated people are also among the most affected. University education is no longer the sine qua non of social mobility, since a college education does bring no expected improvements in economic status. While the exact number of unemployed graduates is difficult to establish, reliable estimates indicate that 35 percent of Moroccan university graduates are unemployed.[49] The regime's ability to employ academics has increasingly become very limited. In 1992, Moroccan university

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[48] In the poor city centers, where parents cannot afford to send their children to university, the jobless rate is much higher.

[49] With new graduates coming out of the universities every year, the number of educated young people has consistently exceeded the number of available jobs.

graduates organized themselves in the association of "Unemployed Graduates" to articulate their vested interests (Tessler, 1997: 94).

Under the socio-economic context, social problems and the political tensions are likely to exacerbate. The lives of the overwhelming majority of Moroccans continue to deteriorate and disparities between the haves and the have-nots grow ever wider. Economic deprivations, which are growing among the population, may ultimately erode the legitimacy accorded to the regime and become the most salient dimension of public attitudes toward authority. Such pressures have already made themselves felt on some occasions, particularly during the rioting of 1981, 1984, 1990 and 1991.

3.1.3 Political

In the decades that followed independence in 1956, Moroccan universities and institutions of higher education were greatly influenced by Marxism and particularly the Marxist-Leninist ideas found a favourable echo among the youth (Waterbury, 1970). The constellation of ideological battle between the capitalist and the socialist models had strong impact on the intellectual life in Morocco. In the Moroccan political discourse the secular thinking assumed a dominant position. In the wake of the Arab's crushing defeat in June 1967, this situation began to change. Arab modern secular ideologies have gradually lost credibility. In the face of it, socialist ideas and Marxist principles began to loose their appeal and influence, they once enjoyed among young educated.

Since 1970, the regime followed a policy of weakening Marxist political parties and organizations. The regime also contributed to the weakness of students unions.[50] In an effort to stem the imminent threat to the regime by the Marxist groups and their pervasive influence in high schools and universities, the regime unleashed Islam-oriented groups and encouraged the establishment of Islam-oriented groups on university campuses (Tozy, 1999). The regime-sponsored proliferation of cultural and religious associations was influenced to a certain extent by the counterbalancing policies used by the regime in

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[50] In 1973, the major student organization, National Union of Moroccan Students (NUMS) was banned (Darif, 1992: 228).

regard to the once-strongest leftist opposition. The regime believed that toleration of the creation of Islam-oriented groups could defuse the wrath of the discontented youth.

The momentous development that also enhanced the appeal of Islam in the 1980s was the Iranian revolution of 1979. The Iranian revolution called attention to a reassertion of Islam in Muslim personal and public life (Darif, 1992). This greatly boosted revolution fervor in the Arab world, and added energy and veracity to the actions of the activists.[51] It increased the level of their consciousness concerning the possibility of a political transformation shaped along religious lines. It also boosted the confidence and aspirations of Islam-oriented-movements throughout the Muslim world, by providing them with political symbols and slogans.[52]

In the early 1990s, the political and ideological debate in Morocco has changed, because of the changes in the global constellation of ideological battle between the capitalist and the socialist models. The debate on modernity has taken a new direction. The collapse of Marxist-Leninist states in the socialist bloc caused a debilitation of the oppositional ideologies in Morocco. The majority of the young urban has become indifferent to the intellectual appeals of secular political principles. They have sought refuge from the secular ideological alternative principles to the inherent appeal of Islam (Bourqia et al., 2000). Existing political disenchantment, resulting from the increasing ideological irrelevance of the socialist ideologies to satisfy the aspirations of youth, as it was relatively the case during the sixties and seventy, has contributed to a historically unprecedented sharpening of social consciousness among young people (Shahin, 1997: 179). The conscious choice of Islam as the lynchpin of identity among an increasing number of educated Moroccans has been the single most important step toward the Re-islamization of Moroccan society (Burgat, 1995: 77).

3.2 Islam-oriented movements appeal

In the face of these problems, Islam-oriented movements have advanced various theoretical "prescriptions" of an "Islamic alternative" to remedy disaffected sectors of Moroccan society by providing health care, social services and financial help. Islam-oriented groups

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[51] For more details see chapter 4.
[52] In all Islamic countries, Islam-oriented movements began campaigning for change under the banner "Islam is the solution."

responded to economic misery, social ills and the needs and aspirations of the newly urban who might be university students, professionals, small shopkeepers, merchants, or workers and agrarian capitalists. Many international observers and local knowledgeable analysts noted that Islam-oriented movements have excelled at delivering alternative modalities to cope with the harsh environment (Waltz, 1997). They offered food to the needy, scholarships and hostels to university students, networks to young graduates looking for jobs, and Islamic credit to shopkeepers, industrialists and merchants.[53]

Islam-oriented movements, associations and groups extended their influence through a network of educational and social services at a time when regime services had collapsed in the face of economic crisis and rapid increases in the number of students and the overall population (Waltz, 1997). The provision of adequate social welfare services constituted an implicit critique of the failure of the regime. The mass appeal of Islam has its roots in secular circumstances, worldly frustrations and denials that have been articulated in a religious expression. To put it differently, the real concerns are social and economic and overridingly political but the symbolism and idioms employed are religious.

On the surface, the growing appeal of religion has manifested itself through an increase in the number of worshipers, greater insistence on the outward displays of dress, the vast number of publications dedicated to religious subjects, and the general cultural and intellectual environment and identity-driven politics.

At the institutional level, the growing rise of Islam-oriented movements is reflected in the presence and often the dominance of Islam-oriented activists in professional associations of lawyers, engineers, professors, and physicians. Where permitted to participate in society, Islam-oriented activists are found in all sectors, including government and even the military.

An alternative Islam-oriented leadership exists; its members are armed with modern education but self-consciously oriented toward Islam and committed to social and political activism as a means of bringing about an Islamic society or system of government.

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[53] Financial assistance came from a newly formed Islam-oriented business elite. In the late 1980s, a new urban middle class and business elite emerged whose members often originated from provincial towns. Many provincial youngsters, potential supporters moved from provincial towns and villages to urban centres where they were more likely to gain access to formal and higher education and opportunities for upward social mobility. Since their graduation, many joined the urban middle class through employment in the modern economic sector, which expanded in the 1980s as a result of economic reforms.

3.3 Typology of Islam-oriented movements in Morocco

As frustrations intensify especially among the youth and the unemployed, it appears that new Islam-oriented groups are being formed continually. In regard to Islam-oriented movements with political tendencies and aspirations, scholars distinguished between three distinct branches of contemporary Islam-oriented movements, the radicals, the reformists and the syntheticals (Darif, 1992: 221; Entelis, 1997: 44).[54] These three broadly defined types have different understandings of political and religious change in Moroccan context as well as different strategies to pursue their goals.[55]

Any assessment of the size of Islam-oriented groups should remain tentative. There are estimated thirty associations in existence countywide and more than twenty underground organizations in Rabat alone, each with its own structure, leadership, and ideology (Entelis, 1997: 55). Reportedly, the Moroccan authorities place the total number of these Islam-oriented groups at 45.

Radicals: Radical are those adopted the term of *Al-Jahiliya*. They argue that both the state and society have become un-Islamic. To re-islamise the state and society, they use political violence and political assassination understood as *Jihad*. They do not tolerate gradualism. They operate most of the time underground and are organized clandestinely into cells and networks. *As-Salafiya Al-Jihadiya* serves as the paradigmatic example.

Reformists: The calling by means of intensive education wants to transfer power by democratic procedures, including political organization, mobilization and participation. They totally reject violence as a means for bringing political and religious transformation. They refuse working underground. The *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* party, (previously *Al-Jama'a Al-Islamiya*) may serve as an equally illustrative type.

Syntheticals: They reject the official interpretation and practices of Islam. Theoretically, they accept the democratic principles but refuse to participate in the democratic game. They focus on religious education and participate in all aspect of the Moroccan society, except institutionalized politics. Political change is not the near political objective. According to these groups political change must be the result of a "bottom-up" strategy of acculturation, socialization and education. Strict religious education is at the centre of their educational program.

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[54] We use Darif's terms because they capture the essentials features of these categories.
[55] This typology is based on two typologies developed by Entelis (1997) and Darif (1992).

Table 6: Typology of Islam-oriented Groups in Morocco

	Reformists	**Synthetical**	**Radicals**	**Non-political**
Organization	*Harakat At-Tauhid Wal-Islah and Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* Party	*Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*	*As-Salafiya Al-Jihadiya*	*Jama'a At-Tabligh Wad-Dawa*
Leadership	Saadeddine Othmani	Abdessalam Yassine	Preachers	Al-Bashir Al-Younsy
Focus	Politics	Socies	Morality and Jihad	Dawa

Non-political. There are some Islam-oriented groups, which remain politically marginal in Morocco. These groups evade political dimension in their expression and their activities and, therefore, advocate no political agenda. Their religious activities focus totally on *Dawa*. They accept the existing religious establishment and do not, for instance, question the religious legitimacy of the monarchy nor do they defy the official religious institutions. *Jama'a At-Tabligh Wad-Dawa* is the typical representation of non-political.[56]

3.3.1 Jama'a At-Tabligh Wad-Dawa

The *Jama'a At-Tabligh Wad-Dawa* (literally, hereafter *At-Tabligh*) is an offspring of the mother organization which was established in Pakistan in the early 1940s. The beginning of the *At-Tabligh* was in 1964 when some Pakistani members of the mother organization, while touring in Morocco, introduced the organization's ideas and established a branch in Casablanca. It gained its official status as a religious association in July 1975. Its current leader is Al-Bashir Al-Younsy (Darif, 2000: 196).

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[56] We choose *At-Tabligh* as a non-political organization, because a great number of Islam-oriented activists crossed the line into Islam-oriented political movements. *At-Tabligh* is not a political organization but its members constitute a reservoir for potential members for Islam-oriented political movements.

While *At-Tablighi*[57] put less emphasis on book learning, they rather highly value face-to-face or 'heart to heart' communication. *At-Tabligh* takes its impetus from a desire to move the dissemination of Islamic teachings away from the books and *Madaris*.[58] To propagate their message, they primarily rely on collective touring of the cities. Large meetings were regularly held in different Moroccan cities.[59] These convocations were considered moments of intense blessings as well as occasions to organize for tours. Although *At-Tablighis* in principle prefer to use any mosque as their base while traveling, over time specific mosques throughout Morocco have come to be known as "*At-Tablighi* mosques".

3.3.2 The Sunni Tendency: From *Dawa* to militancy[60]

Morocco has a history of Sunni movements dating back to the end of the eighteenth century (Darif, 1988: 250).[61] The *Salafi* were followers of a late 18th-century reform movement associated with Mohammad Ibn Abd Wahhab. During the twentieth century, the presence of *Salafi* strand in the nationalist movement and struggle for independence marked the orientation of the movement. This current was identified with the *Salafi* thinkers Taqi A-Din Al-Hilali and Allal Al-Fasi. The *Salafi* advocated the return to the basic sources of Islam, *Qur'an* and Sunna. It emphasized the religious identity of the national community and stressed the need to preserve its authenticity understood as Islamic.

The term *Sunni* or *Salafi* is widely used in Morocco to refer to those Moroccans who are "puritans" and claim they only follow the practice and theology of Prophet Mohammad's followers in the early time of Islam (Munson, 1993: 154). The Sunni movement is a diffuse religious and cultural tendency rather than an organized movement (Munson, 1993: 158). The *Sunni* movement with which Al-Faqih Al-Zamzami,

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[57] *At-Tablighis* are followers of the *At-Tabligh* organization.
[58] *At-Tabligh*'s sole cherished reading is Al-Kandahlawi's book *Hayat As-Sahaba* (The Life of the Prophet's Companions). This book is used as a stimulus to everyday behavior (Shahin, 1997: 180).
[59] A pattern emerged of calling participants to spend one night a week, one weekend a month, 40 continuous days a year, and ultimately 120 days at least once in their lives engaged in *Tabligh* missions.
[60] The Salafis also call themselves *Ahl-Al-Sunna wa Al-Jama'a* (Maghrawi, no year, Benevolence in the fellowship of *Al-Sunna wa Quran* not in the fellowship of men's errors. Marrakech.
[61] To counterbalance the influence of the zawayas, the sultan Ismael 1792-1822 encouraged religious groups that wee essentially puritanical and strongly influenced by "Wahhabism" to attack the un-Islamic and saint-oriented practices of older orders (Shahin, 1997: 21).

Mohammad Fezzazi in Tangier and Mohammad Maghrawi in Marrakech identified is not organized in political groups. It is much less ideological and tends to be more traditional. That is why it appeals to ordinary Moroccans, including shopkeepers and blue collar workers in Morocco and Europe but not to educated young Moroccans.

In 1980, Abd Al-Bari ben Sidiq Al-Zamzami observed that Morocco witnessed a Sunni awakening. For him, this was due to the active *Dawa* of a small number of *Ulama*. The growing of this trend at the mass level was tolerated and even encouraged by the regime. In fact, the proliferation of Sunni tendencies can be attributed to the tacit encouragement of the regime. (Darif, 2000: 209). After realizing that the fight against Islam-oriented political movements by means of Western-influenced groups has proved ineffective, King Hassan II engaged them in the confrontation against Islam-oriented political movements. Yet it is to note that they were not engaged as a group, but as individuals. The Sunnis do not constitute a coherent group because they have not developed and adopted a strict formal organization. They were largely amorphous and have no organized structure.

One obvious aim of the Sunnis is to increase the educational and moral levels of the Moroccan people and to renew their understandings of Islamic spiritual activities. They are concerned in implementing the *Ash-Sharia* in a range of ritual and personal behavioral practices linked to worship, dress, and everyday behavior. The Sunnis's focus on prophetic *Hadith* is central to the desire to live in conformity to certain behavioral patterns.[62] Their lives were meant to embody the lives of *Sahaba* (Companions of the prophet).

The Sunni's commitment to individual regeneration has been apart from any explicit political program. The *Salafi*s' relations with other Islam-oriented movements have been conflict-filled. For example, they perceive Islam-oriented political movements as un-Islamic due to being organized either in modern, secular-like and formal or in Sufi-like organizations. They violently oppose custom-laden ceremonies like weddings and pilgrimages to shrines.

Another facet of the *As-Salafi* landscape in Morocco are small but militant groups. Some journalistic reports believed that the beginning of these newer offshoots from other Sunni groups date back to around 1990s, when veterans Mujahidin in Afghanistan returned and began forming small-size groups. They grew away from other Islam-oriented

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[62] The narratives which constitute the Prophet Muhammad's sayings and practices serve either directly or analogously to guide every aspect of moral behavior.

movements. They were aided by the victorious images of the Mujahidin that were evoked in thousands of Islam-oriented magazines and publications in Morocco as elsewhere in the Islamic world.

The rhetoric of the Afghan approach to Moroccan politics began gaining support among young Moroccans because some Mujahidin had infiltrated in other Islam-oriented groups and began disseminating their militant ideology of rejecting any settlement with the regime. But to argue that these groups or their ideologies were brought from outside the country should not cover the reality that their organizational and ideological roots are to be found in Morocco. In February 1991, the regime issued a memorandum, in which Friday preachers were warned not to preach "dangerous doctrines, coming from the Islamic Orient" (Quoted in Darif, 1996: 45). In the early 1990s, there have been limited cases of violence when bombs were placed outside the Société Marocaine de Dêpot Bank in Oudja in 1993, the Makro department store in Casablanca in 1994 and the Atlas Asni Hotel in Marrakech in 1994.

Most of the small militant groups have been active mainly in poor sections of large urban centres such as Casablanca, Fes, Sale and Tangier, where the famous preachers of the *Salafi* tendency are based.[63] These preachers do not address political issues directly, yet their highly expressive populist sermons have a distinct political message.

The *Dawa* of Islam-oriented militant groups focus on the political theology of the *Jihad* against any secular orientations and manifestions of modern life that betrayes Islam. The introduction of new members to these closed and secret cells occur within private home circles and in the confines of "garage" mosques and their affiliate bodies (*Qur'anic* schools and religious study groups), where they periodically meet to discuss the *Qur'an* as well as local and national issues.[64] In addition, they organize informal meetings held on a weekly basis to deliver their sermons[65] in "garage" mosques and residential flats to avoid police surveillance[66]. Tradesmen and artisans were the targets of the religious lessons and seminars. These lessons include religious speeches and news of Muslims in other countries, especially countries involved in *Jihad* conflicts such as Afghanistan, Chechnya, Kashmir and Iraq.

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[63] In Tangier Mohammed Fezzazi, in Tétouan Omar Hadouchi, in Casablanca Zakaria Miloudi, in Sale Hassan Kettani, in Fez Abu Hafs. Abu Hafs was known to have fought in Afghanistan in the early 1990s.
[64] The memorisation of the *Quran* and prophet's *Hadith* was central for these groups.
[65] They organized discussion circles (halaqat) between sunset (Maghreb) and evening (Isha) prayers in their prayer rooms. Their teaching concentrated on religious matters.
[66] These mosques are not mosques in the traditional sense of the word.

Islam-oriented militant amirs (leaders) propagate positions against the regime, and hold critical views of the un-Islamic imported practices to Morocco and called for the total reconstruction of society on the lines of religion. They have provided a protest ideology against the regime. Asserting that Islam is not just a collection of beliefs and ritual actions but a comprehensive ideology embracing public as well as personal life, they call for the implementation of the *Sharia* in all walks of life. They preach strict adherence to the founding principles of Islam.

Thus far, there has been little statistical evidence on the socio-demographic profile of the membership of these Islam-oriented militant groups. They are not influential in Morocco for they can not secure the support of some *Ulama* or older religious preachers: They have been unable to secure the well-frequented mosques for the propagation of their views. They have been incapable of establishing themselves on university campuses and mobilizing support in the ranks of university students and recent graduates. These Islam-oriented militant groups have found widespread support in the least educated and most traditional social strata and among individuals who are not yet recruited by mainstream Islam-oriented political movements.

Among the key ideological concepts that place these groups in another category than Islam-oriented political movements are the concepts of *Al-Jahiliya* and *Jihad* [67]. These interpretations have provided religious legitimacy for the resort to physical violence. These militant groups share what is commonly referred to by the regime as a "*Jihad*" ideology. The basic tenets of this ideology revolve around the idea of restoring *Hakimiyya* (Allah's governance). [68]

The regime decided to combat preachers popular among these groups. In the early 2003, the regime jailed two Islam-oriented preachers, Abou Hafs and Hassan Kettani, because they issued Fatwas through their speeches in their mosques in Fez and Sale respectively. [69] But Morocco's moment of truth in fighting these militant groups came on 16 May 2003, when a series of bombings occurred in Casablanca, the worst terrorist attack in the country's history. The bombing left 45 people dead and over 100 wounded most of

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[67] *Jihad* is described as the missing pillar in Muslim devotional life.
[68] Hakimiyya can also mean divine sovereignty or rule.
[69] The mosque as a place of religious practice has turned to be a political space. Mosques have served as a centre for religious exhortation and a nucleus for mobilization of supporters. This constitutes a real source of strength for Islam-oriented movements. This has provided the Islam-oriented movements with a very useful tool for attacking the official form of Islam and presents their unofficial version of Islam. However, Islam-oriented movements have recently developed new places and opportunities to evade the regime's control mechanism over mosques.

them Moroccans and some with European nationalities. Naturally, it brought to the fore the significance of such militant groups in present-day Morocco.

Following the 16 May in 2003, the immediate challenge for the regime was to find a way to respond without seeming to give in to outside pressure.[70] On May 21st, 2003 a week after the attack, the parliament passed an antiterrorism law without any opposition even from the Islam-oriented party. This empowered the regime to arrest suspect people based on intelligence information and to hold them without charge. The investigation into the attack developed rapidly in the following week the regime crackdown against.[71] In July 2003, thirty members belonging to a militant Sunni group were tried in Casablanca for violent acts and were sentenced to life. Amirs were arrested and judged by the regime, giving long prison terms to a number of famous amirs and preachers such as Mohammed Fezzazi. To deal severely with these groups, the regime used the death penalty. Consequently, executions of dozens of militants have occurred. Mass arrests, allegedly running into thousands, were used to break up the power of these groups in their strongholds in Casablanca, Fez and Tangier.[72] It was reported that these people were detained and interrogated under torture and ill-treatment[73] by the regime, assisted in the process by European and FBI terrorism specialists.[74] In addition, entire neighborhoods were kept under constant security watch.

Many Moroccan observers believe that these militant groups are not affiliated with foreign organizations or foreign states. The amirs have ties with minded-like Islam-oriented amirs and groups in the Islamic world, while others stated that it was possible to drew a link between the Casablanca attacks and a tape released in February 2003 to *Al-Jazeera*, where Osama Ben Ladin added Morocco to his list of six apostates Muslim countries that are most eligible for liberation. The regime has been keen to establish a link between these groups and *Al-Qaida* and asserted that the bombings had been carried out by *Al-Qaida* with the support of local collaborators to gain acceptance of its heavy-handed

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[70] The Moroccan Jama'a Al-Mujahidin Al-Islamiyya (Islamic Combatant Group) was put on a UN list of terrorist organization linked to *Al-Qaida*, and in 2003 was added to the U.S. State Department's list of terrorist organizations.

[71] According to an official communique, the terrorists belonged to an offshoot faction of *As-Salafiya Al-Jihadiya*, called *As-Sirat Al-Mustaqim* (The Right Path).

[72] Some estimates put the number at 5,000 persons. On May 28, 2003 the public prosecutor announced that Abdelhaq Bentassir had died in detention before his interrogation had been completed (Eileen Byrne, Financial Time, 16.4.2004).

[73] The extent of this harshness evoked some domestic criticism from human rights organizations.

[74] After searching neighborhoods and the houses of the suicide bombers, the authorities uncovered written propaganda sermons of Abu Qatada, a religious leader living in London. Instruction manuals on explosives and ingredients to manufacture explosive were also found.

tactics against these groups. In addition, this would justify both the harsh laws and even harsher methods of investigation that the regime used against Islam-oriented groups.

3.3.3 Harakat At-Tauhid Wal-Islah: From a group to a party

In 1969, Abdelkarim Mouti founded together with his associate Ibrahim Kamal, the *Jamiya Ash-Shabiba Al-Islamiya Al-Maghribiya* (hereafter, *Ash-Shabiba*) the Moroccan Islamic Youth Association in Casablanca (Munson, 1993).[75] While operating clandestinely *Ash-Shabiba* and its leader Abdelkarim Mouti concentrated on recruiting followers, on structuring the organizational base and on socializing and educating members (Darif, 1992).

As a political activist with a long experience Abdelkarim Mouti managed to recruit relatively a great number of followers from among teachers and university students. Influenced by Sayyid Qutb, Abdelkarim Mouti adopted many of the phrases, symbols and slogans of Qutb's political terminology (Darif, 1992: 228). The Qutbian discourse appealed to many university students and to educated segments of the Moroccan society.

In 1972 Abdelkarim Mouti obtained a legal status for *Ash-Shabiba*, as a religious and educational association. He emphasised that his organization was apolitical and thus using non-violent means to spread Islamic moral values among Moroccans (Darif, 1992). According to a manifesto distributed in several mosques in Casablanca, *Ash-Shabiba* declared that one of its most urgent objectives was confronting Moroccan Marxists (Darif, 1992: 226). Given the confrontation of the regime with the leftist in general and its Neo-Marxist elements in particular, the regime supported and approved the organization in the aim of counterbalancing the forceful political influence and political relevance of doctrinaire Neo-Marxism (Tozy, 1999).

As the organization grew rapidly, the regime attempted first to contain and co-opt the leadership of the organization and second to defame the organization and liquidate it if it refused the regime's offers. In 1975, Abdelkarim Mouti refused to take part in the Green March, a prerequisite for political admission in the Moroccan political field (Shahin, 1997:

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[75] Abdel Karim Mouti served in the 1950s in the resistance against the French colonialism in Marrakech. After independence in 1956, he was appointed as inspector in the Ministry of Education. He was a member of the National Union of Popular Forces (NUPF).

186). As a reaction to this decision, the regime decided to crush down the organization. At the end of 1975, the regime announced that a group of people belonging to *Ash-Shabiba* were arrested for allegedly killed Omaar Ben Jelloun. This incident was used to justify the regime's harsh measures against *Ash-Shabiba* (Darif, 1992). Abdelkarim Mouti left the country in 1975 and went into exile in Libya and then in Norway and was forced to lead the organization from abroad.[76]

In September 1980, Abdelkarim Mouti was tried in absentia and received life imprisonment. In March 1981, Abdelkarim Mouti published in Belgium *Al-Mujahid*, a paper in which he increased his militancy and confrontational attitude towards the regime by severely criticizing the monarchy and its policies. In the early 1980s, many senior members and activists formally withdraw or froze their membership (Shahin, 1997: 188).

A small number of young members such as Abdelilah Benkirane, Abdallah Baha and Saadeddine Othmani became interested in the formation of political organizations or parties, especially under the impact of Abdelilah Benkirane. In January 1982 Abdelilah Benkirane published a statement in which he declared that the Rabat group distanced itself from Abdelkarim Mouti, from his organization and from all its publications. He particularly denounced the content of the magazine *Al-Mujahid* (Darif, 1992: 254). In 1983 Abdelilah Benkirane announced the formation of *Al-Jama'a Al-Islamiya* (The Islamic Group) and sought official recognition for his organization. Though the regime did not grant the group the official recognition, it permitted *Al-Jama'a Al-Islamiya* to open branches in different parts of the country.

While seeking formal legalisation, *Al-Jama'a* was urged to change its name and drop any reference to Islam in it. In February 1992, it became *Harakat Al-Islah Wat-Tajdid* Al-Maghribiya (Movement of Reform and Renewal). The association published a statement in which it explained why it changed its old name: First, to avoid misperceptions of the monopoly of Islam, second, to reassert that the organization is one Islamic organization among many, third, to confirm the organization's readiness to cooperate with other political and social organizations, and finally to highlight the main focus of the organization's activities, which is to reform the conditions of the Muslims by renewing their understanding of Islam (Darif, 1992: 276; Shahin, 1997: 190).

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[76] In 2000, some Moroccan newspapers reported that Abdelkarim Mouti might be allowed to return to Morocco, if he would accept the regime's conditions.

In the early 1990s, the *Harakat Al-Islah Wat-Tajdid Al-Maghribiya* created its own students branch under the name of *Talabat Al-Wahda Wat-Tamassul* (Unity and Responsibility) in the university, one area where all political actors in Morocco have sought to expand and dominate.

Much attention was focused on political participation. The movement of *Al-Islah Wat-Tajdid* articulated the demands of its constituency und ensured the political participation. In May 1992, the leaders of the *Al-Islah Wal-Tajdid* announced the creation of a new political party *Hizb At-Tajdid Al-Watani*, (National Renewal Party, NRP) and applied for official recognisation (Darif, 2000: 172). The group asserted that it did not monopolise Islam, nor did it claim to be its sole representative. Despite the declared objective and means of the party, the regime seemed unwilling to accept the challenge of a party formed on an Islamic basis. The regime immediately refused to legalize the party by arguing that the approval of this party would imply that the other political parties were not Islamic.

Aware that the regime was wary of any political party laying claim to Islam, the party did not call into question any of the existing institutions, including the constitutional monarchy (Darif, 2000: 173). The leader of the organization declared that the party would participate in the political process according to the guiding rules: respect for democracy, the free choice of the people, accepting the concept of transfer of power and respect for pluralism. The organization has engaged in spreading its message through preaching and demand the right to gain legitimate power with ballots rather than bullets or through an electoral process that enable Islam-oriented movements to come to power.

After failing to gain legal recognisation, the party's leaders were forced to look for fielding candidates in elections under the banner of officially recognised political parties. Initially, the *Al-Islah Wat-Tajdid* looked after a conservative party. After the failure of an attempt to infiltrate the *Istiqlal* party in 1993, it opted for a small and then little-known political formation, the Constitutional and Democratic Popular Movement, of Abdel Kareem Al-Khatib.[77] Despite the regime's refusal to legalize the party, the leaders of the party succeeded through the Constitutional and Democratic Popular Movement in gaining access to the political field. In June 1996, Abdelilah Benkirane declared the entering of an Islam-oriented association into formal politics (Willis, 2004).

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[77] The CDPM broke away from the Popular Movement (MP) in 1967 under leadership of Abdel Kareem al-Khatib. The party has Islamic tendencies.

The *At-Tauhid Wal-Islah* (Unity and Reform) was the product of the realignment and the unification of *Harakat Al-Islah Wat-Tajdid Al-Maghribiya* and *Rabitat Al-Mustaqbal Al-Islami,* the League of the Islamic Future of Ahmed Raissouni.[78] The movement adopted the new name the "Movement of Unity and Reform". *At-Tauhid Wal-Islah* also built up a sophisticated organization run by a leadership apparatus in charge of the overall strategy, as well as a ten-member *Majlis Ash-Shura* (consultation committee). The movement managed to resist any authoritarian organizational tendencies and thus was capable of sustaining a moderate political orientation by cooperating with other political forces insisting on gaining official recognition as a legal political party. This was made possible because the organization was led by a collective leadership rather than by a charismatic leader. The organization has held regular internal elections for its leadership (every four years). It has allowed the rotation of different persons in the leadership of the movement. The organization was aware to develop its structures and institutions.

The unification with *Rabitat Al-Mustaqbal Al-Islami* has played an important role in helping the party to gain widespread support among young educated Moroccans. As its activities expanded and recruitment ability increased, the party participated in the political process according to the guiding rules: "Respect for democracy, the free choice of the people, accepting the concept of transfer of power, and respect for pluralism" (Darif, 2000: 276). In 1997 the Constitutional and Democratic Popular Movement won a total of nine of parliament seats. The party candidates had been elected in Morocco's main cities, including Tetouan, Fes, Oujda, Agadir, Tangier and Casablanca (Darif, 2000: 277). Thus it can be seen that the regime has been able to arrive at a fairly effective formula for the partial incorporation of the milder elements of Islam-oriented movements into its institutions. But it can also be regarded as the final of achievement of Islam-oriented movement. Given the new electoral constellation in the Moroccan political field, the At-Tauhid and CDPM was forced to find a new position.

In October 1998, the Constitutional and Democratic Popular Movement became formally the *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* (Justice and Development) Party. As the then president of the party, Al-Khatib explained the change of he party's name in terms of a new orientation rather in term of a new focusation on new issues of justice and development (Willis, 2004).

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[78] This association was created in April 1994 as a result of the emergence or unification of three cultural and education associations, namely association of Islamic *Dawa*, the Islamic Association and the Islamic Enlightenment association (for more details see Darif, 1999: 104-105).

After the death of King Hassan II on July 23th, 1999, the party as well as the organization declared their full support for the new King Mohammed VI. Ahmed Raissouni, the then president of *At-Tauhid Wal-Islah* explained that "the new *Amir Al-Mu'minin* (Commander of the Faithful) will enhance the Islamicity of the Moroccan state".

In 2002 September's legislative elections, *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* emerged as the third largest party in Parliament and among the major opposition parties in the country. They captured 42 of 325 seats in the lower house of parliament. The party is concentrated in urban areas. Having succeeded in obtaining almost 15 percent of the total votes and up to 40 percent in major cities, including four seats in Casablanca, they enjoyed relatively massive following in the big cities. Old popular quarters close to the city centre and peripheral suburban quarters were the main source of support.

The party cuts across different social segments in society. The diversity of the social composition of its constituency came about as a result of its increasing social awareness and its evolution from an apolitical to a political organization. Almost all the party's parliamentary and candidates in parliamentary elections in 1997 and 2002 held graduate and post-graduate degrees, and a significant portion of the leadership and membership can be described as middle-class professionals.

In May 2004, the party chose a new president. The party congress elected Saadeddine Othmani as secretary-general, replacing the party's founder, Abdelkrim Khatib. The party congress opened with a declaration of loyalty and commitment to Morocco's monarchy and to democracy.[79] Othmani stated the party's rejection of "terrorism and all forms of violence".[80] He recalled that the party was among the first to condemn the Casablanca attacks in May 2003.[81] In his speech, he said that the key interest for his party remains the political, social and economic development of Morocco.

3.3.4 Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan: From a group to a front

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[79] We abide by the Islamic character of the state which has at its head the Commander of the Believers, the guarantor of Morocco's territorial unity and the protector of its liberties.
[80] In addition to his doctor in medicine, Othmani has a religious education through his diploma in Islamic Studies. He has hitherto served as party deputy secretary-general.
[81] The party also expressed solidarity with the European people wounded and killed in the attacks in Madrid.

The initial stage in the development of the organization *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* began to take shape when Abdessalam Yassine[82] directed his open letter, *Al-Islam Au At-Tufan: Risala Maftuha Ila Malik Al-Maghrib* (Islam or the Deluge), to King Hassan II in 1973. Abdessalam Yassine was detained for three and a half years. After being released from prison in March 1978, Abdessalam Yassine engaged himself in preaching on religious and political affairs in a number of mosques. In May 1978, Abdessalam Yassine was banned from delivering lectures in the mosques without a license. Consequently, he established in 1979 the magazine, *Al-Jama'a* (The Group) (Darif, 1992: 321).[83]

On his release in 1981 he started seriously thinking on building up an organization. He sustained networks of participants that stretched around the country. In September 1981, he announced the creation of the *Usrat Al-Jama'a* (Family Group), using the name of his magazine, *Al-Jama'a*. In September 1982, Abdessalam Yassine applied for legal recognition for his association. The request was rejected for the organization "plans to enter politics in the name of religion". In April 1983, Abdessalam Yassine re-applied under a new name for creating an association. Abdessalam Yassine asserted that *Jamiya Al-Jama'a Al-Khairiya* (Charitable Group Association) had "political nature" and concern itself with "political re-socializing" its members in particular and Moroccan in general along Islamic lines.

In 1987, the association raised the slogan, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* and has become known by that name. In Abdessalam Yassine's view, the concepts of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* summarize the objectives of the association and the means to achieve them. Abdessalam Yassine explained in an interview with an Algerian magazine in the early 1990s that

> "These two words were revealed in the *Al-Qur'an*: Allah commands justice, doing of good...Justice is a popular demand and a divine command. It therefore must be achieved in all aspects of life. Benevolence is an educational program addressing the individual and the community. We thus combine two duties: the duty of the state and the duty of calling to Allah" (Darif, 1992).

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[82] He was a former regional inspector in the Ministry of National Education. Originally from the Sous (in southern Morocco), Yassine was raised and educated in Marrakech. He had a spiritual crisis in 1965 and recovered through the Sufi mysticism, but he broke with the Boutchichiyya order and made his entrance on the political scene by writing his first book, Al-Islam Bayna Al-Dawa wa Al-Dawla (Islam between the Call and the State) in 1971/2.

[83] For more detail see chapter 4.

The organization had become popular. This popularity was evident when, in December 1989, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*'s members, students and followers could organize activities in a number of Morocco's universities and high schools to support the Palestinian *Intifada* in its second anniversary. As a response, on 30 December 1989 the regime put Abdessalam Yassine under confinement in his house, without any court order (Darif, 1992). On January 13th, 1990, the regime dissolved the association and restricted its activities, fearing a growing expansion, which the regime could not control. The regime arrested all the members of its Guidance Bureau.[84] They spent two years in prison and paid 10.000 DH. Within two years, the organization has gained influence and popularity.

Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan has been by far the best organized Islam-oriented organization in Morocco (Darif, 2000). An analysis of the organizational structure of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* reflects a well-planned pyramidal hierarchy. Initially, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* had an amateur-like organization, but since 1987, it began to professionalize its structures. Abdessalam Yassine had built an organization of a million followers with an elaborate apparatus. The association appeared to reflect the organizational apparatus of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt (Tozy, 1999) which maintains a pyramidal shape. At the top of the pyramid resided *Al-Murshid Al-Am* (the supreme guide).

In 1999, it was reported that Abdessalam Yassine created *Al-Majlis Ar-Rabbani*, a new structure that assured him the total control of the association. In the same year, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* created *Ad-Daira As-Siyasiya* (political bureau). The bureau is composed of four members headed by *Al-Murshid Al-Am* and functions as a public organ. As far as political communication is concerned, it issued public statements on various domestic and foreign issues and staged media events such as holding press conferences with foreign journalists, giving interviews and issuing communiqués. The members of the political bureau appeared frequently in cultural and political gatherings held by other organizations and participate in marches and public demonstrations.

To understand the political potential of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*, it is important at this point of analysis to explore and examine the social composition of its constituency. Among the movement's priority targets is the student world, which Abdessalam Yassine's organization has penetrated with effectiveness. They have gained particular support among recent university graduates and young professionals, male and female. The movement

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[84] They are Mohammad Alawi, Mohammad Albacheri, Mohammad Al-Abadi, Fathallah Arsalane, Abdulwahid Almotawakil and Abdullah Shibani.

recruits on campuses and from religious faculties, law and the humanities, but their concentration and success is in science, engineering and medicine faculties. The teachers and students were the dominant segments.[85] The loci of the movement's recruitment activities remained the universities and high schools. According to Darif's profile of members, adherents and sympathizers indicate that 70 percent were students and teachers. In its initial phase, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* was a student movement, but in today's Morocco, it has developed into a social movement. The association worked laboriously on recruiting massively followers, teachers and civil servants.[86]

The leaders of the organization believe in a political change resulted from a "bottom-up" strategy of socialisation, acculturation and education. The long-term strategy of the organization focuses on the gradual capture of society, not just the state. *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* puts its weight wholly towards the end of reshaping society. The organization's large constituency is based in the centre of Morocco, especially in the main cities of Sale, Casablanca, Fez, Tangier and Marrakech. The rural lower-middle-class and the urbanized off-shoots of the rural areas constitute an important element in organization. This expansion of the social base of the movement was achieved due to its social activities, such as offering Islamic education, combating illiteracy, organizing summer camps and public health campaigns. They socialise youth through educational, religious, artistic, and athletic activities. The organization has since February 1991, when it mobilized ten thousand members to the streets in protest against the Gulf War, demonstrated a high level of realism by avoiding any unnecessary and direct confrontation with the regime. This pragmatic and realistic attitude has helped *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* to recruit massively among many segments of the Moroccan society.

Since the mid 1990s, the organization has followed a pragmatic strategy with the regime by focusing on recruitment. This concentration was made possible, because the regime had been integrating *At-Tauhid Wal-Islah*, believing that the integration of this group into the political system will weaken it. This integrative strategy has helped *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*, because the attention was drawn away from it. This was helped by the fact that the organization has not accepted the political parameters as set by the regime and has shown no willingness to give concessions. Meanwhile, the movements has built an

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[85] Some estimates said that teachers represented 15 percent of the constituents. Teachers are the traditional recruit target of socialist.

[86] Moreover, the Sufi influences of Yassine and of the moral and spiritual program which he devised for his followers make *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* attractive to a wider following, middle and lower classes, civil servants, peasants, and workers, who are the usual recruits of Sufi orders.

organization of a half million followers. The strength of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* is best measured in terms of its sympathisers rather than in terms of its members (Darif, 2000: 295). For Darif, the movement is being in the process of transforming into a social movement (2000: 147).

One of the most searching questions put to Abdessalam Yassine's press conference on May 20 2000 was whether *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* was planning to convert itself into a political party ready to contest elections. Abdessalam Yassine asserted that his organization was not preoccupied with achieving power, but with changing society through "education, education and education". In the same vein, Fathallah Arsalane, spokesman of the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* asserted that in any case the organization would not fight elections for some time.[87]

3.4 Objectives

While the non-political groups have no concrete political objectives, they have a number of objectives closely related to the religious and moralistic dimension of Islam. In the following, we summarize only the objectives of Islam-oriented political groups that represent serious and challenging forces for the political regime.

The ultimate objective of these movements is the restructuring of state-society relations in the image of Islam's early golden years. Islam-oriented movements raised issues of equity and justice in open public discourse, and groups espousing the new Islamic rhetoric are growing more seductive and influential. Their major objective is the establishment of a truly Muslim society and an Islamic state through legal channels of reform, through the Islamic education of the individual, promotion of the integrity of the family, and the incorporation of Islamic values into the whole society, which will all eventually lead to the establishment of an Islamic system. Through their manifest anti-seculars and anti-status-quo agenda, they plan to bring about the re-Islamisation of the Moroccan society and establishment of an Islamic state in accord with Islam.

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[87] Fathallah Arsalane, spokesman of Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan, personal interview with the author, May 10, 2001, Rabat, Morocco.

Through preaching in the mosques, in weddings ceremonies and in the beaches, through parliamentary debates and electoral politics, through enforcement of public morality and through political violence they are challenging the authority of the regime, viewed as illegitimate. The Islamic understanding of religion and politics of Islam-oriented political movements often proclaim their anti-establishments views. Leaders of Islam-oriented movements openly declare that they represent a politics of new type, qualitatively different from all other Western-influenced groups and associations. They question the prevailing definition of what Islam means, attempting to relocate the division between religion and politics. The political relevance of what seemed to be un-political becomes highly political. Islam-oriented movements seek to transform the role of Islam in the polity by advocating an assertive and forceful political Islam.

3.5 The regime's reactions to the rise of Islam-oriented movements

In Morocco, the king is also *Amir Al-Mu'minin* (Commander of the Faithful).[88] Granted the religious-based legitimation of the regime, the control of the religious field is indispensable for its survival.[89] In the early 1960s, the regime was engaged in controlling the "production" and education of *Ulama*. In 1964, the regime created the Dar Al-Hadith Al-Hassaniya.[90] This high school of religion was designed to educate the *Ulama* for the regime. The regime was directly involved in the formal education of its *Ulama*. The Al-Qarawiyine University is also integrated into the Ministry of Education. The *Ulama* lost thus their influences over the administration of the Islamic curriculum and religious education, since they only functioned as instructors.

In the face of this massive appeal of Islam, particularly to young educated Moroccans, the regime has attempted to reorganize the religious field. The monarch issued a *Dahir* on April 8th, 1981 ordering the establishment of Al-Majlis Al-Ilmi Al-Ala (the

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[88] The expression "*Amir Al-Muminin*" (Commander of the Faithful) is stated in Articles 19. The king had extensively used classical Arabic and *Qur'anic* references in his political speeches. The king had often evoked his *Baraka* (Allah's given blessings) (Shahin, 1997: 50).

[89] The regime planned also to minimize the strong position which the *Ulama* had enjoyed historically. The nationalisation of the Habous lands stripped the *Ulama* from financial resources and made the *Ulama* a body totally dependent on the regime (Shahin, 1997: 51).

[90] The regime closed the "Moulay Youssef high school for religion"", where Yassine was educated (For further Darif.

Supreme Scientific Council) in which the corpus of the *Ulama* would be re-organized under the directorship of the king as Amir Al-Muminin (Darif, 1992: 115).[91] The role of the Council as defined in paragraph 3 of the *Dahir* was to control the religious field and to contribute to the preservation of the doctrinal and spiritual unity of the *Umma* by upholding the principles of the *Qur'an* and *Sunna* (Darif, 1992: 114).[92]

After confining it to strictly cultural and religious affairs the monarchy allowed the *Ulama* to be organized hierarchically to facilitate a more effective response to counter subversive religious ideology. But King Hassan II also warned the *Ulama* to engage in any political activity. For the king, it is not in the interest of the *Ulama* to interfere in politics; rather they should be in charge of deepening the awareness of the Muslim population, particularly the youth (Darif, 1992: 64).

The reconstruction has reduced the effectiveness of the formal *Ulama* and rendered them unable to play the role assigned to them by the regime. The Councils failed to serve the king as he wished, because of the heavy restrictions that stripped them of their independence and credibility. The *Ulama* became deligitimated in the eyes of young people. *Ad-Durus Al-Hassaniya* (King's Hassan's lectures), which are held annually since the early 1960s during the month of Ramadan under the auspice of King Hassan II uncovered the feebleness of Moroccan *Ulama*.[93] This had forced the regime to invite the *Ulama* from some Islamic countries to lecture (Al-Jaberi, 1988).

From 1981 on, the regime was keen on strengthening its control over the religious field through a number of means such as control of mosque construction, standardization of Friday sermons to exclude radical Islam-oriented imams, and the closing of mosques outside of the hours of prayer (Darif, 1992). In the early 1980s, the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, created in 1961, was reorganized and placed under the control of the Ministry of Interior. *Ulama* and Friday preachers receive instructions from the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs that set the limits of the sermons they offer in mosques.[94] The regime monitors religious activities of mosques and restricts activities considered to be political in nature. To ensure that the approved doctrine is

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[91] The regime had also established *Al-Majalis Al-Ilmiyya Al-Iqlimiyya* (the Regional Scientific Councils).

