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Democratization in the Arab World: A Moroccan case study of Culture, Religion, and Governance

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Democratization in the Arab World: A Moroccan case study of Culture, Religion, and Governance

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Abstract

Democracy and Islam are generally assumed as incompatible, which leads to further assumptions towards the notion that democracy in Muslim majority states can not be reconciled. The presence of a religious political culture appears as the main hindrance for sound democratic structures. However, it appears that the absence stems from other prominent factors. This paper extends the rhetoric that Islam and democracy can be compatible and a lack of democracy is dependent on specific authoritarian structures. Morocco, a Muslim majority state that is going through democratization offers data to gauge whether or not democratic practice is present within the general society. The present study attempts to explore the ways democracy is defined because of the way the majority of the population agree that it is the best form of government is democracy. There was specific analysis on measuring the extent of democratic values and practices that is engaged by the general Moroccan sentiment. Although it was found that general Moroccan sentiment isn't democratic on all regards, this still cannot be used to explain that Islam and democracy are incompatible.

Key Words: Political Science, Development Studies, Law

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Introduction

The lack of democracy in the Arab world has been a long-standing issue and thought provoking conflict that scholars have discussed and analyzed. Especially in the recent context of the Arab Spring in 2011, for the first time the general public was rising against the authoritarian regimes in the Arab world. The aspect of these protests and demonstrations that caught the attention from the rest of the world was that the social groups organizing weren't Islamists. Which led bystanders expecting to a certain extent a wave of democratization to arise within the region. Although this wasn't exactly what happened it does bring to question the political features of Arab regimes and the way the public sphere is connected to these political cultures.

Morocco offers data in regards to analyzing whether or not the democratization process can arise in Arab regimes because of the hybrid political nature of the country. Although there are many features of the political structures that lack basic democratic features, the mobilizations of several social groups in the past has set a sort of renewed culture within the public that wants to liberalize the country's political sphere. Yet the pressing question does lie with explaining the ways in which Moroccan citizens define democracy in their own terms. Majority of the country's inhabitants agree that democracy is the best form of government, yet the country fails to fully democratize. This brings forth the underlying question to how the Moroccan public defines democracy and whether or not democratic values and practices are existent within the public to explain the ways in which the public and society at large is fit to democratize in the first place.

The study will help determine the complex variables that need to be taken when understanding a country's political culture, something that isn't definitive and is based on a multitude of factors that requires an in depth analysis of the social dynamics in the society's infrastructure to properly understand the ways in which the sentiment of democracy can be altered or different in the context of the country.

Literature Review

When assessing the theoretical literature, majority of scholars have come to a consensus that the emergence of the Arab Spring 2011 initiated a ripple effect that challenged autocratic regimes in the Middle East (Blaydes& Lo, 2011). Which signaled an extensive amount of literature that theorizes why democracy is absent in the Middle Eastern region, highlighting key components within the societies and political structure that lack democratic values. First and foremost, it's critical to first define democracy and democratic practice to properly gauge this phenomenon on a global scale to properly judge what constitutes as "democratic" and what doesn't. Democracies are heavily characterized through values, such as openness, competition, pluralism and tolerance of diversity (Tessler, 2002). Political participation is also another set of practices that is crucial in democratic states, such as the right to vote, protest, etc. In addition, democracies are commonly associated with secularism, which is where some of the main sources of contention exist with democratic transition in the Arab world. Scholars have declared that in order for democracy to emerge, a complete separation between religious and the state is necessary (Stepan& Linz, 2013). Which is why Islam's presence in many Middle Eastern countries is commonly pinpointed as one of the main deterrents of

democratic transition in the region. This is often due to the fact that Islam is associated with Islamism (Tibi, 2008). These two concepts need to be differentiated in order to recognize that the religion itself is completely separate from the political practices that are taken under the religion. Islam is a faith and is not political in its nature, however Islamism is a political ideology that is based on the religion (Tibi, 2008). Scholars draw a strong differentiation between these two concepts because discussing them in regards to democracy is inconsistent when gauging if Islam and democracy are compatible with how democratic is Islamism (Tibi, 2008). Yet, Islamic ethos on the role of women in Islam is another explanation for a lack of democratization. Furthering researchers to analyze data from Muslim majority states to link whether or not cultural or religious beliefs/practices may contribute to explaining support or opposition to democracy. Specifically looking at the four Arab states of Jordan, Egypt, Algeria and Morocco, it was found that there wasn't a significant link between the two, and there needs to be a different explanation towards why democracy is absent in the Arab world (Tessler, 2002). Others pinpointed that certain Islamic cultural beliefs can over predict authoritarianism, but fail to recognize that there are other Muslim-majority countries that have made democratic transitions (Blayes& Lo, 2011). Therefore the link between Islam as the deterrent to democracy isn't enough to explain the disconnect, allowing scholars to transition to assessment of the civil society that encompasses values that may or may not be democratic which are promoted by specific political structures.