[92] The Counsil is very important. The director of this Counsel is personally loyal to the monarchy and is appointed by a royal decree.

[93] Since his thronesation, King Mohammad VI presides over *Ad-Durus Al-Hassaniya*.

[94] The regime was aware of the growing and real role the Friday preachers are play in deepening people awareness of their plight. The regime organized in Fez in March 1987 the first international congress for Friday preachers, which adopted some measures. If the Friday preachers should not respect these criteria, they were prohibited from delivering their sermons (For more details, see Darif, 1996: 42-48).

abided by, teaching in mosques is also carefully watched by civil servants with religious background who coordinate their activities with security forces of the Ministry of Interior (Shahin, 1997: 54). Between 1988-1991, the ministry had stopped 26 Friday preachers that challenged the restrictions by delivering religious sermons that were not in total accordance with the regime and also because they criticized the regime's position during the first Gulf War in 1991 (Darif, 1992: 198).

In the early 1980s, one of the instruments which the regime used to consolidate its religious authority and to contain the power and influence of Islam-oriented political movements was the adoption of the *As-Sahwa* (awakening) (Darif, 1992). This involvement has two forms. The indirect form constitutes the organization of religious conferences and meetings. The direct form of the regime's involvement manifests itself in creating sommer universities of the Islamic *As-Sahwa* in September 1990 (Darif, 1992: 65).[95] These sommer universities are assigned with the functions of educating and guiding young Moroccans through lectures and seminars. This involvement of the regime is particularly significant, since it has targeted in the first place young students. In its ongoing struggle against these Islam-oriented movements, the regime has called on the *Ulama* to respond to the claims made by these movements.

In its response to Islam-oriented movements challenge, the regime has endeavored to articulate the other understanding of Islam, producing the necessary support for the existing political structures. The regime continues to endeavor to control, regulate and manage religious authority and the production of religious knowledge, and, to this end, is aided by the representative of official Islam, namely the *Ulama*.

The High Scientific Council has had some negative and opposite effects. The *Ulama* became domesticated and bureaucratized and have gradually lost touch with the masses. The terrifying events of Casablanca 2003 were a great evidence of the failing of the regime in controlling the religious field. This "inspired" the regime to start a new process of "managing" the religious field through reconstructing the education institutions responsible for the production of religious knowledge. To this end, a new *Dahir* was issued in 2004. Religious sermons delivered on Friday prayers should be in accordance with the Ministry's official sermons. The sermons are carefully watched and monitored not only by the civil servants of the Ministry of Interior. The regime has placed the religious activities

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[95] In a letter sent to the first meeting of the Sommer University of Islamic *As-Sahwa*, the king called Moroccans to go back to the basic of Islam and to establish an Islamic Caliphate (See also Darif, 1992: 65).

of the mosques under the security surveillance of the Ministry of Interior. As a result of these measures, it was reported that 5000 Friday preachers were banned from delivering their sermons.

The growing salience of the organization's activities on university campuses and in the social space has alarmed the regime to react and manage this "colonialiation" of the movement. The implementation of Islam-oriented movements at the Moroccan universities dated back 1987, when the first Islamic cultural week was organized (Tozy, 1999: 181). In the early 1990s, Islam-oriented movements came to dominate the Moroccan Students Union (Tozy, 1999: 182). The regime made a number of efforts to combat the domination of the students' organization by the Islam-oriented movements. The regime and the socialist-led government argued that the students' organization was held hostage by Islam-oriented movements. In 1996, the ministry of education, and the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Justice issued a memorandum banning all cultural activities at the universities. On November 8th, 1998, the regime banned any cultural activities on the university campuses without its permit. Despite the restrictions, the movement managed to strengthen its positions and dominate the National Union of Moroccan Students.

The regime was also engaged in fighting *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* in the social space. The Ministry of Interior ordered on 27 February 1999 the governeurs to ban all activities in the public space (Darif, 2000: 286). Recent demonstrations have also shows that the regime has not managed to stop the organization form spreading its messages. On 12th March 2000, Islam-oriented movements mobilized an estimated 500,000 participants and during the second *Aqsa Intifada* demonstration on 7th April 2002, they mobilized about 1 million.

In December 2003, the monarch, who has this prerogative as the supreme religious authority in the country, instructed the parliament to pass a new law that makes the creation of political parties based on the line of religious and ethnic lines unlawful.

4 Prior-Internet communication strategies

Several scholarly works have dealt with Islam-oriented movements in Morocco (Burgat, 1996, Darif, 1992, 1995, 1996, 2000,; Entelis; 1997; Munson, 1993; Shahin, 1997; Tessler, 1997 and Tozy, 1999), yet there is no systematic study that has examined Islam-oriented communication tools and strategies that have helped to bring about the physical growth and organizational formation of these movements in Morocco.[96]

Generally, as people of *Dawa*, or *call to Allah*, Islam-oriented movements value direct and face-to-face personal interaction as the preferred communication method to reach their audiences. They place a high premium on the direct, personal and traditional way of contacting and communicating with people in places such as houses[97], mosques[98] and beaches.[99] However, in his book *The Prophetic Paradigm: Socialisation, Organization and March*, Abdessalam Yassine identified "books, magazines and cassettes" as tools that play an important role in propagating Islam among people and in opening several opportunities for contact and dialogue.

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[96] Mahjouba Et-Tetwani (1994) finished a master thesis at the Moroccan High School for Journalism on *Islah* und *Ar-Raya*, two papers belonging to *Al-Jamma*. The master thesis examined the historical development of these two papers and presented a very well content analysis of the papers.

[97] On many occasions Islam-oriented movements held regular meetings discretely in private homes of association members, bringing charismatic speakers, who were especially chosen to preachers to deliver "lessons" on various Islamic subjects for believers, political activists as well as those indifferent to politics. This kind of informal meetings could not be banned by the regime and has increasingly become popular and from a political communication perspective a useful tool in Islamic countries.

[98] Since 1981, the regime planned to control the religious field. Mosques were closed after the prayer time and were closely watched by the regime agents to better monitor them. In addition, imams were appointed by the regime. Some free mosques evade this controlling mechanism and turn to a place of recruitment, mobilization and activities through lectures delivered by "free Imams".

[99] Beaches constitute an appropriate public place for Islam oriented movements. *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* administrated and managed several holiday beaches across Morocco. These were very successful so that many Moroccan newspapers and magazines covered their activities. Muslims from many Islamic countries and Moroccan migrants from Europe frequented these Islamic beaches. Even Western and secular-influenced Moroccans frequented these beaches, since they were very well organized, clean and secure. Alarmed by the increasing appeal of these "Islamic beaches", the regime embarked on suppressing and banning the movements' summer activities on beaches. The summer of 2000 and 2001 was a "hot summer" between *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* and the regime. Some leftist papers talked already about "a new colonialisation of the Moroccan territory by terrorists" (Al-Bayane, 2001). During the summer, the regime prevented members of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* from gaining access to campgrounds and beaches for group prayer sessions, and arrested and jailed some of the group's members. In August two *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* members were sentenced to 3 months' imprisonment for their preaching activities on a beach in El-Jadida. During the same month, Interior Minister Ahmed Midaoui declared before Parliament that "people go to beaches for recreational purposes and we do not have Islamic beaches". The regime has excelled at distorting news about the activities of Islam-oriented movements. The regime banned the so-called "Islamic summer camps" which the organization organized near the beaches of Tetouan, Nador and Saaidia on the Mediterranean, and Casablanca and Agadir on the Atlantic coastline.

In the same vein, *Al-Jama'a Al-Islamiya* defined its use of communication tools in its directives of October 17, 1990. Article 5 states that the group can use all legal means to propagate its messages, including "lectures, organization of cultural conferences, publication of newsletters, newspapers, and periodical magazines" (Darif, 1992: 290).

Islam-oriented movements' communication channels grew out of a specific historical period characterised by its protest and dissent. The Islam-oriented movements' interest in communication is apparent with the founding fathers of these movements in the early 1970s. Due to this early concern Islam-oriented movements have paid a great attention to the mass media. From the very outset Islam-oriented movements have regarded the mass media as a powerful resource in their conflict with the regime. In the early 1970s there seemed to be little indication of widespread knowledge or support of Islam-oriented political movements, yet since the appearance of the first publication in 1971, communication strategies have increasingly become an integral part of Islam-oriented movements' political arsenal.

In the following we define Islam-oriented prior-Internet communication channels as a collection of all kinds of communication tools - books, booklets, magazines, cassettes and videos – organically linked to or having affinities with Islam-oriented movements, that are used in their political struggle and are designed to create an autonomous Islamised public sphere, independent from the tight regime's control.

This chapter provides an overview of the pre-internet political communication strategies, highlighting the political, financial and technical challenges these organizations have encountered since the early 1970s. Also included in the analysis is the reaction of the regime to these developments in the political communication of Islam-oriented movements. Exploring prior-Internet communication strategies in a context characterized by rigid censorship and control policies helps us to understand the potential of the Internet in terms of information and communication strategies. This is especially important when employed by marginalized and underprivileged political groups.

4.1 Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya

4.1.1 Magazines

In the early 1970s, the founding fathers of Islam-oriented movements were conscious of the importance of magazines in expressing the emerging religious and political consciousness of these movements to the Moroccan public. The birth of Islam-oriented print press was a characteristic reflection of the outlooks then held by some leaders. Abdelkarim Mouti was quick to recognize the importance of the print press as a mediating instrument and as a channel of communication with Moroccans. He considered newspapers and magazines as an essential medium of communication and aspired toward having a paper committed to socialisation of high school and university students. In the early 1970s, Abdelkarim Mouti attempted to take charge of this process by targeting mass media for the dispersal of his message. He published his articles in the socialist's newspaper *Al-Muharrir*.

As noted in chapter 3, Abdelkarim Mouti was tried in absentia and was sentenced to life imprisonment in September 1980. In March 1981, he published in Belgium *Al-Mujahid*, a paper in which he increased his militancy and confrontational attitude towards the regime by severely criticizing the monarchy and its policies.

Al-Islah Wat-Tajdid has made extensive use of magazines from the late-1980s onward. On February 20th, 1987 the first issue of an Islam-oriented monthly review entitled *Al-Islah* (Reform) appeared. The paper turned into a weekly in 1988. *Al-Islah* was established and edited by a group of reformers headed by Abdelilah Benkirane and Abdellah Baha. The periodical functioned as the mouthpiece of *Al-Jama'a Al-Islamiya*. The objective of this publication was "to promote Islamic ideals, to educate people, to offer interpretations on current issues, and to engage in intellectual encounters with French-influenced groups". Its editor wrote in its first issue: "The paper has thus set its objectives, which reflect those of the association, as reinforcing the current Islamic awakening" (Et-Tetwani, 1994).

The first issues highlighted the importance of communication in the *Dawa* activities. *Al-Islah* dealt with a wide variety of religious, cultural, economic, social, and

political aspects both of Morocco and the Islamic world (Et-Tetwani, 1994). It advocated the return to the *Qur'an* and the *Sunna*, particularly "when the Muslim nation is witnessing severe setbacks, struggling with crisis, and exposed and besieged by various enemies". Despite this, the message is reformist in content and moderate in tone. The paper was banned and then stopped its publication on 29 December 1989 (Tetwani, 1994). It was ordered to close on the grounds that it criticized the king's positions on wearing the headscarf (Et-Tetwani, 1994).

For expressing its views on various issues, *Al-Jama'a* launched another bi-monthly periodical, *Ar-Raya* (The Banner) in June 1990. The purpose of this publication was the association's perception that an unprecedented and fierce onslaught was taking place against Islam. It called for a total revision of the Moroccan identity formation and the removal of the obstacle made in the way of fostering an Islamic identity. In terms of content, it was a continuation of *Al-Islah*, since the editors remained the same. In May 1992 the regime banned the issue of *Ar-Raya*, in which the association criticized the regime's rejection to grant *Hizb At-Tajdid Al-Watani* (The National Renewal Party) a legal status as a political party to participate in the election of October 1992.

As Islam-oriented movements gained popularity with the public, *Ar-Raya* turned into a weekly in June 1993. Other Islam-oriented magazines and periodicals appeared on the media scene. The first, the weekly *As-Sabil* (the Right Path) was launched in 1996 by Mustapha Ramid, a senior figure of the *Harakat Al-Islah Wat-Tajdid* and its first issue was prohibited.[100] Its second issue was also banned. *As-Sabil* was more like a newsletter than a weekly. It is consisted of its editor and some activists. The publication, *As-Sabil*, was overtly ideological and did not close for financial reasons. The second publication was *As-Sahwa* (The Awakening). It made its debut immediately after the regime shut down the *As-Sabil*.

On January 27th, 1999 *At-Tajdid* (The Renewal) debuted as a merger of *Ar-Raya* and *As-Sahwa*. It became the official mouth-piece of the organization *At-Tauhid Wal-Islah* (Darif, 2000: 112). *At-Tajdid* appeared for 18 months as a weekly. Since June 3th, 2000 it appeared twice a week. On November 18th, 2001, which corresponded with the first Ramadan 1422, the paper became a daily.[101] The last change in frequency was accompanied by an attempt to expand readership by appealing to new target audiences.

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[100] He is a lawyer and a parliamentarian.
[101] To emphasize the Islamic content and orientation, Abdallah Baha said that the date was suggestive.

At-Tajdid offers easily comprehensible contributions to current political events and to cultural questions. During the early 2000, it served for instance during the reform of the *Al-Mudawana* as discussion-platform for Islam-oriented intellectuals. With these contributions, the magazine has vehement counter-reactions again and again from the part of the French-language papers. From 2000 on, the periodical began to devote special issues to more specific themes pertaining to the media, especially the condition of Islam-oriented media in Morocco. Its quality became increasingly evident with the intensification of the debate with secularists. One focus of discourse in this newspaper was the harsh criticism of secularism. An entire range of issues such as sports and entertainment remained outside the purview of its coverage.

For all its ambition, Islam-oriented *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya*'s press was still in its infancy and faced difficulties of several kinds. All these magazines share some common features concerning their ownership. Their publications were collectively owned and privately printed. Unlike party press, Islam-oriented print press received no subsidiary from the regime. Some Islam-oriented leaders claimed that their publishing activities have been critically limited by financial factors, since these publications do not have enough financial means.

Magazines and newspapers reflected these hardships in their poor unrefined physical quality, sloppy layout and mostly irregular publishing schedule. As Mohammed Lachibe says: "Under these financial pressures, format and style were of secondary importance".[102]

The magazines appeared in irregular intervals, since its funding were exclusively based on low revenues from the sale and not on advertisement. Mohamed Yatime and Abdallah Baha reasserted that their team at *At-Tajdid* was idealistically motivated and was not in journalism for making money.

The contributions were principally written by movements' intellectuals and voluntary writers, who sympathized with Islam. The typical product of these circumstances was the weekly or monthly magazines with an emphasis on long-term enlightened rather than day-to-day information. Biweeklies, weeklies and monthlies were the preferred medium for expounding and debating rather than reporting. They have played a role as a forum for debate among Islam-oriented leaders and intellectuals and as a means of

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[102] Mohammed Lachibe, media coordinator of the Parliamentary fraction of the *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* party, personal interview with the author, December 11, 2001 Rabat, Morocco.

involving some segments of Moroccan society more actively in political and religious events.

4.1.2 Audience

Initially, *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* print press was marginalized. Thus, the number and circulation of magazines and newspapers remained very low. According to an Islam-oriented leader, in the early 1980s there was only *Ar-Raya*, with a meager total circulation of 3000. In the early 1990s the print press has experienced the emergence of a number of newspapers and magazines, reflecting an increasing readership. Over the past years the audience for news and information presented from an Islamic point of view has greatly expanded in size and broadened socially. Since the "first civilisational war"[103] in 1991, there was a palpable appetite for information presented from an Islamic point of view among young educated people. Since its creation in the late 1990s, *At-Tajdid*, for instance, has increasingly become an important source in providing information, which contradicts, opposes and sometimes challenges the main stream media. The newspaper sales have increased from 10,000 in 1998 to 35,000 in 2004. Granted the low readership in the Moroccan context, these numbers reflected popularity of Islam-oriented movements' ideas and at the same time the growing of the circles of followers. *At-Tajdid* greatly exceeds the scope of its circulation and renders it a communication channel for Islam-oriented intellectuals and activists. *At-Tajdid* adhered to an avowed Islamic orientation and thus found it easy to satisfy the religious and cultural need of a growing young audience.

As an Islam-oriented daily, *At-Tajdid* is no match for the mainstream papers, which have a circulation three times greater. In comparison with those of the party press, *At-Tajdid* has a relatively moderate circulation, yet its significance should not be assessed in terms of circulation figures but rather by what it represents, especially considering the growing rise of Islam-oriented audiences.[104] In contrast to the late 1970s, when there was virtually no Islam-oriented newspaper or magazine to appeal to the educated readers, *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya*'s has now one periodical and one daily. Still, *Al-Adala*

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[103] The "first civilisational war" designation is credited to Mahdi Elmandjra in his book with the same title.
[104] One secularist journalist remarked: "Islamist print press has a rosy future, since it serves the special communication needs of a rapidly growing Islamist readership in Morocco".

Wat-Tanmiya is underrepresented, since these numbers are not significant in relation to the total population of Moroccan papers, about 20 newspapers and 30 magazines.

4.1.3 Cassettes and Videos

In writing about the sharp increase in expressions of personal piety, Tessler notes that there was a "boom in the sale of cassettes dealing with Islamic themes were at the time estimated to be selling thousands of copies every month" (Tessler, 1997: 107). Being aware of the rapidly growing audience, the cassettes have been attached a big importance as an excellent means of communication with a larger segment of Moroccan society, particularly those who have difficulties to read. Books are read only by very limited elite. Cassettes, which are aligned with the party, play a key role in raising issues of concern to Islam-oriented movements that the Moroccan mass media ignored.

Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya has used cassette tapes to disseminate their religious sermons and political information, since the latter has enjoyed wide popularity. In addition, Moroccans, like many Arabs in general, are likely inclined to lean towards word-of-the-mouth communication, a feature deep-rooted in the oral culture. This is alos a strong motif to expand their communication tools to include cassettes. Senior leaders at the party realized that the reliance solely on the print communication channels has limited effects in the Moroccan context.

Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya also used videos, but their use is limited to senior members for internal communication.[105] To enhance the political and religious impact of their efforts, they consciously use different communicative tools and engage in communicative strategies that may convey their message to reach a much larger audience. In doing so, they could bring their point of views onto the agendas of distinct audiences.

> "Our organization refuses to use the mosque for political propaganda for a certain political program. We see that our organization aims to educate Moroccans and is supposed to carry its work with modern

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[105] Abdallah Baha, a senior leader with the *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* party, personal interview with the author, December 18, 2001, Rabat, Morocco.

political communication tools, including books, public lectures, cassettes, face-to-face communication".[106]

Voluntary members recorded lecture delivered by the organization member and distributed them among students.

Moqri Abouzaid's lectures recorded in tapes cassettes and videos were widely distributed among Moroccan and Arab students in Europe.[107] We numbered about 17 videos, most of them dealt with international politics and Islam.

According to Abdallah Baha, the organization has recorded about 21 videos films, specifically for internal communication between senior members and for documentation reason.[108] For propaganda objective, the organization had not recorded any cassettes. But the organization has been aware that a cassette can be reproduced in the hundreds or thousands by others. Granted the lack of central control over the production of cassettes, senior leaders asserted that they are aware of the number of these tape cassettes and video cassettes. Voluntary members and media savvy activists recorded the lectures to distribute them.

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[106] Mohamed Yatime, Member of the Parliament for the the *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* party and managing editor of the daily *At-Tajdid*, personal interview with the author, May 12, 2001, Rabat, Morocco.
[107] He is a professor at the University of Casablanca and a parliamentarian of *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya*. He is also a "prolific" and eloquent lecturer.
[108] Baha, personal interview.

4.2 Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan

4.2.1 Books

Books have functioned as a channel for voicing *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*'s perspectives and thus as a means of gaining access to Moroccan public. For *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*, books can play a very significant part in replacing public meetings and rallies (Yassine, 1994).[109] *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* activists initially chose the medium of print to produce books, magazines and tracts. They used books as a platform for discussions with French-influenced groups and with other Islam-oriented groups. In the following, the focus will be specifically on Abdessalam Yassine's most important books because he has proven to be a prolific ideologue.[110]

As noted in chapter 3, after distancing himself from Sufi Islam in the late 1960s, Abdessalam Yassine engaged himself in a new adventure in Marrakech. He involved himself in the Moroccan intellectual life that was wholly characterized by European political philosophies such as Marxism and Existentialism (Tozy, 1999: 194). Abdessalam Yassine's intellectual activism resulted in publishing several books and booklets.[111] Abdessalam Yassine's first book was published in 1972/71. The central thesis of *Al-Islam Bayna al- Dawa wa Dawla* (Islam between the Mission and the State) is the rejection of understanding Islam as a religion that concerns solely private life. In contrast, Abdessalam Yassine saw Islam as a comprehensive religion that seeks to organize religious, economic, political, social and cultural life of Muslims. In Abdessalam Yassine's words, Islam is both a religion and a way of life.[112]

In 1973, Abdessalam Yassine published *Al-Islam khadan: Al-´Amalo al-Islami wa Harakiyato* (Islam Tomorrow). Here, he revaluated the concept of *Al-Jahiliya* (the Pre-

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[109] Recently, many scholarly books have emphasised the role books have played in contributing to the emergence of an Islamic public sphere (see Gonzalez-Quijano 1998: 171-198 and Eickelman and Salvatore 1997: 219-241).

[110] See Darif, 2000: 54-55.

[111] Yassine's disciples often refer to the fact that Yassine has been the most prolific political leader in the history of Morocco. They refer rightly to the fact that Moroccan politicians could not produce books, an obvious signal that they do not have political, social and economic ideas which could later be integrated in a program. The books are in a sense the program of the organization.

[112] For further analysis see Darif, 1995: 11-16.

Islamic).[113] For Abdessalam Yassine, today's Muslim societies live in a period of "*Fitna*" (total disorder). He adopted *Fitna* since it suitably applied to the current state of the Islamic *Umma*. He explained what the nature of *Fitna* is and the ways by which the *Umma* could overcome it.

In the same year Abdessalam Yassine published *La révolution à l'Heure de l'Islam* in France. At that time he was not politically engaged in any religious or political organization. He viewed the evolution of secular principles in Morocco as part of a process of European domination. For him, colonialism introduced these "un-Islamic political, economic and cultural concepts into Moroccan political discourse". According to Abdessalam Yassine, the proper way to withstand the European domination is by calling on "the mobilization of Moroccans on the grounds of Islam".

In 1973, Abdessalam Yassine wrote *Al-Islam Au At-Tufan: Risala Maftuha Ila Malik Al-Maghrib* (*lslam or the Deluge*), which he directed to the king. He privately printed this 114-page letter and distributed it to many persons, including the Commander of the Faithful (Tozy, 1999: 69).[114] This identified him as an Islam-oriented political activist and earned him a three-year imprisonment. He also raised in the letter the issue of corruption of the king's entourage and counsellors. Abdessalam Yassine called for change of the structure of Moroccan society along Islamic precepts.

In 1982, Abdessalam Yassine published an essay in French, which he directed to the French-influenced segment of the Moroccans. This essay was initially delivered by Abdessalam Yassine in 1980 in Rabat as a lecture under the title of "Towards an Islamic Dialogue with the Westernized Elites". In the same year, Abdessalam Yassine published *Al-Minhaj An-Nabawi: Tarbiyyatan Wa Tandiman Wa Zahfan* (The Prophetic Paradigm: Socialization, Organization and March.[115] The book was an attempt to provide Islam-oriented movements with an organizational framework and is thus the most significant book of Abdessalam Yassine. The book was and is still used by the organization as a textbook for socializing members and followers in organized groups.[116] In this book, Abdessalam Yassine laid down a plan of action for the organization. The central message of this book is that the Muslim's basic problems were caused by their having deviated from Islam. This situation should be changed if they returned to the application of *Ash-Sharia*.

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[113] The term stems from *Quran* and means ignorance. It refers to the period before the coming of Islam.
[114] It is very important to note that *Quran* also has 114 verses.
[115] For details of these chapters, see Darif, 1995: 147.
[116] For an excellent elaboration of these points see Darif, 1995: 147-159.

Abdessalam Yassine proposed what he called the prophetic way as a method for "spiritual education" (socialization) and a *Jihad* organization (Yassine, 1982: 50).

In 1987, Abdessalam Yassine published *Al-Islam Wa Tahadi Al-Marxiya Al-Leniniya*, (*Marxist Leninism and the Islamic Challenge*). In this book, Abdessalam Yassine argued for popularising Islam to the masses in the hope of stopping Marxists from propagating their alien and dangerous ideas among Muslims. His main aim was to make Islam more appealing by taking account of the need of wider Moroccan audience. Abdessalam Yassine urged the people of *Dawa* to conquer the traditional domain of Marxism and to place social and economic questions at the centre of their *Dawa*.[117]

In 1989, Abdessalam Yassine published *Al-Islam Wal-Qaumiya Al-Ilmaniya*, (*Islam and secular Nationalism*).[118] In this book, Abdessalam Yassine vehemently attacked the Western political ideas and principles. At the heart of his critique are those "Westernised elites", who imported these ideologies, without making any effort at adapting them to the local context.

In 1989, Abdessalam Yassine published *Muqaddima Fil-Minhaj (Introduction in the Method)*.[119] The book presented many new terms, but the most significant one is "*Iqtiham Al-Aqaba*" (the Overcoming of the Obstacle). This was a conscious act of political activism. Abdessalam Yassine encouraged Muslim individuals to form groups to prepare for what he called "*Iqtiham Al-Aqaba*", an equivalent of Islamic Revolution, a change possible only when Muslims are organized in groups.[120]

In 1994, Abdessalam Yassine published *Hiwar Maa Al-Fudala' Al-Dimukratiyin*, (*Dialogue with the Virtuous Democrats*).[121] Abdessalam Yassine's basic massage was that democracy and secularism are two related notions. By linking the two, Abdessalam Yassine attacked democracy indirectly while arguing that Islam is not against democracy and for despotism. He distinguished between two practices of democracy, the one in the Europe and the one in Morocco. In Morocco, democracy is victimized by authoritarian tendencies. He accused Moroccan democrats of allying themselves with the authoritarian regime to suppress Islam-oriented movements.

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[117] For further and excellent elaboration of the issues of this book, see Darif 1995.
[118] Yassine, 1989a.
[119] Yassine, 1989b.
[120] See Darif, 1995: 85-97.
[121] Yassine, 1994.

The intellectual discourse of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* has been advanced by the most influential leader by means of his books. Abdessalam Yassine's writings provide a coherent ideological framework for the members of the group. His books supplied the organization and the reader in general with coherent analyses to the major issues pertaining to Moroccan politics and society and thus they constitute a great strength. Islam constitutes the basic framework of reference.

4.2.2 Magazines

As noted in chapter 3, Abdessalam Yassine turned to the public to practice his verbal *Jihad*, after being released from prison in May 1978 (Tozy, 1999: 194). He began delivering his political lectures and religious sermons at mosques. The regime reacted by preventing him from preaching at mosques. After being deprived of his local mosques to spread his message, Abdessalam Yassine established his first periodical, *Al-Jama'a* (The Group) in February 1979. *Al-Jama'a* initially appeared quarterly and then turned into a monthly magazine.

The reason for publishing this periodical, as explained in its first issue, was political and religious. Through this magazine, Abdessalam Yassine intended to unify the many small Islam-oriented groups in Morocco under one organization. In addition, *Al-Jama'a* was set to serve spreading Islamic values and principles among Moroccans, especially educated ones. In the first issue, Abdessalam Yassine declared that the aim of his magazine was "to make the voice of Islam heard" (cited from Darif, 1994: 29).

The magazine's initial year of publication was suggestive because it coincided with the outbreak of the Iranian Revolution 1978/79. Religious symbols and political slogans of the Iranian Revolution were echoed in the pages of the magazine. The magazine contained articles that were not available to the public in Morocco such as the writings and ideas of Ayatollah Khomeni, Hassan Al Banna and Rachid Ranouchi. Between 1979 and 1980, it published a number of articles which dealt with the news and developments of the Iranian Revolution and which discussed several books of Ayatollah Khomeni (Yassine, 1979: 18). In the third issue, for instance, Abdessalam Yassine elaborated the theory of

Wilayat Al-Faqih (the guardianship of the jurisconsult).[122] By this treatment, he implicitly criticized the institution of monarchy as an aberration from Islam.

In March 1980, the regime banned issue 4 of *Al-Jama'a* and became concerned anew about the threat of Islam-oriented movements, since some Moroccans were allegedly directly involved in the take-over of the Grand Mosque in Mecca. In July 1982, *Al-Jama'a* published *Risalat Al-Qarn FI Mizan Al-Islam* (the Letter of the Century in tin thehe Light of Islam) in the pages of the tenth issue on the occasion of the coming of the fifteenth Islamic century. This letter tackled many issues in a strong and unexpected tone. Abdessalam Yassine's critique was directed to the king and to the official *Ulama*. According to Abdessalam Yassine, the *Ulama* have abandoned the role they have played in public life during the Islamic history. He also recommended that *Qur'an* should replace the current constitution as an alternative to the historical and "civilizational" decline in all aspects of life, including the economic, scientific, military, cultural and political.

By establishing his periodical, Abdessalam Yassine could not achieve his initial objective by bringing other Islam-oriented groups under one organization. However, the magazine *Al-Jama'a*, functioned from the very beginning as a central organizing tool. *Al-Jama'a* initiated not only the Islamic media but also Islam-oriented political movements. It can be concluded that Abdessalam Yassine's organization grew up around *Al-Jama'a*. Through this magazine, Abdessalam Yassine published his ideas and principles to a limited public.

In 1982, Abdessalam Yassine attempted to launch the newspaper As-Sobh (The Dawn). The mission behind this new publication was, as the name suggests, heralding the promising future of Islam and the near collapse of the regime. On December 27th, 1983 Abdessalam Yassine was arrested after the publication of the first issue of his newspaper and was sentenced to two-year imprisonment in May 1984 and 4,000 Dirhams (Tozy, 1999: 189). The motive of the charge was the religious content as well as the strong political and social positions postulated in the first issue of As-Sobh. The second issue was also confiscated and banned.

Under such heavy restrictions, Abdessalam Yassine decreased the intensity of his attacks against the regime. While the regime insisted that Abdessalam Yassine's publications should be tightly controlled, the later launched *Al-Khitab* (The Discourse) in

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[122] Yassine indirectly criticized Khomeni's theory of *Wilayat al-Faqih* as a new notion that has no antecedent in the Islamic political history.

January 1984, which was confiscated in the publishing house.[123] This evidences the regime's determination to implement rigid media restrictions against Abdessalam Yassine and his publications.

Being aware that mass media frame public opinion, Abdessalam Yassine and his cohort continued to publish the periodical *Al-Jama'a, which* maintained its critical stand vis-á-vis the regime. Fearing the proliferation of such kind of newspapers, the regime banned it in July 1984, after its sixteenth issue, *Al-Jama'a*.

During the early 1980s, repressions against *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan's* magazines were severe, common and ruthless. *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* was the subject of tremendous aggressiveness from the regime. It was the foremost target of the regime. Following the January riots in 1984, the regime severely limited the channels of political communication of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*.[124] The regime tightened its grip over the organization's activities and publications. In an effort to silence the voice of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*, the regime had obstructed its channels of political communication by a multiple of measures. The regime launched several arrest campaigns against the organization's members and prevented its congregations in mosques. In its political and religious struggle with Islam-oriented movements, the regime sought to crack down the organization's publications; and by the end of 1984 all operating Islam-oriented periodicals were doomed to be banned. This harsh policy resulted in the absence of any Islam-oriented periodical for four years in the media scene in Morocco.

The successive attempts to launch a paper or a magazine reflected the importance *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* imparted to the mass media. After the harsh experience, Abdessalam Yassine and his cohort became fully aware that the regime would not allow an Islam-oriented publication that has a militant orientation and a strong tone. Under such harsh conditions it was difficult to develop their own communication voice in the Moroccan media system, and thus, Abdessalam Yassine and his cohort decided to stop defying the regime by publishing any paper.[125] In addition, Abdessalam Yassine's energy was exhausted in defying the regime. As one leader said, Abdessalam Yassine's disengagement from the media realm meant that he directed his efforts to build his organization.

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[123] http://www.aljamaa.com/ar/archives.asp?Page=2&idRub=27.
[124] Several preachers were accused of exploiting mosques for political purposes. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments controlled mosques.
[125] During the five years of its existence, Yassine could publish about 16 issues.

As a result of the political change of power in the late 1990s, the print media was greatly transformed. This transformation was marked by the appearance of an avalanche of new publications, including general newspapers and special interest magazines. *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* re-entered the media scene by launching a weekly magazine for its youth organization, *Risalat Al-Futuwa*, in March 1999. This magazine was edited by journalists, students and young scholars. The editor-in-chief is a journalist by profession. The emergence of this new magazine should be understood in the context of growing conflict between secular-influenced students and Islam-oriented students at Moroccan universities. *Risalat Al-Futuwa* was founded to report the activities of the Union of Moroccan Students from an Islamic perspective and to fill a lacuna in the Islamic media.[126]

From the early issues one can clearly witness the high degree of intensity of *Risalat Al-Futuwa.* It published extracts from other Islamic newspapers and periodicals and republished a number of Abdessalam Yassine's articles. The weekly published reports dealing with domestic and local political issues. It focused on problems pertained to Islam-oriented students. The paper presented Islam not as a mere religion but rather as a valid ideology capable of solving the current social, political and cultural problems of Moroccan society. The magazine adopted a firm anti-regime line in political and religious matters.

After *Risalat Al-Futuwa*, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* began its daily on June 30th, 2000, under the title *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*. Its name was suggestive, since it adopted the name of the organization[127]. Its declared role was to publicize the positions, viewpoints and opinions of the organization and to promote Islamic ideas to fight secular ideas and ideologies. This community newspaper presented itself as the centre organ of the organization.The magazine stand thus at strong defiance of the official religious discourses about Islam. For instance, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* advanced strong political, social and religious positions. Most articles of the first issue criticized in direct ways the existing social injustice and corruption.

Despite the difficulties, they managed to print offset the second and last issue in December 2000.[128] Against this background, the second issue featured a special section on the situation of human rights in Morocco. *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* suspended the publication of this daily and the newspaper was under *a de facto* ban.

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[126] Abdusamad Fathi, editor of the weekly *Risalat Al-Futuwa*, personal interview with the author, May 11, 2001, Casablanca, Morocco.
[127] This strategy was used by the Socialists, who named their daily paper in 1981 after the party to make it popular among Moroccans.
[128] This method involves a multiple of difficulties.

Nearly all of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* new publications that were established during the period of democratic transition became casualties of the regime. Since the publication of the first issue, the magazine had been frequently banned. Fearing the wreath of the censor, *Risalat Al-Futuwa* dealt with some topics and let others untouched. Despite these cautious editorial tactics, the weekly was a subject of regime's restrictions. During May 2000, the issue 18, dealt with human rights abuses made against the organization during the past years, was seized. The regime seized thousands of copies of the 34th issue dated 2 April 2001 and thus the weekly was technically banned on April 6th. The 36 issue was also seized during the night of May 22nd, 2001 on the premises of the distribution company.

In 2001, the regime adopted other measures: strong pressure on printing houses. *Risalat Al-Futuwa* was forced to change four printing houses within one year because the printing firms refused to print the weekly under the regime's threat and reprisal. The regime had threatened and pressured a number of printing firms not to print the magazine.[129] Three printers stopped printing *Risalat Al-Futuwa* on orders from the regime. Consequently, the weekly was forced to reduce the number of its pages. Following pressure on these printing houses, the weekly began printing offset.

The regime has developed and employed unofficial and subtle strategies of intervention when it attempted to force *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* to comply and align with the regime's interpretation of Islam by threatening of permanent shutting down. *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*'s newspapers and magazines were forced not to differ much from the official ideological leanings. How the regime treated the Islam-oriented newspapers and magazines relies on the movement's acceptance of the religious and political agenda as set by the regime.

4.2.3 Audience

Since several of Abdessalam Yassine's books went through a number of editions, the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* realized that books were a useful medium in communicating with

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[129] In January the director of the printing company "Safagraphic" accused the regime of causing $15,000 (150,000 dirhams) damage to his company, which printed the magazine of the organization. It lost PCs, archives and documents.

Moroccan-educated people. Yet Morocco is a country that has no reading tradition.[130] There are no reliable statistics on books readership in Morocco. But although the reading of books is very limited, the Islamic book has become increasingly common and thus enjoys wide popularity. There is no statistics on the types of books preferred by Moroccans at the Ministry of Culture or at Moroccan Publishers Union. The purchases of Islamic books have considerably increased (Entelis, 1989: 85). Recent estimates reveal that the Islamic book is growing in Morocco like all Arab countries.[131] In the month of Ramadan, for instance, the sale of Islamic books is exponential. According the UNDP's Arab Human Development Report 2003 (AHDR), religious books account for 17 percent of all books published in Arab countries. Mass higher education has played an important role in this process. In addition, Islamic books are not expensive and easily written (Eickelman, 1999: 24).

While most Islamic books are generally within the financial reach of large segments of the Moroccan society, books produced by French-influenced writers are expensive and accessible only by the most learned of readers. Another factor that helps boost the Islamic book market is that these kinds of books draw no attention to the censor, since most of them do not tackle directly political questions of the day.

While Islamic books were generally not censored, many of Abdessalam Yassine's books have been under tight censorship mechanisms. The regime targeted books that criticize publicly the regime's political institutions and religious symbols. *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*'s publishing house in Casablanca, *Al-Ufuk*, which belongs to senior members of the organization, has been under strict control. The regime exerted pressure on printers not to print some of Abdessalam Yassine's books. In October 2000, the printer's shop was broken into and 800 copies of Abdessalam Yassine's new book, "Justice, the Islamists, and Power" were confiscated, among other items such as PCs, archives and documents. In November 2000, the organizers of the Casablanca International Book Fair, under strong pressure, prohibit the presentation of Abdessalam Yassine's books, especially "The Prophetic Paradigm: Socialisation, Organization and March". This decision was taken in the context of the considerable success of Abdessalam Yassine's publication.

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[130] In February 2004, for instance, the ministry of Culture and Communication organized a reading week. According to many recent reports, young Moroccans favour Satellite and Cybercafes rather than books.
[131] Interviews by the author were carried out with some books store personals in Casablanca, Rabat, Marrakech, Fez and Meknes during the last five years.

The growing demand for the Islamic book in general and Abdessalam Yassine's writings and books in particular reflected the profound influence of these writings in the spread of the organization's ideas. Indicative of this influence is the number of the books Abdessalam Yassine published. He published about 30 books. Almost all his books were reprinted. For instance, "The Prophetic Paradigm: Socialisation, Organization and March" was first published in 1981; the five edition appeared in 2002.

The demand for this type of books reflects the profound influence of Islam-oriented movements and also reflects the change the Moroccan society is currently undergoing (Entelis, 2002). Significantly, it also reflects the very similarities between Islam-oriented movements and the greater public in terms of religious, political and cultural imagination. Abdessalam Yassine's books continue to be in widespread use not only among members but also among sympathizers. Not all readers of these books are directly connected to Islam-oriented movements, but they sympathize with them and their "civilisational project".

In spite of an increasing popularity of Islamic books, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* has been aware of the limitation of books as a political communication medium. Burgat rightly puts it this way:

> "Alors que la parole se prête à une audition passive, le livre exige de son lecteur une demarche plus volontaire… il est donc plus fréquemment l'instrument de leur consolidation, servent à structurer l'argumentaire du néo-militant et ses bases "doctrinales" (Burgat, 1986: 103).

Books still primarily target the elite and do not function as an appropriate and effective platform for political discussion as is the case with newspapers and magazines.

In its first year, the circulation of *Al-Jama'a* reached 3000 and in 1981, 5000 copies of *Al-Jama'a* had been distributed (Burgat, 1986: 107). As stated in the first issue of *Al-Jama'a*, the audience "were made up primarily of believers". *Risalat Al-Futuwa* had a circulation of 10,000 at the end of 2001.[132] They published 20 issues between March 1999 and April 2000.[133] In its first issue, the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* daily reached 20,000 copies, a signal in the increase in the movement's popularity. As a result of the harsh

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[132] Fathi, personal interview.
[133] It is to note that Mohamed Aghnaj received a permit from the regime in February 1999 to publish a weekly.

restrictions, described above, we may suggest that *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*'s publications have had a limited audience, since they could not regularly reach the population.

Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan's print press at this early stage catered to those few who already sympathised with it and were disposed to learn from it. These magazines were and still are read exclusively by Islam-oriented people who yearn for Islamic political and religious content. The reading circle of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*'s magazines was limited primarily to their audience that consisted inherently of a relatively small group of people such as members, urban sympathizers, teachers, students and Islam-oriented professionals.

To sum up the media policy of the organization has attempted to create a balanced middle way. Some tools are for the elite, others are designed for the mass. The organization has been quite successful in utilizing information and communication of the second generation, namely cassettes and videos as effective tools for political communication, religious and political instruction and mobilization.

Abdessalam Yassine, whose media savvy can not be easily denied, used videos not only to evade the regime's blockade, but also to broaden the range of his audience. Copies of cassettes and videos were often distributed outside mosques.

4.2.4 Distribution network

The regime has installed a complex web of indirect regulations such as distribution hurdles that have prevented Islam-oriented movements from getting access to the mass media. For instance, in January 1984, a number of followers and activists of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* were arrested in Casablanca and were charged with crimes related to distributing illegal political tracts, such as *Al-Jama'a*. In the same context, Mohamed Al-Bachiri, a leading figure of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*, was arrested and charged with subversion, a charge that earned him eight months prison (Darif, 1995: 197). In 1989 several persons were arrested in Rabat and Casablanca because they possessed tracts that "disrupt the public order". These tracts were merely old issues of the magazine *Al-Jama'a*.[134]

This situation had not changed for the better in the democratic period in the late 1990s. Under the socialist-led-government, the regime has continually harassed with

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[134] www.alJama'a.com/tawarikh.htm.

threats, detentions and large fines levied against those who were directly or indirectly involved with *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* communication channels.

During the *Risalat Al-Futuwa*'s first year of publication, Sochepresse, the distribution firm, was in disfavour in distributing the magazine.[135] The situation did not improve in 2000. By most measures, it has since deteriorated. Mohamed Aghnaj, managing editor of the weekly, said that many copies were held back by the distributor. According to him, "the regime exerts strong pressure on printing presses and distributors to prevent the weekly from being sold".[136] A journalist of the weekly *Al-Hayat Al-Yaumiya* said that on April 6th, 2000 police broke into the distribution company in Casablanca and seized 10,000 copies of *Risalat Al-Futuwa*. Thus the weekly *Risalat Al-Futuwa* was again technically banned. In November 2000, Sochepresse stopped distributing the weekly under strong pressure and constraints from "above".[137]

Deprived of an easy and normal distribution system, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* had no other alternative than to organise an autonomous and secret network of voluntary distributors. Despite restrictions over the organization's members and activities, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* was able to distribute magazines and tracts to its members, followers and to interested sympathizers throughout Morocco through a network of activists of the organization. The organization has a great interpersonal network of students, teachers and voluntary distributors who circulated magazines and audiocassettes. This takes the form of informal communication networks.

To face this new challenge, the regime reacted by issuing administrative orders and by putting "bureaucratic manoeuvrings", including temporary seizure and harassment of distributors and sellers to silence *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* and critical voices. Several distributors, belonging to *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*, were thereafter arrested on several occasions as they distributed copies of *Risalat Al-Futuwa* and *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*. On October 20th 1999 for instance, a member of the organization was arrested and charged with "disseminating false information via an illegal paper and distributing a magazine belonging to an unauthorized association.[138] On December 8th 2000 a number of distributors were sentenced to prison. On January 27th 2001, some members of the organization were detained for two months for

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[135] In Morocco there are only two distributors: Sapress and Sochepress.

[136] Mohamed Aghnaj, managing editor of the weekly *Risalat Al-Futuwa,* personal interview with the author, May 11, 2001, Casablanca, Morocco.

[137] www.alJama'a.com/tawarikh.htm.

[138] http://www.alJama'a.com/tawarikh.htm.

distributing underground publications, including pamphlets, sheets and booklets.[139] On February 2nd 2001 a newspaper salesperson was arrested for selling *Risalat Al-Futuwa*.

The newspaper, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* has been subject to similar restrictions and difficulties. On 8th December 2000, 64 members of the association were arrested in different cities for distributing the second issue of the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* and eleven were judged. On January 18th 2001, a member of the association was arrested in Tata, a small town in the south of Morocco, and was sent to prison for two months and charged a fine of about 1000 DH, because he distributed the newspaper of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*. On March 13th 2001, Ali Al-Qadouri was sent to prison for three months because he distributed the newspaper *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*.[140]

The last recent cases were reported in June 2001, when another person was detained for possessing the daily. On July 26th 2001, in Taroudant, a medium city in the south of Morocco, four members of the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* were jailed for a period of three months and were fined 3000 DH because they were caught distributing the organization's newspaper. In September 2001, another member was sentenced to three months in jail for distributing magazines critical of the regime to friends. On September 10th, 2001 the authorities arrested Mohammed Zarhouni, a member of the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* in Oujda and confiscated from his home 50 video cassettes and many books including all books of Yassine. He was trailed on September 13 for selling illegal books and magazines in public places.[141]

Consequently, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* was confronted with difficult tasks of distributing and circulating its magazines and newspapers, since the regime has made distribution untenable by putting a number of strong pressures on the two existing distribution firms. The regime arrested any person who happened to distribute these publications. As a result, the number of the distributed magazines and newspapers seemed to be very limited because of the impediments in the face of normal distribution process. The distribution targeted only among the organization members and sympathizers.

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[139] http://www.alJama'a.com/tawarikh.htm.
[140] http://www.alJama'a.com/tawarikh.htm.
[141] http://www.alJama'a.com/tawarikh.htm.

4.2.5 Cassettes and Videos

The communication technologies of the second generation, especially cassettes and videos have captured the imagination of the leaders of *Al-'Adl wa al-Ihsan* since the early 1980s. With the growing popularity of Sheikh Abdel Hamid Kishk[142] and his virulent cassettes, Al-'Adl wa al-Ihsan quickly realised the scope offered by the medium. In the Arab world the sale and distribution of what has come to be known as "Islamic cassettes" has been increasingly booming (Tessler, 1997: 107).[143]

Deprived of delivering religious lectures, sermons and speeches in the mosques on Fridays, Al-'Adl wa al-Ihsan's preachers begun to employ small media such as cassettes and videotapes. They modelled their communication strategy particularly on that of Sheikh Kischk. In 1982, the organization undertook the recordation of about 40 cassettes of the most important book of the leader and the intellectual power house of the organization, *The Prophetic Paradigm: Socialisation, Organization and March.*

After successive attempts to enter into the communication print media of newspaper and magazines, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* recognized the difficulty of spreading the message to the newspaper and magazines readership. *Adl wa Al-Ihssan* tried different political communication strategies so as to target groups of potential members. The group, being marginalized, was forced to develop alternative media methods for spreading its political and religious messages by cassettes and videos. Cassettes and videos offered the group an additional alternative communication tool to the media of the national information system.[144]

Cassettes made a new type of communication possible in which charismatic leaders of the organization informally communicate to people in their homes rather than in mosques which the regime strictly and regularly monitored. Similarly, Mohammed Al-Bacheri,[145] a distinguished member of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*, began recording his sermons in cassettes, after being prevented from preaching in the mosques of Casablanca. Between

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[142] He is the most famous and widely listened preachers in the Islamic world. His cassettes are very popular and are circulated by hundreds of people in Morocco and among Moroccans in Europe and America. Ten years after his death, he is still the leading preacher in the Islamic world according to a recent rating published at http://www.Islamway.com.

[143] "Islamic cassettes" are cassettes that deal exclusively with Islamic subjects and are designed for *Dawa*.

[144] What is striking is the inattention of political parties to the effectiveness of these tools. As far as we know, no political party leader has ever used these communication tools. The satirist Ahmed Sanoussi has also made use of the cassettes to reach his audience after being denied access to the Moroccan TV.

[145] He was very fluent in style, with a remarkable command of words. He used an inflammatory language, yet an eloquent and original one.

1982 and 1984, Al-Bacheri recorded about 300 cassettes for "political education" (Darif, 1996).

Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan tried different political communication strategies so as to target groups of potential members. It has developed innovative communication tools such as videos to disseminate their religious sermons and political information. In the exploitation and use of the services of videos, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* has been in the vanguard. The organization intensively used videos to boost the arsenal in an attempt to reach a larger audience. After being confined to his home in 1989, Abdessalam Yassine recorded approximately 10 videos for communicating with his followers. *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* were engaged in filming their meetings and conferences to inform its members. It also used video films for internal communication for those members who live in other regions and could not attend the events. Until 1995, the organization recoded about 21 videos.

The main issues tackled in these videos were the history of Islam presented from an active political perspective. The argumentation line that directed the themes of these videos was the reconstruction of Islamic identity by a new reading of the Islamic history.

With inexpensive video cameras and the ease one can produce video cassettes Al-*Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* developed one of the innovative methods. In the early 1990s, they began filming mass rallies, large demonstrations and public assemblies. They distributed the in-house made video cassettes among their followers.[146] As Abdallah Baha said:

> "Since the Moroccan TV and Radio do not report events involving Islamic movements, the campaigns were filmed and distributed to advertise for the their organizational skills".[147]

On December 18th, 1995 for instance, under the title "Abdessalam Yassine under house arrest", a cassette video of thirty minutes was widely distributed among the organization members and sympathizers, not only in Morocco but also in Europe and North America. The video film was designed to commemorate Abdessalam Yassine's house arrest.

A Moroccan journalist noted that "the application of the cassette tapes have improved the responsiveness to Islamic issues and fostered an Islamic consciousness,

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[146] The organization has already begun using a technology of video-senders and broadcast certain videotapes directly into the homes of followers and sympathisers. Because of security reasons, we could not verify this information. If true, this new alternative transmission programming will be an additional innovative method of Islam-oriented movements.

[147] Baha, personal interview.

encouraging people to participate in public affairs". In 1991, cassettes, for instance, were used to mobilize support and help coordinate passive resistance tactics of students serving as intermediaries.[148] Abdessalam Yassine could distribute his electrifying messages via audio cassette tapes. These tapes were extensively copied and distributed on voluntary basis among young students and educated Moroccans as well as among a largely illiterate public.

4.3 Objective of the prior-Internet communication strategies

To play a significant role in the Moroccan political field, Islam-oriented movements established a "propaganda" apparatus to systematically promulgate their ideology and political agenda. *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* and *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* used different communication tools in their political conflict with the regime.

Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan, for instance, founded an organization committee for information and communication. The media committee (Lajnat Al-Ialam) is made up of five members, appointed by the president of the committee executive, who are responsible for the media policy of the organization. The function of this group is "to inform the *Umma* by means of news agencies, newspapers, magazines books, radio and TV". The seventh organ co-operate closely with the third organ, which is responsible for the organization of meetings, lectures, and cultural seminars as well as the planning and production of books and studies. As one leader of the *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* observed that the main objective of the Islam-oriented media is "to inform people and the public opinion about different issues from an Islamic point of view".[149]

After the death of King Hassan II, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* created the political bureau (*Ad-Da'ira As-Siyasiya*). The bureau is composed of four members headed by *Al-Murshid Al-Àm* and functions as a public organ. As far as political communication is concerned, it issued public statements on various domestic and foreign issues and staged media events such as holding press conferences with foreign journalists and giving interviews. The

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[148] During the dramatic event in Casablanca in December 1991, it was reported that students utilized tape cassettes of Yassine containing subversive messages and strong condemnation of the regime's position in siding with USA against Iraq.

[149] Yatime, personal interview.

members of the political bureau appeared frequently in cultural and political gatherings held by other organizations and participate in marches and public demonstrations.

Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan has followed a general communication strategy. If one looks at how the leaders of the organization have encountered the media in recent time, one can conclude that the internal communication structure within the organization appears quite centralised. The flow of information to the media is strictly filtered. The media-movement relations and interactions are delegated to a few key leaders such as Fathallah Arsalane and Almotawakil. This rigid strategy was designed to control the internal communication process and minimize the appearance of any internal dissent in their media interactions. They speak with one voice.

Islam-oriented movements outreach involves direct propaganda of Islamic ideology. They focus their outreach on educated youth. Through these communication tools, including personal contact and communal activity at the grassroots level, they are working to reshape the political consciousness of educated youth, imbuing them with a new sense of civic obligation and new perspective on their own capacity to effect social transformations. By convincing youth with the notion that reform of Moroccan society is a religious and moral duty incumbent on every Muslim, Islam-oriented movements have begun to erode long-entrenched patterns of popular non-participation and passivity and foster an active political culture rooted in Islamic symbols.

Islam-oriented movements heavily rely on direct, word-of-mouth and face-to-face interactions as the best form for recruiting members and for securing commitment and collective identification (Entelis, 1989: 84). The traditional forms of communication are still largely in place.

The two major Islam-oriented organizations in Morocco are pursuing a bottom-up approach, aiming at a gradual transformation of society through words, preaching, and social and political activity. They have become energetic in establishing much-needed communication channels such as magazines and publishing houses. By producing these publications, the Islam-oriented media activists not only have gained access to the communication channels, but also have actively taken part in the communication process.

Destined to play a significant role in the contemporary Moroccan politics, Islam-oriented movements have a tradition of developing and using alternative and independent media to facilitate political communication and to reach people. They have worked hard to develop their own media as a vehicle for exchange of ideas and for mobilizing new

members and for telling Moroccans about the existence of their movements. Islam-oriented movements have tried different political communication strategies to target as many groups of potential members as possible. Being fully aware of the centrality of the media in the political conflict, Islam-oriented movements express their political ideas and their religious understanding. The leaders of the movements have over the years developed a sense to the media, yet they lacked material resources necessary for media access.

As shown in the previous sections Islam-oriented movements have repeatedly appropriated as many media as possible to spread their message. As seen by prior-Internet communication strategies, they have also continued to come up against censorship. While, Islam-oriented movements have their own periodicals, they can not compete with other newspapers and magazines. They have sought to bypass the traditional media by appealing directly to the public. The communication strategies used by Islam-oriented movements in their battle against the regime's organized press freedom were not effective. Certainly the application of the cassettes and videos to political communication has not displaced print forms of political communication. It is noteworthy that the use of all these prior-Internet channels has not opened the door to Islam-oriented movements and allowed them to begin to claim control over the "design and architecture" of the Moroccan public sphere.

Islam-oriented movements have combined multiple communication channels such as pamphlets, books, audio and video cassettes and the Internet directly and independent print media and satellites indirectly to reach a variety of audiences. The primary objective behind the insistence and intensive pursuit of possessing a communication tool has been the creation of an Islamized pubic opinion by presenting information material from an Islamic point of view. According to Mustapha Alkhalfi, the political editor of *At-Tajdid,* "such an Islamic public opinion did not exist, since Islam-oriented movements were denied free access to the national information system".[150]

It is often argued that the Internet as a new information and communication means has the potential to meet the needs of Islam-oriented movements. Can the Internet allow them to surmount the established political regime and deliver their political and religious message in the way they see appropriate to their political and religious objectives? Will the Internet allow Islam-oriented movements to find a voice within the Moroccan public realm?

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[150] Mustapha Alkhalfi, the political editor of *At-Tajdid,* personal interview with the author, December 19, 2001, Rabat, Morocco.

5 Islam-oriented movements and the Internet

Over the last few years, research has shown that mass media and mass high education have significant influences within the Moroccan society and politics. Dale Eickelman rightly points out:

> "The more profound changes taking place through the Muslim world, particularly in Morocco, which are correlated with mass higher education and mass communication, factors that have begun to profoundly affect how people think about authority and responsibility in the domains of religion and politics" (Eickelman, 1993: 259).

Morocco presents a critical case study that provides ample evidence for examining the complex relationship between mass media and mass high education, and the implications these relationships have for political development.

Arab satellite broadcasting has received the lion's share of the attention recently devoted to new electronic media and their potential to affect political change in the Arab world. On closer examination, though, a different technology may already have had a larger impact on political transformation in Morocco: the Internet. Of Moroccan political opposition forces, Islam-oriented movements are among the most active on the Internet.

This chapter attempts to answer the following questions: How are Islam-oriented movements making use of the latest technologies of the Internet? How are these Internet technologies reshaping forms of political information, political communication and political mobilization?

The main emphasis of this chapter is on the utilization of the websites by two leading Moroccan Islam-oriented movements. We will attempt in this chapter to examine in a systematic manner what the websites actually contain, and to explore to what purposes the websites are being put. The analysis will be done by examining in detail the relation between the use of the Internet and the emergence of an identity of resistance. The reciprocal relationship that exists between the political use of the Internet and the rise of an Islamised public sphere are discussed in the last section.

5.1 Reasons for the use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements

Prior to proceeding into the analysis, it is in order to identify some of the main reasons why Islam-oriented political movements have set up Internet-based communication strategies in their communication struggles with opponents. There are five main reasons why Islam-oriented movements have adopted an online presence.

5.1.1 Censorship

Prior to the arrival of the Internet, the access to the public space through media such as newspapers and magazines has proved to be difficult. As marginalized "fringe" groups in the national information system, Islam-oriented movements have a strong incentive to seek alternative ways to get beyond the limited and often closely controlled communication channels. They have considered the political value in using the Internet to further their political and religious goals, as well as disseminating what they claim to be authentic "Islamic values and norms". Here they can disseminate and propagate their interpretation of Islam on their own terms, bypassing the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments.

Islam-oriented movements have considered the official information system to be biased as it works for the political regime.[151] Before the arrival of the Internet the direct exposure with the Moroccan public relied heavily on the national information system. The most significant stimulus for Islam-oriented political movements to develop Internet-based political communication strategies is to counter the effects of their disadvantage, resulting from the asymmetrical power structure of the national information system.

The obvious reason why Islam-oriented movements adopted the Internet is laid bare in the first page of the official website of *Al- Adl wa Al- Ihsan*:

> " We want to achieve the people through this new medium and to surmount the state barriers. This website aims at breaking the

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[151] Arsalane, personal interview.

blockade imposed on *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*. It also gives the opportunity for communication and dialogue. The surfer will have a set of material and content, which give him an idea about the methods, the positions, the programs and the activities of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*".[152]

Interviews with the spokesperson of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* suggest that his organization values its online presence, which it views as breaking the "informational closure".[153] In addition, the use of the Internet helps to bypass the boundaries of the national information system and to bring Moroccans into contact with new political content, forms and symbols.

For unmediated political communication, Islam-oriented movements have been quick to capitalize on the opportunities that the Internet makes available. Even the most senior officials in the hierarchy of both organizations supported a quick implementation of the Internet-based new methods of distributing information to secure positions in the emerging information system. This universal acceptance allowed for timely efficient incorporation of the Internet in the communication strategies of Islam-oriented movements.

The regime has excelled at monopolizing the diffusion of information (Eickelman, 1999). Being consigned to the periphery of the national information system, deprived of both equal resources and access, Islam-oriented movements have traditionally been rapid and keen adopters of new information and communication technologies to overcome the monopoly of the regime (Entelis, 1997). Against this background, they have turned to the Internet as an efficient means of diffusing political information and establishing contact with people.

5.1.2 Economic reasons

A second reason for the quick implementation of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements is their limited financial resources. Limited technical and financial recourses pushed Islam-oriented movements to put a premium on a heavy use of the Internet. The Internet has proved to be a highly cost-effective means of communication for resource-poor political organizations. The cost of developing, hosting and maintaining a fully-functioning website

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[152] http://www.aljamaa.info/ar/detail_khabar.asp?id=3594&IdRub=22.
[153] http://www.aljamaa.info/ar/detail_tasjile.asp?id=172.

is far less than to establish a newspaper or a magazine not to speak of radio and TV stations. This economic consideration functioned as a catalyst for launching various websites. As Abdallah Baha said:

> "Due to the low financial threshold of establishing a web presence, the Internet is an ideal communication tool for our organization to make our political and religious views more accessible for a large segment of Moroccan society".[154]

With a few technical skills Islam-oriented movements created many professional looking websites utilizing the free shareware and web-hosting facilities that are available online. There are currently no dedicated full-time employees working permanently to maintain Islam-oriented websites.[155] Some of these websites use hosting facilities in North-America and Europe. Technically skilled volunteers and enthusiastic supporters based in North America and Europe set up the websites.[156] In the case of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*, the volunteers were dedicated members of the organization and were integrated into the communication team, the seven section of the organization. The volunteers who designed the websites for *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* were highly trained computer experts. The reservoir of such voluntary workers is potentially great and far away to dry, since the majority of Moroccan students abroad show Islam-oriented tendencies.[157] Jon Anderson has observed that some highly educated segments of Arab emigrants are among the creators of Internet technology and among its first users (Anderson, 1999: 66). As Mohamed Yatime stated:

> "The virtual presence of our organization and newspaper depends in terms of technology expertise to a certain extent on students and professionals living in America, Europe and Japan".[158]

The critical factor is not necessarily money but dedication of young professionals to work for Islam-oriented movements. Another factor is the ability of Islam-oriented recruiters to mobilize people to serve these organizations under the banner of Islam. The

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[154] Baha, personal interview.

[155] The only exception is the daily *At-Tajdid* which has recently hired a full time webmaster.

[156] Abdusamad Fathi, editor of the weekly *Risalat Al-Futuwa*, personal interview with the author, May 11,

[157] Recent events and reports have showed that many Moroccans were activists in Islam-oriented organizations in Belgium, USA, Germany, Italy and Spain.

[158] Yatime, personal interview.

Internet is the most financially viable method of large scale communication for those Islam-oriented movements without enough financial resources.

5.1.3 Modernization mark

Owing a website in Morocco has become a symbol in the minds not only of the regular Internet users but also for particular groups of people, such as professionals. It connotes awareness of the future and an ability to adapt to innovations. And it symbolizes that the organization or the political party is current with the times.

Islam-oriented movements are acutely aware of this new fact. They want to be identified with cutting-edge technology to counter the impression that they are not technologically progressive as they are often portrayed in secular party press and French-language mass media. As mentioned in chapter 3, Islam-oriented movements are targeting young people, who are often the most computer literate and are likely to surf. They are acutely aware that their power is on the rise, particularly among high schools pupils and university students. In terms of public relation, they are conscious of the utility of the Internet in promoting their image among young people. In terms of technological understanding and use, they aim to present a modern picture and that they are keeping up with the latest technological developments.

Being online is trendy for Islam-oriented movements. They feel that having a website is necessary, if they are going to portray themselves as organizations of the future and pioneers for the new century. As Mohammed Lachibe puts it:

> "We use our websites as a way to send a signal about our commitment to technological development and modernity. The implementation of the Internet may also counter the perception associated with Islam and technological backwardness".[159]

In that sense, the use of websites is not only a medium to propagate a message, but enbodies the new message . In an age when the use of the Internet has become a key arena for political rivals and adversaries struggling over symbolic capital, they had to build a reputation, a "good name" in the eyes of Moroccans upon whose support they would

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[159] Lachibe, personal interview.

depend. This is to endorse the idea that Islam-oriented movements are committed to innovation and the development of the information and communication technologies. Presenting itself as a technology aware organization can be regarded as symbolic politics. Fathallah Arsalane shared the opinion by stating:

> "The failure to have a website would be viewed as an inability to adjust to the future. But the most distinctive contribution of the Internet to our organization is instrumental rather than symbolic".[160]

On his part, Abdusamad Fathi, editor of the weekly *Risalat Al-Futuwa*, does not acknowledge the symbolic dimension associated with the use of the Internet. He regards "the use of the Internet not as a mode to secure symbolic values, but as a communication necessity.

True the communication necessity has played a significant role in making the organization seek alternative communication channels such as the Internet, but the symbolic dimension associated with the use of a new technologiy was evident when *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* announced that it launched its website in a press conference. Also the multiple revamp of the organization's websites and the high-tech design of its websites can be regarded as a means to shape Internet users' image of the organization.

5.1.4 Combating stereotyped representation

Islam-oriented movements face another core communication problem with the main mass media and particularly secular print press. They accused the mass media's coverage as "inappropriate, negative and cynical". They claim that the gatekeeping functions in public service broadcasting offers no air time to their concerns. For them, the mass media coverage focused on stereotypes and spectacle. In addition, they believe that their images, their political and religious discourses have been subject to a systematic framing and de-framing, because they cannot make the media publish news about them the way they want it to be made. As one Moroccan journalist puts it:

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[160] Fathallah Arsalane, spokesman of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*, personal interview with the author, May 10, 2001, Rabat, Morocco.

"For too long, political and religious messages of Islamic movements have been subject to reinterpretation and to linguistic distortion from the print press".[161]

It is against this background that Islam-oriented movements use the Internet as a communication medium to by-pass the conscious deficiencies of the national information system. To convey their own political and religious message content and image without being misinterpreted and misrepresented, they used their websites as sources of information. They see that supplying Moroccans with first-hand information gleaned directly from their websites - and thus without being distorted - will guarantee a presentation of their political and religious agendas.

Through the Internet, Islam-oriented movements hope to stop the biased coverage of Islam-oriented movements' affairs in print media. The Internet can be expected to facilitate opportunities for Islam-oriented movements to gain visibility rather than via the traditional mass media. It is true that a clever use of the Internet can help overcome some of these negative stereotypes and can provide a more positive modern image. Communication scholars in Morocco believe that the representation of Islam-oriented movements in the media will change as they start to produce their own media. Thus, Islam-oriented movements have grown attentive to the potential of the Internet. By using the Internet, they are creating additional communicative channels to add to the more traditional avenues such as books, cassettes and face-to-face interactions and exchanges.

Islam-oriented movements were not the first in using the Internet. But they were pioneers in using the Internet strategically as a mass media tool for distributing their political, religious and social messages. This puts Islam-oriented movements increasingly in control of their own news reports, which they can produce and distribute with the same technologies employed by conventional media. The Internet provides alternative communication spaces in which information can develop and circulate widely with few of the filters of the traditional press. Islam-oriented movements hope to provide national and international audiences with a representative picture of themselves and the work in which they are involved. Islam-oriented movements were engaged in framing their activities, actions and practices by shaping the ways these issues were conceptualized and

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[161] Fatima Bouterkha, senior official with the Moroccan Press Syndicate (SNPM), personal interview with the author, March 30, 2001; Berlin, Germany.

understood. Through the use of the Internet, the gatekeeping capacity of the traditional press has been weakened. As Fathallah Arsalane said:

> "We create our websites as part of our public persona. The Internet has offered key benifts because it has for instance allowed us to control our messages and images in the public. We are keen to be presented to the public in the way that fits our political-cultural identity. It allows us to craft and deliver our message unimpeded by gatekeepers".[162]

5.2 Content analysis of websites

5.2.1 Method

Content analysis is one of the best known and most widely utilized research methodologies of studying mass communication (Berger, 2000: 173). Content analysis offers a method for examining manifest contents of messages. This research technique is chosen by a large number of social scientists and communication scholars for its systematic and objective analysis.[163] In recent time, content analysis has acquired a new momentum in doing Internet research. Yet doing content analysis on websites has encountered a number of difficulties, including complications in sampling, defining units of analysis and achieving reliable coding (Davis, 1999: 187), due to the features of the websites that are different from traditional mass media. The communication content of websites continuously change, since regular and constant updating of website content is considered a critical and positive quality.[164]

Others consider the measuring of the number of pages a website may contain as a problem.[165] These difficulties can serve as an obstacle in the content analysis process. Despite these problems, the content analysis of websites in general and of political

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[162] Arsalane, personal interview.
[163] For informative definition see Weber, 1990; Krippendorff, 1980.
[164] The design of the websites also changes continuously.
[165] The largest website in the world is the BBC with some 1000 pages (Coleman, 2001: 110). This is to say that coding an entire website could be extremely time-consuming.

websites in particular has proved a useful guide to understand communication content. Much research approaches the Internet through content analysis (Davis, 1999; Gibson, 2003; Hill and Hughes, 1998).

In fact, content analysis is an ideal tool for the current study that examines and assesses the functionality of Islam-oriented political websites. This will enable us to make inferences about the message these movements have sought to deliver. It will also enable us to understand how Islam-oriented movements used Internet-based political communication strategies and how far these movements have used their websites to inform, communicate, and network.

Two main types of data were considered: an in-depth analysis of the content of 12 websites belonging to Islam-oriented movements and interviews. The interviews were a series of semi-structured face-to-face interviews with relevant officials, leaders and political spokespersons of Islam-oriented movements.[166] In addition, interviews were held with stuff engaged in the development of the organization's online presence.

A total of thirty-one individuals were questioned over a period that lasted from March 2001 to July 2003. Interviews were carried out with representatives from *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* (ten interviews) and *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* (six interviews). Three journalists were interviewed who have worked on Islamic affairs in leading Moroccan independent press. Semistructured interviews use a standard set of questions but also provide the flexibility of following up interesting leads that emerge during the sessions.

An endeavour has been made to reconstruct the outlines of these websites by interviewing the different Islam-oriented movements' webmasters to provide more context to the information gathered on the websites. The interviews were designed to assess the two Islam-oriented organizations' use and attitudes towards the Internet as well as to examine the importance, function and impact of the Internet for Islam-oriented groups.[167]

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[166] *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*'s interviewees show a strong reticence concerning the operation of their websites. This is understandable in the context of the post-September 2001.

[167] Some of these interviews were conducted via E-mail.

5.2.2 Sample

Communication researchers adopt different sampling approaches to select communication contents in units (Riffe et al., 1998: 83). Riffe et al argue that the Internet creates unique sampling problems, because gaining a complete list for sampling frame is practically impossible (Riffe et al., 1998: 101). Since listing the pages of all websites seemed virtually impossible, we chose, for pragmatic reasons, the cluster sampling as an effective way to sample websites. Cluster sampling is suitable for content analysis of websites, since webmasters organized the content of websites by topics and subtopics (Riffe et al., 1998: 95).[168]

A set of twelve websites was included in the analysis. The choice was less a matter of selection than a reflection of what exists. Despite the limited number of websites featured in the analysis, it is truly representative of the major Islam-oriented organizations in Morocco. Islam-oriented websites are defined as the one that are explicitly related to the two Islam-oriented political movements. The definition includes websites produced by Islam-oriented political movements or persons and organizations formally affiliated to the organizations.

To identify the websites, initially we used search engines, primarily google (http://www.google.com/). Convention of the name of the organization and the newspaper plus the word "com", "org" or "net" was also used. We searched via Islam-oriented websites links and Islam-oriented portals such as Sultan.org and Islamonline. Identified Islam-oriented websites through searches were downloaded over a 36 month period at regular intervals (intervals 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003), depending on the most important political events in Morocco such as election of 2002 and two demonstrations organized in support of the Palestinians and around the *Al-Mudawana* reform.[169] Further material was collected on the basis of regular captures. The intervals between captures were based on the changes observed across this period. The fact that we monitored the websites for a relatively long period of time would assure that the description of the website reflects the development of these websites.

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[168] According to Riffe et al., cluster sampling is the process of selecting content units from clusters, or groups, of content. A newspaper, for instance is a cluster of a number of articles, usually divided into topic clusters such as politics, culture and religion (Riffe et al., 1998: 95).

[169] See chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of these issues.

A digital archive of twelve Islam-oriented websites has been created on CD-Rom. The communication content was coded into computer database records. Contextual variables included the date when the item was posted, its form (essay, statement, and interview) and the author's name. Most of the websites under analysis have, in the period since they had first been monitored (2000), had a notable improvement in the quality, especially in terms of design sophistication, accessibility and so forth.

5.2.3 Coding

A standard methodology for analyzing political websites is already emerging. The employed method of categorization was developed by an international team of scholars and successfully used by Pippa Norris (Norris, 2003: 29). According to this coding method, the contents of the websites are coded in terms of two different categories: information and communication.

The first category refers to the provision of different types of information. The information transparency of websites was assessed on the basis of the presence or absence of 19 criteria, including information about their party history, constitution, organization, program, news and schedule of events and conference (Norris, 2003: 27).

The second category refers to communication. The communication interactivity of the websites was evaluated by rating the website as having or not having 13 criteria such as joining the party online, donating money, volunteer services, e-mailing officials and participating in online discussion groups (Norris, 2003: 29).

To further elaborate this coding scheme, a third and useful category for this analysis was adopted to examine the connections between the 12 websites by analysing their internal and external links (Van Aelst and Walgrave, 2004: 116).

In a nutshell, this coding scheme provides measures of the "informative-ness", which are the content of a website, the "communicative-ness" that is its interactivity and its "networkness". To further explore the "informative-ness", "communicative-ness" and "networkness" functions of a website, code nought was attributed if the feature was not present at all on the website, while code 1 refers to the presence of the characteristics on the website.

This coding includes only quantitative categories.[170] It is heavily descriptive, focusing solely on the availability of information material and feedback tools. Therefore, it seems appropriate to introduce qualitative categories that shift the emphasis to the issues encountered in the websites. The question is not only which information is available on the websites, but also which topics and issues were addressed.

The coding process yielded a comprehensive set of 453 webpages from 12 websites. This set of communication reflected the nature of the discourse produced by the Islam-oriented movements' websites. We codified the website's functions by using a coding scheme specifically adapted and designed for Islam-oriented websites.[171] We coded these digital contents in terms of political, social, religious and economic issues.

Before the final content analysis was conducted, an initial pre-test was used to develop a coding scheme for website features. Using the sampling frame and procedures to collect data as described below, one coder in the first pre-test examined eleven websites. This pre-test primarily aimed to identify the types of information and communication available on the websites. The second test was carried out to refine earlier coding schemes and thus make them appropriate for Islam-oriented websites analysis.

We conducted a detailed content analysis of the websites used by Islam-oriented movements (N=12) and used the webpage as the unit of analysis. Content analysis is primarily a quantitative methodology, but it requires some qualitative analysis as well (Berelson, 1952). In this content analysis, we also combined the two steps. The first is the essentially descriptive task to identify and display the result in terms of the frequencies with which the values of the themes occurred. This means to know which thematic units received the most "coverage" in the websites. The second step is predicted on the first and concerns itself with the thematic and qualitative content analysis. A systematic content analysis of communication content of the sampled websites requires a descriptive endeavour with the goal of identifying agents behind the creation and development of the websites, their targets and their aims. The describtion of the websites is an interesting starting point for the content analysis. The following description of the websites is guided by some considerations and questions:

1. How are the aims of the websites presented?

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[170] Researchers generally adopt existing coding schemes established by their peers. But sometimes, they need to develop their own coding scheme for analyzing content.
[171] This codification was performed at each download.

2. Who is the initiator and responsible for the websites?

3. What are the targeted audiences of the websites?

4. What are the functionalities- information, interactive communication and networking of the websites?

5.3 Description of the websites

5.3.1 Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya Party

Recognizing the importance of electronic media, *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* party responded with media-savvy tactics and set up and managed an array of websites dedicated to different aspects of its work. The websites of *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* can be divided into five general categories: organization website,[172] party website, election website, parliamentarian website and newspaper website.

Table 7: The websites of Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya

Website	Agent
Al-Islah website (http://www.islah.ma)	The organization
Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya website (http://www.pjd.ma/arabe/index.asp)	The party
The Election website (http://www.pjd.ma/arabe/elec2002.asp)	The party
Rachid Medouar's website (http://www.parlementaire.ma)	The parliamentarian
At-Tajdid website (http://www.attajdid.ma)	The party and the organization

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[172] The initial domain address was http://www.Islah.ma.

5.3.1.1 The website of Al-Islah

Screen shot 1: The website of Al-Islah

On November 15th, 2003, the *At-Tauhid Wal-Islah* (hereafter *Al-Islah*) movement[173] established its website. The inauguration of the website http://www.islah.ma served a number of purposes. The website provides many layers of archived general information about the history of the organization, including the organization's own position and interpretation of its historical origin.[174] The website also provides core principles of the organization, the organization's structure, key goals, methods of action and activities. Most of these information materials are in Arabic and are not updated since the inception of the website.[175] The website of *Al-Islah* focuses on its ideology by promoting ideological conversion.

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[173] For more detail about the movements see chapter 3.

[174] This was designed to "correct" the regime's official interpretation of the movement's historical development. The organization put out information that contradicts and thus undermines the official version and explanation of the history of the movement.

[175] The webmaster promised a French version of this website.

In terms of communication and interactivity, the website of *Al-Islah* incorporates online surveys and interactive opinion polls where users can express opinions. The uses of polling techniques online remain problematic in terms of scientific reliability and are of modest quality. The questions used are generally designed to reinforce the pre-exiting political position of the organization. The results of these polls are made available and are commented.

The website of *Al-Islah* established an electronic discussion forum, bulletin boards and discussion groups dedicated to many subjects such as headscarf in France and Islam in Islam-minorities countries. The discussion forums are moderated. The website contains an e-mail list that serves to share information through frequent e-mail notices that are designed to lead the supporter back to the website. Mechanisms that allow website visitors to send information to like-minded friends are also available.

The website invites visitors and surfers to sign up to receive campaign e-mail and information updates by e-mail. In addition, the website requestes feedback from the visitors, asking them to express their opinions on, for example, how they found the website. A polling feedback mechanism is in place, but the website failes to provide audio resources.

In terms of networking the website of *Al-Islah* includes links for a wide range of Islam-oriented organizations, preachers and activists such as *At-Tajdid*, Islamonline, Sheikh Qardawi and Amr Khaled.

5.3.1.2 The website of Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya

Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya began its Internet activity in 2002 by launching an extensive website (http://www.pjd.ma/arabe/index.asp).[176] The website had multiple features: Biographical and contact information about the leadership of the party, parliamentarians and candidates.[177]

Screen shot 2: The website of Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya

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[176] All big political parties have established a web presence during the election campaign of 2002. The last general election acted as a major stimulus for parties to move online. Currently, at the national level, there are over 20 parties with a website ranging from the familiar parliamentary parties to organizations that have little or no presence outside cyberspace. The following parties launched websites during the election campaign: Alliance of Liberties (A.L.), http://www.adl.ma; *At-Tajdid wa Al-Insaf*, http://www.pai-maroc.org/index.asp; Citizens' Forces, http://forcescitoyennes.net/index.htm; *Istiqlal* Party, http://www.istiqlal.ma; Party for Progress and Socialism (PPS), http://www.pps.ma; Party Al-Ahd, http://www.harakamp.org.ma/; Popular Movement (PM), http://www.harakamp.org.ma/; Socialist Union of Popular Forces (SUPF), http://users.mtds.com/~usfp/, Unified Socialist Left Party (USLP), http://www.gsu.ma.

[177] The party website had a horizontal banner at the top (stretching across the entire width of the screen) with a photograph of the party's historical leader, Abdelkrim El-Khatib, the party's name and slogan.

The website of the party also prominently displayed many layers of archived information, including a few pages about the history of the party and core rules, the versions of party charters, declaration of principles of the party. A draft statement of the party's political standpoints and party activities were also available. Information at the website generally echoes the party's speech material, the substance which is left unreported by the traditional media. The website is updated on a regular basis, responding to important social and political events or demonstrations.

Through their online presence, the organization aims to reach a wide audience and make Moroccans learn about its principles and objectives. The website provides contact information in the form of services telephone numbers and general e-mail address to contact the organization.

The party website has links to two other websites. While the first link leads to the website of *At-Tajdid*, the party's newspaper, the second one links the website of the parliamentarian, Rachid Medouar.

5.3.1.3 The election website of Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya party

Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya party conducted its election campaign not only in the streets and on TV but also in cyberspace.[178] In addition to the normal party website, which was geared to reach a wide audience, the *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* set up an independent, separate election website http://www.pjd.ma/arabe/elec2002.asp, specifically devoted to the election campaign. The architecture of the election website reveals that it aims at reaching their audiences, including specific audiences, members and sympathizers.

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[178] As a political party, *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* was granted access like other political parties to the national TV to present its programs.

Screen shot 3: The election website of Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya party

The election website provides a range of information concerning the party's parliamentary candidates. The party posts election platforms, candidate and constituency listings as well as manifestoes and regulations concerning the election. The website provides a variety of types of information to visitors, including those frequently found in printed campaign brochures as well as those unlikely to be readily available in print. A lengthier description of the party's political program is likewise provided in Arabic and French. The website's archive offers visitors a section explicitly devoted to the organization's stand on a selection of political issues. However, the election website focuses on electorcal victory rather than on promoting ideological conversion.

The website has a campaign calendar of future events at constituency and regional levels, conferences and public meeting times of candidates. The website is hence often used to advertise meetings and other events and to publish the declarations and activities of party spokespersons. The election website provides a chance for "informed" voters to see what the candidates themselves are saying about the issues and their stands on these issues. Position papers and fact sheets addressing a number of issues are available from the electoral website. There are also complete transcripts of press conferences and speeches. What is striking is that the website has not yet integrated these materials in audiovisual formats. The election website quite often offers basic issue statements about what the party

stands for and what it intends to do. The information presented here is selectively targeted to constructed publics.

Unlike the party website, the election website included content in French, yet the website has no complete version in any foreign language. In terms of communication, e-mail addresses are not common features on the election website.

5.3.1.4 The website of a parliamentarian: Rachid Medouar

Not all candidates of the *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* party used the Internet in the election campaign of 2002, yet Rachid Medouar candidate for parliamentary office began to use the Internet as a campaign tool with immense communication capabilities. He was the first and until 2004 the exclusive Moroccan politician who adopted an electronic campaign candidate website http://www.parlementaire.ma.[179] In his website, he describes himself as the "first cyber-politician and parliamentarian on the Internet in Morocco".

The website of the parliamentarian opens with a personal image of Rachid Moudar.[180] The candidate explains to the visitors the reasons why he established this website. According to Rachid Medouar, the adoption of a campaing website is useful because:

> "The Internet will give the voter the chance to participate through their suggestions and questions concerning laws and policies. The contact with a segment of citizens will be easy and better through the Internet, will broaden consultancy possible with expert and interested in legislative activities, and will make it possible for researchers and journalists to follow the activities of the parliamentarian".[181]

The website focuses on the person of Rachid Medouar by providing his profiles and other specialized information. To tout his personal qualifications, two biographies are identified on the website. As stated on the homepage, Rachid Medouar launched the

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[179] What is striking is that not all Islam-oriented political candidates use Internet campaigning techniques. After speaking with some parliamentarians, they show interest in adopting the Internet technologies in the parliamentary camping in the coming years.

[180] By tapping at the domain address, users can hear an audio-clip.

[181] Rachid Medouar, Member of the Moroccan Parliament, personal interview with the author, December 9, 2001, Rabat, Morocco.

website "to provide voters with information about the parliamentarian himself".[182] The website of the parliamentarian contains a schedule of upcoming events. The purpose, according to the parliamentarian, is to "alert supporters to my appearances".[183]

Screen shot 4: The website of a parliamentarian: Rachid Medouar

The candidate's website provides retrievable archive containing extensive information on the major aspects of the election, yet the most important sections of Rachid Medouar's campaign website are his many interviews with Moroccan newspapers and magazines and an archive of his publications.

The ways in which Rachid Medouar's website offers information that substantiates his issue positions are similar to that of the election website. For each of these issues position, he offered detailed explanation of what he will do. The website features the content only in Arabic. This signals that the websites directs its appeal to his local clientele.

The parliamentarian website has e-mail contact possibilities. By providing campaign e-mail address under a public account, Rachid Medouar encourages people to contact him.[184] In terms of online political interactivity, Medouar promises to devote some hours on weekly basis to directly communicate through e-mails and chat-rooms. For him, the Internet is "a constantly developing communication medium, which affords today's

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[182] http://www.parlementaire.ma/texte/intervieux/tajdidsahafa.htm.

[183] http://www.parlementaire.ma/index2.htm.

[184] The e-mail account: medouar@majliss-annouwab.ma.

political candidates a diverse array of new ways to disseminate information, to engage in networking and persuasion, and to strategically campaign in the political arena".[185]

To enhance his website, Rachid Medouar includes some links to other related organizations. The links indicate and emphasises the nature of his affiliations.

5.3.1.5 The website of At-Tajdid

At-Tajdid (http://www.attajdid.press.ma) is an information and news website and was established in 1999 as an extension of the party's newspaper.[186] The website describes itself as an "independent news and information website", which provides news and detailed information and analysis of developments in Morocco from an Islamic perspective.[187]

The website is organized almost in the same structure as the print version. Therefore, it is not surprising that the content of this website is largely the same as that presented in their print sibling. As Mohamed Yatime said:

> "It was simply another avenue for reaching an online audience and for providing the public with high-quality information".[188]

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[185] Medouar, personal interview.
[186] *At-Tajdid* has now a new Internet address: http://www.attajdid.ma.
[187] http://www.attajdid.press.ma.
[188] Yatime, personal interview.

Screen shot 5: The website of At-Tajdid

Information is the most highly valued feature of the website. The website serves as an archive of past issues of the newspaper and also is characterized by its tight focus on Islamic issues and on many international key issues. According to a Moroccan journalist, the website is among the most excellent general sources of political information on the Internet in Morocco.[189] The website features an extensive collection of news articles from the print version including a chronological listing of essays and reports about current political and social issues.

Beyond this media-related information, the only other content on this website is a summary of the religious credo of the organization. According to Mustapha Alkhalfi:

> "A myriad of cultural products posted on the webite of the newspaper was created by activists, movement and party members, Islam-orientd cultural organizations, artists, writers and intellectual in solidarity, and others tied to the Islam-oriented movements' networks".[190]

All information offered in this newspaper website is in Arabic. The website offers a photo gallery and downloadable images that users can include on their own websites.

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[189] Anas Mezzour, journalist of the Arabic weekly Al-Ayyam, personal interview with the author, December 13, 2001, Casablanca, Morocco.
[190] Alkhalfi, personal interview.

In addition to these examples of top-down information dissemination, the website also facilitates real time discussion forums and chat rooms that are specifically aimed at generating discussion and debate amongst readers, visitors and members. The website of *At-Tajdid* has an e-mail system for contact.[191]

5.3.2 Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan

While its print media activities were banned, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* began to operate a number of websites.[192] The organization created its own website (http://www.alJama'a.org)[193] and managed multiple separate websites for affiliated organizations such as the website of the organization's leader (http://www.yassine.net), the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan's* magazine (http://alJama'a.org/journal/index/htm), the *Risalat Al-Futuwa*' youth and student magazine (http://www.fotowa.com), and Justice and Spiritually Publishing House (http://www.jspublishing.net).

Table 8: The websites of Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan

Website	Agent
1 *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* website (http://www.alJama'a.org)	The organization
2 Yassine Online (http://www.yassine.net)	The leader of the organization
3 *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* magazine (http://alJama'a.org/journal/index/htm)	The orgabization
4 *Risalat Al-Futuwa* website (http://www.fotowa.com)	The student section of the organization
5 *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* publishing house (http://www.jspublishing.net)	The organization
6 The website of Nadia Yassine (http://www.nadiayassine.net)	The former spokesperson of her father
7 The website of a pro- *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* activist(s) (http://www.geocities.com/alJama'a.geo/index.html)	Activist (s)

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[191] The first Islam-oriented movement e-mail account was established on July 30th, 1999 in the name attajdid@hotmail.com. In August 2000, the e-mail address was: attajdid@attajdid.press.ma.
[192] See Chapter 4.
[193] Initially the domain address was org/, but sine 2001 the organization changed this domain address. For further details see Chapter seven.

5.3.2.1 The website of Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan

The official website of the organization was first set up in early 2000 and has been sheltered on servers situated outside of Morocco. Initially, the website was little more than a digital magazine; it served thus as a window for the organization. The first website was a simple version of the magazine, *Al-Jama'a*.

The virtual content offered on the website is not qualitatively different from the material available off the Internet. This is because the full content of the website has been abstracted from the organization's official material, e.g. some book extracts and old issues of the magazine, *Al-Jama'a*.

Screen shot 6: The website of Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan – edition 2003

Over the past years, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* has developed a detailed and rich website.[194] The official website is well organized; it is divided into eight separate sections all of which are clearly identified and easily accessible from the main page.[195] One of the largest components of the website is the section of "who we are" that lays out the organization's

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[194] Though the website has undergone alterations to its appearance over the past years, the fundamental underlying structure of the website has remained largely consistent. The structure and design of the organization's website evolved and became more ambitious as the technological base of the organization developed.