Islamism and political Islam both have been highlighted in the present literature to explain the lack of democracy in the Middle Eastern region. The rise of Islamist parties in

many Middle Eastern countries' democratic elections is new phenomenon that is slowly unraveling (Ghanim, 2009). The main differentiation that appears in the literature, one is about how Islamism takes many forms in political parties, and how there is a strong radicalization that exists in many Middle Eastern countries. Whereas there have been cases where Islamist parties have engaged in the democratic process, specifically with the AKP Islamist party in Turkey (Ghanim, 2009). Secularism in Turkey is clearly present, allowing the success of the Islamists quite surprising, but it's highlighted that the main reason for this was because of parties' development of a more tolerant and pragmatist politics than the Afghan, Arab, Iranian or Pakistani Islamists, who are still representative of the extremist and violent mainstream of radical Islam (Ghanim, 2009). Yet scholars have underlined the fact that Islamist parties cannot develop a "genuine commitment to democracy" by embracing a liberal understanding of democratic pluralism (Tibi, 2008). Extended to the larger argument in regards to civil society in the Middle Eastern region, which is noted to lack the tolerance and underpinnings of a democratic government (Blayes& Lo, 2011).The literature highlights that an active civil society plays a part in the transitioning from authoritarianism to democracy. Civil societies are defined as the existence of an autonomous space between the state, the market and the family to sustain the democratic political system, and the process of organizing citizens together without force or coercion (Cavatorta, 2006). The argument is that civil societies in the Middle Eastern region are weak and passive because of Islam, which was believed to require passive citizens. Yet in more recent literature it is noted that the civil society is present but is mostly made up of Islamists, which are noted to be uncivil. However these

accounts have been noted as misleading due to the pressing fact that all Islamist movements and parties are different and that claiming that an Islamism doesn't promote a civil society based on the ethos of Islam is not accurate and fair in regards to the diversity between Islamism and the region (Cavatorta, 2006). This reiterates earlier points in the literature that point out that Islam shouldn't be used to express a lack of democracy.

Economic development has been a popular explanation in regards to democratization, however falls short considering wealthy Arab Gulf states like Saudi Arabic, Kuwait and others that have failed to democratize despite their high income per capita (Balyes& Lo, 2011). Leading to the hypothesis that the fact that Oil is a key export is the explanation for the hindrance of democracy because of the fact the oil dependence is linked to regime stability and lower chances of civil war and anti state protest. This theory is useful in explaining a lack of democracy in Gulf States but fails to highlight the reasons why other Middle Eastern countries are undemocratic (Balyes& Lo, 2011). However when attempting to gauge Arab support for democracy on a wider scale, researchers have found that some of the highest levels of support for democracy stemmed from the Arab states. World Values Survey gauges whether or not respondents agree that democracy "very good" rather than "fairly good" is the best form of government. The responses range from 82 percent in Morocco to 96 percent in Egypt, yet these can't properly gauge the extent of actual democratic practice that exists and how democracy is defined in their respective contexts. (Tessler&Gao, 2005). Leading analysis on the lack of democracy in the Arab world on a more individualistic level to be more pertinent because every country is different in regards to their political and economic societies.

This paper focuses on the ways Arab societies define democracy and explore whether or not democratic values exist in practice first and foremost to gauge how this may or may not limit why democracy is minimal or absent. The Arab country selected for is Morocco, the existing dynamics between the political structures and society,along with detailed qualitative interviews from fieldwork based in Morocco on the extent of democratic values and practices amongst a diverse group of civilians, providing viable analysis to further assess the reasons of an undemocratic state. It's imperative to first understand and analyze key components highlighted in the literature onMorocco's political, societal and governmental structures hindering democracy.