[195] The other sections include article opinions, analysis and interviews and communicative forum and visitors' contributions.

history and describes the organization's political mission, objectives and programs.[196] This section provides a resource for those users wishing to learn more about the organization, as well as for supporters who wish to keep informed of the organization's activities on a regular basis. This section is designed to inform the general public who are browsing the website and learning about the organization for the first time and provides detailed information on the organization conferences and events for members and sympathizers.

The news section of the website provides a continually updated collection of organization press releases from May 2000 up to now. This section also provides users with a valuable wealth of current information direct from the organization spokespeople, much of which did not make it to the major front pages of Moroccan newspapers. The information contained in this section was updated regularly.

For instance, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* has a religious section full of extracts principally from Abdessalam Yassine's religious books and his preaching. This section offers composed lessons, *Hadith* interpretation, scripture and a range of other religious pronouncements. Beyond this, the section is focused towards providing Islamic materials. The religious section is geared toward Islam-oriented supporters who may be interested in becoming a part of the organization. The official website presents its information material only in Arabic and seems not interested in attracting attention from the outside. The websites have not a search function, a structural weaknesss of great websites.

The websites have an e-mail-based tool that enables surfers to send an article to someone else. The webmaster of the website collects e-mail addresses from members, activists or other interested persons. Visitors to the website, for instance, are requested to be added to the e-mail list and will thereupon receive a steady stream of e-mails from the organization containing a recent selection of available information, including material, which were silenced in official publications, as not in accordance with the official version of the regime. Also a weekly e-mail-based newsletter is offered.

After re-launching a new designed website on October 18th, 2003, the website of the organization displays some of the latest whiz-bang and the most sophisticated technical features, including streaming video and audio facilities and multimedia presenations.[197] The first audio clips were Abdessalam Yassine's speeches and religious sermons.[198] The

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[196] http://www.aljama'a.org/mannahno.htm.
[197] Over the course of three years, the organization redesigned the website many times.
[198] In terms of design, this website has a professional looking.

combination of multimedia such as sound, image and text-based features make the website targeting mass audiences rather than specific groups.

Since 2003, the organization was seeking to capitalize on the Internet's interactive potentials. It has increasingly used Internet-based multimedia features and tools such as Web-cams, streaming video and sound files to communicating its images and messages directly to the public.

Screen shot 7: The website of Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan – edition 2004

In 2005, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* launched a substantial revamped website. With its content-filled and attractive layout, the website appeals to young users. In a continuous effort to turn the website to an Internet-based radio, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* intensively uses multi-media materials such as moving pictures videos and sound files. It also provides live video coverage of some of its important actions. This multi-media material is categorized and archived in a way that makes it available to a wide audience at every time. Indeed, it is reported that the plans are well underway to expand the Internet-based radio-function of the website. *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* is planning to produce a daily Internet-based community radio station.

The website established links to the affiliated group's websites such as Abdessalam Yassine's website, the website of *Risalat Al-Futuwa*, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*'s newspaper and to *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*'s publishing house. What characterizes this website is that it has no active link to other Islam-oriented websites. External links are non-existent.

5.3.2.2 The website of the leader: Abdessalam Yassine

Soon after the lifting of the house arrest in May 2000, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* began framing the movement in a multitude of ways, designed to appeal to a variety of groups both inside and outside of Morocco. Against this background, the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* group launched Yassine Online website through international providers (http://www.yassine.net) to communicate with supporters and circumvent an official ban on its activities and publications. The launch was announced in a press conference held by the two leaders of the organization.[199]

The website was named after the leader of the organization "Yassine Online". It is a personal website rather than an organization website. In addition to biographical information, the website has multiple features: it provided information like a memorandum and a linking through to more detailed background material, including the full text of the conference after his release. Pictures illustrating Abdessalam Yassine and a group of journalists in his house in Sale during the 2000 first press conference are also posted on the website. The full text of the memorandum "To Whom It Concerns" is available on Yassine's website since November 2000. The voluminous memorandum criticizes the ancien regime of King Hassan II and urged King Mohammad VI to redistribute the late king's wealth.[200] Within hours of its posting, hundreds of surfers poured in from around the world.

The website published a great amount of the writings of Abdessalam Yassine, including two books, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*, *Al-Adala, Al-Islamiyun Was-Sulta* (Justice, Islamits and Power) and Al-Khilafa Wal-Mulk (The Caliphate and the Monarchy) were in full available online. The books were technically banned in Morocco.[201]

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[199] Arsalane announced the creation of the website in a press conference.

[200] http://www.yassine.net//letters/arab-karn.htm.

[201] 800 copies of his new book, "Justice, the Islamists, and Power" were stolen, among other items from printer's shop before being distributed in October 2000.

Screen shot 8: The website of the leader: Abdessalam Yassine

The most striking feature about the website is the intensive use of European languages. The website of the leader is in English, the memorandum is provided in English, French, German, Spanish and Arabic. This suggests that the information material contained in this website is to benefit Moroccans residing overseas and an international audience.

5.3.2.3 The website of Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan newspaper

The pursuit of gaining and securing strong positions in the new informational system by creating online presence illustrates the increasing significance of the distributing political information in Morocco. The website of the periodical *Al-Jama'a* is an online version of the publication. The website reflects the structure and content of its print counterpart well. The website, which is entirely in Arabic, provides static pages that have remained essentially unchanged and have not been updated in terms of content and design since 2000.

Screen shot 9: The website of Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan newspaper

The website is set initially up for supporting the organization's media activities, yet the website includes only a few pages of information on this issue detracted from the first issue. All posted material on this website is dedicated to the cause of freedom of press in Morocco.

The website is text-based. The website of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*'s newspaper displays no sophisticated Internet features as facilities for multimedia presentations and synchronous chat.

5.3.2.4 The website of the Risalat Al-Futuwa

The weekly *Risalat Al-Futuwa* website was opened in the spring of 2000. The magazine website was modeled on the print version. As an information and news website it is tied to the organization, which focuses its content on coverage of Islam-oriented movements, while also providing less timely resources such as already published articles in other newspapers.

After launching the website the virtual content initially offered on the website was not qualitatively different from the print material, and could be understood as a simple extension of the non-virtual material. Specialized and background information materials

from the print-services were placed on the website. The website is characterized by the inclusion of content not commonly found in the mainstream media. Almost all published texts on the website are signed by authors who are members of the organization, sympathizers or Islam-oriented members of other Islam-oriented groups. While news dominates the front pages of the website service, it provides links to sections devoted to substantial amounts of issue information.

Screen shot 10: The website of the Risalat Al-Futuwa

The website also contains a number of current interviews with senior leaders. It outshines its parent website of the organization. In its ability to provide indexes of past articles, as well as to create links between relevant pieces and to arrange searchable indexes.[202] Every single issue dating back to the first issue in 2000 is available through *Risalat Al-Futuwa*'s website. To facilitate access to information available on the website, a search engine is incorporated in the website.

The website provides up-to-date news resources of specific interests. These are often selected items of national and international news with specific Moroccan and Islamic orientation. Abdusamad Fathi agrees that this website "is being used to distribute the organization's offline publications, which would not otherwise be available to a wide

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[202] The full content of the *Risalat Al-Futuwa* website is free to read.

audience".[203]

The exclusive use of Arabic means that the website is designed to target Arabic-speaking surfers within and outside of Morocco.

The website has two outgoing links to the website of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* and its leader's website. *Risalat Al-Futuwa*'s website has no hyperlinks to websites of other organizations.

5.3.2.5 The website of Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan publishing house

The website was launched in 2001 and is sponsored by an organization operating in North America, which has close ties to the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*. The Justice and Spirituality Publishing's website (JSP) describes itself as "an international publishing company headquartered in the USA".[204] The website provides documents covering biographies of the organization's leaders. A schedule of activities, conferences and events is posted on the website. The website contains detailed coverage of these events. The team of the JSP's website stages live dialogue sessions between leading officials and sympathizers, members and non-members. The website reports on a video conference, organized by the team of the publishing house, in which the leader of the organization, Abdessalam Yassine, delivered a speech and answered some questions via video-conferencing.

The website gives a greater attention to the ideological content of the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*. Still, it provides some of Abdessalam Yassine's books in English such as "Winning the Modern World for Islam" and "The Muslim Mind on Trial Divine Revelation versus Secular Rationalism". The website does not only publish the reviews on Abdessalam Yassine's books, but also provides a number of testimonies of well-known scholars about Abdessalam Yassine. It appears that the primary mission of this website is to introduce Abdessalam Yassine's ideological and intellectual thinking to the Americans and by extension to a global audience. The whole information material is presented in English.

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[203] Fathi; personal interview.
[204] http://www.jspublishing.net.

Screen shot 11: The website of Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan publishing house

5.3.2.6 The website of Nadia Yassine

In an interview published on June 2nd, 2005 in *Al-Usbuiyya Al-Jadida,* a Moroccan weekly, Nadia Yassine, daughter and unofficial spokesperson of Abdessalam Yassine, expressed her preference for a republic and repugnance for authoritarian regimes. Nadia Yassine was charged and if guilty, she will face heavy fines and up to five years in prison. In response to the regime's constraints on freedom of speech, Nadia Yassine began her political online activism, by launching in June 2005 a website in Arabic, English and French http://www.nadiayassine.net, dedicated to publish her opinions and ideas. The launching of the website can be regarded as an effort to help blunt and counter the effects, resulted from her recent conflict-filled relation with the regime.

Screen shot 12: The website of Nadia Yassine

The website contains personal biographies, photos with the family and press releases. To avoid the impression being subjective and propagandist, the website provides featured material from independent sources such as Al-Jazeera, BBC and other news. This insertion of news media stories about Nadia Yassine is designed to endorse her cause.

Nadia Yassine's website contains the full text of the "interview-event" and detailed information on her political activities, including audio and video clips of her public lectures (e.g. lecture at Berkeley in USA on Islam and democracy). In an interview with the author Nadia Yassine said:

> "Since many years we have struggled to find a voice within the public realm. This website offers a means by which we can direct our message to specific segments of interest in a more immediate, direct and interactive fashion than perniciously have been possible".[205]

The website has a message box for visitors. Admittedly, this kind of interactivity allows people to communicate by sending a message, but it lacks the delineative nature of such interactions. The website has received more than 200 support e-mails, mostly from

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[205] Nadia Yassine, *Daughter and unofficial spokesperson of Abdessalam Yassine, E-mail interview with the author, September 20, 2005.*

professionals and highly educated Moroccans. The website also featured photos of her last trial in Rabat. Nadia Yassine gives the following explanation why she uses the Internet

> "Through the Internet I can convey more lengthy and detailed information at much less cost than through other media formats and in terms of reach, the distribution advantage of the Internet is huge".[206]

The content of the website remains focused on provising basic information about her intellectual and political activities and provides regular compilations of news articles on female issues.

There is no e-mail address. The website has two links, one to her father's website and the second to the organization's website.

5.3.2.7 The website of pro - Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan activists

Sympathizers of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* overseas established virtual branches for support. This offers the opportunity to mobilize new groups of activists previously out of reach, to raise funds and encourage expatriates to donate. An online joining facility has been added in August 2002. Since the Internet allows activists to pursue their activities in some instances without attracting the attention of the authorities, a pro-Yassine website was created and launched by apparently unaffiliated individuals overseas. The website is hosted by free servers in the USA. These online activities conducted by individual activists were not in cooperation or consultation with Abdessalam Yassine or his organization (Abdassamad, 2002). They are rather independently undertaken. On the homepage there are two statements that expressed the website's visions and positions.

The website is an unofficial website of the Al-'Adl wa al-Ihsan. A menu offers access to the history of the organization, a list of community events with links to the organization's newspaper and links to a youth group formed by students. The structure of the website is rather simple; it was not designed and constructed by professionals. The group of activists act as intermediaries.

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[206] Nadia Yassine, E-mail interview.

Screen shot 13: The website of pro - Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan activists
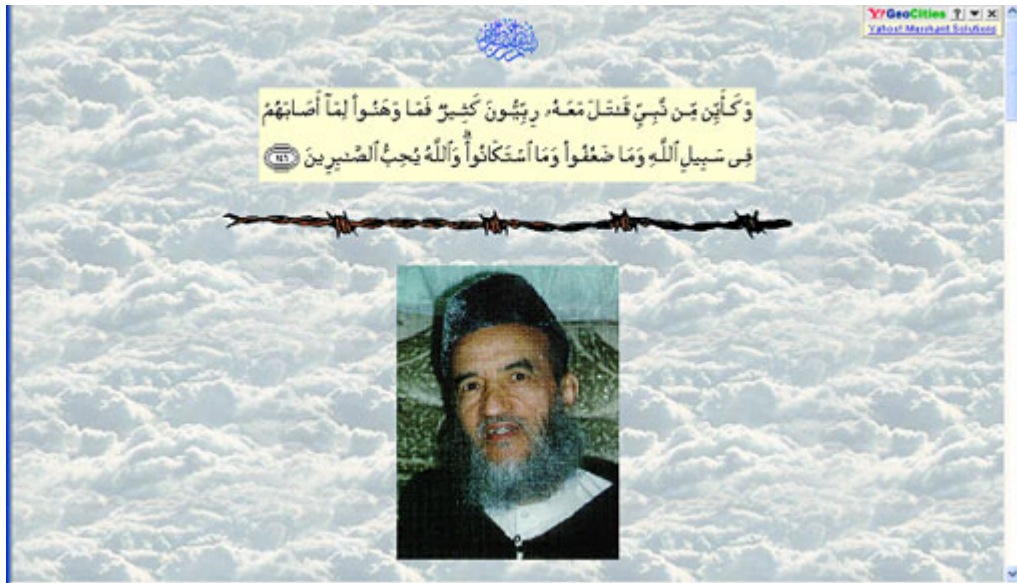
The website urges support for the opposition to the regime. The full content is entirely devoted to the advocacy of Abdessalam Yassine's organization. It features a graphic of Abdessalam Yassine, when he was under siege, which suggests that the website was launched before 2000, the year Abdessalam Yassine's house arrest was lifted. All the content available on this websites is in English. The website has some graphics interfaces and includes links to other websites such as the website of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* and the website of Abdessalam Yassine.

5.4 Analysis

Though the Internet may not have matured as a means of political communication, it is possible to say that Islam-oriented movements have a relatively greater presence in cyberspace that they have in the mass media. With 12 websites, Islam-oriented movements' presence is still small in comparison to the Internet presence of organizations and political parties in Europe and USA. However, the growing online presence of the two leading Islam-oriented organizations suggests that a significant change has occurred in the way the organizations value the shaping and impact of the Internet.

Within the last two years, the two organizations revamped their websites. This reflects a dynamic understanding of Internet technologies and suggests that the Internet has become a centre of Islam-oriented organizations publishing culture.

Even though the sample is limited, the websites, under analysis, expanded rapidly to include more information: background information on the problem area that they address, as well as information about their activities. Both organizations give sufficient information on their websites. They, contrary to their critics assume, give information in a sufficient manner so that they do not remain vague. The websites differ according to issues addressed, political objectivity, ideological framework and organizational logic.

Although e-mail addresses are common on the website, other forms of interactive communication such as chat forum and bulletin boards were rare. In some websites, RealAudio services were built to take advantage of the Internet potential. If interactivity is measured by live interactions through chat rooms or virtual town halls, such interactivity almost never existed.

We investigate in details the following questions: What Internet-based information and communication strategies do Islam-oriented movements use in presenting themselves via the Internet, and in particular what kind of communication messages do they seek to convey to which audiences? Special focus is on how Islam-oriented movements use their websites to mobilize and rally support for specific activities and events, most notably elections and demonstrations.

5.4.1 Information

The analysis of the functions of the websites demonstrates a predominance of information provision in relation to the facilitation of communication. There is a trend toward information provision, as is a common trend among websites in general.[207] The data thus far collected from content analysis of websites suggest that Islam-oriented movements have entered the world of the Internet with an explicit and predefined communication strategy, one that went hand in hand with the necessity of information transfer. This was supported by the interview data with representatives and officials from these movements, which show a general consensus that information provision, particularly to educated audiences, such as students, journalists or their own activists remains the primary goal. As one leader puts it: "The websites exploded almost all previous limits on the volume of information that has been exchanged".[208]

5.4.1.1 Quantitative analysis

After sampling the type of information material available on these websites, we now turn to examine their communication messages. The primary objective of this issues-centered examination is to call attention to the "views and arguments" delivered by these movements. To explore this more fully, we developed a thematic coding scheme.

Because it is important to understand the qualities of the mediated messages, we differentiate between four distinct content categories to see the range of diversity of information provided in the websites. Issues dealt with in these websites are not solely religious, as might be expected, but range from politics to social and economic issues. While the analytical focus is more on the political and social issues, religious and economic remain at the periphery of in the Islam-oriented discourse in today's Morocco.[209]

Similarly, the formats in which politically, religiously, economically and socially relevant information is presented are important. We distinguish between three basic expression formats through which digital information material and communication content

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[207] Elsewhere, content analysis of political party websites in countries as diverse as the UK, Russia and Japan have found that their primary purpose has been the provision of standard information about party organizations and policies (Norris, 2003).

[208] Abdulwahid Almotawakil, senior leader of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*, personal interview with the author, May 19, 2001, Rabat, Morocco.

[209] While hard issues can be also called high-profile issues, soft issues can be called low-profile issues.

are articulated. The first form is that of statements issued by the organizations and posted on their websites. The second form is interviews given to national and international print and electronic media of leading and senior figures in the movements. The third form is essays written by members, sympathizers or drawn from Islam-oriented writers or websites.[210]

In the analysis and tables that follow, we present percentages of themes and issues produced by Islam-oriented websites. Our analysis documents the high frequency with which these issues-focused information were appearing on the websites.

5.4.1.1.1 Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya

The content of the five *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* websites does not confirm the conventional wisdom that Islam-oriented movements are religious movements. As Table 5 shows, the content of the websites focus more attention on political issues (65 percent). The second most common type of information is about social issues (22 percent). We found only eight percent of the sampled websites dealt with economics. The percentage of religious articles occupied a marginalized proportion (5 percent).

Table 9: Issues in the websites of Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya

Issues	Items	Percent
Political	138	65
Social	45	22
Economic	17	8
Religious	11	5
Subtotal	211	100

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[210] The website of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* contains also sometimes information material drawn from non-Islamic sources such as *Le Monde*, *La Liberation* and *El-Pais*.

**Issues in the websites
of Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya**

Economic issues 8%

Religious issues 5%

Social issues 22%

Political issues 65%
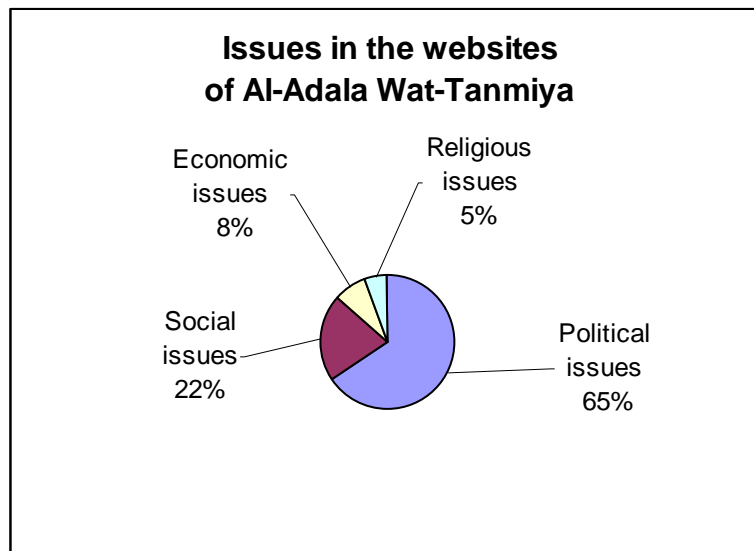
Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya massively uses articles when dealing with political issues (65 percent), social issues (60 percent), and economic issues (76 percent) and religious issues (100 percent). Statements were rarely used and when then only in political, social and economic issues. Interviews were widely used but typically focused on political issues (30 percent) and social issues (29 percent).

Table 10: Issues in relation to formats in the websites of Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya

	Political	**Social**	**Economic**	**Religious**	*Subtotal*
Articles	90	27	13	11	141
Interviews	41	13	1	0	55
Statements	7	5	3	0	15
Subtotal	138	45	17	11	211

5.4.1.1.2 Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan

Like the *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* websites, the websites operates under the aegis of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* revolves around political, social, economic and religious issues. As Table 7 depicts, politics represented 55 percent, social references marked 20 percent. These figures demonstrate the political and social emphasis of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*. 15 percent of all

websites incorporated content about economic issues. Religious issues marked only 10 percent.

Table 7: Issues in the websites of Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan

Issues	Items	Percent
Political	132	55
Social	48	20
Economic	37	15
Religious	25	10
Subtotal	242	100
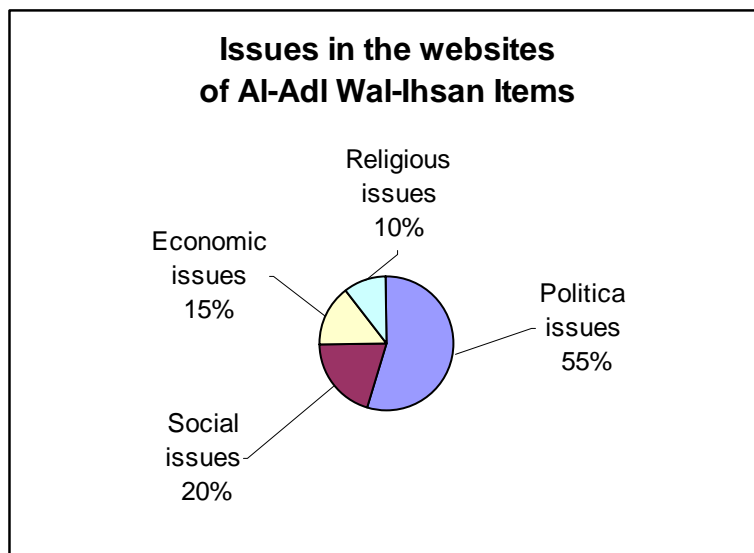
Of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* coded website, articles are the dominating expression form with 105 pages for politics, 31 pages for social issues, 37 for eceonimc and 25 for religious issues. The second expression format are interviews that accounts for 20 pages for politics respectively 12 pages for social issues. Statements are rarely used in political and social issues (7) and (5) respectively. For expressing economic and religious themes, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* never used interviews or statements.

Table 8: Issues in relation to formats in the websites of Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan

	Political	**Social**	**Economic**	**Religious**	*Subtotal*
Articles	105	31	37	25	198
Interviews	20	12	0	0	32
Statements	7	5	0	0	12
Subtotal	132	48	37	25	242

5.4.1.1.3 Comparison

A comparison between the two oppositions is useful because it will point out whether they are on the same track or not. Table 9 presents the results of a comparative analysis of the communication content available on the websites of the two Islam-oriented organizations. The analysis supports the contention that Islam-oriented websites vary substantially in terms of content, but not in terms of focus. As suggested, there were differences between the two organizations regarding the provision of information. In regards to politics-related content throughout the sampled websites, *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* tends to provide relatively more political information than *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*.

This is understandable, since *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* is a political party. Surprisingly, *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* is the least informative on economic issues. The websites of both organizations were relatively rich in terms of social information. This fact can be explained with heightened debate on the *Al-Mudawana* between Islam-oriented movements and Western-influenced segments of the Moroccan society. As Table 9 shows the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* was most likely to incorporate religious content.

Of the 453 pages coded, about 60 percent of the sampled pages were political. The social issues represented 21 percent, the economic content 12 percent and the religion marked eight percent. As suggested these figures demonstrated the political emphasis of Islam-oriented movements.

The findings of the study shows the websites elaborated their "views and arguments" on political and social issues in articles. Articles were the most popular reference and message strategy, accounting for the high occurrence (employed at 81 percent of the websites). Interviews were also popular as a reference and message strategy,

accounting for 13 percent of the websites. The rest of the content was distributed via statements, which accounted for 6 percent.

Table 9: Comparison in terms of issues between the websites of Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya and Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan

	Political issues	Social issues	Economic issues	Religious issues	Subtotal
Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya	138	45	17	11	211
Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan	132	48	37	25	242

5.4.1.2 Qualitative analysis

The qualitative content analysis is divided into two distinct, yet overlapping parts. In the first section we focus on the information dimension of the websites. We shall examine in more detail the key political, social, religious and economic themes to which political scientists and communication researchers would typically lend particular emphasis. The second section will concentrate on two important aspects of the communication of these websites, namely communication and interactivity.

As mentioned earlier, in terms of content, political information appeared to be the most prevalent content and materials provided by the sampled websites concentrating their online efforts on supplying information related to domestic politics. For the sake of analysis, it is useful to distinguish between domestic and international politics in the content of Islam-oriented websites.

5.4.1.2.1 Domestic political issues: 2002 Election

The issue of the election of 2002 remains one of the focal issues on Islam-oriented websites under examination, with front pages of the major websites covered of stories and links related to this issue. For three reasons we specifically focus on the subject of election

2002. First, we take in mind the centrality of the parliamentary election in the Moroccan political field. Second, the analysis of the use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements during this election helps understand their positions and attitudes to this topical issue during these years of democratic transition. Third, this election staged the first test for the concept of "new authority" advanced by the new monarch after his succession in 1999.

5.4.1.2.1.1 Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya

Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya party participated in the 2002 election for the second time.[211] In this year's legislative elections, the *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* party made remarkable gains, by quadrupling the number of seats from 12 in 1997 to 44 in 2002, and thus became the third largest party in the parliament.

    Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya made active use of the Internet for campaigning during the official election period in 2002. Unlike most Moroccan political parties, the party established an electoral website. The website served as the central message source concerning the election information.

    On July 20th, 2002 the party posted a statement which announced that the Ministry of Interior had committed itself to make the September's elections of 2002 free and fair[212]. The primary effect of this statement was to legitimize the party's participation. The second effect was to attack implicitly other Islam-oriented organizations such as *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*, which called its members and sympathizers to boycott the election.

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[211] Political parties were promised that this election would be free and a fair election, beyond any regime's manoeuvring.

[212] http://www.pjd.ma/arabe/elec2002.asp.

Screen shot 14: Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya election website

The election website, for example, posted about ten interviews given to national print press by senior members of the party.[213] The aim of these interviews was to reassure Moroccans and foreigners alike, to refute the campaign raised against the party and to convince Moroccans to vote for the party's candidates. Abdelilah Benkirane, stressed this point in an interview given to a Moroccan magazine: "We seek a gradual role for us in parliament…not a landslide that would cause fears among the pro-Western elite".[214] The interview was republished on the party website in September 2002.

The party website also featured information related to the elections campaign. It presented the party's political statements as a counter campaign against the secular parties. Yet the website of *At-Tajdid* played a leading role in this counter campaign. The website concentrated on a special aspect pertained to the election, which is of the "anti-islamist campaign" conducted by socialist parties and organizations in the secular and French-language press.

A first observation worth making is the way in which the party's activities on the Internet attest to an increasing candidate-centeredness of campaigns. To encourage Moroccans to vote in the election, *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* placed on the election website

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[213] The website published Saad Eddine El Othmani's three interviews with As-Sabah, Al-Manara, Al Muqri Abu Zyad Al Idrissi's interviews with Maghreb Press Agency, Abdallah Baha's Interview with the election website and Rida Ben Khaldoun's interview with the election website (http://www.pjd.ma/arabe/elec2002.asp).

[214] http://www.pjd.ma/arabe/elec2002.asp,

its candidate lists in preparation for parliamentary elections. The prevalence of the interviews with senior leaders such as Mohamed Yatime, Abdelilah Benkirane, Ahmed Raissouni and Mustapha Ramid reflected a tendency of the party to focus on candidate rather than on the party as their campaigns gather momentum.

Screen shot 15: Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya election website – candidates list

Features with documentary information that would help Moroccan educated citizens to cast ballots based on thoughtful consideration and comparison of the party's program. They were posted ten weeks before the elections. The party website announced the publication of a report, assessing the legislative work of the party in the last parliament. The report tackled topics such as "the moralisation of public life and resistance of any administrative misuse, the reform of the education system, the development of the women's and children's living conditions".[215] Also included in this report were issues like "the defense of human rights and freedom of expression, the support of and contribution to the economic and social development and the control of the government work, the reform of the elections laws, the support of *Intifada* and campaign against the normalization with the Zionist enemy and the effective of control of the Morocco's foreign policy and the

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[215] http://www.pjd.ma/arabe/actualites.asp?type=7&id=58.

moralization of the parliamentary work".[216] By publishing this report, the party aimed at canvassing public opinions and keeping Moroccan voters up to date on the latest news.[217]

During the campaign for the election 2002, the website of *At-Tajdid* tackled a range of national and local policy areas, including corruption, mismanagement and misuse of public money. The website engaged itself in publishing corruption scandals that involved high senior executives in the bank sector.[218]

By the time of the 2002 election, the party had developed the election website as the focal point of the party's overall media strategy. During the 2002 election campaign period, the party updated regularly pages of the website with information on current events. The most growth occurred in the last week before the Election Day 2002. The tone of the communication content placed on the *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* website was always moderate. Articles, interviews and statements were typically neutral in tone. However, the election website was essentially a partisan website. The party consciously avoided religious themes and images during the election campaign.

The Ministry of Interior had delayed the publication of the election results because of "many technical problems". After being made officially known, the party immediately published the election results in the party website as well as in the election website.[219] But due to the delays casued by the "many technical problems", the party gave a great amount of attention to the results of the election. On September 30th, 2002, the party website published a statement issued from Abdel Kareem al-Khatib, the former president of the party, expressing his "deep thanks to the Moroccan public, who trusted the party and its candidates".[220] In the wake of the election result, the website of *At-Tajdid* posted a number of articles to comment the results and to highlight Islam-oriented movements' electoral success.

One of the essential features of the Internet as a communication medium is its ability to offer website producers the chance to connect disparate pieces of information and content via the function of the link. The election website had taken advantage of the Internet's unique capacities to "link" content from various sources into a dynamic arena of information exchange, by featuring links to election stories in the French media such as

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[216] http://www.pjd.ma/arabe/actualites.asp?type=7&id=46.

[217] This report was designed to give a special orientation for the voters so that they can compare the work of other political parties.

[218] Fur a detailed discussion of this point see the section in which we will deal with the economic issues.

[219] http://www.pjd.ma/arabe/actualites.asp?type=4&id=38 and http://www.pjd.ma/arabe/elec2002.asp.

[220] http://www.pjd.ma/arabe/events.asp.

references to the websites of *Le Monde* and *Liberation,* which widely and positively reported on the election results, particularly on *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* success. These information links do provide further information material, but they do not reflect an intellectual or ideological alliance. This kind of links does not prove a relationship between the organization and its information links.

The smart use of the eailsy downloadable PDF-files rather than HTML-based pages demonstrate the organization holistic and strategic driven-approach that has characterized the communication work of the organistion. This will allow people with limited internet access to use the materials offline.

5.4.1.2.1.2 Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan

Unlike the website of *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya*'s, the politically oriented materials on the websites of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*'s was highly critical of the regime and the established political institutions, including the parliamentary election. *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* demonstrated no willingness to participate in the parliamentary election 2002. As the organization website made clear, the organization refused direct involvement in the political process via the established political institutions, including the election.[221] During the election 2002, the website published a number of articles dealing directly with the event. The website posted, for instance, an interview translated from Spanish into Arabic by the American scholar John Entelis.[222] Entelis argued in this interview that Islam-oriented movements are peaceful organizations and that they have societal programs that may help solve Morocco's problems. Significantly, the website titled the interview "Abdessalam Yassine: the sole alternative". The website compared this comment with the regime's monitoring and tracking of the "activities and non-activities of the organization".[223]

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[221] http://www.aljamaa.info/ar/detail_khabar.asp?id=3166&IdRub=26.
[222] The website drew this material from *Demain*, a Moroccan weekly.
[223] http://www.aljama'a.org/majlisse_02112001.htm.

Screen shot 16: Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan: Al-Aqsa Intifada

During the parliamentary elections of 2002 a number of material was posted on the website of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* to explain its position vis-à-vis the boycott and to play down the importance of the elections themselves. The major aim of the organization was to embarrass the regime by demonstrating its insincerity in implementing democracy. The organization hoped that its withdrawal would intensify public cynicism that in any case usually accompanied elections in Morocco. On the other hand, the organization pointed out that it was not against elections as a principle of organizing political life. It accepted participation in the democratic process if the regime changed the rules of the political game.

In May 2002, the website posted an essay written by Mohammad Manar, a leading intellectual of the organization. He argued that there were a number of political parties in Morocco, without political plurality. He criticized the multi-party system as divisive and un-Islamic. He asserted that when *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*'s would assume political power in the future, Moroccan political parties would have the right to articulate and express their political, social and economic points of view provided that they deterred from attacking Islam. The role of the leaders and the members of the organization would involve the denouncement of the parties' plans and plots that serve the interests of these parties and not the ones of the community.[224]

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[224] http://www.aljama'a.org/daawa_wa_hiware/maali18042001.htm.

Screen shot 17: Risalat Al-Futuwa election website

The website also published an essay by Abdel Ali Majdoub on Abdessalam Yassine's positions on democracy.[225] The author listed some important passages from the leader's numerous books without any comment. He then asked the visitors to read these texts and judge for themselves without the intervention of any kind of "mediators". By mediators he means the weekly magazine *Al-Sahifa Al-Usbuiya*, which published in its 63rd issue on April 26th an essay, assessing "the democratic question in Abdessalam Yassine's thought".

In May 2002, the organization's website posted another statement claiming that the regime carried out a "secretive study on behalf of the palace".[226] The main claim was that the regime worried about an eventual victory of an Islam-orientated party and that Islam-oriented movements might be gaining momentum in the country if the party would make a considerable gain in the 2002 elections. The report had also counseled the regime how it should deal with this eventual scenario.

To frame the post-election period, the organization website republished a number of essays already published in Moroccan dailies and weeklies. It republished e.g. on October 26th, 2002 a long study under the title "makhzenization of modern political elites in

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[225] http://www.aljamaa.info/ar/detail_khabar.asp?id=3623&IdRub=3.
[226] http://www.aljamaa.info/ar/detail_khabar.asp?id=3836&IdRub=14.

Morocco: the substance of the Makhzen and its mechanism" by Mohammed Shakir, earlier published in the weekly *Al-Sahifa Al-Usbuiya*.[227] The core thesis of this study is that the Moroccan modern political elites had been co-opted by the regime. Instead of modernizing the traditional political structures on which the regime has founded its power and authority, the modern political elites were integrated into the traditional structures of the regime, a process the author labeled "makhzenization".[228]

The website posted a number of articles that discussed an extraordinary range of issues omitted or misrepresented by the party press and the regime-related mass media such as election fraud and corruption. On October 8th, 2002, the website placed an essay by Omar Iharshane, the secretary general of the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* youth organization.[229] Iharshane criticized the conditions under which these elections took place. According to his account, the elections had been in the past tarnished by fraud and vote buying. These elections were no exception, because it has never been in the regime's interest to organize free and fair elections.

On October 11th, 2002, the website posted another essay titled as "Driss Jettou as a prime minister: an unacceptable solution for an unacceptable situation" by Omar Iharshane.[230] He ardently criticized the nomination of the prime minister and perceived it as an evident confirmation of the organization's initial positions that "the existing political institutions, including the constitution and the parliament are not functioning". They rather functioned as "façade institutions to legitimize the authoritarian structures of the political regime". He also commented on the central role of the king in the Moroccan political system and in the constitution. The author also remarked that the abstinence from election by Moroccans could be regarded as a significant index of the general public mood. The low rate of 52 percent clearly indicates that Moroccan voters were in an increasing mood of apathy, or even alienation, from the traditional modes of political participation, the political process and the political party system. The author also remarked that the organization had anticipated the low turnout at the ballot-casting stations.

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[227] http://www.aljamaa.info/ar/detail_khabar.asp?id=3698&IdRub=14.
[228] http://www.aljamaa.com/ar/archives.asp?Page=2&idRub=27.
[229] http://www.aljamaa.info/ar/detail_khabar.asp?id=3818&IdRub=16.
[230] http://www.aljamaa.com/ar/dossier20053/index2.html.

5.4.1.2.1.3 Conclusion

Our analysis shows that Islam-oriented movements during the 2002 election have tapped the potential of the Internet to stimulate political action through their websites. Until recently, Islam-oriented movements had no role to play in the Moroccan electoral politics. Through use of the Internet, Islam-oriented movements have expanded opportunities for the Moroccan public to have easier access to the specific information and knowledge regarding elections. Now, through the Internet, unlimited access to substantive information including top-notch research papers in politics could be retrieved at the command of one's fingertips from Islam-oriented websites.

Islam-oriented movements framed the election of 2002 issue in a way that went initially against the grain of the secular political parties and secular-associative groups. Since Islam-oriented movements often claim that they do not receive coverage in the media, or that their message is distored by news editors and journalist, via the Internet, they become their own news producers and deliver their organizations' messages unmediated to Moroccan voters, thereby bypassing the traditional media. In the case of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*, the Internet offered them the possibility to directly communicate with their power bases. Abdusamad Fathi, editor of the weekly *Risalat Al-Futuwa*, said:

> "We use the Internet to inform people of what is happening to our organization. Without the Internet, we would otherwise have had no means of providing thousands of Moroccans with our firsthand accounts. We also want to counter the government's misinformation by providing objective, reliable and credible information and analysis of the conflict".[231]

The original message on the elections and democratization could be reached by a number of Internet surfers. Thus, the traditional problem of distortion, so common when communication content spread by the anti-Islam oriented media channels is likely to disappear by the skilful deployment of the Internet-based and mediated communication by Islam-oriented movements. The use of the Internet in the parliamentary election in 2002 allowed the marginalized voices of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* to be heard, particularly their call to boycott the election. We can not establish a link between the boycott campaign of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*'s website and the low and moderate turnout on the ballots, especially among

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[231] Fathi; personal interview.

young people. But we can conclude for sure that for the first time in Morocco, Moroccans could read the "views and arguments" on democracy, political parties and election directly from *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*'s online sources of information.

The Internet as a new tool for campaigning in elections has been used by the two organizations. It has been made clear that the use of the Internet during the election 2002 became visible. *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* has identified the potential of the Internet by campaigning and has exploited it. The Internet has thereby functioned to increase the availability of political resources so that the most motivated, informed and interested in Moroccan politics may draw, download and distribute these materials.

The analysis of the election website and the website of the parliamentary confirmed Norris's comment that the Internet's use in election campaign serve in the first place to reach the converted (Norris, 2002; 2003). True, the influence of the Internet in increasing the likelihood to vote, in contrast to the US and Europe, is very small. The Internet had no direct impact on the ballot. But it seems that this strategic and innovative approach to the election 2002 in Morocco provide new resources and new pathways of influence for Islam-oriented movements.

One might correctly say that the external importance of electronic media for Islam-oriented movements comprises potential for coordination, increased media relations, desktop publishing and the more efficient conduct of electoral campaigns. Their websites have direct links to relevant pieces of information. As the case of *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* demonstrated, the party has used the election website primarily as an information vehicle to provide voters with extensive policy information. The election website has acted as a virtual library for documents, manifestos, press releases, information contacts. The election website was also a useful resource for journalists, researchers and students. "Via the Internet, we can say that we take control of the organization's agenda" said one official senior official.

Islam-oriented movements brought their politicized interpretations of events, or frames into alignment with potential recruits' pre-existing frames. Through the Internet, the parliamentarian has been given the ability to direct his messages with greater precision to specific targeted individuals and groups. The website gives him the possibility to personalize his campaigning appealing to a limited and self-selecting audience. According to Rachid Medouar:

> "With the help of my personal website, I could narrowcast and personalize messages. I used it as a means to target specifically Moroccan youth, because younger voters are often the most computer literate in Morocco".[232]

Despite the difficulties in quantifying the Internet's impact in electoral politics in Morocco, the Internet is proving to be an extremely effective substantive information-based campaigning tool.

5.4.1.2.2 International issues: The second Aqsa Intifada

On the foreign policy front, among the most recurrent and important themes in Islam-oriented discourse in Islamic countries are the general condition of Muslims throughout the world such as the development of Islam-oriented movements in other Muslim countries, the complex problems of the *Umma* and the worldwide community of Muslims in a globalized world characterized by political, cultural and civilizational turbulences. Yet the Palestinian issue remains central in the Islamic world. We choose the Palestinian issue and not other issues such as Afghanistan and Iraq, because the former has lasting effects and the widest appeal. The Palestinian issue has also been considered important because it constituted a crucial element in the recruitment strategies of Islam-oriented movements. According to a recent survey carried out by the Pew Research Centre for People and the Press in the US in 2002, 77 percent Moroccans feel solidarity with Muslims across the world (Pew Research Centre for People and the Press, 2002).

5.4.1.2.2.1 Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya

The website *of Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* attempted to frame Moroccan history in Islamic terms and to reinforce the historic role of Morocco in the Islamic *Umma*, appealing and supporting the tendencies of "unity among the Arab and Islamic World" and deploring the "injustices perpetrated against the worldwide Islamic community - in Palestine, Iraq,

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[232] Medouar, personal interview.

Afghanistan, Chechnya, Kashmir, and elsewhere".[233] This manifested itself clearly during the campaign in support of the second *Aqsa Intifada* in 2002. The website of *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya*'s party supported the Palestinian cause, by reasserting Islamic and historic legitimacy over Palestine. On the homepage of the website of *At-Tajdid* a moving text summarized this claim by saying that "the support of Palestine is an Islamic duty".[234]

In addition, the website of *At-Tajdid* included in its pages news of the conflict and featured photos of bloodied weaponless Palestinian civilians juxtaposed with graphic depictions of heavily armed Israeli soldiers.[235] The top of the webpage was decorated with a graphic that showed a Palestinian boy throwing stones. The website documented in photos and texts the Palestinian situation. Palestinians were presented as helpless victims of Israel actions. The website of *At-Tajdid* circulated a number of pro-Palestinian graphics, for instance, a clip showing the killings of Palestinian children by Israeli military machinery in 2001. The most sensitive clip showed the killing of the Palestinian child Muhamed Al-Dura. The presentation of this material is clearly designed to generate support from like-minded Moroccans.

The website of *At-Tajdid* heavily covered the Palestinian issue, defining it as a core Islamic issue by paying regular attention to the human suffering in the occupied territories. The website of *At-Tajdid* also posted a statement reporting that the regime's police dispersed with tear gas on October 9th, 2001 in Casablanca 2000 to 3000 Islam-oriented activists who were protesting Israeli's soldiers' use of force against Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza in September and October 2001.[236] Further, the website of *At-Tajdid* reported that the regime's security forces intervened once students began chanting anti-Israeli and anti-American slogans. Still further, the website of *At-Tajdid* placed a statement, reporting that Islam-oriented leaders were refused permission to hold a demonstration in support of the second *Aqsa Intifada* on February 15th, 2002. This was to mobilize Moroccan society to hold further demonstrations.

The website of *At-Tajdid* used these issues to evoke an image, attract political support and urge Moroccans "identify with what they see as the suffering of their Palestinian brethren at the hands of Israel and America". More significantly, it came after a

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[233] http://www.pjd.ma/arabe/index.asp.
[234] http://www.attajdid.press.ma/global/alhamde.html.
[235] http://www.attajdid.ma/def.asp?codelangue=6&info=3&date_ar=2002/1/2
[236] http://www.attajdid.ma/def.asp?codelangue=6.

period of international political turbulences and an increase in the "religious clash" between the USA and Islam.

The website of *At-Tajdid* has allowed a regular voice to Palestinian senior leaders in the Islam-oriented organization such as Hamas, which the official television denied.[237]

In an essay posted on March 25th, 2002, the writer openly attacks the regime for seeking to normalize its diplomatic relations with Israel. The primary aim of the essay was to call all Arab regimes to support the Palestinians.[238]

In the immediate aftermath of the demonstration, the website of *At-Tajdid* reported the success of this demonstration. To evidence this success, the website, for example, featured a number of pictures of the demonstration in Rabat and many other demonstrations in several urban centers in Morocco. The website featured the second *Aqsa Intifada* demonstration as the biggest protest event ever seen in Morocco.[239] It reported heavily on the response of Moroccans, who show their awareness and identification with what the website called "the most important Islamic issue of this century".

The website of *At-Tajdid* posted a number of interviews reporting the impressions of young participants.[240] Interviews with demonstrators were transmitted within one day over the website. Most interviewees shared the idea that Moroccan people released their anger against Israel and the USA, ostensibly in support of the Palestinians. Interviewees depicted Palestinians in heroic terms. These interviews attacked the USA and Israel. The latter was depicted in negative terms such as "Israelis are aggressors and terrorists" and "Israel is a criminal state".[241] The interviews denounced solely the US's direct support of Israel.

By interviewing participants in the demonstration, the journalists of *At-Tajdid* intended to involve community members in debating issues which affect their daily life. This aimed to strengthen the civic engagement of Moroccans by showing them involved in shaping politics by direct participation. This kind of civic activism is likely to grow, since Islam-oriented movements aim at mobilizing young Moroccans to engage in politics.

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[237] http://www.attajdid.ma/def.asp?codelangue=6&info=33&date_ar=2003/7/3.
[238] http://www.attajdid.ma/def.asp?codelangue=6&info=52&date_ar=2002/3/21.
[239] http://www.attajdid.ma/def.asp?codelangue=6&info=22&date_ar=2002/4/5.
[240] http://www.attajdid.ma/def.asp?codelangue=6&info=9&date_ar=2002/4/13
[241] www.attajdid.press.ma/last/index.html.

5.4.1.2.2.2 Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan

Since the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* website's debut, it has consistently supported Palestinian Islam-oriented movements. *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* widely used its websites to raise public awareness of the issue and to mobilize people, who were interested in Islamic issues to hold demonstrations such as the second *Aqsa Intifada* demonstration on April 7th, 2002.

Screen shot 18: Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan: Al Aqsa Intifada

The organization website framed the demonstration around the concept of Islamic identity and history. Like *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya*, the organization website presented the conflict from religious perspectives.[242] It mobilized prospective members by invoking symbols and narratives that resonated with collectivized conceptions of Islam.[243] The messages on the organization website were explicitly customized to the symbolic languages of the intended audience. They use a semantically religious language to unite readers (surfers) and encourage them to act collectively. Here the supreme symbol of political identity as it is articulated in the website is reference to Islam. Islamic history was used as a reference that invigorated Islamic collective heritage. The conflict was presented as against the "Zionists" and not against the Israelis. The word Israel too was rarely used.

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[242] http://www.aljamaa.info/ar/detail_khabar2.asp?id=2313&IdRub=155.
[243] The death of a high school student was framed in religious terms. They accused the regime's suppression of causing the death of "martyr of Sale", Sana Mabrouk.

Instead, the news used "Zionists" as Israelis are called. Further, they posted images they thought would appeal to the Moroccans and mobilized supporters to demonstrate against the "Zionists".[244]

The organization released a statement on its home page decrying the regime's abandonment of the Palestinian cause and asserting the movement's support for Palestinian groups.[245] By reinforcing the belief that Palestinians are powerless against the "enemies of the *Umma*", they fostered political activism. A considerable part of the statements pertaining to the Palestinian issues posted on the website of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* fall into this category.[246]

The *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* issued a communiqué condemning the Arab regimes for not coming to defend the Palestinian people.[247] The summit declaration of the league of Arab regime from March 28th, 2002 was labeled a "great treason" to the "Arab and Islamic people".[248] The website provided a scathing condemnation of USA and the ruling regimes identified with it. To make their criticism of the Arab regimes' inability to deal with this problem effectively, they even posted an essay published in *Ye'diot Achronot*, an Israeli magazine, about the "growing of Israeli export to the Arab world in the context of gowning suppression of the *Intifada*".[249] The website criticized Arab regimes for "not coming to support their Muslim brethren".[250] This is an indirect way of attacking the regime's foreign policy toward Israel as "un-Islamic".[251]

Similarly, the website's criticism targeted not only Arab regimes, but also the religious establishment in Egypt.[252] The website published a statement containing harsh critic to the Grand Imam of *Al-Azhar*, Dr. Muhammad Sayid Tantawy, because he issued a Fatwa condemning the "martyrs" that exploded themselves causing their death and the death of others.

Before the demonstration the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* websites posted addditional material to provide information, resources, contact lists, to post documents and calls to

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[244] http://www.aljamaa.info/ar/detail_khabar.asp?id=3593&IdRub=7.

[245] http://www.aljamaa.info/ar/detail_khabar.asp?id=3763&IdRub=8.

[246] http://www.aljamaa.info/ar/detail_tasjile.asp?id=172.

[247] http://www.aljamaa.org/khitam.htm.

[248] http://www.aljamaa.org/assahifa1.htm.

[249] http://www.aljamaa.org/baramij9.htm.

[250] http://www.aljamaa.org/hissar.htm.

[251] http://www.aljamaa.com/forpalestine020315.htm.

[252] http://www.aljamaa.org/daawa_wa_hiware/maali18042001.htm.

action.[253] The website listed specific details about the demonstrations (date, time and place) in cities throughout Morocco. After the demonstration, the website's gallery showed lots of shots of recent demonstrations in Moroccan cities in support of the Palestinians. The website showed pictures of crowds estimated at more than 2 millions attending the demonstration in Rabat.[254] One graphic, for instance, showed leading figures of Islam-oriented movements in Morocco such as Fathallah Arsalane, Mustapha Ramid, Moqri Abouzaid, Abdulwahid Moutawakil and Abdelilah Benkirane.

The content of these message include criticism of debate organizers in the Moroccan broadcasting for excluding Islam-oriented politician and activists. In some statements, they strongly condemned the regime TV coverage of the *Intifada* demonstration of 2002. The Moroccan national television and radio framed this demonstration as a socialist-led government demonstration. The TV coverage avoided to refer to Islam-oriented movements, their participation and their organizational skills. The TV coverage focused solely on the government ministers and leaders of political parties. According to some journalists, they observed that no *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya*'s leader was given a chance on TV to comment on the demonstration as was the case with other political parties' leaders. One essay posted on *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* website analyzed the slogans the demonstrators had chanted. According to one essay about 90 percent of the slogans have an Islamic leaning and touch. The most challenging slogan was refrained as follows: "The government goes away, the demonstration is not yours".[255]

The organization website cooperated with Palestinian Islam-oriented movements by posting their publications like speeches, articles and statements. Hamas former leader, Abdessalam Yassine posted regularly articles providing detailed information about his movement's activities. The organization website, for instance, featured more than ten essays signed by Abdel Aziz Rantisi, another senior leader in Hamas, presenting the group's positions on recent developments. It appeared that this was aimed at giving Hamas an outlet to directly communicate with Moroccans. This direct communication was designed to increase the effect of making Moroccan sympathize with the Palestinian issues. These essays presented to the Moroccan audience were customized and tailored literally at the level of the educated Moroccan. The enormous amount of attention granted to Hamas

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[253] http://www.aljamaa.org/majlisse_02112001.htm.
[254] Conservative estimates placed the number of the demonstrators at 250,000. The demonstration was peaceful.
[255] http://www.aljamaa.com/tawassol.htm.

was intended to send the message that Palestinian Islam-oriented groups are the only major and legitimate actors and that they could not be ignored. The rhetoric in which these essays were coached was not moderate in tone as it used powerful revivalist oratory.

5.4.1.2.2.3 Conclusion

Demonstrating the impact of the political use of the Internet in second the *Aqsa Intifada* demonstration is more clear-cut. The content of the webpages of Islam-oriented websites posted before, during and after the demonstration ranged from reports on the event to photo series from participant's accounts of actions to complete reports and international media coverage.

Senior leaders stressed the importance of the Internet as a tool for political communication during this demonstration. The realization meant that Islam-oriented movements used the Internet to mobilize Moroccans to participate in the Casablanca demonstration on April 7th, 2002. As Abdullah Shibani, member of the political committee of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*, stated:

> "During this period, the websites were a means of support in the mobilization process. We adjusted our Internet approach toward information in response to Internet's popularity among students and well educated people".[256]

Abdullah Shibani also believed that many demonstrators might have visited the organization's websites. While we could not verify these claims, it is clear that Islam-oriented websites offered Moroccans a number of opportunities for in-depth exploration that substantially exceed other sources, especially broadcast media.

The Internet has helped Islam-oriented movements to extensively report on the protest activities. The content analysis demonstrated that Islam-oriented movements have used their websites to rally domestic support to engage in the demonstration. But we can not jump to the conclusion that through the use of the Internet, Islam-oriented movements could transform mere aggregates of Moroccans, who share the same political and cultural

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[256] Abdullah Shibani, member of the political committee of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*, personal interview with the author, May 18, 2001, Rabat, Morocco.

identification into a "mobilisable" masse. Al Moqri Abou Zyad Al Idrissi, Member of the parliament for *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* party, asserted:

> "Detailed information is necessary to promote active political engagement. The Internet provides an ideal mechanism for this type of detailed information".[257]

Abdulwahid Moutawakil shared Abouzaid's position on the role of direct and free circulation of detailed information among sympathizers, members, activists, independent journalists and the public at large, when he informed that "disseminating detailed information helps raise public awareness about important issues and mobilize people to become politically involved".[258]

The tactical use of information for organizing and coordinating actions provides Islam-oriented communication networks with an efficacy they could never have had before. Internet-based tactics promoted their chance to coordinate their collective action. This mobilization activity involves both building a support base and calling for political action.

There is some evidence that the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* had framed this high-profile issue in broadly similar ways as the *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya*. The rhetoric that surrounded most of the websites is rhetoric of Islam. The electronic transmission of religious symbols and rhetoric has altered the ways in which this emotion-filled demonstration was framed and perceived by both sympathetic and unsympathetic observers. Islam-oriented movements were able to solicit unprecedented levels of support by disseminating selected frames to Moroccan audiences.

The analysis shows important pattern of interdependence between electronic communication and growing of religiously-based political consciousness. The net result was the generation of widespread sympathy and support among students and the elite for the movement.

The content analysis of information material, including articles, statements and interviews, posted on these websites appeared to confirm the anti-Americanism. The content of the websites exhibited a generally hostile attitude towards Israel and the USA. Both countries are framed as enemies. They have raised critical questions about the

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[257] Al Moqri Abou Zyad Al Idrissi, member of the parliament for *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* Party, personal interview with the author, December 11, 2001, Rabat, Morocco.
[258] Moutawakil, personal interview.

substance of the regime's foreign policy. The use of Islam as a source of mobilization proved particularly effective in an era of "clash of civilizations" and "clash of globalizations".

5.4.1.2.3 Social issue: Al-Mudawana

The emergence of *Al-Mudawana* as an issue of concern in the late 1990s and the early 2000s, further fuelled the debate to the fundamental question on which cultural reference should the reform of the *Al-Mudawana* be based (Buskens, 2003).[259] This social issue embodied some of the central tensions between feminists and secularist groups and Islam-oriented movements. On March 18th, 1999 the Ministry of Social Affairs, Family and Children presented a national policy paper for the "integration of women in development" (Darif, 2000). In 2000, the socialist-led government drafted a new social policy law, calling for a revision of the personal status code, based on Islam. According to the minister, the new law's objectives were revolutionary in the Moroccan context.[260]

On March 12th, 2000 an estimated 40,000 supporters of the reforms demonstrated in Rabat. Because the march in Rabat was in favor of the reform plan, it was initiated and backed by the socialist-led government and framed in the mainstream print media as well as the regime's audiovisual media against violence and poverty that wrecked women's life. The socialist led-government published and the secularist organizations massively used the mass media. The secular party print media and the French-language media operated closely with the regime-owned audiovisual media to frame the Islam-oriented discourse as "backward and opportunist".[261] In addition, posters advertisements were published in the various branches of mass media, including newspapers, radio and television. It is to note that the program was backed by the World Bank.

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[259] Buskens (2003) has produced a thoughtful article that well captured the recent flux and clashes around the *Al-Mudawana* debate.

[260] In January 2000, Mohamed Said Saadi, then-Secretary of State for Social Protection, the Family, and Children, announced his department's "Plan of Action for Women's Integration and Development". The reform of *Al-Mudawana* planned to outlaw the polygamy; women would be given more legal rights in civil matters and more social and economic opportunities, girls in the countryside would have been offered better access to health care and education. The reform would also put the right to divorce in the hands of a judge rather than the husband, girls under 18 years old would not be allowed to marry, girls would marry without the agreement of their parents, particularly male parents and finally equal partition of property between the female and male partners.

[261] The secular party print media and the regime-owned radio and TV coverage of Islam-oriented discourse pertinent to the debate on the women will have to be saved for a future study.

Islam-oriented movements, groups and opponents of the plan held a counter demonstration in Casablanca. Islam-oriented movements mobilized an estimated 500,000 participants, including senior leaders of political and apolitical movements to demonstrate against the proposed reforms. This massive counter-demonstration by Islam-oriented movements had put the regime and the socialist-led government in a difficult position. As a result, the regime was forced to reconsider the reform policies.[262]

While the Rabat march had long been planned around the International Women's Day on March 8th, Islam-oriented movements announced their counter-demonstration only a week before the demonstration took place. As the Casablanca demonstration showed, Islam-oriented movements have been more successful than secular political forces, including the socialist led-government and the regime in mobilizing Moroccans around their issues.

At the center of analysis here is the role played by the websites in the diffusion of support for an Islam-based reform of the *Al-Mudawana*, in the dissemination of the latest "news" to like-minded cohorts and in making the actual mobilization of activists easy.[263] In the following we will examine the real communicative impact of the websites of *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* and *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* on informing and getting Moroccans onto the street for their agendas.

5.4.1.2.3.1 Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya

The website of *At-Tajdid* played an important role in promoting the organization of the counter demonstration against the reform of the *Al-Mudawana*.[264] On March 29th, 2000, the website *At-Tajdid* advertised for an Islam-oriented rally to take place in Casablanca on behalf of all Moroccan Islam-oriented leaders.[265] The *At-Tajdid* posted an array of information on the website, including some statements which call activists, sympathizers and Moroccans to organize a rally in Casablanca to oppose the reform plan.

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[262] In April 2001, King Mohammad VI set up a commission to work on reforming *Al-Mudawana*, but no progress was made by year's end.
[263] Islam-oriented activists and some leaders of the leading organizations informed the author that they intensively used their mobile phones during the 2002 demonstration. E-mail activities came second.
[264] At that time, the *At-Tajdid* was a weekly magazine. First on November 18th, 2001 it became a daily.
[265] http://www.attajdid.press.ma.

The website of *At-Tajdid* also posted the declaration made by *Al-Munadama Al-Wataniya Lihimayat Al-Usra* (The National Organization for the Protection of the Family) and a report about "the Organization for Renew the Feminist Consciousness", [266] which backed the reform if it took the Islamic reference as a basis for any reform. The author of this report, Bassina Haqqawi, an Islam-oriented feminist and activist situated the whole discussion in an international framework. She argued that "the reform of the *Al-Mudawana* should be understood in the context of the crusade against Islam". According to her account, the campaign for the emancipation of Muslim woman was a key ploy in this crusade. She concluded "the people behind the Rabat demonstration cooperated with the embassies of USA, France and England". These arguments and voices challenged in educational, propagandistic and progressive manners the positions of secularized groups and Western-influenced feminists.[267]

Screen shot 19: Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya: Al-Mudawana

During the most discursive phase of the debate, *At-Tajdid* website emphasized the idea that uncoordinated action was not enough and that Islam-oriented movements were required to act in concert. As a new menas for virtual and real mobilisation, the webiste

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[266] Organization consists of some Islam-oriented activists from *At-Tauhid Wal-Islah* and conservative members of some "secular" parties.
[267] http://www.attajdid.press.ma.

urged in a strong language visitors and surfers to unite in a "community of believers" to act collectively.[268]

The website of *At-Tajdid* has skillfully portrayed Casablanca rally as representing traditional Moroccan values and often equated Islamic values with a wider national identity. The demonstration was framed and reframed as a conscious protest against the secularization of Moroccan social life. Women protesters were pictured in the website carrying signs that read "Yes for reform, no for Westernization".[269] It is noticeable that the website of *At-Tajdid* has drawn on anti-Americanism feelings amongst traditionally conservative Moroccans as well as among secularly educated young ones.

To draw the attention of politically and religiously active visitors, the website offered a number of interviews in which leading figures of Moroccan Islam-oriented movements articulated their positions.[270] Most of the interviewees formulated their defense of Islam in an apologetic and emotional language. Ahmed Raissouni, one of the most controversial figures in the Islamic scene in Morocco defended the *Al-Mudawana* by saying that any attack on the *Al-Mudawana* represents a violation of Islamic law.

To target low-educated Moroccans, the website attempted to mobilize behind certain banner popular sentiment against the regime by turning to interviewing a number of popular preachers in popular mosques, who enjoy a large following among ordinary Moroccans. The content of these interviews falls short of tackling the complexity of social reality; rather it reduces the debate to Islam and non-Islam schema. Muslims were called to come to rescue their religion from what most of the interviewees call "Zionist attacks" on traditional values. The interviews emphasized the mentality of "us against them".[271]

After the protest took place, *At-Tajdid* website celebrated the success of the demonstration, by highlighting the role played by Islam-oriented movements in mobilizing and engaging Moroccans in collective action. To evidence the success, the website posted a report in which it presented the demonstration as "a peaceful and not emotional event".[272] In an attempt to counter Islam-oriented movements' violent image, the website extensively used the language of non-violence. Such a framing was implicitly intended to attack the secular media, which described the "mob" as violent and aggressive to deligitimate it. This alternative framing of events is a common practice in the website of *At-Tajdid*. The fact

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[268] .www.attajdid.press.ma/last/index.html.

[269] http://www.attajdid.ma/def.asp?codelangue=6&info=3&date_ar=2003/7/19.

[270] http://www.attajdid.ma/def.asp?codelangue=6&info=33&date_ar=2002/1/7.

[271] http://www.attajdid.press.ma/tajdid/DETAIL.ASP?category=watan&Articleid=9301.

[272] http://www.attajdid.press.ma.

that Islam-oriented movements now have direct control over the content of their message offers further opportunities to shape how they are perceived by different target audiences and to frame their own image and the image of their enemies.

5.4.1.2.3.2 Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan

The websites of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* and *Risalat Al-Futuwa* have played a leading role in providing Moroccan with background information on pressing issues such as the *Al-Mudawana* debate. Over several weeks, the *Risalat Al-Futuwa* website published approximately 25 articles that vehemently opposed the reform plan, highlighting the international funding and inspiration of the reform as well as its philosophical assumptions and orientations that run counter to Islamic *Ash-Sharia*.[273]

In the women section of the organization websites, there was a great amount of information devoted to the situation of women in Islam. The organization website featured a review of Abdessalam Yassine's book "The Enlightenment of Female Believers". The review placed emphasis on the thesis that the problem of women in the modern time is closely related to the general condition of the Islamic *Umma*. Any partial treatment of this problem will likely aggravate the problem of the *Umma*. The writer started her review with a quotation from Abdessalam Yassine's book on Islam and women: "The success of female believers in their *Jihad* depends on the power of their beliefs". The problems of Muslim women, insisted the author of the review, "should be tackled and solved in the general Islamic framework". [274]

One week before the demonstration, the website of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* posted a communiqué, signed by Islam-oriented activists, movements and organizations, declaring their participation in the Casablanca demonstration for defending "our religion and women from the enmenies of Islam". Visitors were given detailed information on how to take part in the demonstration. The website gave practical information on transport. During the protest, the website of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* provided a multiple impressions of the event as it unfold, by offering eyewitness accounts.

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[273] http://www.fotowa.com/misc/showarticle.asp?tmpcode=2101&tmpctgr=%26nbsp%3B&issue=02.

[274] http://www.fotowa.com/misc/showarticle.asp?tmpcode=2104&tmpctgr=%26nbsp%3B&issue=09.

After the demonstration, the website of *Risalat Al-Futuwa* hardened its positions. It posted a report that summarized the positions of leading figures of the Islam-oriented movements.[275] All interviewees viewed the new plan as undermining the social fabric of the Moroccan society. Interviews and essays posted on the website of *Risalat Al-Futuwa* had often been framed in terms of the rhetoric of "foreign powers forcing their will against our will", a position shared by other political parties and even other secular groups.[276] The website quoted Habib Forqani, a leading Moroccan socialist politician, who said that the reform "is in itself a Zionist method fabricated in the World Bank to weaken Islamic societies".[277] These interviews were intended to create boundaries and set limits on how the social debate should develop. *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* webite insisted: "The new *Al-Mudawana* was the product of American and European embassies". The harsh critique presented in the websites of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* was pointed to the secularist groups, which were blamed for "selling" the country to the World Bank. Such views and opinions are common in the political discourse advanced and defended by Islam-oriented movements and can be regarded as representative.

The website of *Risalat Al-Futuwa* presented the "views and arguments" of feminists who seek to reform the situation of Moroccan women from within rather than advocating a European model of gender relations. A famous example was Dr. Saidiya Kassid, a leading figure in the organization. In one of her essays posted on the website, she distinguished between Islam and social patriarchal structures and urged women to be courageous to make this distinction. The key argument was that the secularist groups politicize women's issues, because they lost credibility and have no support in the society. The aim of this strategy was to "block the growing popularity of Islam".[278]

The organization website published an interview with Nadia Yassine, who said that the *Al-Mudawana* did need reforms, but the reforms should not be inspired from "un-Islamic institution and countries". She considered the reform plan as an imposition of a foreign agenda on the Moroccan society. Nadia Yassine explained: "We held our march to tell those women that their plan does not recognize our Islamic culture. They want to let

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[275] The list contains Fathallah Arsalane, Mohammed Al Alawi, Abdulwahid Moutawakil, Omar Amkassou, Mohamed Yatime, Rissouni, Saâdeddine ElOthmani, Mustapha Ramid, Mohammed Al Arwani, Moqri Abouzaid, Taher Schafschawani, Mohammed Tilabi, Abd Latif Hatimi, Mohammed Zayan and Nadia Yassine.

[276] http://www.fotowa.com/misc/news.asp?tmpcode=22&tmptype=1.

[277] http://www.fotowa.com/misc/news.asp?tmpcode=21&tmptype=1.

[278] http://www.aljamaa.org/majlisse_02112001.htm.

the West impose its ideas on our culture. We are all for the emancipation of women, but we want it to be done along Islamic lines".[279] Nadia Yassine declared that the Prophet Mohammad was himself a feminist, and that any changes to the law that govern social life should be made within a Muslim context.[280]

The website of *Risalat Al-Futuwa* also reported critically the many difficulties created by the regime throughout the country against the movements' members, supporters and sympathisers. According to this report, Islam-oriented movements were not free to mobilize their members and supporters. The report cited the example of Tangier, where their members and sympathisers faced travel obstacles like delayed deliverance of travel permit to Casablanca.

Screen shot 20: Nadja Yassine: Al-Mudawana

The website of *Risalat Al-Futuwa* reported on the weakness and incoherence of the Rabat rally. The website published an essay, which analyzed the number of participants delivered by organizers, the security service, and international press. He concluded that the number of the Casablanca demonstration doubled in fivefold the Rabat rally.

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[279] http://www.aljamaa.org/daawa_wa_hiware/maali18042001.htm.

[280] http://www.aljamaa.com/lamghari021112.htm.

5.4.1.2.3.3 Conclusion

In Morocco, *Al-Mudawana* has been the central theme in the heightened debate between secularist parties and associations and Islam-oriented groups and activists. Islam-oriented movements heavily used their websites in these debates to take first steps towards circulating information material on their positions, views and arguments.

Islam-oriented movements were far better able to manage the kinds of information that reach Moroccan citizens through their websites. The electronic communication has not turned Moroccan's attention toward Islam; rather it has served to make Islam-oriented movement's political and religious messages available to a reasonably large significant segment of Morocco's society even in the absence of mass media channels.

The social debates around *Al-Mudawana* span all websites under analysis. The content of the websites in relation to the *Al-Mudawana* was framed as the presentation of conflict. The ability for the websites to broaden the range of debate about the *Al-Mudawana* was found in both organizations. This became especially apparent during the week before and after the demonstrations. Anyone following the digital content of Islam-oriented movements during this period, essentially characterized by the heightened social debate, would find it hard to escape the conclusion that the intensive provision of information concerning social issues was a key to the *Al-Mudawana* solidarity.

Moroccans who were opposed to the reform of the *Al-Mudawana* could continually browse first-hand information that discusses this issue from an Islamic point of view. Moroccan Internet users could deliberate and debate over this issue and other major issues of the day since a high level of information and analysis from an Islamic point views were made available for the first time to the public on the websites. Interviews with senior figures in Islam-oriented movements all indicate that the websites played a significant role in the mobilization of a number of groups and activists by providing information and that this was a considerable factor in driving Islam-oriented movements Internet use. The mobilisation success of Casablanca, resulted from Islam-oriented movements' concerted efforts, proves some kind of collaboration and cooperation. But it is hard to say how these networks are stable and enduring networks. For Mohamed Aghnaj, managing editor of the weekly *Risalat Al-Futuwa,* the role of the Internet was evident: He explained:

"During the *Al-Mudawana*, the distance no longer poses an obstacle to communicate with our people. The information was systematically placed on our websites so that surfers are led to read this material with the eyes of the organization. Surfer would have no difficulties to find out the intended message".[281]

In 2000, Islam-oriented movements competed bitterly not only to get a virtual presence, but also to have an influential appeal to a large number of visitors by targeting a young audience, including students, journalists and academics. The website of *At-Tajdid* focused its online activities towards gaining domestic support for their offline social activities. Islam-oriented movements could direct their social messages to specific constituencies of interests and presented multiple Islamic messages and narratives and their websites offered ground-level analysis of social issues. These cases show the importance of the Internet and that the Internet is more useful and instrumental than independent media (not to speak of the regime and political parties print media) in providing Islam-oriented movements a voice during social debates where specific and detailed information is required. Abdulwahid Almotawakil informed:

"When we wanted to distribute the offline print version of our paper, this activity involved a number of risks. It was difficult to reach our readers or it was very difficult for our readers to read their paper. In the age of the Internet, we have developed a network of political information exchange".[282]

The most general conclusion to be reached from this analysis is that this demonstration was, to a large extent, structured by Internet-based communicative strategies of the Islam-oriented movements.

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[281] Mohamed Aghnaj, managing editor of the weekly *Risalat Al-Futuwa,* personal interview with the author, May 11, 2001, Casablanca, Morocco.
[282] Abdulwahid Moutawakil, member of the political committee of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*, personal interview with the author, May 19, 2001, Rabat, Morocco.

5.4.1.2.4 Religious issues: Dawa

The Internet has opened up new space of religious practice, particularly the practice of *Dawa*, (call to Islam). Eickelman and Anderson illustrate how the Internet offered "new religious interpreters", who possess no sophisticated theological knowledge the possibility to challenge the official discourse and traditional interpretations of religious texts and afforded them the possibility to advocate an un-orthodox interpretation of the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*. These "new religious interpreters" aimed at destabilizing religious established hierarchies and this in turn has led to the fragmentation of religious authority.

5.4.1.2.4.1 Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya

As earlier mentioned, religion seemed to be less a matter of importance for *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya*. The many websites *of Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* have not devoted space to religious issues. The exception was the website of *Al-Islah*. The election website as well as the party website featured almost no religious content. The activities and goals of the party were consciously characterized in religious terms, with conscious mention of Islam in the party constitution.[283] In this sense, the party was consistent in its religious discourse based on the respect of the role of the "commander of the faithful" in religious matters. For the party, religion is no path for politics. The religious content of the website of *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* catered specifically to Moroccan audience.

The website of *At-Tajdid* was full of Islam-based rhetoric and language. The website of *At-Tajdid* has developed a strong tone in religious matters. Yet the website practiced no *Dawa* in the religious sense. It attempted to raise Islamic awareness for Islamic issues not only in Morocco but in the World.

Similarly, even the relatively small religious section of the *Al-Islah* website was not explicit about its *Dawa* agenda. The website of *Al-Islah* presented Islamic materials and resources in order to call its website visitors to the message of Islam. In one word, the religion section of the *Al-Islah*'s website appeared to be that of a *Dawa* organization. *Al-Islah* seized this opportunity to spread its base of support, and form broad channels of communication devising its own organizational structures to spread its religious message.

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[283] http://www.pjd.ma/arabe/index.asp.

The organization uses its website to project a message of Islam to a global audience. The website of *Al-Islah* provides information on religious issues and links to a wide range of other *Dawa* websites. Yet even the *Al-Islah* website focused neither on theological issues nor on religious education. This tendency is supported by the evidence that 90 percent of the website featured links to *Dawa* website.

5.4.1.2.4.2 Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan

In the virtual space, *Dawa* has acquired a special meaning. *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* has quickly adopted the techniques of the electronic *Dawa* and become commitment to the practice of this new kind of *Dawa*. The person who is identified with religious content in the organization website is Abdessalam Yassine, whose writings occupied the central place in the religious section of the organization website. As a charismatic leader, Abdessalam Yassine provided spiritual and religious guidance for the members' lives. At a time of deep religious disarray, Abdessalam Yassine offered a nominalist version of coherence.

Fathallah Arsalane was conscious that the Internet can enable *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* to gain further influence in the spread of religious consciousness among Moroccans, by turning the organization websites into virtual cyber-pulpit.[284] The *khutbas*, Friday sermons, are recorded at many mosques and posted on the website, using the latest audio streaming technology.

Not surprisingly, in terms of religious content the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* websites contains considerable religious materials. *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* makes extensive use of the primary symbols that function as the ideological and cultural "glue" of their religious identity (logo). The world map is rounded by the initial letter of the organization's name. The letter "A" for Adl (Justice) and the letter "I" stand for Ihsan (Charity).[285] A special section for *Dawa* was organized to maintain doctrinal orthodoxy.[286] Through the organization website the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* conducts online religious persuasion. The *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*'s strategy goes hand in hand with the organization position in regards with *Dawa*. In an interview with the weekly *Al-Ayam* posted on the organization website, Nadia

[284] Proselytizing among Moroccan Jews, Moroccan atheists and others has never topped the priorities of Islam-oriented movements, which target primarily Moroccan Muslims.
[285] http://www.aljamaa.com/forpalestine020315.htm.
[286] http://www.aljamaa.org/daawa_wa_hiware/maali18042001.htm.

Yassine recalls that the central and integral function of the organization is to spread the word of Allah.[287]

The convergence of kinds of media such as audio, video and text allows *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* to turn its network of websites to a micro-digital multimedia centre and thus benefit at best, particluarly at delivering religiously-modelled lecture which found echo among young educated Moroccans, who can downloaded them at MP3 format first to listen to it at every place and second or to send it via e-mail to other friends.

Screen shot 21: Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan: Dawa

The distribution of religious material and content is highly centralized. The senior leaders take responsibility for checking all religious material. The absence of religious leadership to inform the debate in matters of religion, along with the lack of expertise in textual hermeneutics to interpret foundational religious texts are perceived as detaching texts from textual authorities and thus a threat for Islam. Yet none of these leaders have ever entered into newsgroups to discuss religious topics. A high degree of censorship with respect to what can be published on the websites in terms of religious content is a common feature of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*'s communication strategy in religious affairs.

The mission of the Justice and Spirituality Publishing's website is "to make known the message of the *Qur'an*: a message of peace for a violent world, a message of sanity for

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[287] http://www.aljamaa.org/majlisse_02112001.htm.

a directionless world, a spiritual message for an ailing modern humanity". The space of religious flows of *Dawa* defined the central mission of the website in matters of religion to "utilize internet technology to unite Muslim worldwide, empower them with knowledge of their 1400 year-old tradition, and foster within them a deeper connection to Islamic faith".

5.4.1.2.4.3 Conclusion

In our examination of the religious use of the Internet, it has become clear that as a medium for communication, the Internet was used in the services of *Dawa*. As depicted in the theoretical chapter, a number of scholars argue that different kinds of social movements' networks use the Internet in different ways, consistent with their broader approach to marshalling support and effecting social and political change. Islam-oriented movements use the Internet to fit their religious conception of *Dawa*. Regarding the *Dawa* services, there are dissimilarities between the two organizations. The convergence of the media in the Internet created an environment in which religious information in multiple forms is available. *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* utilized this convergence more than *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya.* This is due to the strongly religious flair of the former, reflected by the centrality of Abdessalam Yassine as a religious leader with strong spiritual appeal among Moroccans. *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* adopted religiously-based codifications that challenge the regime on the religious front. *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* advocated a new religious paradigm which contradicts the dominant hegemonic religious discourse. As Fathallah Arsalane points out:

> "We aim to counteract the disadvantages our organization face in its struggle against the vast resources of the regime. We believe that the Internet can level the playing field by leveraging our ability to coordinate our *Dawa* activities".[288]

While *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* has intensively used the Internet for this propose, the *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* website put out no religious content that contradicts and challenges the official version of Islam.

The cautious treatment of the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* to the flow of religious information within the organization reflected the closed nature of the organization's structure. As we

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[288] Arsalane, personal interview.

noted earlier, the information is tightly centralized. The lack of overall editorial control on the websites is regarded with distrust and caution.

Through the innovative use of audio and video streaming technologies as well as dedicated text-based information services, Islam-oriented movements can virtually contribute to the formation of religiously based "public opinion" in ways unimagined prior to the advent of the Internet. The use of the Internet has eliminated the mass media-style gate keeping in the field of religious understanding of Islam. Internet surfer can access religious information, which has not been filtered, deconstructed and framed for mass consumption. Accessible reservoirs of religious information is daily uploaded, transmitted, circulated and posted on the Internet. With simple software programs, e-mails, ftp and peer-to-peer technology, Islam-oriented movements circulates the message of Islam. The net outcome is that a huge amount of material which might otherwise reach no more than a narrow audience is now more widely distributed. As Abdelilah Benkirane, Member of the parliament for *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* Party, explained: "*Dawa* is a form of *Jihad*, but the Internet has made the *Jihad* of word more effective".[289]

5.4.1.2.5 Economic issues: Economic liberalization

In the 1990s, Morocco underwent a period of economic reform and structural adjustment. The regime was engaged into privatization and liberalization processes of the national economy. When the socialist led-government came to power in 1998, it continued this trend. As a result, the privatization of the economy took a prominent place in the national economic debate in Morocco. Despite the fact that Islam-oriented movements were not famous for their economic discourse, they have contributed to the ongoing debate.[290] As mentioned earlier, Islam-oriented movements' websites contained specific articles about current economic issues but in general the websites were much less instructive on economics.

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[289] Abdelilah Benkirane, Member of the parliament for *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* Party, personal interview with the author, December 21, 2001, Rabat, Morocco.

[290] Still there is no academic study on the economic discourse of Islam-oriented movements in Morocco, so far we are aware.

5.4.1.2.5.1 Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya

The websites of *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* dealt with some economic questions. Most of the economic essays posted on the websites offered a diagnosis of the present conditions of Moroccan economy from a critical perspective. A central issue in these writings bears on the process of liberalization and the economic policies of the socialist-led government. The party website regards "itself as a bulwark against economic mismanagement".[291] An essay posted on the party website during the election camping 2002 highlighted the problem of public mismanagement by supplying statistics.

In March 2002, the party website published an essay to report on the party's parliamentarians, who formed a committee to conduct inquiries on the corruption that involved the National Social Security Fund. According to the report, the Fund had lost $15 billion over a period of thirty years due to mismanagement and embezzlement.[292]

The report described this as the most serious financial scandal that has cost the nation an amount equal to Morocco's foreign debt. The report referred directly to corruption and mismanagement of the public money and stated that corruption among senior state officials and politicians was rampant. It stated that instead of reducing corruption and the opportunities for 'commissions', liberalization process has made corruption prevalent of grand scale.[293] The report urged the socialist-led government to make the fight of corruption a priority and to eliminate the key "causers" behind corruption by introducing institutional reforms to control and check the economic liberalization programs. The liberalization programs were "accompanied by a huge rise in the number of pauperized middle class individuals and families that experienced an acute downward mobility".[294]

The website of the party reflects its strong commitment to public debates and a committed reference to public life. This commitment of the website to public life can be understandable since it is essential to legitimate the party. It can be also understood as part

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[291] http://www.pjd.ma/leparti_ar.php3.

[292] http://www.pjd.ma/arabe/actualites.asp?type=5&id=22.

[293] Corruption had indeed reached dimensions that no Moroccan could ignore. See Denoeux, 2000 for a very interesting account of corruption in Morocco. Berlin-based Transparency International, for instance, gave Morocco a score of 4.5 on its 2002 corruption perception index, with "0" indicating "highly corrupt and "10" representing "highly clean" (Transparency International, *2003:* 262-6), http://www.globalcorruptionreport.org.

[294] http://www.pjd.ma/arabe/actualites.asp?type=5&id=28.

and parcel of the party's project for the moralization of the Moroccan public life. This went hand in hand with an increasingly strong sense of morality pertaining to public conduct. This is understandable in the Moroccan context, characterized by a growing Islamisation of the society which has been occurring since the early 1970s.

The website of *At-Tajdid* also posted a number of essays on economic issues. The ones, which dealt with liberalization process, were divided into two aspects. The first concerns the economic dimension of the liberalization process, while the second focuses on its social question.

The author highlights the inability of the government to implement its economic policies. For him, while liberalization provided an important opportunity for growth, it also raised challenges in terms of increasing the modernization of economic institutions. He argues that the major challenges facing the liberalizing process are: institutional and structural economic reforms so as to improve the environment for the private sector and domestic investment and its reliance on individual initiative. The success of the reform should rely on the total mobilization of national resources, including the encouragement of private initiative and the creation of a domestic market for enhancing the purchasing impoverished population.

The second dimension focused on social justice. Economic development should benefit society at large and should not be in the service of minority. The socialist-led government should take actions to reduce poverty and exclusion to reallocate public resources and to improve access to key inputs like human resources and capital. It is no wonder, that the party's name strongly reinforced this social dimension in the economic development. The Islamic solution for the problem of distribution is the achievement of justice.

They refuse to reduce economic struggles to distribution conflicts in the sharing of added value as it is understood from a strict macroeconomic point of view. Technical language and statistical analysis are used to blunt sharp criticism of the socialist-led government economic policy.

While some essays discussed the socialist-led government policies, other essays mounted a sustained challenge to the key aspects of "western" definition of economics. Some of these essays analyzed the condition of the Moroccan economy to determine the causes of inequality and to arrive at alternative solutions based on Islam. They presented an Islam-based alternative to the existing problems of Moroccan economy.

They refuse to reduce economic struggles to distribution conflicts in the sharing of added value as it is understood from a strict macroeconomic point of view. They have adopted an Islam-centered economic discourse.

5.4.1.2.5.2 Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan

The website of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* placed the economic essays under the section termed "Development and Underdevelopment".[295] In his memorandum, Abdessalam Yassine also dealt with economic issues.[296] According to him, King Hassan II amassed as much as $ 40 billion dollars. In a religious plea, he asked King Mohammad VI to give this amount of money back to reduce Morocco's colossal exterior debt that "hampered the country's economic take-off".[297] He also criticized the "Ominum North Africa (ONA), the leading Moroccan industrial conglomerate dominated by King Hassan II, which granted development project contracts to private entrepreneurs in return for hefty bribes".[298] The primary aim of these essays was the refutation of non-Islamic economic ideas and the promotion, in lieu, of Islamic economic principles.

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[295] http://www.aljamaa.com/tahalil.htm.
[296] http://www.aljamaa.com/istitlaa_261201.htm.
[297] http://www.aljamaa.com/iharchane180102.htm.
[298] http://www.yassine.net/Default.aspx?book=alminhaj_part4_10&m=1&sm=11.

Screen shot 22: Risalat Al-Futuwa: Research engine

Another category of essays attempts systematically to collate detailed evidence for the importance of Islam-based economic models. It reasserts the importance of Islamic economic principles and urges the new generation of "Islamic avant-gardes everywhere to prepare the necessary groundwork for developing an Islamic economy to resolve the persistent problem of underdevelopment as caused by the deficient modernization schemes adopted by the Westernized segments of Moroccan society". Imported economic models solely complicate the conditions of Muslims and prevents them from attaining their economic take-off and reaching the level of independence. "To change the existing problem-ridden socio-economic conditions and thus change the nature of economic dynamics in the Islamic countries, practical solutions in accordance with Islamic values must be developed and implemented" is a common argument. Some essays called Islamic economists to have Islam as a source of inspiration. The majority of these essays were in line with the key tenets of Abdessalam Yassine's book on economics.[299]

The investigation of the economic issues rests on a coherent view of economics, aiming at integrating the analysis of economic behaviors and institutions into an Islamic "general economy of practice" to use Bourdieus terms.[300] Such emphasis on the wholeness of the change is typical of Abdessalam Yassine's organization. The discourse of economic

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[299] In 1995, Yassine published a book on Islamic economics, entitled Fil-Iqtisad Al-Bawaith Al-Imaniya wa Al-Dawabid al-Schariya (In the Economy: The Spiritual Motivation and Islamic Principles.
[300] Pierre Bourdieu 1980 Le Sense pratique.

authenticity has been the target of economic criticisms. The discourse of economic authenticity has been the core of what they claim was the central Islamic project: "the attempt to disengage Moroccan economy from embracing the corrupt capitalism".[301] The quest for economic authenticity echoed their endorsed essentialist views toward the economy and thus an Islamic tradition of social justice.

To overcome the problems of underdeveloped economies, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* economists urge Muslims to construct an economic project by deepening and expanding understanding of Islamic economic theory and practice. "Morocco should not follow the liberalization enacted and enforced by the World Bank".[302] The core statement was "not to liberalize the national economy but to liberate the economy from the global financial institutions".[303]

One of the articles on economic themes dealt with "reading in official economic statistics" was very critical of the socialist-led government economic policy. The central argument is that this government has showed its inability to resolve the underlying economic and social problems wrecking the country. The essay refutes a taken-for-granted criticism against Islam-oriented movement that they have not elaborated any economic programs. It points out that the socialist-led government, which governed since 1998, has not only poor economic records, but also showed that they had no economic policies. "The alternative" recommended in this essay "is to abandon existing liberal economic models in Morocco".[304] But the author remains vague when it comes to formulating alternatives.

5.4.1.2.5.3 Conclusion

What characterized the website of Islam-oriented movements was the prevalence of critique of the economic system. This indicates the strong aspiration these movements have in establishing an Islamic economic model when they came to power. Almost all economic articles emphasize Islamic economic principles and argue for the replacement of non-

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[301] http://www.aljamaa.com/sagnidi020430.htm.
[302] http://www.aljamaa.com/hassani020927.htm.
[303] http://www.aljamaa.com/mohamedmanar021010.htm.
[304] http://www.aljamaa.com/mohamedchaquir021026.htm.

Islamic economic doctrines. The essays explain these complex issues in terms of vernacular and academic language, yet the normative languages of Islam remain prevalent.

5.4.2 Communication

In their efforts to adopt new communicative strategies, Islam-oriented movements have come to rely more and more on e-mail as a means of communication. From our content analysis, the pattern that emerges suggests that Islam-oriented websites rank relatively poorly in terms of communication facilities, confirming a more general pattern that the primary function of political websites is information delivery of content over communication (Norris, 2003).

The analysis below of communication is therefore chiefly concerned not with interactive communication or two way communication, including survey, polls, feedback forms and bulletin boards, but with the most common and basic communication functions of Islam-oriented websites, namely e-mails. The analysis will explore to what extent e-mail-based political communication of Islam-oriented movements has become the building block of online activism.

5.4.2.1 E-mail-based communication

5.4.2.1.1 Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya

Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya has pursued an online strategy by embracing the more fully adequate and simple technologies of e-mail rather than complex feedback mechanisms. In the summer of 2000, the website of *At-Tajdid* collected e-mail addresses from its visitors.[305] Visitors, including activists and sympathizers, were required by the website of *At-Tajdid* to supply their electronic contact information (e.g. e-mail-accounts). In the same vein, there was evidence from the party's website that it was making considerable efforts

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[305] http://www.attajdid.press.ma.

to solicit visitors to submit views on specific policies or areas of substantive concern and to submit feedback via e-mail. The election website also began to generate e-mail lists of candidates, which included contact information. According to a communication officer at the party:

> "We built upon the Internet as foil to the main stream mass media. Our website decreases the role of mass media in which the promises of our party's politics remain invisible in national media. Our plan is to send out press release to our sympathizers in the hope of getting around the media distortion that our press release undergoes".[306]

In the election of 2002, for instance, the *At-Tajdid* e-mail system administered more than 2500 e-mails and distributed information pertaining to the election. Furthermore, the website of *At-Tajdid* featured a contact section where website visitors could be kept informed of the latest news, events, and photos on a regular basis. The website of *At-Tajdid* also launched mass e-mail campaigns during the escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the early 2002.[307] Since its initial establishment in 1999, the *At-Tajdid* e-mail list grew from 200 over past years to a peak of 40,000 in the run-up to the March in support of Palestinians in 2002. This list had been used to send out e-mail versions of pro-Palestinian information. As the Israeli-Palestinian conflict took a dramatic dimension in terms of causalities, the *At-Tajdid* website supplies online activists with messages asking them to take action in support of their "brothers of faith against the Zionist military machine in Palestine". Remarkable was the website use of an electronic petition. The letter was distributed electronically to subscribers and asked them to e-mail this petition to the President of USA as well as officials in the white house.[308] They reportedly gathered 1500 click-signatures on this anti-American online petition.