From all the countries in the Arab world, Morocco is a unique case in regards to the fact that it has a history of a path of political pluralism and market economics since the 1950s and has continued to set reforms towards creating a relatively open political and economic system, but remains authoritarian (Maghraoui, 2002). The main reason for this paradigm is because of the fact that political reform has been overshadowed, and economic reform has been highlighted as the main problems of the country, leading the current political system to stagnate. One can find an excessive amount of accordance with economic justice/equity and a general philosophy of political rights but a lack of support for democratic principles. This imbalance is theorized as depoliticizing the country, similar in many other Arab countries, where economic reforms are used to take precedent over constitutional change (Maghraoui, 2002). The literature also highlights in regards to Morocco, that the increased levels of corruption have also been caused by the concentration of wealth and economic power, the favoring of officials and entrepreneurs

who hold close ties with the monarchy in terms of unfair advantages and non-transparent business transactions (Safieddine&Atwi, 2009). Scholars have also determined that Middle Eastern countries aren't ready for democracy because of the current levels of development, literacy, education and urbanization. In Morocco alone the rate of enrollment in secondary schools is at 52.4 percent in 2006, political reform is possible not only through a strong will in authority but building awareness in the public and in all institutions and corporations is an essential step in the democratization process (Safieddine&Atwi, 2009). Morocco has made progress in combatting corruption, transparency has been improved and the upgrading of the country's legal and regulatory framework is now underway. In addition some non-governmental organizations have been working on building awareness among public and lobbying authorities. Yet there is still a lot of work that needs to be done in terms of enforcing laws and imposing accountability (Safieddine&Atwi, 2009). Therefore gauging the current sentiments and perceptions of democracy in Morocco will help contribute to understanding the way the public is responding the changing political atmosphere of the country.

Lastly, the case of Morocco in regards to democratization is critical at this time because of the way Morocco has transitioned in light of the Arab Spring in 2011 and the February 20th movement. Morocco is often coined as an exception to all the other Arab countries in regards to the lack of a political revolution, but the analysis of the February 20th movement revealed the segmentation that is existent throughout Moroccan society. Morocco political regime can be coined as a hybrid due to the democratic features through the popular ratification of the constitutional referendum and elections, and

authoritarian through the discretional nature of the reform process and the repression of the 20th February Movement (Desrues. 2013). These features are pertinent in explaining the way the protest movement more or less failed in regards to transforming the political regime. However the collective action from different social groups, especially ones organized by youth movement groups, offers an explanation to the different intergenerational gaps of cultural and political practice within Moroccan society.

The present study contributes to the existing literature that Islam alone is not the reason for a lack of democracy. However there is a gap between the fact that Moroccan citizens generally agree that democracy is the best form of government, yet the country remains undemocratic. Therefore this study attempts to explore how democracy is defined by gauging if democratic values are present in their sentiments and if they are practiced. These findings will help contribute to the fact that public awareness and knowledge is critical in assessing democratization in the Arab world.

Methodology

Research Design

Since the purpose of this study is trying to gauge the general sentiment of democracy within the Moroccan society, qualitative methods of analysis are posed as the best viable option to accomplish the goal of the study. Which is to understand the definitions and democratic values and if the extent of democratic practice, and this will be more beneficial if the responses are explanatory versus quantitative measures. The method that was used to recruit participants for qualitative interviews was through random sampling. There wasn’t a specific target population for the study, since the goal is trying to gauge

Moroccan public sentiment, so anyone that is a citizen of Morocco is eligible for the study. However it was made sure that the age, occupation and gender were recorded to take account of certain variables that can produce certain responses. An assumption in regards to the age was that younger generations may have more positive and progressive definitions of democracy and encompass more democratic practices than older generations that were interviewed. Another was that education and literacy of participants may contribute to their understandings

First, I began with the assumptions that I would recruit participants in key busy locations that I visited and that are local to my homestay. When I arrived at the location I will gauge which is the optimal areas for recruitment, but I will aim to go to public town squares, grand market places and local cafes and coffee shops. I will approach individuals first by greeting them and asking if they could answer a few questions. I will begin to explain my research, the purpose, the time requirement, the benefits, and the minimal risks if they are concerned. I will express that the interview will be recorded, but the data will be kept confidential, but also reiterate that this is not a requirement in the research interview. If they agree I will present them the consent from, and obtain written consent, and I will make sure to answer all their questions or concerns with any of the components on the form. Once I have obtained consent, I will lead them to a place where I can sit down with them and begin to administer the interview. I will make sure they know that all the questions are optional and they can refuse to answer any of the questions if they so choose. I will administer the interview in Arabic and provide the interview questions in both English and Arabic. After the interview is over I will thank

them for their participation and give them my contact information if they want to inquire later about any of the findings and overall research that I have completed.

Challenges

This planned out method was something that was a lot more difficult to enact, I began approaching potential participants in coffee shops. Many participants were very eager and willing to help, however once they read the questions, many refused or didn't want to follow through with the interview, even when I reiterated that they didn't have to answer all the questions. However, I still managed to get interviews done, only 6 were administered but each one was very long and in depth because I really wanted to make sure that I asked follow up questions to get to the root of why the participants were defining certain principles and democratic practices. This study is very focused on explanations to gauge the wide variety of sentiments within society; therefore the interview process was critical in its pursuit to uncover these varied sentiments. This was a key challenge because of the length of the interviews and the amount of information in each interview was limited.

Ethical Considerations

Though respondents may initially provide me with their name, all data and recordings will remain confidential. Respondents will be given pseudonyms that will accompany all interview data, both in my spreadsheets and in any future documentation (i.e., write up in my thesis). Only general demographic information (including age and gender and occupation) will be identified with the pseudonyms. The information will be stored on the computer, which will have a fully patched operating system and application

and current antivirus software with current virus definitions. The risks will be minimal in the scope of this research; the only risk will be potential discomfort with some of the questions that will be presented in the interviews. There will not be any direct benefits for the participants. As the risks are not expected to be great, the benefits will outweigh the risks. Participants are contributing their confidential perspectives on the intersection of democracy and culture/religion in the Arab world. Though a small sample size, the cumulative information will contribute to ongoing discussions about democratization in the Middle East and North Africa and can help the Western world become better informed on the topic. There will not be any direct benefits for the participants. However, there may be general societal benefits in terms of contributing to education and informing others on common misconceptions of people and their sentiments in the Arab world.

Analysis

Democratic Values

World Values Survey states that 64.7% of Moroccans believe that having a democratic political system is “very good” and that it should be integrated into Morocco’s government. If such a large majority of the country feels a certain way, why doesn’t the government respond to democratize the country? The answer lies within understanding of “democracy” in the context of Morocco, democratic societies encompass tolerance of diversity and a whole lot of values that are critical to proclaim themselves as democratic. Therefore leaving many questions in the interviews geared towards assessing if Moroccans withhold these values to better inform their definitions of what democracy is.

The questions that were centered on beliefs towards the belief in the freedom of speech, religion and press, there was a general consensus amongst the participants that agreed that all of these freedoms are fundamental rights every person should have. However I wanted to make sure that these questions were elaborated on to make sure there was true accordance with freedom of expression, which is something that isn't commonly associated with these freedoms. I concluded this because of the fact that when I extended the question to ask if homosexuals had the right to speak about any issue, or if a Moroccan were to revert their religion to another sect in Islam, specifically shitte, should they still withhold these freedoms? When it came to homosexuality, the general attitudes towards them were disapproval, which doesn't stand as a surprise in a Muslims majority state. The World Values Survey records that in the state of Morocco, when asked if homosexuality should be justified, never justifiable, or something in between, 83.6 % of the population deemed it never justifiable. Which helps explain the way many of the participants answered the questions in regard to freedom of speech, religion and press. One response was compelling in the way they rationalized the reasons why homosexuals should not have freedom of speech, they said "homosexuals need to know that we live in a Muslim country and its unacceptable for them to show who they are in the public of an Islamic country," (Participant 03, personal communication, April 2016). This sentiment was common in other participant responses where most deemed homosexuality has something that is tabooed and shouldn't really be a point of discussion when discussing freedom of speech or expression.

Data from the World Values Survey aided in affirming the same sample size that I interviewed as a general sentiment towards the greater population. Yet when assessing the ways in which the government should function in regard to society, when asked if the government should reflect the needs and wants of the majority of the population (question 8, appendix), everyone agreed that the government should. Yet when followed with if minority voices, specifically mentioning shitte groups and homosexuals, should be banned, one participant said "these groups shouldn't have their voices heard because there isn't that many of them in Morocco and homosexuals shouldn't even be in Morocco because we a Muslim country, and shi'a people aren't representative of Islam and they are barely people here that shi'a" (Participant 01, personal communication, April 2016). This was a very important statement to take apart because in nature it is completely contradictory, if one agrees that minority voices should not be banned, how can they further say that certain groups shouldn't be allowed to speak out because of their minority status. This was something was particularly hard to understand, but I realized that that there are many differing and contradictory sentiments that occurred periodically throughout the interview process. This doesn't necessarily mean that Moroccan do not withhold democratic values, I just think that their views of democratic values is tainted and is shifted in their context. Living in a Muslim majority country with very specific views and outlooks on many issues does bring forth varying degrees of sentiments, because other participants said that even minority voices should be heard and it doesn't matter who they are, it's the governments job to listen to everyone. This was a moment in the research process when it is difficult to draw conclusions on such contextual issues

that really differ from person to person, but overall it's fair to make a conclusion that fundamental democratic values are deemed important, but the extent of the values to encompass all people no matter who they are is still ultimately lacking the greater rhetoric of the public. This social dynamic could be present due to a lot of factors; lack of representation from minority group could be an explanation, or the mere fact that these individual do not voice their concerns or grievances in a society that rejects them. However it is important to note that many social movements, especially organized by the youth in Morocco have been attempting to vocalize the grievances and rights for the homosexuality groups in Morocco.