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[306] Lachibe, personal interview.
[307] http://www.attajdid.press.ma
[308] http://www.attajdid.press.ma

Screen shot 23: Islah: E-mail based communication

Certainly, this electronic initiative had no obvious effect on the American foreign policy or its position vis-a-via Israel; however, this was probably a new moment in the formation of foreign politics in Morocco, since a number of Moroccan individuals were directly engaged. The website also broke the consensus on which Moroccan foreign politics is based. Foreign policy has been the "reserved domain of the monarch". Here, again the Internet-based political communication employed cleverly by *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* has greatly helped them got there and brought a qualitatively new dimension and attention in the domain of foreign politics.

The boycott of American and Israeli products popularized the use of e-mail, as the *At-Tajdid* website initiated, released and promoted the campaign boycott of Jewish and American companies for several weeks through e-mail, directing thousands of supporters to point their Internet browsers simultaneously toward an article published in May 2002 that read: "They use our money to kill our children in Palestine".[309] The boycott actions included 2500 e-mail subscribers regularly. According to the webmaster, these alerts could be forwarded to another 2000 people.[310] These critical e-mails were in Arabic. French was also used to maximize their reach. The campaign to boycott American products such as Marlboro and McDonald was effective and brought some damage to American companies.

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[309] http://www.attajdid.press.ma.
[310] Mohamed Zakaria, webmaster of *At-Tajdid* website, personal interview with the author, December 16, 2001, Rabat, Morocco.

The proof that these e-mail actions were successful was that the Moroccan regime began a counter campaign, claiming that these kind of boycott damaged Moroccan economy.

The parliamentarian, Rachid Moudar, used e-mail to keep dynamic networks in contact over time. He generally used extensive and well-organized electronic mailing lists help members remain better informed about the party's activities than before the advent of the Internet.

5.4.2.1.2 Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan

As Internet publishers, the organization's website uses electronic mailing lists that enable to send messages to subscribers. For this reason, the website gathered e-mail addresses to disseminate general information about issues and activities for online members as well as for key activists who will most often respond to action alerts and other requests. The website has a relatively small database of members and activists. According to senior official, the organization's e-mail list numbered about 3000 recipients, with the majority of those within Morocco. The organization website operates a list serve that transmits networked e-mail messages and periodic updates to sympathetic activists in North America and Europe. The organization website quickly began contacting people who signed their e-mail list regularly by e-mail with information.

Screen shot 24: Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan: E-mail based communication

Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan also established a brief e-mail "*Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* newsletter" to send general and specific information to online members on a weekly (almost every Friday) basis from a France-based e-mailing server. This took the form of an e-mail update to inform the subscribers about the latest material made available on the organization website. This newsletter consisted only of text (no attached documents), and include a general update about activities.

Like *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya*, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* recognized the potential of the e-mail-based communication to strategically reach different and particular sectors of the population by sending personalized e-mail messages. According to Abdusamad Fathi:

> "E-mail is one of the tools that we use to contact and communicate with our members, because it was inexpensive and easy to generate, there was a tendency in the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* to use e-mail as a digital megaphone, distributing information to online activists and sympathizers and media institutions".

Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan has integrated its e-mail use into its web of existing communication tools and the networks in which they are operative. Providing both news and tactical mobilization support for the demonstrators via these increased Internet potentials. We can not say for sure that so many people actually showed up in Casablanca, because of the e-mails action and and mobile phones, but in the wake of the demonstartion it was reported that *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* received an increased volume of information exchange via e-mail from students, journalists and others. Nadia Yassine's website has received numerous e-mail messages of support, mostly from highly educated Moroccans.

5.4.2.1.3 Conclusion

The websites of Islam-oriented movements in Morocco offer a good example of the art of online political propaganda. The quick adoption of the e-mail technologies showed how the use of the Internet has become normal within the two organizations. Islam-oriented movements combine traditional basic modes of communication such as interpersonal and face-to-face communication with new interactive forms of communication such as e-mails.

They have effectively and fully incorporated e-mail technologies into the overall architecture of their communication strategies to publicize hard-to-communicate political, social and religious messages.

Islam-oriented movements' websites provide e-mail contact points to generate communication between their headquarters and people. Thus, they keep online members informed and can call upon activists when action is needed. As we witnessed they quickly established e-mail lists for online members to disseminate general information about issues and activities, and for key activists who would most often respond to "action alerts" and other requests. Some individuals and subnetworks within Islam-oriented movements' networks have been engaged in tactical communication by using the electronic mail in gearing directly towards support for mobilisations, protest activity, and direct action against the regime and other political and cultural opponents. They are now more able to inform the Moroccan public and the independent media, locally and internationally. Mohammed Lachibe asserted that:

> "Frequent contact with large numbers of supporters is far easier and cheaper to execute with the help of e-mail than with previous methods of contacting. Sending e-mail on a regular basis to those who have requested such e-mail is valuable".[311]

Equally important, the two organizations provides channels of communication for Islam-oriented activists by distributing articles, interviews, statements and communiqués through *mass* electronic mailing. For Islam-oriented movements, the e-mail has proven useful in distributing hard-to-communicate political messages. E-mail enabled them to create awareness of their situation and prevent the regime from blocking information or making its version of events the only one that got out. As Mustapha Al Khalfi, the political editor of the newspaper *At-Tajdid* explained: "With the Internet, Islamic movements have effectively raised public awareness of pressing social and economical problems and political issues". E-mails are particularly an important tool for communication of sensitive political views and coordination of protest activities. E-mail discussion networks to mobilize and share campaign ideas, targeting not only Moroccans at home but also elsewhere in the world has proved successful. Via mass electronic mail, Islam-oriented

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[311] Lachibe, personal interview.

movements could empower ordinary Moroccans to participate more directly in the foreign policy-making process.

Using e-mails-based communication mechanisms and data-exchange mechanisms unavailable through any other media have a capacity to deliver a vast amount of information to widely dispersed audiences. The use of e-mails in this innovative fashion has allowed for the coordination of thousands of activists. E-mail based communication features are likely to become the most effective tools in the domain of political mobilisation, because of the minimal cost and increased speed.

After these two great protest events, it should be clear that mobilizing process has always been difficult. According the Dahlgren, "the Internet allows people to do better what they usualy do, more than it changes them" (Dahlgren, 2005). However, a good deal more research is needed before we can make specific claims about the political potential of the electronic mail in different kinds of political context in Morocco.

5.4.2.2 Interactivity

Islam-oriented movement's use of the Internet raises some interesting issues related to political communication, particularly with regards to the interactive formats. Were Islam-oriented movement's websites under analysis interactive? In the analysis that follows we consider another communication feature and the manner in which Islam-oriented website used it.

5.4.2.2.1 Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya

In regards to the interactivity factor, most of the websites have not provided their surfers with interactive communication mechanisms. Despite his awareness of the interactivity of the Internet, the parliamentarian Moudar has not provided any interactive tools or feedback mechanisms on his website, which he might employ as a potentially means to build a

relationship with voters and to promote participation in Moroccan political life.[312] Moudar promised that he would be engaged in interactive communication by devoting some time to this new interactivity-based political communication, yet the parliamentarian has still yet engaged in live chat sessions from his own website.[313]

Screen shot 25: Justice and Spirituality Publishing: Interactiveness

As mentioned earlier, the website of *At-Tajdid* is equipped with some interactivity features such as bulletin-board services and mailing lists that might allow its visitors to engage into political discussions. During the official campaign period in 2002, the website of *At-Tajdid* also ran open discussion forums.[314]

The website of *Al-Islah* is the most important website in our sample in terms of interactivity features.[315] The website is heading towards a more interactive discussion board format, allowing supporters to interact with each other rather than simply relying on

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[312] http://www.parlementaire.ma/index2.htm.
[313] Interactive discussion lists are more time-consuming than one-way broadcast lists, but if managed properly can be a highly productive means of communication.
[314] They appreciated receiving responses from those who visited their website.
[315] http://www.alIslah.ma/def.asp?codelangue=27&info=711&date_ar=1-5-2003.

top-down communication. It offers a discussion forum on different themes. But the bulletins boards and chat rooms on *Al-Islah* website are still too low.[316]

Despite the availability of these interactive facilities, the fact remains that such rare opportunities for communicative interaction and participation target only a selective audience of the public who were already alert regarding issues pertaining to Moroccan politics. In the long term, interactive facilities might play another important role in shaping the structure of the Moroccan public sphere, because of the relative growth of the Internet use among educated Moroccan and especially among students. The examination of the *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya*'s websites suggests that forums were mostly un-moderated and that senior leading figures rarely participate. The availability of a small discussion forum hardly guarantees that the websites engage their visitors in political discussions. The very few existing discussion forums were used as mobilization instruments, but not for opinion formation.

5.4.2.2.2 Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan

In light of the previous section, it is not surprising that the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* websites also scores low on interactive options. The only means of communication available on the organization's websites is e-mail. The websites support only the vertical patterns of communication, which suggest that the application of the interactivity module is still unreachable. The communication tends to be one-way, rather than two-way interactive. While *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* recognizes the immense communications potentials offered by the Internet's interactivity, it has not yet exploited it for political communication. As one senior leader said:

> "The websites offer no opportunity for horizontal communication, despite of the interactivity nature of the Internet which fosters horizontal communication. Morocco is not well prepared for this kind of communication. The same hold true for the e-commerce. The

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[316] The content analysis of these discussion forums can not be included in this work. The tiny number of participants on these discussions is the main characteristic of these forums. The amount of messages posted can be considered "quantity negligible", on which we can not draw valid scientific conclusions.

interactive applications are not on the agenda, because these technologies are not common".[317]

It is of interest to analyze why *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* is reluctant to use the interactivity tools such as chat room, feedback tools and online surveys.

One possible explanation is the economics of interactive websites. *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* can create websites, but really high-tech interactive-based websites still require a substantial investment. The opportunity offered by the interactivity dimension of the Internet to appeal to young educated Moroccans represents a direct challenge for the organization, since it does not possess the physical and financial resources. The fact that these websites do not afford interactivity applications might also indicate that the less use of the interactivity features fits the hierarchical organizational structure of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*. While interactivity features require open and free flow of information within the organizations, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* is a closed organization as shown in chapter 3.

Screen shot 26: Abdelsalam Yassine: Interactiveness

The information transfer is centralized in the hands of a few senior leaders, who place high premium of the traditional communication and face-to-face mode of communication. This kind of communication is characterized by a strict flow of

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[317] Abdusamad Fathi, editor of the weekly *Risalat Al-Futuwa*, personal interview with the author, May 11, 2001, Casablanca, Morocco.

information from top to down. In this context, e-mail discussion lists are not a substitute for person-to-person communication and thus online communities do not substitute traditional face-to-face communities.

5.4.2.2.3 Conclusion

A striking result of the content analysis is the absence of interactive features. Islam-oriented movements' websites have done very little in terms of interactivity. Discursive and interactivity features such as multimedia, surveys polls and feedback forms were generally underused and underplayed. Text-based websites are convenient in Morocco where low speed Internet connections prevail; political communication based on interactivity features can be expected to increase, since Islam-oriented movements have "statutory" obligations to communicate directly with people. In addition, Morocco, a country where the Internet access is poor, the interactivity features are not appropriate for political use. Low Internet communication application such as e-mail has served the purposes of political communication more effectively than hi-tech interactive websites (Rodgers, 2003: 84).

The strategies of the political communication of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* on the Internet can be considered as an extension of their off-line strategies. The way information is delivered is top-down, flowing from the very high leadership towards the audiences. The monological character of the organization offline communication strategies manifests itself in one-to-one e-mails and through the use of websites which do not have interactive features. Most of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* officials interviewed reported that these new possibilities for the promotion of Islamic ideas and dissemination of critical ideas function best when the communication is based on one-to-one.[318] Consequently, the communication on organization websites is one-way asynchronous, not two-way interactive.

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[318] Fathallah Arsalane in 2001.

5.4.3 Networking

One of the key themes of the discussion about the political use of the Internet and political communities is the notion of "virtual communities".[319] It has frequently been suggested that the use of the Internet technologies will contribute to the development and emergence of virtual communities (Rheingold, 2000; Castells, 1996).[320] Howard Rheingold was largely responsible for the introduction and popularization of this term.[321] He defines virtual communities as "social aggregations that emerge from the Internet when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace" (1993: 5).

Many social scientists concur that the formation of interlocking networks among like-minded organizations and activists is crucial for the onset and spread of social movements (Van de Donk et al., 2004). Jones for instance argues that interactivity is a critical pre-requisite for virtual community, but it is not by itself sufficient to create virtual communities (Jones, 1997).

In the case of Islamic societies, it is crucial to explore whether these technologies can provide a powerful boost to the establishment of contacts and the emergence of virtual communities, the virtual *Umma*. Many observers argue that the use of the Internet has played a crucial role in the flourishing of virtually-based communities in the cyber Islamic environments (Anderson, 1999; Bunt, 2000). But what role does Internetworking, particularly linking like-minded groups and individuals through the medium of the Internet play in stimulating virtual communities? Do online networks facilitate the development of genuine, rather than simply imagined or superficial, collective identities tied to peoples and causes.

In the literature, there is a debate on the relation between interactivity-based communities and the emergence of virtual communities. Most scholars base their analysis in their empirical evidence after studying the content of chat rooms and examine the exchange experienced by participants. As we see Islam-oriented websites do not offer

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[319] This debate has produced a rapidly growing body of literature that seeks to explore this relationship.

[320] Howard Rheingold (2000) coined the term "virtual communities" to describe "social aggregations that emerge from the net when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace".

[321] More recently, some commentators have begun to question the viability of this term in the technology.

interactive features due first to their limited financial resource and second due to their closed and centralized structures.

Many theorists search for virtual communities within bulletin boards, conference groups and chat rooms. To explore whether this interactivities features have contributed to the emergence of a virtual community or not discussion lists, which enable people to establish a common sense of identity and often link them to one thing in common, online interactivity-based communication, incidences of conversations on these political forums and their vigorous exchange of opinions were empirically content analyzed. This presupposes a forum with a range of discussion participants who advanced arguments.

Networking and linking websites, broadly understood as a mode of social and political interaction, has been an indispensable precursor to the formation of virtual communities. The link as a way to extend mediated form of recognition and reciprocal online existence determine the level of community. The possibility of being connected to others increase the chance of building a virtual community.

As a way of exploring virtual communities, we examine the connections and networks between the websites under analysis and the nature of the featured links to other websites.

5.4.3.1 Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya

In terms of linking, the party website can be considered as an active website, because it establishes direct interaction with affiliated groups and other Islam-oriented movements through hyperlinks.[322] The election website features links to the website of *At-Tajdid* and to the website of Rachid Medouar. The website of Medouar links the party and the website of *At-Tajdid*.[323] In terms of external links, the website features links to organizations such as the *International Union of Parliaments of Support of Palestine* and to the *Palestinians Information Centre*.[324] It also posts infomration and reference links to stories in the French media. These links to newspapers articles are temporary. The website of *At-Tajdid* provides links to external websites such as Hamas movements, the *Aqsa* Foundation, Qaradawi website, Palestinian Information Centre and Islam-Online. During its activities

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[322] http://www.pjd.ma/arabe/index.asp.
[323] http://www.parlementaire.ma.
[324] External links include those between the party and other bodies.

for mobilizing Moroccans to take part in the second *Aqsa Intifada* demonstration, the website also distributed e-mail containing links to Qaradawi website. These links make it easier to co-ordinate national and international campaign, including the boycott. *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* realised early the value of the Internet networking as a way of extending and coordinating its political struggle.

Table 10: Number of internal and external links in the websites of Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya

Name of website	Number of Internal links	Number of External links
1 The website of At-Tauhid Wal-Islah organization	2	15
2 The website of *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya*	0	0
3 The election website of the *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya party*	2	0
4 The website of Rachid Medouar	4	6
5 The website of *At-Tajdid*	1	0
Subtotal	9	21

The website of *Al-Islah* is the most "bindong" organization with more links than all other Islam-oriented websites: It has links to a number of organizations that supports Islam-oriented issues.

The most significant boost to networking offered by *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya*'s websites, however, comes through hypertext links. The number of links to other websites is very significant, because it reflects the cooperative and inclusive strategy of the organization. But it seemed the network value of these links is that they reflect a real contact but did not reflect their strong offline networks.

Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiy's websites were strong advocates of external links. The use of the link resonates with the objective of the organization. By networking disparate social movements, coalitions can be formed that mobilize wide segments of the Moroccan civic society. According to the Rachid Medouar:

> "Through parliamentary work, we come to realize the importance of networking. We value the networking and cooperation with other organizations. We have established working connections to a variety

of other similarly oriented organizations and political parties and activists. The Internet enhances these networks".[325]

The hypertext quality of the websites means that it can provide instant and extensive links between organizations. We identified the kind of links *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya*'s websites had created as internal links.

Screen shot 27: Rachid Medouar: Networkness

5.4.3.2 Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan

The link features scored considerably low as key functions in the websites of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*. On the organization website, for instance, internal links are prominent. On the *Risalat Al-Futuwa* website no external links are offered apart from links to their own affiliated websites such as the organization website and Abdessalam Yassine website.[326] The internal focus of the link activities of the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*'s websites indicates that in fact they seek no outside support. *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* is reluctant to engage in networking

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[325] Rachid Medouar, member of the Moroccan Parliament, personal interview with the author, December 9, 2001, Rabat, Morocco.

[326] http://www.fotowa.com/misc/summary.asp?issue=02.

via its websites. While Nadia Yassine website offers two permanent links to the website of her father and to the organisatio, external links are non-existent.[327]

Table 11: Number of internal and external links in the websites of Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan

Name of websites	Number of internal links	Number of external links
1 The website of Abdessalam Yassine	1	0
2. The website of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*	4	0
3. 3 The website of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* newspaper	0	0
4. The website of *Risalat Al-Futuwa*	2	0
5. The website of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* publishing house	0	0
6. The website of Nadia Yassine	2	0
7 The website of a pro- *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* activist(s)	2	0
Subtotal	11	0

The rule that the less links there are, the weaker the organization network becomes does not prove right in the case of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*. It is not expensive to build links between different Islam-oriented organizations, yet the way in which the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* typically did this was by posting on their websites a brief statement describing the organization's position on an issue or recent development. The leaders of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* said that the group enjoyed excellent relations with groups outside the country, e.g. to Hassan At-Turabi, the leader of the National Islamic Front. The organization posted on its website a statement, expressing its solidarity with him in his predicament. The solidarity statement failed to feature a hyperlink to the website of the Sudanese party. Similarly, the organization website published a statement, paying tribute to Islamic Salvation Front and its leader, Abbasi Al-Madani, yet it did not feature any links to the organization. When asked about the lack of hyperlinks to Islam-oriented organizations on the websites of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* despite the intensive contacts and cooperation with these organizations, one senior official at the communication committee answered that "there are other forms of contact such as video, telephone, fax, mobile phone, SMS and e-mail".[328]

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[327] http://www.nadiayassine.net.
[328] Abdulwahid Moutawakil, member of the political committee of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*, personal interview with the author, May 19, 2001, Rabat, Morocco.

Screen shot 27: Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan: Networkness

These online strategies that *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* used to promote links beyond affiliated websites and networks does not fit with earlier results by Hague and Loader. Hague and Loader argue that the persons and groups which are well networked in „real space" will be those who are well networked in cyberspace and vice versa (Hague and Loader, 1999: 12). *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*'s use of the Internet is structured by sense of security and caution.

There are two possible explanations for this relatively low figure. By restricting their online linking and networking to affiliated websites, the organization intended to suggest its independence of ideological leanings from foreign like-minded organizations.[329] The failure to link to other websites was not the result of neglect, but strategically omitted. Another reason might be the organization's fear of losing surfers to other organizations.

The organization's reluctance to develop this important category in terms of political communication can correspond with its aversion against operating closely with other Islam-oriented organizations. The focus of the networking solely to websites of affiliated organization and newspapers fits the organization's structure. The reluctance of providing links to other Moroccan Islam-oriented groups suggests a sense of concurrence rather than cooperation between these organizations. Their elaboration of co-operating networks among like-minded groups within Morocco to broaden their capabilities for reach

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[329] For further details see chapter 3.

and action is not existent. The absence of direct "inter-inter" Islam-oriented hyperlinks in the Moroccan context can be regarded as the stumbling block in the way of building a virtual network. This indicates that the notion of strong virtual community even within Morocco seems far away to reach. The emergence of an Islamic virtual community is indeed questionable. But if the offline networks found way into the online world, the virtual *Umma* is therefore more likely to develop.

The analysis of the websites made clear that Islam-oriented movements in Morocco are national-based communities. Their notion of the "Moroccan" nation is realist rather than idealized conceptions designed to appeal to Moroccan. This notion contradicts with the notion of the Islamic *Umma* the transnational community of Muslims unbounded by the nation-state. Since the entirety of the organization's website is presented in Arabic, the only international audience for their online material are be regional Arabic speakers. The organization tends to reach in the first place the Arab world audience, since the websites features no other so-called "Islamic languages" like Turkish and Urdu.[330]

Some scholars have argued that "Islamists" have abandoned the goal of reconstruction the *Umma* in favor of a nation-based Islamic community. In the Moroccan context, Islam-oriented movements have adopted from the beginning a nation-based *Umma*. This lack of internationalization is not surprising given the organization's political objectives which focused on achieving political changes from within Morocco. This internal focus, however, does not necessarily limit their online activism. The organization has benefited substantially from global internetworking, since affiliated groups in North America have built a website as noted earlier. It is, on the one hand, evidence of the organization's interest in developing a global community, yet this does not top its priorities. On the other side, there is some yet little evidence that indicates that the organization has sought to use the Internet for creating a virtual community.

Virtual communities are not the precursors of networked communities, since chatting with each other could not necessarily help build a community.

In the case of virtual communication, we can conclude that *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* perceive this kind of community in negative and sceptical terms. It emphasizes that virtual communities are seen as the precursor of destruction of traditional face-to-face communication. One senior leader warned from the virtual communities by arguing:

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[330] *Hizb At-Tahrir* reflects in its different websites its universalizing ideology concerning the notion of *Umma* and Khilafath by using all Islamic languages, including European languages and Russia.

"The flourishing of virtual communities may lead to the disturbance of face-to-face interaction and communication based on bonds of trust that are at odds with those of virtual communities".[331]

For *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*'s leaders, a virtual community has no definite structure and membership might be loose, since membership might change on weekly basis. People leave and join the community at whatever time they want. Thus, the fluid structure of such a community does not neatly fit the philosophy of the organization. The organization may consider this kind of networking as challenge rather than opportunity for its visits and members. It is a kind of monopoly and centralization.

Islam-oriented movements echoed Mark Poster's concern that "Since there occurs no face-to-face interaction, only electronic flickers on screen, what kind of community can there be in this space" (Poster, 1996: 217). Virtual communities are experienced in a mobile and fluid form.

5.4.3.3 Conclusion

Networking helps wide distribution since it increases the amount of information the surfer. As Castells points out:

> "Networks constitute the new social morphology of our societies, and the diffusion of networking logic substantially modifies the operation and outcomes in processes of production, experience, power, and culture" (Castells, 1997: 410).

For Castells

> "A network is a set of interconnected nodes... Networks are open structures, able to expand without limits, integrating new nodes as long as they are able to communicate within the network, namely as long as they share the same communication codes for example, values or performance goals" (Castells, 1997: 411).

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[331] Arsalane, personal interview.

It has been suggested that the Internet can further build online community and can increase organization to organization contacts via hyperlinks. The analysis of the technical capabilities of the Internet, including linking and networking possibilities offered on the website of the *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* does not therefore lead to the conclusion that a "virtual *Umma*", heralded by many scholars, is likely to be created as the direct result of the use of the Internet technologies. From our analysis we can suggest that *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* and *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* made no effort to link to other websites.

The use of some reference links to information sources has advantaged Islam-oriented movements' "views and arguments". Zizi Papacharissi argues that hyperlinks offers one key advantage in constructing public sphere. She notes that the capacity for storing and retrieving data allows political discussion to be enriched with links to relevant information via hyperlinks (Papacharissi, 2002). In this sense, the Internet democratizes information by simplifying the creation, duplication, storage and distribution of data. In addition, networking via computers also facilitates communication among a larger number and broader spectrum of individuals, enabling people from different remote locations to associate with each other, to engage in political debates, and more generally, to make their opinions matter by having their voices heard. Links offer them a vehicle for uniting their voices with other like-minded activists at times when many others are similarly engaged in grassroots lobbing for the same cause. Network-based politics involve the creation of broad umbrella spaces, where diverse organizations, collectives, and networks converge around common hallmarks while preserving their autonomy and specificity.

Islam-oriented movements are often regarded as social networks of informal and formal organization. The websites were conceived as a network of websites, people and communities against the regime. The websites have become the web of resistance. The integration of the physical and virtual dimension of the community has impact on the capacity of Islam-oriented movements' social networks to act as agents of mobilization. While Norris notes that "purely online communities without any physical basis are usually low-cost, easy-entry, easy-exit groups (Norris, 2002: 8), Castells argues that virtual communities are different from physical communities, but are not necessarily less intense or less effective in binding and mobilizing (Castells, 2001: 131). Islam-oriented movements have a strong social basis. Mohamed Yatime said that:

"It is true that genuine community can only be forged through the bonds of physical location, but we have turned the kind of online community we have with many Moroccan abroad to a fruitful cooperation and collaboration relation which is likely to develop to an offline community".

Mowlana suggests that because of increased mobilization arising from networking, groups are able to have more of direct input into the decisions affecting their daily lives.

"A worldwide meta-network of highly decentralized computer networks has arisen that democratizes information flow, breaks down hierarchies of power, and makes communication from top to bottom just as easy as from horizon to horizon" (Mowlana, 1993:).

In networked societies: boundaries are permeable, interactions are with diverse others, connections switch between multiple networks, and hierarchies can be flatter and recursive. The change from groups to networks can be seen at many levels. In addition, Castells (1996, 1997) argues that we must grasp the transformations of space, society, and identity that are associated with digital communication networks.

In the end, this argument implies that it is not strategically useful, or even feasible, to conceive of actions or strategies that can, in isolation, influence political and social structures in a manner that will enhance the capacity of Islam-oriented movements to use the Internet for networking activities. Our results suggest that Islam-oriented movements have yet to tap the full potential of the Internet as a facilitator of cooperation and networking.

5.5 Discussion and conclusion

Building on our earlier analysis of Internet-based communication tactics, we will here consider in some detail the concept of "identity of resistance". The term is particularly helpful first in providing a framework for analysis of political activity in the digital age and then in understanding the ongoing transformation in the public sphere and in the hierarchy of political power in Morocco.

An appropriate and useful starting point for interpreting the implications the use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements has for politics in Morocco is Castells's suggestion that "the rise of the network society calls into question the process of construction of identity during that period" (Castells, 1997: 11). Relating this theoretical statement to the key process in the construction of political identity in Morocco, it becomes evident that the identification of Islam-oriented movements as a primary target of the application of these theoretical assumptions is not misplaced. Castells himself applies this theoretical assumption on Islam-oriented movements (Castells, 1997: 13). To broaden the interpretative framework, we apply the discourse of defensive identities, now much in vogue. Castells notes: "The search for meaning takes place then in the reconstruction of defensive identities around communal principles" (Castells, 1997: 11). Castells goes on to argue:

> "In the network society, project identity, if it develops at all, grows from communal resistance. This is the actual meaning of the new primacy of identity politics in the network society (Castells, 1997: 11)".

What are the implications of the use of the Internet by Islam-oriented political movements on the Moroccan political field? In the context of the current upsurge and the multiplication of various grassroots resistance movements, questions of identity have attained a centrality within the social sciences lately. Social scientists have long argued that social movements have been engaged in cultural conflicts contesting meanings and forming collective identities that may potentially transform existing social structures (Castells, 1997).

Mediated political communication on the Internet plays a crucial role in the processes of identity formation, by diffusing information and offering the symbolic representations and religious-based political, social and economic discourses. Following Melucci (1996) the Internet has contributed to the construction of Islam-oriented movement's identities by challenging symbolic and cultural codes. They are adept at using potentially online-based communication strategies for raising the intensity of Islamic consciousness among the youthful political segments of the Moroccan society and, in so doing, for deepening the crisis of the regime and further alienated the French-influenced groups. This involves a political and cultural conflict on major issues related to the basic notions of politics in the new millennium.

Based on a stream of research on social movements, Castells argues that social movements in the Information Age are essentially mobilized around cultural values (Castells, 2001: 140). They engage themselves in struggle to modify codes of meaning in the institutions and practice of society. According to Castells, the power is primarily exercised around the production and diffusion of cultural codes and information content (Castells, 2001: 164).

As Castells points out "identity is becoming the main source of meaning in a historical period characterized by widespread destructuring of organizations, deletigimation of institutions, fading away of major social movements, and ephemeral cultural expressions. People increasingly organize their meanings not around what they do but on the basis of what they believe they are (Castells, 1996: 3).

Following his definition of what constitutes identity, Castells distinguishes between three forms and origins of identities (1997: 7). The first type is the "legitimizing identity, introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalize their domination vis-à-vis social actors". The second type concerns "resistance identity, generated by those actors that are in position and conditions devalued and or stigmatized by the logic of domination, thus building trenches of resistance and survival on the basis of principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institutions of society". The third type refers to project identity, which is "when social actors build a new identity that redefines their position in society, and by doing so, seek the transformation of overall social structure" (Castells, 1997: 8).

Of great significance in the following analysis is the second type of identity-building, which consists of the "exclusion of the excluders by the excluded" (Castells,

1997: 9). For Castells, identity of resistance helps create communities. New social movements build defensive identities around communal principles.

As the most prominent new social movements, Islam-oriented movements are currently building their defensives identities around religious symbols and cultural codes are likely to grow in importance. In the digital age, political and cultural resistance of Islam-oriented movements to the regime have been built around a religiously constructed identity. The resistance discourse has been not easily accommodated and assimilated into Islam-oriented movement's conventional paradigms of politics. In a world of cultural turbulences, Moroccans, particularly young ones have sought to find a modus operandi to "reinvent" religiously-based boundaries and produce stable and consistent meaning in a world where meaning is fluid and contingent.

In a growing digitalized network society the power of identity as "the process of construction of meaning on the basis of cultural attribute that is given priority over other sources of meaning" is rising. In the Moroccan case, contemporary politics is being shaped by the conflicting trends of forces of secularism and forces of Islam. The cultural and political fragmentation in Morocco accounts for the contemporary articulation of the politics of identity in terms of "identity of resistance".

Identities are formed and maintained in contrast to established identities: Islam-oriented movements' undertakings with respect to identities involve antagonism. Their identity-preserving antagonism aim at enhancing Islamic identity, which they perceive not just as different from those of others but threatened by them. Social and economic as well as religious themes became the site of political antagonism as shown in previous sections. Mark Poster argues that Internet-based communication has enabled virtual communities to function as places of difference from and resistance to new patters of modernity (Poster, 1996: 215). The emerging Islamized public sphere defined itself in opposition to the secularist public sphere was confronted by the regime which it sough to contain.

This encouragement for the search for models and forms of political organization consonant with the Islamic principle of political action has markedly characterized Islam-oriented movements' political endeavors. Islam-oriented movements are attempting to promote a political understanding of Islam, by putting forward proposals for an Islamic polity.

Identity of resistance functions as a unifying identity which is the necessary precondition for the emergence of identity-based political movements. These developments

subvert the primacy of the nationally bounded identity, and undermine old identifications in terms of which individuals traditionally determined themselves and formed their identities. The political, social and religious discourse reflected in dozens of Islam-oriented movements' websites challenged traditional identifications of Moroccan identity. The process of identification takes place when the websites exposed unjust situations and renew group commitments. As we see from the coverage of the second *Aqsa Intifada* by Islam-oriented websites, Islam-oriented movements incite political action by invoking an injustice frame that highlight moral indignation and traces problems to specific actors.

The political discourse of virtually all websites under examination is that of "resistance". The emphasis on common political and social issues, rather than strictly religious ones appealed to those young educated Moroccans. The themes that caused much resistance from Islam-oriented movements are the ones relating to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the family status. As Mustapha Alkhalfi, the political editor of *At-Tajdid*, explained:

> "The demonstration organized in the context of these political and social conflicts constitute an act of resistance to the official foreign policy and to the disintegration of the Moroccan family".[332]

In terms of collective identity, there is little doubt that Islam-oriented movements and other Islam-oriented activists identify with the resistance expressed and enacted in form of domestic conflict against any regime's attempt to westernize the Moroccan social, cultural and political life.

What happens to religious, cultural and political self-representation and identity when Islam-oriented movements went online? The key point in Castells network society is that new electronic media have become the privileged space of politics (Castells, 1997: 311). The thrust of Castells' argument, and that of many others, is that all politics is conducted in the frame of new electronic media. Dahlgren shares Castells' argument that access to political power without an electronic media strategy has become very difficult (Dahlgren, 2001). The divide in the bases of power in society may grow between those who do and who do not use the political resources of the Internet for political engagement.

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[332] Mustapha Alkhalfi, the political editor of *At-Tajdid*, personal interview with the author, Month 9, 2000, Rabat, Morocco.

From a political communication perspective, a recurrent question is whether the political use of the Internet has brought a new public sphere. It has been argued that the Internet is positioned, due to its multitude of features, to play a leading role in creating a new public sphere in the digital age, as cafes and salons in the eighteenth century, print media in the nineteenth century and television and polls in the twentieth century. By opening up a new communicative environment, the political use of the Internet poses anew the issue of public sphere at the centre of political debate.

In Morocco, this new opening has enabled Islam-oriented movements to challenge the legitimizing identity as never before. Political, social, religious and economic issues have been constructed, reconstructed and discussed through the online presence of Islam-oriented movements. The websites have become a new stage where conflicts and polarizations of the pre-existing identity are played out anew. The digital-based opening sets the framework for a reinforcement of an Islamic political identity. Under these emerging conditions, Islam-oriented movements, groups and organizations seek recognition in the public sphere through electronic maneuvers. Consequently, the Internet gives voice to the media marginalized Islam-oriented groups that had been kept in silence.

Islam-oriented movements are acutely aware that for it to be effective, the Internet has been integrated into the overall communication strategy. Yet the the Internet is not going to replace existing communication outlets, but complete them. The use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements does mean that other traditional pre-internet communication tools will be ignored. Fathallah Arsalane explained:

> "The Internet is very important for our movement especially because several of our publications have been banned. The Internet permits us to publish them. The traditional personal communication fits our organization. We favor the face-to-face meetings as a method of getting our message heard". [333]

In terms of the overall opportunities for political communication, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* appears to have found a suitable and alternative method by which to spread its messages in the digital age.

When evaluating its communication tactics after many setbacks caused by the restrictive censorship system applied in Morocco, *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* considered the option

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[333] Arsalane, personal interview.

that involved the practical application of the Internet as an effective communication tool. The recent integration of the Internet in the organization's communication tactics convinced many observers that they are very well adept. A well-known Moroccan journalist remarked while referring to the organization's launch of the two websites: "The *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* has excellent communication strategies". They succeeded to integrate the websites with overall communication plan (especially the use of e-mail and e-mail lists). In this respect, the use of Internet could be viewed as simply an addition to the other forms of communication utilized.[334]

Since e-mail is likely to become a popular way for young Moroccans to communication, then Islam-oriented political movements will benefit greatly from this trend in matters of the political communication. Again, this reiterated the point that Islam-oriented political organizations will use the technologies in a way which suits their own message. At the same time, *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* and *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* have been proven able to transmit large volumes of their information material via the use of e-mail and thus could increase the information amount available. The volume and speed at which they transmitted political information concerning the election of 2002 and the second *Aqsa Intifada* demonstration and social information about the *Al-Mudawana* means that they can provide for a more substantive basis for informing, communicating and campaigning.

One of the most practical applications for Islam-oriented websites was the information provision first to their members and sympathisers and second to a large audience. They have benefited substantially from the Internet, particularly with regard to enhanced levels of public awareness, coordinated online campaigns and increased pressure on the regime and other actors to institute reforms or change policies as demonstrated in the *Al-Mudawana* case.

The process of digitalisation, still slow, is likely to make the emerging relatively autonomous information system the center of political power. The digital content follows a fairly predictable pattern: websites abound with discourses that challenge the national criteria that have formed collective identity. Islam-oriented movements projected consciously in their websites the politics of identity. For Islam-oriented movements the politics of identity has found in cyberspace an ideal medium for information and publication.

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[334] It has been reported that *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* has encouraged its supporters to visit its websites.

As noted in chapter 2, impressed by the significance of the media in struggle against colonialists, nationalists established newspapers to make their voices heard. Like the nationalist, Islam-oriented movements have established a presence in the virtual world as quickly as possible to communicate with their constituencies. Many Islam-oriented leaders have placed on the Internet a great hope for redefining their conflict in by raising questions concerning their collective identities. The presence of the information on their websites aimed at strengthening cultural elements.

In an early study of the political use of and political engagement on the Internet, Hill and Hughes (1998) conclude that the Internet has expanded the political margins of public sphere. In recent years the rise of the network society, corresponding with growing proliferation electronic new media formats have excited optimism about the ability of the these new media to help produce a public sphere. Few studies have sought to identify the nature of this emerging public sphere.

Islam-oriented political movements in Morocco are seeking to reach a large number of Moroccan audiences by evading the multiple media restrictions imposed by the regime. By placing the full text of the memorandum online, they avoided the regime's authoritarian and coercive tactics in dealing with the organization's publications.

We explored Islam-oriented websites' functions and e-mail-based communication strategies and thus provided strong evidence that these websites have fulfilled many of the functions of political communication, since their electronic-based political communication were handled with considerable expertise by adroit and savvy Internet technologies activists. In line with the Internet-based communication strategies, they began structuring Islam-oriented movements' online presence in terms of political and cultural characteristics.

Many scholarly works argue that the new technologies of communication will allow religious and political identities to flourish (Eickelman and Anderson, 1999: 5). Eickelman and Anderson point out that "a proliferation of media and means of communication have multiplied the possibilities for creating communities and networks among them, dissolving prior barriers of space and distance and opening new grounds for interaction and mutual recognition" (1999: 3).

In a recent study Norris conclude that the network society does not drive the new social movements, transnational advocacy networks, alternative social movements, protest organizations, community activists and development workers, but facilitates their

organization, mobilization and expression (Norris, 2003). The potentialities of the political use of the Internet relates not to the number of people it can reach but to its impact on specific audiences (Rodgers, 2003: 83). Applying this general rule on the political use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements in Morocco, we are entitled to conclude that Islam-oriented movements are fully aware of this truth. They target specifically recipients of high education in general such as students and professionals who are among the highest users of the Internet in Morocco and who are politically engaged in cyberspace.

The low cost of creating and maintaining a website mean that it is possible for them to deliver their unedited messages direct to the public. Through these newfound electronic-linked tactics, Islam-oriented movements purposively spread unmediated literature for political purposes. The most general conclusion to be reached from this analysis is that Internet-based political communication strategies of Islam-oriented political movements will be more fully structured by the management and provision of information. The presented results above confirm the perceptions of the approach to the Internet as a machine for disseminating information to reach a larger educated audience.

Since the audience consist from students and professionals, contributors were all academic to appeal to this high demanding audience. They draw attention to their contribution by academic, systemized and simplified presentation. Contributors were chosen to fit the educational status of audience.

Many highly scholars who sympathize with these organizations increasingly contribute to the discussion of political, social and economic issues. This conscious migration from high textualism of official *Ulama* to pragmatic and vernacular language suggests a deep understanding of communication. They frame their discourse in modern modes reasoning and new forms of argument.[335] They also develop new ways of writing, since they do not replicate the traditional style of the *Ulama*. The new way of writing and presenting issues related to Islam bring audiences, particularly young ones close to solutions to the problems under discussion. They address complex religious issues rather than reducing it to Islamic-Un-Islamic schema. The interviews and statements depart from this strict academic mode of arguing. These essays stimulate discussion and debate rather than constructing conflicts. Essays create the opportunity to move beyond the conflict schema that some interviewees have inflamed.

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[335] This indicates that their "educated" audiences expect detailed, factual and accurate information.

To appeal to this high demanding audience, which generally consists of students and professionals, contributions and essays were written by new "intellectuals". But what kind of intellectuals write or communicate in this new mode of electronically mediated discourse? The academic background of the new generation of contributors to the political, social, economic debate suggests the distinctly proliferation of Islam-oriented intellectuals in the Moroccan academic life. This is likely to foster an Islamizied consciousness on the part of youthful audience. This is indicative of the increasing number of "debaters" who participate in discussions about the place and the role of Islam in shaping the social, political and economic roots of today's Morocco. Today we see more and more progressive-minded Islam-oriented writers, intellectuals and activists coming to the fore.

One of the strength of the websites under examination has not been the content alone but the richness in terms of variations and organization of information. As Graham Meikle argues in his book on media activism and the Internet "information is obviously a key to successful campaign" (Meikle, 2002: 78). For Meikle, the very success of online activists demands soft skills not in the state-of-the art design or animation, but in information management and provision (Meikle, 2002: 78). This argument is also echoed by Rodgers when he said: "The provision of information is a necessary element of the development of activist politics" (Rodgers, 2003: 132).

As this analysis demonstrated, Islam-oriented movements in cyberspace environment have increasingly become more effective than ever in publishing and distributing their information content. A public space was formed around the intersection of political, social, economic and religious issues. With these topics Islam-oriented movements aim at appealing primarily to the Middle-class career-seeking professionals such as educators, engineers, doctors and administrators. These set of issues attract youthful educated audiences and thus fit the information-seeking behavior of young Moroccans. Islam-oriented movements frame their verbal and visual messages on the Internet to achieve their message receivers. Islam-oriented websites have been used successfully im promoting a coherent, collective assessment of what these events mean within the overall process of political and religious change. The very message of Islam comes clearly through their treatment of issues and themes in their websites.

The spread of Islam-oriented "views and arguments" among students and young Moroccans make the conceptions of traditional understanding of politics and religion unviable. Recent events seem to support the view that a shift in identity has began to take

place in Morocco (Darif, 2000). Moroccans are becoming increasingly sceptical of partisan politics and of established politicians who seem corrupt and ineffectual.[336] The erosion of public trust of the regime and its political and cultural institutions is not a recent phenomenon. Trust has been on the decline since 1970s; educated people have lost their faith in the political institutions that are closely related with the regime such as parliaments and political parties.[337] Mounting evidence points to a declining role for political parties in shaping the politics in Morocco. They promote religiously based-agendas through appeals to Moroccans who are not readily persuaded by the language of party loyalty and solidarity and who may be more open to the notion of politics of identity. As a result, Islam-oriented movements grow in significance as alternative foci of allegiance for a large number of educated Moroccans.

The findings of this case study suggest that the political use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements make them found their way into new arenas of political and social discourse. In recent times, many noted scholars, Moroccans included, pointed to the fact that young educated Moroccans have developed an interest in religiously based-identities, and departed from a national to an Islamic identity (Eickelman, 1999; Maghraoui, 2001). Maghraoui, for instance, pointed out that the current political institutions, actors and practices in Morocco are in a frail condition and held in poor public regard. A traditional concept of authority has come under attack, and has been shaken in a number of forms. As a result, political power has become a contested domain, rather than an accepted reality. The growth of religiously based political identities is paralleled with a decrease of nationally based political identities.

Islam-oriented movements have related their information systems to the content of their political message. To attract their supporters, they publish their print publications and their information material on the Internet. The sympathizers of Islam-oriented movements get a wider range of news and information about issues than they could on any sources of the national information system. As Anass Mouzar, a journalist specialized on Islam-oriented movements in Morocco, put it: "In cyberspace, Islamists are more effective than ever".[338]

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[336] Conventional distinctions between parties on the grounds of classes are now replaced by identity politics, which means that cultural (sacred) politics have emerged in the form of Islam-oriented political movements.
[337] As a result, traditional nationally located political parties have seen their membership's rolls wane. Indicative of this is the fact that the importance of the French-influenced organizations has been undercut by a relatively new trend of identity politics that has brought cultural aspirations and concern.
[338] Mezzour, personal interview.

The Islamized public sphere is built on the existence of political and social protest, on the identity of resistance. It offers a critique of political, social, economic and religious values and practices from the standpoint of Islam-oriented movements as marginalized groups within Moroccan society. In this sense it constitutes a protest public sphere or a counter-public sphere. Their early appearance on the Internet marks their initial awareness of the electronic political communication. They aim at gaining visibility and recognition in the public sphere by using websites primarily as an information storehouse and communication tools.

The analysis suggests that the use of the Internet has greatly contributed to the creation of an Islamized new form of public space beyond the official media and mainstream print media and enhanced an Islamized identity among youthful educated Moroccan. This result corroborates recent research that argues that new public spaces were created by the application of "new" media (Eickelman, 1999). The dynamic shift of the content from offline to online has caused a change in the overall structure of Moroccan "Öffentlichkeit". Eickelman and Anderson rightly point out that "the transposition of religious (and political) issues to new media also changes the associative ecology of Islamic discourse" (Eickelman and Anderson, 1999: 14).[339] In essence, following Eickelman, the suggestion is that changes in public sphere towards more opening and participation are contingent upon change in the communication strategies of Islam-oriented movements.

The increasingly assertive autonomy of Islam-oriented movements by dint of the new digital media system brought into the open a new understanding of how Islam-oriented political movements regularly circulated their religious tracts, and religious educational material. The Internet has transformed the nature and function of the political communication strategies of Islam-oriented movements, not only by its effects on political communities strategies themselves, but by enabling them to deliver their political and religious message without being afraid of the misinformation process of the regime's media and the party media. In addition, the Internet has allowed Islam-oriented movements to target their specific audiences. One of the most significant consequences of the use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements has been the creation of mediated culturally and

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[339] The impact of the new media on the emergence of an autonomous public sphere in the Arab world are not yet fully identified, because the very few empirical case studies, and their interpretations, are behind the fast process of the transformation.

religiously based networks of identities and collective belonging, populated by an ever-increasing number of individuals of different social backgrounds.

6 Moroccan students' online political activities

One of the major problems of the political studies, analysing the impact of the Internet on politics is that most these empirical studies tend to focus on the content of political websites (Davis, 1999; Davis and Owen, 1998; Hill and Hughes, 1998; Gibson and Ward, 1998, 2000). Scholars justify this focus on the supply-side by claiming that the number of people who visit political websites is limited and thus a reliable survey data on people using the Internet for political reasons is lacking. Consequently, the study of the political use of the Internet is mainly limited to the supply side (Vedel, 2003: 52). Norris rightly remarks that most research on the use of the Internet has focused on the structure and contents of party websites, rather than on the use of these websites by the populace (Norris, 2003: 27). According to Norris, Internet analysis in the political science needs a multi-method research design, which combines content analysis of party websites (the supply) with survey evidence about users of these websites (the demand).[340]

While there is little survey on people using the Internet for political reasons in US and Europe, there is a very few research on people using the Internet in general in Morocco. Existing research on Internet users done in Morocco has focused narrowly on commercial market research and audience research industry. In recent time, some surveys on specific Internet use such as political and social use of the Internet by those who are well educated and familiar with computer technology were carried out (Hofheinz, 2004).

The political use of the Internet has grown increasingly since it first became available in the mid 1990s. This is indicated by the rapid proliferation of political websites in the past five years. Moroccan Internet users could choose from a growing number of websites with information about political parties, social groups, and political and intellectual activists.[341] Yet there is a lack of systematic study on Moroccan political websites, especially from the uses and gratifications perspective. In this chapter we will investigate the political use of the Internet from the demand side, focusing on Moroccan university students.

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[340] Norris applied the "supply-and demand" method. She analysed the content of 134 websites and surveys of the electorate in the 15 European Union member states, from the spring 2000 Eurobarometer (Norris, 2003: 27).
[341] As mentioned in chapter 2, the Internet has exponentially grown in Morocco to the point that some scholars called Morocco an "Internet boom country. See the website of the IUC www.iuc.org.

The study of the political use of the Internet by Moroccan university students is a matter of specific significance in that it provides a convenient focus to study the use and impact of the new communication technology on an important segment of Morocco's future elite. Why does our sample focus on university students? Three factors have determined our sample choice. The first involves Internet technological infrastructures available for students in a number of places including university media centers, cyber cafés and homes.[342] Conventionally, students were the early users of the Internet. They were worldwide seen as the principal Internet audience.[343] The same holds true for Moroccan students, who have been among the most Internet technologies literate in the country. They constitute the highest concentration of Internet users.

The second reason concerns the relatively high level of student's political awareness and identification with certain domestic and international political issues. The real battleground of political forces in Moroccan political life is the university (Darif, 2000: 251). Educated youth and particularly university students constitute the primary recruiting target for political parties and political organizations. Islam-oriented movements also target in their recruitment the better-educated among men and women at high schools and universities (Tozy, 1999: 181). John Entelis recently argues that Islam-oriented political movements constitute the real challenge for the regime and the social and political support for these movements stems from two segments, namely university students and unemployed urban youth (Entelis, 1997: 50). As Mahdi Elmandjra puts it:

> "Moroccan students may be indexical of the political future of the country, since they constitute the activist segment of Moroccan society"[344] (Elmandjra, 2002).

The third reason is that traditionally, studies that used survey techniques to analyse Moroccan political life focused typically on students' political behavior. In 1984, Mohammed Tozy, for instance interviewed students at the University of Casablanca to explore the rise of Moroccan Islamism (Tozy, 1999). In April 1995 a group of Moroccan sociologists at the University of Rabat carried a study among 865 students to examine how

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[342] Almost all Moroccan universities are connected to the Internet.
[343] No wonder that the early research on the use of the Internet has been done in the USA and has focused on high school and college students.
[344] Elmandjra, personal interview.

religious values determine the habitus of Moroccan students (Bourqia et al., 2000). Recently, Tessler surveyed a sample of young urban Moroccans to gauge to what extent media consumption stimulates significant political changes among Moroccan's future political elite (Tessler, 2000).

This chapter considers the consequences of the political use of the Internet by students for political life in Morocco. The first section outlines briefly the data collection and methods. The second section goes on to present the findings of the survey and analyse the use of the Internet by students and its relationships to online political activities. The conclusion considers whether this new medium has the capacity to transform the public sphere, and by extension, the nexus power in the Moroccan political field.

6.1 Data and Methodology

This chapter reports the findings of a survey conducted among Moroccan students.[345] The aim was to find out what role, if any, the Internet plays in Moroccan students' political lives, what they think about it, and how and why they do or do not use it. A series of questions about general Internet use were asked, including how long an individual student had been online and how frequently he or she used the Internet per week.[346] The questionnaire also included questions about the place of Internet access, e-mail use and frequency. Basic demographics including gender and age were also collected.

To examine the political impact of the Internet in particular, we asked a series of questions about a wide range of online political activities. This includes e.g. looking for political information on the Internet, and or engaging in political online discussion forums. Some questions investigated the general view of Moroccan students towards Islam-oriented organizations' websites, including the extent of current usage of these i.e. how often they visit Islam-oriented websites. Questions about signing online political petitions, sending e-mails to politicians or signing up for an e-news bulletin were not posed given the underdeveloped state of the Internet in Morocco at the time of carrying the survey.

The following overview of the data examines the online political "habitus" of the students at two big Moroccan universities. All data is drawn from this survey sample

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[345] Findings are presented in the form of both graphs and tables in order to facilitate interpretation.
[346] Internet user was measured by using the five-item scale "how often do you surf? Do you ever send or receive e-mail? (If yes, ask) Is this? Every day, once every week, once every month, never.

which consists of 393 respondents, from the universities of Casablanca and Rabat. Face to face interviews were conducted with the sample and all research was carried out between May 2001 and January 2002.[347]

From the outset, it is clear the survey is a small-scale study and cannot claim to be representative. And thus it may not reflect the overall behavior of Moroccans, but it may well reflect the behavior of Moroccan students, given the relatively small number of users of the Internet and the limited availability of political websites.[348]

6.2 Minor Findings

6.2.1 Surfing the Internet

Out of the 542 respondents, there were 393 respondents who described themselves as Internet users. The survey reveals that by January 2002 almost 73 percent of the Moroccan students were online. Generally the access to the Internet among Moroccan students is high. Given the pace of change in communications, with use of the Internet growing by leaps and bounds, digital divide by university students is likely to be bridged in the next future.

Contrary to what one might think, there is a great percentage of early adopters (experienced) users among Moroccan students. 11 percent have been online for at least three years (1998). 21 percent have been online at least two years (1999). 36 percent users have been online for at least two years (2000). 28 percent of students have used it for one year (2001). Almost 3 percent of students have used it for less than one year (2002).

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[347] The environment in which this survey was undertaken was very restrictive to the expression of true public opinion. There was a high degree of suspicion and fear of reprisals. This was more pronounced after September 2001. This is a typical Arab environment in which public opinion survey has been conducted. A few minor methodological and statistical errors are certainly unavoidable. Nevertheless, it would be reasonable to lay claim to the fact that not only some general tendencies could be discerned, but also some scientifically verified conclusions could be drawn.

[348] Limiting the sample to two Moroccan universities and to 393 respondents was unavoidable given the resources available for the research, and this may reduce the degree to which findings can be generalized with confidence.

Table 12: Adoption and surfing of the Internet

Years	Total	Percent
1998	18	11
1999	56	21
2000	96	36
2001	181	28
2002	42	3
Subtotal	393	100

6.2.2 Place of access

Respondents were also required to indicate the access location to the Internet from a list of possible locations. The cyber cafés are by far the most popular and accessible, thus comprising 66 percent of Internet activity. Moroccan students get also on to the Internet through university connections (30 percent). Finally, and not surprisingly, Internet connection at home had the lowest score of 4 percent and comes at a rather distant 3rd. The low score recorded for home is due to their low level of connectivity caused by the high cost that is associated with such service in Morocco.

An interesting observation is that although most students have Internet access at their universities, most of them are more likely to access the Internet from the cyber cafés. Computers available for use at universities are few and often lead to long queues of users. In addition, universities suffer from a low level of connectivity in addition to restrictions placed on the use of this facility. The high score for use of the Internet via cybercafés is due to its availability at every time and at low price.[349]

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[349] See detailed information about this in Chapter 2.

Table 13: Place of Internet access

Place	Total	Percent
Cybercafes	260	66
University	119	30
Home	14	4
Subtotal	393	100

6.2.3 Time of surfing

Table 11 shows that 15 percent of the respondents access the Internet on a daily basis, 60 percent weekly and 24 percent monthly. More intensive use of the Internet, however, is found in a small minority, 1 percent of students connect to the Internet at least twice a day.[350]

Table 14: Time of surfing

Surfing	Total	Percent
once a day	59	15
once a week	235	60
once a month	95	24
least twice a day	4	1
Subtotal	393	100

6.2.4 Hours of surfing in a week

In response to the question asking the average amount of time spent using the Internet each week, 9 percent answered "less than 1 hour per week", 46 percent "1 to 3 hours per week",

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[350] Regularly is defined as at least once a week. As mentioned earlier, the regular use is the most important.

33 percent "4 to 6 hours per week", 9 percent "7 to 9 hours per week", and 3 percent "more than 10 hours per week".[351]

Table 15: Hours of surfing per week

Hours of surfing	Total	Percent
Less than one hour	22	9
One to three hours	109	46
Four to six hours	77	33
Seven to nine hours	20	9
More than ten hours	7	3
Subtotal	235	100

6.2.5 Surfing reasons

For what purposes are Moroccan students logging onto the Internet? Students were asked to indicate their primary uses of the Internet. This survey shows that students spent the majority of their time in real-time chat rooms and e-mail, making them the most popular functions of the Internet (50 percent). The next highly preferred use is surfing for information and news about politics (30 percent). 14 percent of espondents reported that they accessed the Internet for educational and research purposes. Surfing for entertainment has the lowest score (6 percent).

Table 16: Reasons for surfing

	Total	Percent
Chat rooms and e-mail	197	50
News	118	30
Education	55	14
Entertainment	23	6
Subtotal	393	100

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[351] Heavy use of the Internet is defined in terms of the amount of hours students surf in a week. More than three hours a week is considered heavy use of the Internet.

6.2.6 Chat room

Within the population of users, 60 percent respondents reported that they have been in a chat room. We see that 6 percent of the students who chat online did so every day. 44 percent chat once per week. The survey shows that 28 percent of the students surveyed have been in chat rooms once a month. So, Moroccan students were very frequent members of chat rooms in the virtual world.

Table 17: Chatroom use

	Total	Percent
once a day	23	6
once a week	173	44
once a month	109	28
never	88	22
Subtotal	393	100

6.2.7 Surfing for e-mail

E-mail clearly enjoys a high degree of popularity among Moroccan students as a way of communicating their messages.[352] The survey shows that 29 percent of students check their e-mails once a day. While a majority (44 percent) send or receive e-mail at least once a week. Nevertheless small percentages almost 26 percent of the surveyed users use e-mail only once per month.

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[352] E-mail is regarded by the computer industry managers in Morocco as the main reason for the massive take up and wide acceptance of the Internet in Morocco.

Table 18: E-mail use

	Total	Percent
once a day	113	29
once a week	174	44
once a month	101	26
never	5	1
Subtotal	393	100

6.2.8 Surfing for news

Just 6 percent of students are getting the news online at least once a day, and a great proportion of them (30 percent) said they obtain online political news once a week. 42 percent of the students go to the Internet for news in once a month. About 22 percent have never accessed the Internet to have news.

Table 19: Surfing for news

surfing for news	Total	Percent
once a day	23	6
once a week	118	30
once a month	164	42
never	88	22
Subtotal	393	100

6.2.9 Preferred news websites

Preferred information websites are ranked according to the percentage of users naming them. The most commonly preferred (visited) news website that had the highest score of 46 percent was *Al-Jazeera*, followed by *At-Tajdid* with 14 percent. *Risalat Al-Futuwa* ranks third, with about 10 percent of the respondents. The other most commonly visited

websites were *Le Monde, BBC*, *La Vie Economique*, *Radio France* and *El-Mundo*, *El-Pais* and *CNN* in that order.[353]

Table 20: Preferred news websites

	Total	Percent
Al-Jazeera	54	45
At-Tajdid	17	14
Risalat Al-Futuwa	12	10
Le Monde	9	8
BBC	7	6
Radio France	7	6
La Vie Economique	4	3
El-Mundo	3	3
El-Pais	3	3
CNN	2	2
Subtotal	118	100

6.2.10 Islam-oriented websites

Despite relatively high levels of Internet access, both at cyber cafés and at universities, accessing of Islam-oriented websites is not very high. 256 out of 393 students said they visited Islam-oriented websites. Asked about which Islam-oriented websites students visited in the last week, they mentioned at the first rank the website of Youssef Qardawi, which was by far the most popular destination with 28 percent, followed by Islam-online with 20 percent and Abdessalam Yassine online with 16 percent. The other most commonly browsed websites are *Risalat Al-Futuwa* (12 percent), *At-Tajdid* (10 percent), *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* (8), Islamway (7 percent), *Hizb At-Tahrir* (2 percent) and Hamas (2 percent). Moroccan Islam-oriented websites proved popular.

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[353] At the time of the survey many Moroccan newspapers had not launched their own online presence yet. As we previously mentioned, Islam-oriented movements were pioneers in matter of establishing and maintaining websites.

Table 21: Preferred Islam-oriented websites

	Type of website	Total	Percent
Youssef Qardawi	Personal website	71	28
Islamonline	Services websites	52	20
Islamway	Services websites	39	15
Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan	Organization website	33	13
At-Tajdid	Newspapers website	27	11
Hamas	Organization website	23	9
Hizb At-Tahrir	Organization website	11	4
Subtotal		256	100

40 percent of students said they have accessed these websites more than one time. 45 percent has accessed Islam-oriented websites irregularly. 27 percent of the students visit Islam-oriented websites regularly.

Reasons why students visit Islam-oriented websites vary. The most common reason is obtaining general information about the organizations (53 percent). The second tier is to get direct and unmediated information from Islam-oriented political organization (40 percent). Seven percent said they browsed for no specific reasons.

Table 22: Reasons for visiting Islam-oriented websites

	Total	Percent
Obtaining general information about the organization	137	53
Get direct and unmediated information from these organizations	102	40
No specific reason	17	7
Subtotal	256	100

6.3 Analysis and Discussion

What does online politics mean in this study? Given the situation of online politics in Morocco, we focused on passive types of online political activities practised through information seeking, particularly political information on the Internet, the engagement in

online discussion forums and the browsing of Islam-oriented websites.[354] Thus, we understand by passive online politics here the double usage of the Internet by searching for political news and the visit of Islam-oriented websites either for one time or many times. While we view in this study these practices as key variables in online political activities, we consciously ignore the active forms of online political activities such as signing and sending an e-mail petition, sending an e-mail to an elected politician and sending an e-mail to a public service.

6.4 Major Findings

To move to the issue at the heart of this study, what is the relationship between regularly using the Internet and political usage of the Internet? Statistical analysis of the relationship between some characteristics associated with the use of the Internet and online politics uncover an even more interesting story. Our findings suggest that the various uses of the Internet for political reasons vary by the conditions such as adoption history, place of access and the frequency of use.

6.4.1 Adoption history of the Internet and search for political information

The study found that the use of the Internet for political reasons varies on the basis of adoption of history of the Internet. The more experienced students' users had with the Internet, the more they sought political information.[355] 36 percent of users who began using the Internet since 1998 seek political information. 27 percent of those who used the Internet in 1999 sought political information. 20 percent of 2000 users browsed information websites. 11 percent of the 2001 users looked for information on the website. And finally, 6 percent of 2002 users used the Internet for seeking political information.

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[354] Only 4 percent of all students Internet users say they use the Internet for online political discussion forums. The number is so small that there is no way to draw statistically significant conclusions from a closer examination of this group.

[355] We distinguish between early adoption and later adoption of the Internet. Those who started to use the Internet in 1998, 1999 and 2000 were identified as "early adopter" and those who began using the Internet in 2001 or later are considered "later adopters".

Table 23: Adoption of the Internet and the search for political information

Years	Total	Percent
1998	42	36
1999	32	27
2000	24	20
2001	13	11
2002	7	6
Subtotal	118	100

6.4.2 Adoption history of the Internet and Islam-oriented websites

Internet adoption history does have a significant impact on visiting Islam-oriented website. 33 percent of students with long online experience more than three years tended to visit Islam-oriented website. A grand total of 77 or 30 percent of the students surfing more than two years frequented Islam-oriented websites. New Internet adopters of about one year seemed not to visit Islam-oriented websites (5 percent). From this pattern we can say that an early adoption of the Internet increased the probability of visiting Islam-oriented websites.

Table 24: Adoption of the Internet and the visit of Islam-oriented websites

Year	Total	Percent
1998	84	33
1999	77	30
2000	56	22
2001	26	10
2002	13	5
Subtotal	256	100

6.4.3 Heavy Internet use and search for political information

Table 22 describes the relationship between hours spent on the Internet on a weekly basis and seeking information. The heavy Internet students' users were more likely to use the Internet to get politics-related information. 55 percent of those who spend "more than 10 hours per week" sought for political information. 25 percent of those who spend "7 to 9 hours per week" browsed online source for political information. 9 percent of those who spend "4 to 6 hours per week" and 8 percent of those who spend "1 to 3 hours per week" browsed news websites. Only three percent of those who spend "less than 1 hour per week" visited websites for political information.

Table 25: Heavy Internet use and the search for political information

Hours of surfing	Total	Percent
Less than one hour	3	3
One to three hours	9	8
Four to six hours	11	9
Seven to nine hours	30	25
More than ten hours	65	55
Subtotal	118	100

6.4.4 Heavy Internet use and Islam-oriented websites

Heavy Internet use was also positively associated with preferences for Islam-oriented websites. The more time university students spent using the Internet, the more likely they were to be visiting Islam-oriented websites. 44 percent of those who spend "more than 10 hours per week" visited Islam-oriented websites. 39 percent of those who spend "7 to 9 hours per week", 9 percent of those who spend "4 to 6 hours per week" and 5 percent of those who spend "1 to 3 hours per week" visited Islam-oriented websites. The least common response was of those who spend "less than 1 hour per week" (3 percent).

Table 26: Heavy Internet use and the visit of Islam-oriented websites

Hours of surfing	Total	Percent
Less than one hour	7	3
One to three hours	12	5
Four to six hours	23	9
Seven to nine hours	101	39
More than ten hours	113	44
Subtotal	256	100

6.4.5 Place of Internet access and search of political Information

Does the place of Internet access matter for online political activities? The place of Internet access has significant positive correlations with seeking for political information. The cybercafés Internet users have the highest percentage of seeking political information (73 percent). Our survey shows that only 20 percent of students, who regularly surf from the university, seek for political information. Home-based students surfers, who are engaged in seeking political information counts only for seven percent.

Table 27: Place of Internet access and the search for political information

Place	Total	Percent
Home	8	7
University	24	20
Cybercafes	86	73
Subtotal	118	100

6.4.6 Place of Internet access and Islam-oriented websites

As indicated in Table 25, the frequency of contacting Islam-oriented websites varies with where the Internet is accessed. Those who surfed from home tended not to visit Islam-oriented websites (2 percent). Being aware that their surfing habits would be monitored by the regime, a small number of students (10 percent) visited Islam-oriented websites from university. Cyber-cafés users (88 percent) were substantively more likely than home and university student users to have browsed Islam-oriented websites.

Table 28: Place of Internet access and the visit of Islam-oriented websites

Place	Total	Percent
Home	5	2
University	26	10
Cybercafes	225	88
Subtotal	256	100

6.4.7 Political information and Islam-oriented websites

The majority of those (62 percent) who logged online for political news, visited Islam-oriented websites. This pattern was even more evident among the smaller group of heavy Internet users (78 percent). Does it matter what type of websites students visit? A majority of students, happened to visit *Al-Jazeera*, visited Islam-oriented websites. This congruence between *Al-Jazeera* and Islam oriented websites indicates that students, who were interested in Arab news websites, were more likely to engage in online Islamic activities.

It has been often argued that the use of Arabic in education and in the public sphere facilitates the spread of Islamic culture and thus creates the cultural condition of Islamism (Tozy, 1999). Our analysis does not confirm the conventional wisdom, formulated in the statement "arabisants et islamisés". That is to argue that students, inevitably, seek out information from like-minded sources and visit websites that are likely to echo their political leanings. We examine the visits to American and European news websites and the

visits to Islam-oriented websites. As might not be expected, more than three-quarters of those who visited American and European news websites (77 percent) have visited Islam-oriented websites.

6.5 Conclusion

This survey was designed to explore how students in two Moroccan universities view the Internet and how they use this new medium for political reasons. This study has some limitations that are related to the definition of online political use of the Internet. The definition employed in this survey to measure the political use of the Internet among Moroccan students is very limited. While not covering other important ones, identified and defined in previous sections of this chapter, it measures only two usages.

It can be concluded from the results of this survey that Internet use in Morocco is widespread amongst students, but passive online politics or Internet penetration in politics reflects some traits of Internet penetration in general. As a general rule, the numbers of those Internet users for politics are still limited.

The conclusion argues that length of Internet use is positively related to engagement in online activities. In other words, the longer one uses the Internet, the more she or he is likely to engage in online political activities. The late adopters tend to have no experiences in terms of online political activities, as compared to those with more Internet experiences. If this trend continues to grow at the current rate, a significant portion of the students will use the Internet for politics. More students and educated people will be accessing virtual sources for seeking information, and more students and educated users will start relying on the Internet for the bulk of their political information.

What these results reveal is that university students tended to engage in online politics in a cumulative manner, engaging in one particular activity leads to a series of online political activities. The early adopted and heavy users are likely to intensively use the Internet for political reasons. This means that all students can be seen as potential and continuous Internet users, because most of them already have Internet access at the university and cyber cafés. The online political activity limited to some small segments may in the short-term include other segments.

To confirm the fact that the more students become informed about political, social, economic and religious issues, through repeated exposures to Islam-oriented websites, the more they become predisposed to participate politically. This chapter serves to confirm the overall pattern that early adoption and heavy use of the Internet go hand in hand with an increasing level of online political activities. But what the results can not confirm is that online political activities lead to offline political activities.

A number of advantages were identified by the political use of the Internet by students. Students were positioned by a click to have political information, the freedom to choose their political information sources, the opportunity to get information about events and about political issues without media interference. This could have a positive effect on the public sphere.

In many ways the most striking finding concerns the role played by the Internet and the political websites to provide a valuable service in widening the range of information which became easily available. Information about what their regime does (and does not do) is more freely available online. By extension, Internet practices in terms of information provision to the point of information overload are likely to stimulate the most significant changes in the structure of Moroccan public sphere.

In the midst of this process of change, it would be foolhardy to claim that our research can tell us whether the political use of the Internet has changed students' political attitudes, opinions and values that affected their political behavior and activism. We are still in the early stages of understanding how Internet-based political communication has influenced students. Time will tell exactly how the Internet will fit into the political communication, but all indications are that it will continue to play a more and more prominent role in the political education of the Moroccan students and educated people. The 393 respondents on which the present study is based constitute a relatively strong, if admittedly limited, foundation for discerning the orientations of Morocco's students. This research is exploratory. In this study, we are more searching for patterns than explanations. In future research these patterns can be more closely examined and an understanding could be formed concerning the political use of the Internet. It is primarily designed to gain an understanding of the range of opinions held about the use of the Internet, not to determine the weight of this use. Therefore, the results of our research may be viewed as indicative, not projectable.

Our results provide a promising basis for further investigation of the Internet as a tool of political socialisation, true. But we have to turn to evidence from focus groups to investigate more deeply the impact of a range of Islam-oriented websites on Moroccan university students. For such investigations, we also need systematic longitudinal panel studies examining changes in media consumption.

Media consumption patterns among university students may change as they become familiar with the Internet. Our study results indicate university students use the Internet for news but our results could not indicate whether the Internet is supplanting the use of other media, or whether university students tend to rely less on printed forms of communication such as magazines and newspapers, and that they watch less TV for information. This avenue is to be explored by the comparison between media consumption. This area of research is potentially useful for future research.

Our study could not tell us whether Islam-oriented websites are able to involve some segments of students, who have thus far remained aloof, in politics. Studying the role of Islam-oriented websites and the political behaviors of university students will remain incomplete, without the study of other political actors such as political parties, by using data from the coming election in 2006.

7 Counter strategies of the regime

In 1973 Abdessalam Yassine wrote an open letter *Al-Islam Au At-Tufan: Risala Maftuha Ila Malik Al-Maghrib* (*lslam or the Deluge*) and sent it to Hassan II. He also privately printed this letter and distributed it to many people (Tozy, 1999: 69). Abdessalam Yassine's *Nasiha* angered the king, who reacted by suppressing the text. It was widely known that to be in possession of the letter was punishable in Morocco so that the circulation of such material could be controlled. The regime successfully managed to stifle the circulation of the letter and thus minimized its effects on Moroccans. After about 30 years, Abdessalam Yassine sent a new letter to Mohammed VI. The new letter dealt with Hassan's II reign. In the same traditional spirit, while the regime quickly attempted to block the circulation of this letter after banning it, Abdessalam Yassine already manged to publish it in many independent papers, a new communication channel non-existent in the early 1970s. Loyal to its mentality and methods, the regime banned the papers, which published the full text of the memorandum. Magazines that reported and published extracts of the memorandum faced the same fate.[356] To the surprise of the regime, the memorandum appeared on the Internet. The then-Communication Minister Mohamed Larbi Messari, downloaded the Arabic, French and Spanish version of the memorandum from the Internet.[357]

The potential impact of the Internet on marginalized movements has generated a great deal of attention from political scientists and media scholars. Recent academic debates have focused on the likely benefits and advantages of using information and communication technologies for the purpose of political communication in authoritarian regimes. There is a strong belief that the Internet will empower individuals and groups and thus make information control by authoritarian regimes very difficult (Ferdinand, 2000;

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[356] On February 5th, 2000 some magazines were confiscated from the newsstands. Two days later the regime permitted the circulation of *Maroc Hebdo* and *Le Reporter*, which published only articles about the memorandum "To Whom It Concerns" written by the leader of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*. Two other magazines *Le Quotidien* (Arabic and French version) and *La Nouvelle Tribune* were temporarily confiscated from newsstands in major cities, because they printed the full text of the memorandum. The regime permitted the three publications to be put back on the newsstands for circulation the same day. On February 9th, 2000, the then-Communication Minister Mohamed Larbi Messari declared that the memorandum was not banned, that it was available on the Internet.

[357] Messari, personal interview.

Downing, 1996).[358] This has the potential to alter power relationships between authoritarian regimes and their citizens. Not the Internet but the political use of it is deeply mistrusted because it seems to undermine authoritarian regime's control over the information diffusion. The optimists argue that online-based forms of political communication represent a major qualitative and quantitative improvement over communication technologies (e.g., telegraph, radio, television, telephones) and herald mostly positive ramifications for political change. In the brave new world of the Internet and of information without frontiers, the monopolistic character of authoritarian regimes over national information systems does not sound justified and may by no means be of significance in the age of digitalisation. The complexity involved in the emergence of information autonomy and the intensification of the process are challenging the scope and capacity of authoritarian regimes, as their regulatory abilities are challenged and reduced in some spheres. National information systems, along with other traditional information channels, are widely understood to have become displaced - by new forms of information and communication - from their role as the dominant input channels in the political field. Before the arrival of the Internet, authoritarian regimes used national information systems as political management tools in terms of disseminating their ideologies and legitimising their policies.

In contrast, critics often point out that such technologies potentially enhance the power and reach of authoritarian regimes rather than threatening authoritarian regimes. Some analysts argue that, at least in the short to medium term, the spread of the Internet will tend to benefit authoritarian regimes at the expense of opponents and activists. As Kalathil and Boas observed authoritarian regimes have responded effectively to the challenge by implementing a combination of reactive measures, including blocking websites and jailing activists, and proactive policies, such as distributing official discourse online and offering services (Kalathil and Boas, 2001). Arab authoritarian regimes emulated China in their endeavor to control their citizens' internet use to keep the status quo. They have been very adept at learning to utilize new technologies in order to strengthen their control over information distribution. In 1999, Eric Goldstein, deputy director of the Middle East and North Africa division of Human Rights Watch, stated that many Arab regimes have adopted means such as proxy servers and heavy taxation of the

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[358] Authoritarian regimes are attempting to silence dissident movements and critical opponents on the Internet in countries like Cuba, China and VietNam.

Internet to regulate and censor the free flow of online content (Goldstein, 1999). The United Arab Emirates uses filtering to block dissident political content. Saudi Arabia uses the most extensive Internet filtering technologies so that Internet users are intimidated and are inclined to self-censorship. Egypt has no overt censorship of public Internet use, yet the regime has cracked down on some individuals who posted controversial material online (Kalathil and Boas, 2003).

Like many political regimes in the Arab world, the Moroccan regime has been frightened by the Internet, which it considers subversive, yet so far the regime has not made any effort to control the Internet, allowing users to have access to a wealth of political information that the print and broadcast media cannot publish (Goldstein, 1999). Within the last few years, the potential threat posed by the possibilities of Internet-based political communication has received a great deal of attention from the regime. Since May 2000, the regime has become extremely concerned about the quick adoption and efficient use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements.

It has been argued that the political use of the Internet by one political actor affects all other political actors, "with changes in the behaviour of one group influencing the behaviour of others" (Rodgers, 2003: 75). Following Warkentin in his book on NGOs and the Internet, Rodgers developed this argument by saying that the introduction of the Internet into politics brings "a wider adjustment of power and control relations" (Rodgers, 2003: 75). Applying this equation to the Moroccan context, we are entitled to conclude that it is logical that the regime has inevitably changed its censorship tactics. Indeed, the regime itself is not remaining impassive in the face of these new and serious electronic media challenges, particularly the political use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements, by employing two broad types of counterstrategies.

This chapter tries to answer the following question: How has the regime reacted to the political use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements to maintain its control of the information flow within the national information system? In the following, we focus on the counterstrategies legal as well as technological that the regime has employed in its efforts to prevent or minimize the impact of the use of the Internet in the Moroccan political field.

7.1 Legal methods

In the face of growing use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements, the regime has attempted to silence opponents on the Internet.[359] It has shown "zero tolerance" for for the empowerment of Islam-oriented political movements because it undermines the regime's information monopoly. The regime's worst nightmare came true when Abdessalam Yassine and his organization managed to post the memorandum on the Internet. The memorandum, after being banned in Moroccan independent print press, found an outlet on the Internet. It was reported that a number of activists downloaded the full text of the memorandum and then distributed it in mosques.[360]

By printing and distributing the memorandum, Islam-oriented movements made these censored textual materials available, even for those who had no Internet access. This innovative and effective use of the Internet has made the so-called digital divide and the regime censorship irrelevant: While the digital divide was made irrelevant because even those who have no access to the Internet have had the chance to read the "views and arguments" of the movements, the regime's attempts to seize the memorandum were made obsolete.

The newness of the medium, combined with the apparent impossibility of effectively regulating Internet content have meant that very little content regulation has been attempted so far. The regime, unprepared for how to tackle new Internet-based activism, arrested four members of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* in February 2000 for distributing the memorandum in Moroccan cities.[361] The arrested persons were charged with "violating the sacred institution of the monarchy". It is no wonder, then, that *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* came to be perceived as a political force extending into every place on the Internet to avoid being beaten as in the old print media. The political use of the Internet has grown considerably and has led the regime to concentrate on the strengths that Islam-oriented movements have

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[359] Examples can be cited from Asia, Latin America and Russian.
[360] Messari, personal interview.
[361] We were informed by a source close to these people that they downloaded their material from the Internet after receiving a notice from the Rabat-Sale headquarters. They copied it and began to distribute the memorandum not between their circles, but also in mosques and among university and high school students.

gained from the application and use of the Internet in their political conflicts against the regime.[362]

From that moment, it was clear that the Internet represented a powerful new medium, whose open logic would become ever more dominant in the coming years. Islam-oriented movements are learning to tailor their communicative techniques according to the dictates of the regime's media logic. In their efforts to get around the regime, they are beginning to rely more and more on the electronic tactics first developed and used by other dissidents in other countries.

7.1.1 New Media Law of 2002

Since the national conference on communication in Rabat 1994 a media law was proposed, but was not passed. During the first few months after the socialists took power in 1998, more new liberties were allowed, yet the opposition parties, the independent press and some political parties in the coalition criticized the socialist-led government's application of undemocratic media policies and called for the enactment of a new press law that would suit the spirit of the transition period.

Political debate about the legal changes in the media is a basic political debate. Concerning regulation of the new law for media, the reform plan had been the subject of intense debate even among parties, participating in the government. Documents were presented to the parliament suggesting guidelines for press policies. These reform proposals were attempts to include the needs of a larger sector of the Moroccan population within the context of a new press law. In March 2000, the socialist-led government organized a conference on the reform of the media institutions. Abderrahmane Youssouffi, the then Prime Minister, announced that his government was working on a new media plan with the aid of foreign experts to be one of the most essential components of modern and democratic Morocco.

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[362] In this context, we cite what a Moroccan women interviewed by the journalist Iihem Rachidi, correspondent of the *Christian Monitors* about the sale of Islam-oriented material. She said that "Controllers come to check what was on sale, but they did not give us any instructions. There is not much they can do; everything can be found on the Internet and on satellite TV. http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/1215/p07s01-woaf.htm, 23.01.2004.

On February 8th, 2002 the parliament adopted a new press law. The new press law maintains the provision for the seizure of publications without a court order. Article 29 reaffirms the right of the regime to ban Moroccan or foreign publications if the publications in question tend to threaten Islam, the institution of the monarchy, territorial integrity or public order. If journalists dared to break such taboos, they had to reckon with punitive measures.

The positive improvements of the new press law include lighter prison terms and fines (3 to 5 years, rather than the 5 to 20 in the 1958 law in cases of criticism and defamation of the monarchy) and simplified and less bureaucratic procedures for launching a new newspaper. The law continues to provide fines journalists and editors for damage if found guilty of libelling public officials.[363] The most significant development was that the new law requires the executive branch of government to justify any seizures or bans of Moroccan or foreign publications, suspension of the publisher's license, or destruction of equipment.

Despite these improvements, the media relationships between the regime and the opposition groups have not changed much. The regime's authorities harassed and intimidated journalists in a number of incidents. The most dramatic illustration involved journalists that reported on Islam-oriented movements. For instance, in January 2002, when a lawyer and a member of a local humanitarian organization together with Anas Mezzour, a journalist with the Arabic-language weekly *Al-Ayyam,* visited Islam-oriented activists held in the prison of Kénitra. Anas Mezzour was arrested and his tape-recorder was confiscated (CPJ, 2003). Similarly, on March 13th, 2002 Maria Moukrim, a journalist with *Al-Ayyam*, was threatened, attacked and injured by the regime's authorities in Casablanca. She had written an article in January 2002 on a secret detention centre in the Rabat suburb of Témara (CPJ, 2003).[364] On 16 August 2002, *Al-Ayyam*'s managing editor Nordine Miftah was interrogated for several hours about an interview with an Islam-oriented leader, Abdallah El-Chadli, who had appeared on July 11th, 2002. The journalist

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[363] The new press law has drawn strong criticism from human rights organizations for retaining prison sentences of up to five years for journalists and publishers found guilty of undermining the monarchy, Islam or Morocco's claim to the disputed Western Sahara territory. Many international organizations and local institutions worried about the provisions of the new Moroccan Press Code.

[364] The villa was called the "green prison" because of the colour of the faces of those who have been tortured there. She was not able to visit the centre, but she spoke to people who had been detained there and to people who lived nearby. The prisoners are Islam-oriented activists (CPJ, 2003).

who conducted the interview, Anas Mezzour, was summoned and detained for the same reason two days later and was questioned for nearly five hours (CPJ, 2003).

7.1.2 The anti-terrorism bill[365]

The regime's crackdown against the press during 2002, continued in 2003 with the adoption of additional security regulations under which journalists were prosecuted for publishing "false information that might threaten the public interest, public morality, public order and public security". An anti-terrorism legislation was submitted in January 2003 to parliament shortly after several newspapers carried reports about the regime's abuses such as the secret monitoring of e-mail correspondence. It was designed to institute a rigorous system of censorship, which was enforced by the powerful Directorate of Territorial Security (DTS), and operated under the aegis of the Ministry of the Interior. As a result of pressure from human rights organizations, the regime withdrew the bill in April 2003. On May 21st, 2003 the regime responded to the Casablanca attacks on May 16, by pushing its proposed anti-terrorist legislation back into Parliament for a vote. At this time, the Moroccan parliament passed the anti-terrorist legislation without any opposition.

The anti-terrorist law expands the definition of terrorism to include any disturbance of public order. For example, it allows journalists, reporters and editors to be held criminally liable for publishing material the regime defines as providing moral justification for terrorism. Paragraph 12 of the law's first article is particularly restrictive regarding press freedom. It states that "propaganda, publicity or defence of an act of terrorism" is itself to be considered a terrorist offence. According to a Moroccan journalist, the concept of "publicity" is vaguely defined; it could be construed to mean any report or article about an act of terrorism. Several Moroccan groups and journalists opined that this law gives the DTS an additional legal weapon to carry out its monitoring tasks. The anti-terrorism law gives the regime's authorities; including security forces the right to intercept telephone, postal communications and the Internet without warrants. In addition, article 41 of the new anti-terrorism legislation severely limits press freedom under the pretext of protecting Moroccan territorial integrity. The anti-terrorism law sparked condemnation from

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[365] The draft anti-terrorist law was also labelled by many journalists and civil society groups as *Laânigri law*" after the general Laânigri, the chief of the DST.

Moroccan human rights groups and international human rights organizations for the harsh measures it allows. They strongly criticized its ambiguous definition of "support" of terrorist activities. By allowing arbitrary interpretation, the regime has put journalists, intellectuals, human rights defenders and Islam-oriented activists at its mercy. The anti-terrorism bill empowers the Minister of the Interior to confiscate publications that are judged offensive by the regime. Under this law, the Interior Minister may order the indefinite suspension of any publication. The primary objective of this regulation is to allow the authorities the opportunity to deal with the press from a security perspective.

As a result of this new law, the regime was granted broad powers to arrest journalists and close publications. The first victim of the terrorist law was Moustapha Alaoui, managing editor of the Arabic-language weekly *Al-usbua*, who has been detained since June 5 for publishing a communiqué by a hitherto unknown group called *A-saiqa* claiming responsibility for three of the five bombings in Casablanca on May 16 2003.[366] He was convicted of "concealing a document likely to assist a criminal investigation and publishing false information likely to disturb the peace". Later that month, Alaoui was given a one-year suspended prison sentence and a three-month ban on his paper.

Further examples of the regime's coercive media policies were the arrest of three journalists and editors Mohammed al-Herd and Abdel Majid Ben Taher, of the Oujda-based weekly newspaper *Al-Sharq*, and Mustapha Qashnini, editor of the Oujda-based weekly *Al-Hayat Al-Maghribiya* on 13 June.[367] They were convicted and charged under the country's new anti-terrorism law with "extolling terrorist acts". The charges came in response to the publication of an article by Zakkaria Boughrara, an Islam-oriented intellectual in *Al-Hayat Al-Maghribiya* and in *Al-Sharq.* The article discussed the history of Islam-oriented movements in Morocco and its alleged relationship with the regime's intelligence services. The article also praised the actions and activities of the "*Jihadi* movement*", yet the author did not advocate hatred or call for violence.[368] Both weeklies were prevented from being published for three months.

The independent print press, while not targeted in the same fashion as Islam-oriented print press, including online media, is subject to different constraints on journalistic freedom. As evidence of the continuation of a media clamp down, many

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[366] The communiqué alleged that the regime's security apparatus had been aware of the bombings.
[367] On August 4th, Al-Herd was sentenced to three years in prison by a Rabat court for publishing an article on June 5th by the Islam-oriented activist, Ben Taher and Qashnini were each sentenced to a year in prison.
[368] Boughrara was sentenced in the same trial to 10 years in prison for incitement to violence.

independent press journalists were harassed and some papers were shut down during 2002 and 2003. *Reporters Sans Frontieres* (RSF) have called 2003 "a black year" for journalists. (RSF, 2004). These media incidents thus reflected a sharp disjuncture between the regime's cautious willingness for economic and political liberalisation and stubborn insistence on media and human rights closure. According to a recent report by the Freedom House of 2004 Morocco's rating was downgraded from partly free to not free (Freedom House, 2004).

7.1.3 The anti-terrorism bill and the Internet

As mentioned earlier, initially the regime had not attempted to control Internet content within its own borders through legalisation, yet it has kept a careful watch on any online political activity that may be deemed dangerous from its point of view. It has drafted no new laws and regulations touching the publication of information on the Internet; it merely extended existing press laws limiting free expression on the Internet.

In contrast to Tunisia's blanket policy of extreme state-imposed censorship, the Internet in Morocco was not controlled by the regime. An online presence can not be created in much the same way as founding a private newspaper. No authorisation or licenses are required from an organization or an individual to launch a website. But the legal censorship mechanism applied to all media activities has been extended to cover materials on the Internet. As long as the Internet was not directly challenging the regime's hegemony, the use of the Internet was generally tolerated. The regime was amongst those few countries in the Arab world that resisted authoritarian temptations to censor digital content (Goldstein, 1999; RSF, 2003).

Until April 2001, many Moroccan journalists were aware of no regime-imposed blocking or filtering of the Internet, including newsgroups and e-mail-based communication. The regime has not attempted to control Internet content within its own border through rules and legislation nor has it sought to regulate Internet material coming into the country from outside. The Internet was free from the regime's monitoring and control to the point that even the websites of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia

El-Hamra and Rio de Oro (Polisario) was available from within Morocco.[369] According to Goldstein the regime had not imposed on ISPs any form of legal liability for materials they carry and that any ISPs had been punished for content that was deemed dangerous (Goldstein, 1999). ISPs were not required or pressurized by the regime to supply any information about their customers and no one was the object of the regime's surveillance.

The regime introduced to the anti terrorism law a regulatory framework for Internet content and e-mail monitoring. Since 2003 the law, content on the Internet has become topical. The above mentioned developments at the level of political communication and the wider dissemination of political information have led to a legal and political campaign. Calls for the regime to renew its attempts to regulate the Internet have been launched by many of the regime's departments, agencies and ministries. The Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were directly involved and worked together in order to have the Internet under tight control, particularly in the case of distributing political and religious materials.

The regime has used the danger posed by terrorism and the fight against it as the excuse for increasing authoritarianism and violations of freedom of press, including suppression of online media freedom. Reporters Sans Frontieres asserts that the Internet has suffered 'serious battering' since 9/11 and is "collateral damage" in the war against terrorism (RSF, 2002). Together with existing restrictive criminal and press codes, the new law gives the regime the power to legalize what the DTS already does.[370] Offending materials posted on the servers will be declared a danger to the regime security, ISPs' license would be suspended and equipment confiscated.

The regime retains the power to revoke Internet licences that are deemed threatening to public order. Implicitly, the law has made website hosting firms legally responsible for any content that appears on the websites on their servers. The regime has used the licensing process to prevent the publication of materials that cross the threshold of tolerable political contents. This implies that the burden of policing the Internet has been obliquely placed on the shoulders of Internet-service providers. The anti-terrorism regulation regulates and censors Internet content, yet it has not made access to

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[369] The website http://www.arso.org, contained information material that would never appear in the Moroccan print media.
[370] Some Moroccan media reported that the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were largely behind the terrorism law.

unauthorized content available over the Internet illegal. In a similar vein, the anti-terror law places great limits on cyber-cafés.

The regime has relied largely on informal censorship mechanisms that result in groups self-censoring themselves to avoid direct confrontation with the regime. The rigid self-censorship and self- imposed limitations induced by informal red lines; i.e., discourages the creation of websites deemed "subversive". The websites posted on Moroccan servers must keep criticism within "acceptable" bounds and tailor their content to satisfy regime requirements. Certain sensitive topics, such as Islam, national territory and the monarchy should be avoided, and direct criticism of the monarch is strictly prohibited. Due to the high degree of self-censorship among Islam-oriented movements; their websites have kept their content and material within parameters of political acceptability.

7.2 Technological methods

Morocco has enthusiastically embraced and promoted the Internet as part of a larger economic strategy designed to modernize the country to attract foreign investment and other transnational business opportunities (El Yahyaoui, 2000: 51). The regime is fully aware that future economic growth depends on large measures on the extent to which the country is integrated with the global information infrastructure. The regime has placed a high value on the importance of the Internet and e-commerce in maintaining a competitive business edge, especially in a service economy such as the tourism sector. The regime bid to become "the telecommunications hub of the Maghreb" by making Internet access available since 1995 and by following a liberal Internet policy. The regime has thus provided a great amount of funding to construct backbone telecommunications networks, to enact regulations, to encourage investment and to promote computers, Internet connections and training programs.

Traditionally, Morocco has enjoyed a lively private ownership culture (Kavanaugh, 1999). Consequently, Internet services have been in private hands. The regime has followed a free policy through licensing a great number of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and through the encouragement of competition among Internet content-providers. As a result, the NTRA's first priority has been to introduce competition into the

marketplace.[371] The agency introduced competition with the monopoly of the telecommunications carrier IAM by allowing several ISPs to enter the public Internet access market.[372] Yet the number of firms that interconnected with the Internet is limited to just one, which implies the international gateway remains under the regime's control. This makes it easier for the regime to monitor and control what comes into the country.

Taking advantage of this monopolistic situation, the regime has also made use of technological devices to censor Internet content. One of the most common methods employed by the regime to stop the flow of unwanted information into Morocco consists of blocking websites and monitoring e-mails to prevent Moroccan citizens from accessing unfavourable political information.

7.2.1 Blocking Islam-oriented websites

As mentioned earlier, the regime was taken by surprise when Abdessalam Yassine and his organization launched the Memorandum on his own website.[373] As we mentioned earlier, the regime took note of the danger of the political use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements and became alarmed at the amount of censored and unauthorised information appearing on Islam-oriented websites. The regime realised that the control of information face new challenges and in the long run may lose control completely if it does not adapt. These developments at the level of political communication, alongside the wider dissemination of political information, have led the regime to renew its attempts to regulate the Internet. The regime has responded to the challenge from opponents that have been serious about the political use of the Internet by adopting new forms of information control. The first method was that of blocking websites. On April 6, 2001, the access to the websites of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* www.alJama'a.org, www.alJama'areview.com, www.fotowa.com, were kept blocked. For those who wanted to visit these websites from within Morocco, the access was made impossible, while the access from outside remained possible.

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[371] *Al-Wakala Al-Wataniya Li-Taknin Al-Ittisalat* (National Telecommunications Regulatory Agency) (NTRA).

[372] For further detail see chapter 2.

[373] As we mentioned earlier the website contained the full text of the Memorandum and unflattering materials taken from the censored print press about the reaction to the memorandum.

"Access to our websites has not been possible for our supporters, sympathizers and the Moroccan people because the Mahkzen imposed a technical ban to suppress the movement".[374]

According to a number of leading figures in the hierarchy of the organization, the "technical ban" or the technological blockade demonstrated the growing importance of the Internet as a useful means of political communication in the Moroccan political field. Similarly, Yahya El Yahyaoui asserts that the regime's online censorship against *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*'s websites suggests the growing importance of the Internet in political communication strategies in Morocco.[375]

Screen shot 29: Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan: Blocked website

Rather than abandoning their use of the Internet, however, the organization has been forced to undertake a technological reaction. As a committed political force with a long tradition in avoiding the regime's control over the information flow, the organization has resourceful innovation strategies to make it capable of exploring new ways around the regime's "technical ban". The most common tactic used by *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* to overcome the blockade was to "route around" the regime's technological censorship mechanism. The

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[374] Abdullah Shibani, a leading member of the organization and the husband of Nadia Yassine, personal interview with the author, May, 18, 2001, Rabat, Morocco.
[375] Yahya El Yahyaoui, expert for Information and Communication Technologies, personal interview with the author, December 12, 2001, Rabat, Morocco.

organization's response demonstrated a strong willingness to devote more resources to reach educated Moroccan audiences. It has responded to the regime's blockade by an innovative Internet-based political communication that consists of two different ways.

The first concerns what Internet experts call "mirroring of websites" techniques. The organization established a number of mirror-websites that contained the same political and religious content as the blocked websites. The organization began re-routing connection requests to its mirror websites and providing links to Safeweb, an anonymous proxy server so that people, sympathizers and activists would be able to see the blocked websites. The organization also made the public aware of this blockade by sending a great number of e-mails to those who already registered their names and e-mail accounts.[376] So far, the organization has been successful in limiting the regime's online censorship mechanisms, since it continued to draw visitors to its websites.[377]

The second method involves the changing of the domain address of the websites. They changed the website address name from www.alJama'a.org to www.alJama'a.com to get around the regime's blockade. The fact that the blockade lasted several months forced the organization to think about changing its online address. This decision was taken with some hesitation, because the change involved the loss of many familiar Internet surfers, who would have to find the new address.

In the case of mirroring websites, the regime had not turned towards more complex software systems to block the websites for ever. The regime hopes through the intermittent blockade that Moroccan Internet users simply assume that the websites were not accessible. The regime had not responded to the address changes. Telecommunications experts suggested that for about U.S. $50,000, the regime could purchase high-end computers and off-the-shelf software to monitor all traffic (Kavanaugh, 1999), yet the regime was reluctant to follow this path.

Many observers said that the blockade of the websites of Islam-oriented movements reflected the regime's growing unease about the potential of the Internet and e-mail to aid Islam-oriented organizations to disseminate not only uncensored but also censored information within Morocco. At least a few Moroccan scholars are in agreement with the basics of this assessment. In the words of a long-time observer of information and

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[376] In April 2001, the head of the Paris-based, Reporters Without Borders sent a protest letter to Minister of Interior Midaoui, criticizing the regime's actions.

[377] There is little evidence whether Moroccans Internet users were capable of viewing the websites that were blocked by accessing them via free "anti-censorship proxy (ACP) servers".

communication technologies in Morocco: "It will be impossible to control this technology completely, even with filters and an army of trained digital agents" (Elmandjra, 2001).

Screen shot 30: Al-Adl wal-Ihsan: Mirrored website

The regime has also been capable of exerting subtle pressure in the field of the Internet. It employed a subtle form of intervention when it attempted to force web-hosting to comply and align with the regime Internet policy in terms of access by menacingly withdrawing licensing permits.[378] The regime is serious in using the licensing process to prevent the publication of materials that it believes crosses the threshold of tolerable political and religious discourse. The proprietors of many of the estimated 150 ISPs in Morocco reportedly cooperated with the regime's authorities.[379] The regime can revoke the license of ISPs, forcing them to close their business, yet no cancellation of the ISP's business license was registered. The same could be said for cyber cafés. Since the initial launching of Internet cafés in Morocco no one was closed down or fined. As one Moroccan journalist says:

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[378] It was reported that regime pressured domestic-based printers not to print several newspapers, including two belonging to *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*.

[379] Blockade can be done only intermittently because the software does not have enough computing power to block every objectionable site all the time.

> "The Internet brings to mind an image of a two-headed technology, like the ancient god Janus, with one face representing the technologies of freedom, the other the technologies of control".[380]

Initially, the regime was not well equipped enough to meet the increasing complexities of Internet-based communication, yet there is growing evidence that Morocco's technical countermeasures are becoming increasingly sophisticated. In fact, the American government has already begun assisting the regime by supplying considerable software and hardware techniques to monitor unwanted and objectionable Internet content coming from outside the country and particularly from Islam-oriented websites.[381]

Screen shot 31: Online international support for Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan

Despite this recent sophistication of its software and hardware online controlling mechanism, the regime has not relied on software alone to control what Internet users do in Internet cafes. The regime attempted to combine high-tech measures with traditional and old–fashioned ones to augment its effectiveness with regard to the blockade of websites that were deemed politically and religiously dangerous. Persons identified as of particular interest were subject to strong monitoring. Most Islam-oriented activists known to the regime's "informers" have been subject to varying levels of intrusive surveillance,

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[380] Fatima, Bouterkha, senior official at the Moroccan Press Syndicate (SNPM), personal interview with the author, March 30, 2001, Berlin, Germany.

[381] Governments, corporations and Internet service providers around the world have allotted vast resources to improving Internet filtering and monitoring tools. Internet security is a rapidly growing and highly profitable field, especially after the September 11 terrorist attacks.

especially during sensitive political events and demonstrations. It has often been reported that the regime has heavily depended on Internet cafe owners to collect information about the surfers, particularly by Islam-oriented people. According to a Moroccan journalist, some Islam-oriented activists have reportedly been placed on an intensive watch list. The regime has become aware of new Islam-oriented activity through informers and other old-fashioned means. Four Islam-oriented activists were arrested in Ben Slimane and Tangier in 2000 because they came under suspicion not through high-tech surveillance but through informants.[382] Yet the mixture of these two techniques has proved not to be as successful in deterring anti-regime activities on the Internet because of communication networks.

The communication networks of Islam-oriented communities can be regarded as nodes of these movements and organizations. The communication networks are those "webs of interpersonal communication that do not operate through media, even though they are fed by media and feed into media" (Downing, 2001: 33). For Downing these communication networks are essential both to such media and social and political movements (Downing, 2001: 33). Some elements of this Internet audience are active members of social networks that often operate as information distribution channels. As a active audience, these communication networks underscore the internal connectivity characteristic of Islam-oriented movements and the centrality of this kind of communication process within these traditionally based-organizations in an adverse environment in terms of Internet infrastructure and in terms of illiteracy. What makes these communication networks vital and dynamic is that they are subject to any kind of hierarchy. The activities of these communication networks cannot be separated entirely from the the pulic shphere.

A great deal of public discussion takes place on the arena of the Internet, not only in explicit public forums and within varieties of online journalism, but also within the vast networking of activist organizations (Dahlgren, 2004: xiii; Sey and Castells, 2004: 375). Sey and Castells argue that "while media politics costs money, networked politics is a source of funding, because involvement in an interactive political network is an expression of commitment toward a personal political option" (Sey and Castells, 2004: 377-8). For Sey and Castells, networked politics is individualized politics. The horizontal networked

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[382] It has been reported that during searches of any Islam-oriented suspect's home, the first thing Moroccan security agents seize was computers, hoping to find on the hard drive incriminating evidence such as incoming or outgoing e-mail messages to co-conspirators related to terrorist groups outside the country. According to some Moroccan journalists, the regime confiscated many computers, fax machines, books, and other electronic items.

communication has enabled the emergence of civic networks and activist networks (Dahlgren, 2004: xiii).

7.2.2 E-mail monitoring

The fact that no one has been arrested for voicing anti-regime opinions and ideas on the Internet does not automatically mean that the regime does not monitor online based communication. Despite the privatisation of the telecommunications sector initiated by the regime in the late 1990s, the regime has continued to intervene within the telecommunications operators to track and monitor communication among Moroccans.

In sharp contrast to websites, e-mail and e-mail publications are difficult to block. The challenge is that to what extent the regime can monitor large-scale e-mail communication, regardless of encryption. Being aware of the difficult task, because of financial and technological obstacles, the regime signed a contract in 2001 with *Meditel*, a Moroccan private telecommunications company. This has allowed the regime to have access to data banks.

These regulations require ISPs to maintain detailed records about their users, install software to record e-mail messages sent and received by their users, and send copies of any e-mails that violate security law to the appropriate regime departments, mainly the Ministry of Interior and DTS.

The electronic communication via the use of the Internet and e-mail is tightly monitored. Various sources concur that Islam-oriented activists and movements have long been aware that the regime is engaged in widespread and systematic monitoring of their communications. Even before the terrorist regulations, the regime had been policing the Internet.[383]

In Morocco, where no cyber activist has been arrested for posting articles, Latifa Boussaâdan, a journalist at the Arabic-language daily *Al-Ahdath Al-Maghribiya* was fired for "gross misconduct" because she allegedly sent a photograph of Laânigri, the DTS's chief, by e-mail to *Demain Magazine* on October 15th, 2002. Many Journalists asserted that "Tailing and telephone tapping are also standard DTS practice". Moroccan journalists' telephone calls and correspondence have been subject to regular monitoring. According to the Moroccan Human Rights Organization, the regime has monitored telephone conversations without warrants being legally issued or judicial supervision. Similarly,

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[383] This is reminiscence of the role played by the Ministry of Interior's "eyes and ears that do not sleep", popularly known as "*Mokadem*" It is possible that we can speak of "electronic Mokadem".

Islam-oriented movements are aware that the regime has often exercised offline as well as online surveillance. Prominent members of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* have been subject to constant surveillance.[384] Islam-oriented activists have become wary e-mail correspondents. They were able to foil surveillance by using pseudonymous e-mail accounts to strip information that identifies the sender.

7.3 Conclusion

When the Internet came to Morocco about ten years ago, observers speculated that it would help reshape the politics of the country by introducing Moroccans to ideas, opinions and arguments that the regime had tried to restrict. At the dawn of the digital age, the regime has lost much of its informational sovereignty, largely because of the global networks of information, but also because of the growing use of the Internet for political reasons among a young and educated population and also because the Internet appears to be making a considerable difference to the print media. In the case of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*, the access to print media was at best extremely limited, censored, and controlled and at worst non-existant.

This chapter has surveyed some forms of counterstrategies of the regime's capacity. Aided by extensive legal and technological instruments under its control, the regime has imposed restraints on the political use of the Internet. However, the regime has been powerless to prevent Islam-oriented movements from "spamming" censored materials and political information to Moroccan e-mail users, since the group had used the Internet and had been apparently able to evade regime detection.

In addition to legal and technological methods, the regime employed other intimidating practices to create an atmosphere that prevented freedom of expression not only in the independent print media but also on the Internet. Fears of regime surveillance or reprisals have fostered self-censorship amongst Islam-oriented groups online.

The regime recognized the difficulty of controlling, containing, and directing the political use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements and its traditional forms of

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[384] It was reported that e-mails sent by Islam-oriented activists took many days to reach their destination.

surveillance against online expression.[385] The regime's strategy is also not aided by the current economic environment in Morocco, which encourages the commercialisation of the Internet, not its "politicisation".

On a practical level, the most important significance of the changes in Morocco's cyberspace is that it has begun to march toward functioning as a place for Islam-oriented movements and organizations. Mohamed Larbi Messari, a former Moroccan Communication Minister emphasized the fact that it has become increasingly difficult to censor information. According to him, the regulations were ill-considered and ultimately would not work, since the full text was available on the Internet. As he argued:

> "The regime cannot prevent the free flow of information, and it is time to revisit the concept of censorship, since political censorship decreases as fast as the cost of technology falls".[386]

The use of the packet switching and strong encryption makes it very difficult, time-consuming and expensive for the regime to monitor citizens. Mohamed Larbi Messari has called for the re-assement of strategies of the regime from its traditional central and closed one to an open and more decentralised.

> "Finding effective counterstrategies to the potentially negative effects of the information revolution, constitutes a huge challenge, which means that the scale of Morocco's information-technology modernization would suggest that time is finally on the side of the regime's opponents. Yet this implies that the regime will not loose control soon".[387]

The potentially most powerful effect of Islam-oriented movements in Morocco comes not only from ideological challenges, but also from their increased ability to freely make their political and religious content available online. The fact that the blockade lasted some weeks demonstrated that the regulatory power of the regime in Morocco has become limited in relation to the dynamics and development of the Internet. One aspect of this

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[385] In an interview with the author, a Moroccan official at the Culture and Communication Ministry who prefers anonymity denied the claim that some Islam-oriented websites were blocked. But while stating that a blockade of Islam-oriented movements was not permitted, he acknowledged that blockades were sometimes made to avoid offending content.

[386] Mohamed Larbi Messari, Minister of Communication Culture, personal interview with the author, December 16, 2001, Rabat, Morocco.

[387] Messari, personal interview.

impact is that the advent of the Internet and other mobile communication tools has presented a series of problems for the regime.

The result of this research supports the argument advanced by Castells that political authority has gradually shifted away from authoritarian regimes to more networked political actors. Islam-oriented movements have assumed a more prominent role, circulating literature and staging demonstrations and defining political agendas, just as the Zapatista Guerilla in Mexico seemed to have won the cyber war against the Mexican government in the mid 1990s (Castells, 1997). It is true that the Internet can not level the playing field between Islam-oriented movements and the regime, yet the former as resource-poor groups would be able to compete as effectively as the regime and secular political parties and organizations in affecting Moroccan public opinion and, ultimately politics.

8 Summary and Conclusion

This work, then, is about the Internet and politics in Morocco. The influence of the Internet on the the characteristics of Islam-oriented movements, their structures and organizations is beyond the scope of this study. The study's primary task has been to examine the political use of the Internet by the two leading Islam-oriented political movements in Morocco. It has been attempted to answer the many raised questions by identifying the impact and implications that the political use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements may have on some aspects of Moroccan politics. Which political forces have greatly benefited from the use of Internet-based political communication? Has the online world brought something new to the political communication practiced by Islam-oriented movements? What has been the overall impact of the political use of the Internet on the regime's monopoly and control of the information flow within the national information system?

In the following, we summarized the core of this study, chapter 4 through 7. In chapter 4, we demonstrated how Islam-oriented movements used small media to distribute their political message. Prior-Internet communication media such as books and magazines were of very limited circulation and faced a number of censorship restrictions by the regime. In contrast to magazines, books were published because the regime knew that these books failed effectively to reach the majority of Moroccans and that they are not fit for the wide circulation of ideas in the Moroccan context.[388] Islam-oriented movements have used tape- and video cassettes, first to distribute their message and second to reach a wide audience. It was shown in chapter 4 that the regime's censorship methods have disempowered Islam-oriented political movements' prior-Internet communication strategies. They could not have easy and secure access to the public sphere through print communication channels.

Chapter 5 explored extensively the actual use of the Internet by analysing the websites of the two important Islam-oriented political organizations. By means of content analysis we demonstrated how Islam-oriented movements have used their websites to get round the regime's traditional censorship methods, outlined in chapter 4. The focus of Internet-based political action of the organizations lies in the provision of information by

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[388] As already mentioned in chapter 4, some of Yassines's books went under a harsh censorship restrictions.

turning websites into publishing, printing and distributing machines. They put their websites at the centre of their communication strategies. As one one journalist at *Risalat Al-Futuwa* said: "via the Internet, we are capable of distributing and circulating our political messages among Moroccans".[389] In fact, members and sympathisers downloaded, printed and distributed Islam-oriented material like leaflets. Many social networks provide explication and clarification, simplification of significant news items for low-educated audience. The selective Internet audience has a greater degree of control of production (participation in the distribution) in this medium. The function of such networking cannot be separated from the communication networks.

While our findings in chapter 5 showed that Islam-oriented movements have used e-mail-based communication strategies to provide regular updates, interactive communication features remain under-exploited and under-explored. Results presented in chapter 6 show that students have not used the interactive features of the Internet. This is to argue that the under-employment of the interactive potentials of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements should not constitute a weakness since our survey in chapter 6 shows that even students have not used the Internet to practise online political activities.

Chapter 6 is very important since it gives chapter 5 its link, which appeared to be generally missed in the scientific study of the Internet and politics. The story of the political use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements would be incomplete, without empirically examining the uses and gratification's side, that means in our case how students, which represent the biggest group amongst Internet users in Morocco, have used the Internet for political reasons. Chapter 6 shows that Moroccan students used the Internet for political reasons, including seeking for political information and browsing Islam-oriented websites. Students used cybercafés rather than universities when using the Internet for political reasons. This is understandable granted the succinct monitoring of Internet traffic at university campuses by the regime. The most important trend is that the more students used the Internet; the more they adopted the Internet for political purposes. This finding stores in it a future of the political use of the Internet among educated Moroccans who constitute the most relevant group in the political field in the country.

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[389] Anonymous staff member, of *Risalat Al-Futuwa* weekly, personal interview with the author, April 10, 2001, Casablanca, Morocco.

Chapter 7 delineates the legal and technological methods used by the regime to regulate and monitor the political use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements and to regain its control over the information flow.

Islam-oriented movements' intensive exploitation of the Internet must be considered as the most serious challenge for the regime in matters of political communication in recent time. From the analysis so far it is apparent that the consequences resulted from the political use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements have, in a number of respects, transformed the regime's ability to control the national information system, which has become more autonomous, less sovereign and less exclusive.

The consequences that follow from the use of the Internet for the national information system is the emerging of an autonomous media system that has made the access of new voices and new entrants relatively easy. As argued in chapter one, the Internet is an ideal communication tool for those political forces that have small resources to make their political views more accessible for a large segment of the society. On the evidence presented in this study, we are entitled to conclude that for all these reasons, the emerging information system has guaranteed political and social groups that are currently marginalized in the traditional mass media to gain a position in the emerging information system. The content analysis in chapter 5 has amply demonstrated how Islam-oriented movements used the Internet and how they disseminated information material, including press release and interviews to provide an alternative viewpoint on many occasions. The Internet has helped the disenfranchised Islam-oriented movements to have access to present their arguments and views.

These developments put Islam-oriented movements in a position to break the regime's traditional dominance of the informational system by exploiting the advantages of the Internet. The use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements is changing the equation. As we showed in chapter two the national information system is undergoing a gradual disintegration of its existing mechanism of information control, practiced by the regime since independence 1956. The argument was fully developed in chapter 7, when we have amply demonstrated that even when high-profile technology censorship mechanisms were used, the control of Internet traffic remained ineffective. The very possibility of disseminating information faster, easier and cheaper has made any information control almost untenable. The Internet can be expected to maximize competition, facilitating

opportunities for many more challengers to communicate their messages, inform members, and gain visibility than via traditional mass media.

Historically, Islam-oriented movements have been concerned with access to the mass media, particularly the print press. But the access to the Moroccan traditional print media characterized by a predominance of secular papers and party press has proved extremely difficult for them. There is a strong bias, buttressed by socialist and secularist ideologies, against letting Islam-oriented movements into the public sphere. Since they could not operate daily newspapers or weekly magazines under normal conditions, they were forced to stay outside the communication public sphere. This equation has also changed under the impact of intensive use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements. Today, they no longer need to deal with intermediaries in the form of the mainstream mass media, traditional publishing and distributing routes. The Internet-medium is helping them to bypass what Dutton called the "disintermediation" (Dutton, 1999: 64) and is offering them "equalization" in the access to the communication sphere. This is so far the first dimension of access. The research evidence emerged from our analysis provides some support for the equalisation thesis, pushed by utopians, and based on the ability of small and fringe organizations to exploit the relatively low costs of the medium and the lack of editorial control.

The second dimension of access relates to the availability of Internet access to large segments of the Moroccan population. As many commentators argued, the "digital divide" constitutes a key threat for political life (Dahlgren, 2001: 77; Norris, 2001). It is argued that several limitations exist on the potential for the internet to have any political influence on society. There is a lack of Internet access for some segments of the population. Those with access to the Internet are not representative of the true citizen population. In the case of Morocco, the digital divide, which may decrease in the years ahead, may not prove a key issue regarding the distribution of information and communication, since the small portion of highly educated Moroccans, who are likely to use the Internet, lean towards the most engaged politically.

The results of the survey in chapter 6 are significant. New educated students tended to make use of the Internet by seeking political information and that they are eligible for

political action.[390] As the number of Moroccan Internet users increases, it is likely that Internet-based political communication will grow and evolve as well. If the opportunities for online political activities grow, then it is certain that many educated Moroccans will become more involved in online politics.

There is a strong argument that the emerging informational system has a potential for structural development in terms of the availability of political information. What distinguishes the present era from prior ones is that great amount of information, in varying forms such as HTLM-based text, PDF, Audio-clip, are on offer on the websites of Islam-oriented movements. In fact, the availability of information serves as an opportunity for the marginalized groups such as Islam-oriented movements to edit and frame their political communication strategies.

This pursuit of gaining and securing positions in the new informational system can illustrate the increasing significance of the information in the field of power. The possession of power depends mainly on the possession of the pipeline to information (Castells, 1997). This centrality of information is emphasized by the change in the nature of power relation. Fully aware of the immense empowering capabilities offered by the Internet, Islam-oriented movements are supposed to continue making a much use of it in their political communication to contact with people in the coming years. This has had the effect of drawing people away from the regime-sponsored press and laying the backdrop for the growth of organised resistance to the regime. The challenge also arises from the new issues these groups are bringing into public sphere.

We need to reiterate that the implications of the political use of the Internet for Moroccan politics are diverse. To the political regime the implications are harmful. A central theme that has arisen out of the third question concerns the question of the relationship between the regime and political use of the Internet. A central finding of this study has indicated the extent to which the involvement of some Islam-oriented groups in different patterns of Internet-based political communication to distribute "political" information among educated Moroccans affects the capacities of the regime in controlling political information flow.

As we demonstrated in chapter two, what characterized the rein of King Hassan II was that access of oppositional groups to national information system was being severely

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[390] These groups, even though they constitute a small percentage of the total Moroccan population, grow every day, as thousands of young men and women graduate from public and private institutions of higher education throughout the country and abroad and would be upwardly mobile professionals.

limited. Worst media restrictions were applied especially to Islam-oriented movements.[391] Before the arrival of the Internet the regime managed skilfully to maintain its monopoly and control of the flow of information by using various means. Today, the ability of the regime to regulate the activities on the borderless Internet faces an important legal and technical test. The regime can not effectively control the flow of database on the Internet that connects millions of computer network. As chapter 7 demonstrated, when the regime aimed at "reducing" the access to the Internet of Islam-oriented oppositional groups, it could not conduct its policies of restriction and blockade.

This study incorporates Castells's concept of identity of resistance. Such exercise allows us to explore the relationship between the political use of the Internet by Islam-oriented movements and politics of identity, including formation of identities, construction of communities and reshaping of the emerging public sphere. The objective of the practical and political action of Islam-oriented movements is the generation of an Islamic collective political action to establish the condition necessary to empower Moroccans to take the control of their own lives and to create communities based not on secular ideas, but on Islam. They have been engaged in fundamental conflicts about forming and constructing political identities that may potentially transform the existing nexus of power. The two recent demonstrations organized around the *Al-Mudawana* and the second *Aqsa Intifada* amply demonstrated that they have been also massively engaged in mobilizing religious communities of resistance against the regime as well as secular segments of Moroccan society, by appealing to the cultural identity of the educated young population, by the use of Arabic language, by the emphasis on Islamic traditions and by reference to Islamic symbols. As we saw in Chapter 5, the new element in this discourse is that Islam-oriented activists and intellectuals bring about new forms of language. The traditional forms of writing, designed for the limited circle of the *Ulama* and the literate, give way to more direct prose, clear, lucid and communicable to the rapidly growing literate public.

Since the late 1990s, there have been signs of interest in studying the public sphere in the Islamic countries. This interest sparked off quite a variety of studies in connection with this issue (Eickelman, 1999; Anderson, 2003).[392] A central theme of contemporary study of Islam concerns the role new electronic media played for promoting and fostering

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[391] For a discussion of the regime media restriction imposed on Islam-oriented media communication channels see chapter four.

[392] This literature on the emergence of the public sphere has been speculative. Books and articles have tried to describe the possible impact of the new electronic media on the political change including the change on the structure of the *Offentlichkeit*, but these forecasts were rarely grounded on case studies.

the emergence of public sphere. We have argued that this theme has become particularly acute in view of growing use of the "technologies of freedom". In this context, mass education and mass communication were identified as the two important input factors for the emergence of the public sphere (Eickelman, 1999).

In light of Habermas's argument on the rise of the public sphere, to what extent have Islam-oriented movements via the political use of the Internet developed impulses to bring conflicts from the periphery into the centre of the Moroccan political debate? Anderson suggests that the use of the Internet by Islam-oriented individuals, groups and movements is more akin to the coffeehouses and salons of early modern Europe as well as to the early print capitalism that helped create an imagined community (Anderson, 2003). No wonder that the Internet is often prescribed as the "new electronic salon" (Brants, 2005: 144). The rise of the Internet has profoundly affected the structure of the public sphere as the press affected the 18th- and 19th-century public sphere. It is to argue that the use of the Internet has showed that developments in the electronic media communication strongly influenced the nature, form and content of the Moroccan public sphere.

One of the key findings of this study is the transformation of the patterns of the Moroccan public sphere. In chapter Five, we showed that Islam-oriented movements as new social movements have played a potential role in the vitality and dynamisation of the public sphere. We have presented evidence to argue for the development of a virtually autonomous public space full of "clusters and spaces of protest", by identifiying a number of key issues and tensions that currently inform the nature of the public debate not only within the two organizations under analysis, but also in Moroccan public sphere. These topically bundles of public issues can be best regarded as sites of often-conflicting tendencies that will shape the course of public debate in Morocco of years to come. Again, we argue that the political use of the Internet is transforming the flow of political information and thereby transforming the patterns of the public sphere.

By launching websites, news groups, chat rooms, networks, action groups, the Internet allows people to collectively generate new communication spaces and alternative public spheres. The Internet has created a new public space for politically oriented conversation. In the light of Dahlgren, we argue that the Internet "probably will not alter the present constellation of power, but can at best serve to generate more counter-public spheres" (Dahlgren, 2001: 51).

The existence of a greater choice of information available on the Internet than among other exiting mass media has led Moroccans to become more informed than they were when there were no Internet options available. Plenty of material on offer on the websites of Islam-oriented movements would never get an airing on the Moroccan informational national system because it is politically deemed dangerous.

Political messages can be potentially digitalized and sent through one application or another. The recent addition of video and audio capabilities means that Islam-oriented movements extend the advantages of the text-based, conversational dimension into the multimedia arsenal of the websites. The dynamic shift of the content from offline to online has caused a change in the structure of the *Öffentlichkeit*. As Mohamed Yatime said:

> "The initial aim behind these electronic publications is to create a Muslim public opinion or at least to shape the currently emerging public space".[393]

As we demonstrated through the second *Aqsa Intifada* and the *Al-Mudawana*, the voices of Islam-oriented movements partly through their operating websites, have become a part of the social debate and political dialogue. As Lance Bennett and Robert Entman (2001) observed that in the age of the Internet "It seems likely that smaller, more homogenous public sphere will arise alongside of, if not supplant, the larger, more heterogeneous public sphere that arguably dominated politics".

Islam-oriented movements understood as new social movements, are currently among the most prominent political forces in the Moroccan political field (Entelis, 2002).[394] They represent a cultural and political challenge to the regime. This involves a political and cultural conflict on major issues related to the basic notions of politics. They are transforming the cultural foundations of politics and authority by contesting the hegemonic interpretations of political and religious discourses as well as the relation between authority and politics (Entelis, 1997: 50). Their rise can be seen as a conscious

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[393] Yatime, personal interview.
[394] In the last four decades, the emergence of Islam-oriented movements in forms of collective action in Morocco stimulated a provocative and innovative conceptualization of the meaning of political movements. Its relevance in the political and social field has been highlighted by the process of delegitiming of the secular nationalist movements enacted in government and political parties at the end of 1980s, as shown in the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the recent electoral results in Algeria, Jordan and Sudan that have demonstrated considerable support for Islam-oriented movements.

reconstruction of the Islamic identity in opposition to all Western ideologies, including nationalism, socialism, liberalism and democracy (Castells, 1997: 17).

The argument that the political use of the Internet would be revolutionary as first predicted by the most enthusiastic optimists is no longer strong. The other argument, most clearly articulated by the title of Margolis and Resnick's 2000 book, *Politics as Usual*, suggests that politics on the Internet will closely resemble politics offline (Margolis and Resnick, 2000) falls short of the actual and potential the Internet has in the area of political communication. Both arguments can not be applied to the Moroccan context. The line of our evidence is that the Internet has not brought revolutionary political change to Morocco, but instead it has already been a pillar of Morocco's slower, incredential path towards the political change, manifested possibly in the emerging public sphere, which is in the process of being "softly" re-islamised.

After a decade from Eickelman's observation, with which we started our introductory chapter, we come to the same conclusion. With a positive note, we argue with Eickelman that mass higher education and Internet-based communication have begun to profoundly affect how Moroccans think about authority and responsibility in the domains of religion and politics. Yet we need to be cautious about the transformative capacity of the Internet for politics, at least in the short term, because our results still need further empirical confirmation. Discerning the political implications of the Internet in its early diffusion cycle is at best a tentative business. As repeatedly argued throughout this work, we recognise today as the years unfold, the changes are complex and still on-going.

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Appendix 1: Coding and standardized of Islam-oriented websites

Coding and standarized scores of Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya websites and their "informative-ness"

Types of Information	Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya				
	The website of At-Tauhid Wal-Islah organization	**The website of** *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya*	**The election website of the** *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya party*	**The website of Rachid Medouar**	**The website of** *At-Tajdid*
1 Organization history	1	1	1	0	
2 Press releases/media section	1	1	1	1	1
3 Parliamentary candidate information	0	1	1	1	1
4 Party/organization congress	1	1	0	0	1
5 Program, manifesto, statement of principles	1	1	1	1	1
6 Organization constitution and rules	1	1	1	0	0
7 Website in Arabic	1	1	1	1	1
8 Volunteer services	0	0	0	0	0
9 Leadership information or speeches	1	1	1	1	1
10 What's new section	0	0	0	0	0
11 Schedule of events	1	1	1	1	0
12 Links to external website s	1	1	0	1	1
13 Constituency information or election results by districts	0	1	1	0	1
14 Women's section	0	0	0	0	0
15 Union section	0	0	0	0	0
16 Youth section	0	0	0	0	0

17 Website in other non-native language	1	1	0	0	0
18 Other affiliated organizational section	1	1	1	1	1
19 Campaign Speeches	0	1	1	1	1

Coding and standarized scores of Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan websites and their informative-ness"

Types of Information	*Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*						
	The website of Abdessalam Yassine	**.The website of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan***	**The website of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* newspaper**	**The website of *Risalat Al-Futuwa***	**The website of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* publishing house**	**The website of Nadia Yassine**	**The website of a pro-*Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* activist(s)**
1 Organization history	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
2 Press releases/media section	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
3 Parliamentary candidate information	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
4 Organization congress, conference	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 Program, manifesto, statement of principles	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 Organization constitution and rules	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
7 Website in Arabic	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
8 Volunteer services	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
9 Leadership information or speeches	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
10 What's	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

new section							
11 Schedule of events	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12 Links to external website s	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
13 Constituency information or election results by districts	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
14 Women's section	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15 Union section	0	0	0	0	0		0
16 Youth section	0	1	0	1	1		0
17 Website in other non-native language	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
18 Other affiliated organizational section	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
19 Campaign Speeches	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Coding and standarized scores of Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya websites on their "communicative-ness"

Types of Communication	**Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya**				
	The website of At-Tauhid Wal-Islah organization	**The website of** *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya*	**The election website of the** *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya party*	**The website of Rachid Medouar**	**The website of** *At-Tajdid*
1 Can e-mail party or organization leader	1	1	1	1	1
2 Any multimedia	1	0	0	0	0

video or audio					
3 Join organization	0	0	0	0	0
4 Search facility	0	0	0	0	1
5 Parliamentary candidates' contact	0	0	1	1	0
6 details (e.g. mail address, fax, telephone or e-mail)	1	1	1	1	0
7 E-mail contact address for webmaster	1	1	1	1	1
8 Submit message form	1	1	1	1	1
9 Can sign up to receive a regular electronic newsletter	1	0	0	0	0
10 Can e-mail elected members of parliament	0	0	1	1	0
11 Can e-mail elected members of parliament	0	0	0	1	0
12 Can e-mail party or organization officials	1	1	1	1	0
13 Buy party goods (e.g. publications	0	0	0	0	0
14 Donate Money	0	0	0	0	0

Coding and standarized scores of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* websites on their "communicative-ness"

Types of Communication	*Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*						
	The website of Abdessalam Yassine	.The website of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*	The website of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* newspaper	The website of *Risalat Al-Futuwa*	The website of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* publishing house	The website of Nadia Yassine	The website of a pro- *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan* activist(s)
1 Can e-mail party or organization leader	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
2 Any multimedia video or audio	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
3 Join party or organization	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
4 Search facility	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 Parliamentary candidates' contact	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 details (e.g. mail address, fax, telephone or e-mail)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
7 E-mail contact address for webmaster	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
8 Submit message form	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
9 Can sign up to receive a regular electronic newsletter	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
10 Can e-mail elected members of parliament	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11 Can e-mail elected members of Parliament	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12 Can e-mail	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

party or organization officials							
13 Buy party or organization goods (e.g. publications	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**
14 Donate Money	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Appendix 2: Questions for Islam-oriented webmasters

1. When did you launch your websites?
2. Why did you launch your websites?
3. For what purposes do you use the Internet? (informational, organizational and recruitment)
4. Who is the webmaster of the websites?
5. Is he/she working on a voluntary basis?
6. What are your target groups?
7. Would you mind describing which type of problems do you face in your work?

Appendix 3: Questionnaire: Internet use of students

Please answer all questions as accurately as possible.

1. Background information
        Would you mind giving us background information about yourself?
How old are you?_____
What is your sex? _____Female; _____Male

2. E-MAIL:
        Do you ever send or receive e-mail? (If yes, ask) Is this?
Every day
Once every week
Once every month
Never

3. Surfing the Net
        Do you ever surf? (If yes, ask) Is this?
Every day
Once every week
Once every month
Never

What website did you visit most during the past week?
(Name of the website)_____

4. Locating the surf
        From where do you surf?
Home
Work
University
Cypecafés

5. Everyday surfing
        Would you surf everyday if you can?

Yes_____; No_____

6. Hours surfing
How much time would you spend surfing on an average day?
Less than 1 hour
One hour
Two hours
Three hours
More

7. Surfing reasons
Why do you surf?
News
Entertainment
E-mail
Education

8. Surfing for news:
How frequently do you go online to get news? (If yes, ask) Is this?
Every day
Once every week
Once every month
Never

9. Evaluating the Web:
How satisfied are you with the Internet?
Dissatisfied
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied
Satisfied
Very satisfied

10. Net Impact:
How much have you learned about Islam and politics from the Islam-oriented websites?
A great deal
Some
Not much at all

11. How frequently do you visit the Islam-websites to get information? (If yes, ask) Is this?

Every day
Once every week
Once every month
Never

Thank you very much for completing this survey.

Appendix 4: List of Interviewees

Interviewed persons from Al-Islah and Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya

	Profession	Date	Place
Mohamed Yatime	Member of the Parliament for the *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* party and Managing Editor of the daily *At-Tajdid*	May 12, 2001	Rabat, Morocco
Al Moqri Abou Zyad Al Idrissi	Member of the Parliament for *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* Party	December 11, 2001	Rabat, Morocco
Mustapha Alkhalfi	The political editor of *At-Tajdid*	December 18, 2001	Rabat, Morocco
Abdallah Baha	Senior official with the *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* Party	December 18, 2001	Rabat, Morocco
Abdelilah Benkirane	Member of the Parliament for *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* Party	December 21, 2001	Rabat, Morocco
Ahmed Raissouni	Senior official with the *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* Party		
Mustapha Ramid	Senior official with the *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* Party		Rabat, Morocco
Mohammed Lachibe	Media coordinator of the Parliamentary faction of the *Al-Adala Wat-Tanmiya* party	December 11, 2001	Rabat, Morocco
Rachid Medouar	Member of the Moroccan Parliament	December 9, 2001	Rabat, Morocco
Mohamed Zakaria	webmaster of *At-Tajdid* website	December 16, 2001	Via e-mail

Interviewed persons from Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan

Name	Profession	Date	Place
Fathallah Arsalane	Spokesman of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*	May 10, 2001	Rabat, Morocco
Abdulwahid Moutawakil	Member of the political committee of *Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan*	May 19, 2001	Rabat, Morocco
Abdullah Shibani	a leader with member of the organization	May, 18, 2001	Rabat, Morocco
Mohamed Aghnaj	Managing editor of the weekly *Risalat Al-Futuwa*	May 11, 2001	Casablanca, Morocco.
Nadia Yassine	Daughter and unofficial spokesperson of Abdessalam Yassine	September 20 2005	Via e-mail
Abdusamad Fathi	Editor of the of the weekly *Risalat Al-Futuwa*	May 11, 2001	Casablanca, Morocco

Academics, journalists and experts

Name	Profession	Date	Place
Hussein Amin	Chair of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at the American University in Cairo, Egypt	March 30, 2001	Berlin, Germany
Muhammad Ayish	Acting Dean of College of Communication University of Sharjah	March 30, 2001	Berlin, Germany
Fatima Bouterkha	Senior official at the Moroccan Press Syndicate (SNPM)	March 30, 2001	Berlin, Germany
Mahdi Elmandjra	Progressive intellectual and human rights activist	December 22, 2001	Rabat, Morocco
Yahya El Yahyaoui	Expert for Information and Communication Technologies	December 12, 2001	Rabat, Morocco
Ahmed Nazif	Egyptian Prime Minister	March 10, 2004	Hanover, Germany
Munir Alauoi	Director of Information Technologies at the National Telecommunications Regulatory Agency.	December 27, 2001	Rabat, Morocco
Mohamed Larbi Messari	Minister of Communication Culture	December 11, 2001	Rabat, Morocco
Hassan Nejmi	Bureau chief Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki	December 17, 2001	Rabat, Morocco
Anas Mezzour	Journalist of the Arabic weekly Al-Ayyam	December 13, 2001	Casablanca, Morocco
Rachid Medouar	Member of the Moroccan Parliament	December 9, 2001	Rabat, Morocco
Rachid Jankari	Journalist of the Moroccan Portal and bloger	December 11, 2001 July 6, 2005	Casablanca, Morocco Hamburg, Germany
Aziz Al Baayer	Multimedia Marketing Manager, Al–Maktab Al–Watani Lil–Barid wa Al–Itissalat.	December 11, 2001	Rabat, Morocco

Appendix 5: Abbreviations

DTS:	Directorate of Territorial Security
IAM:	*Ittisalat Al-Maghrib*
ISP:	Internet Service Providers
ITU:	International Telecommunications Union
MAP:	Maghreb Arab Press
SNPM	Moroccan Press Syndicate
MRT:	Moroccan Radio Television
NOPT:	National Office of Post and Telecommunications
NTRA:	National Telecommunications Regulatory Agency
POPs:	Points of Presence
RSF:	Reporters Sans Frontieres
SECAM:	Sequence Couleur à Memoire
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UUCP:	Unix-to-Unix Copy
NOPT:	National Office of Post and Telecommunications