Democratic Practice

A large component that contributes to whether a country is on the road towards democratization is gauging whether or not the general public and society at large is democratic by their practices, or if they believe in many of the practices that are fundamental to democratic states in the world. When assessing the statistical data in the World Values Survey, 50 percent of the population in Morocco deemed that an essential characteristic of democracy was allowing people to choose their leaders in free elections. That question was posed on a 10-point scale where 1 would be not an essential characteristic and 10 would be an essential characteristic. The second half of the response were pretty evenly dispersed on the scale, therefore sparking the curiosity as to whether or not Moroccans actually participate in voting or not.

The primary question that gauged democratic practice was the one that asked whether or not you ever voted in a general election and if you think your vote is

important. The general responses were somewhat divided, three participants had voted in a general election and three others had never voted. Some of the responses to not voting were that they didn't like politics or that thy felt it really didn't make a difference and there was no one they really wanted to vote for. Which was a more rational explanation, unlike the response that was received for participants who actually did vote. When asked if they felt if their vote was important, they still said no, except one participant who felt like their vote was. I think that this paradox is important to analyze because it brings in the thought experiment forward assessing how to measure the importance of democratic practice even if the act by nature when implemented is unethical by nature in the sentiments of the people. One participant explained that "I have been voting, but I don't think that my vote is important because peoples till don't know who they are voting for, they just vote for the sake of voting," (Pariticipant 06, personal communication, April 2016). I think that this is where the core problem exists, which isn't exclusive to just the context of Morocco. When comparing this to a country like the United States for example, a renowned democracy, there is a large majority of citizens who don't partake in democratic practice or deem that their vote is important. Additionally, people often times don't really know whom they are voting for. Therefore I think that this was a difficult conclusion to draw in regards to the fact if the general public is ready for democracy even if they don't vote, because if the government was truly democratic, it might initiate a restorative mindset about the importance of a citizen's vote.

Another component that dealt with democratic practices was the interview question that asked how participation in public demonstrations. Although this is doesn't

necessarily constitute whether or not an individual believe in a democracy or not, it does offer valuable insight and areas to analyze on the extent of involvement that the public will take to reform their current government and issues. All the participants except for one had participated in a public demonstration; one participant even said, “I don’t like those kinds of thing because they are all propaganda,” (participant 06, personal communication, April 2016). This was interesting because even though public demonstrations are legal in Morocco, there are still negative connotations that surround protesting. This could be due to many factors, on would think that due to the February 20th movement in Morocco that signaled mass protest within the country, that this practice may seem normalized. Yet again, the whole concept of not feeling that this demonstrations and protest will actually make a difference arises as well. Take the February 20th movement for instance; the repression of the movement and the lack of amending all the changes that were demanded may have relayed a general notion that these sort of practices don’t hold much precedent in a country like Morocco.

Religion in relation to Governance

The last theme that were raised from the responses and that that was covered in the remaining interview questions related to religion and the implementation of it within politics and governance. The world values survey states the 23 percent of Moroccans believe that religious authorities ultimately interpret the laws as an essential characteristic of democracy and the remaining percentages were spanned across the scale towards whether or not the it is essential and a sizable percentage said they didn’t know. This led to the analysis of the fact that in the context of Morocco it seems that democracy isn’t

necessary defined as a secularist form of government. This was something that was clearly highlighted in many responses as well.

When participants were asked if they were religious, most of them would say they didn't feel that religious but that they followed the main fundamental principles that Islam encompasses. Almost all participants also agreed that politics and religion should be separated, but that sharia law was something that should be implemented into the government. Therefore leading many contradictions to rise up in their responses. The main contradiction was apparent between the agreement that politics and religion should be separated by then the agreement that Islamic law should be included in the government. There seems to be a lack of connection between the phenomena of politics and law/governance. This seemed to be two separate entities defined by Moroccan participants who believed that sharia law was commendable and should be implemented because it places a strong deterrent to crime. The idea is that a punishment that is extreme will instill fear and allows individuals to not commit the crime as much. Using the sharia example of cutting a thief's hand off was something that majority of the participants agreed to because theft is a big problem in Morocco and all participants used the same explanations that it would stop them for stealing.

The most important conclusion that I took from this contradiction was that Islam and sharia law are something that aren't defined within the same prospects. Islam and religion is a way of life and something that should be integrated into the government but sharia law is almost viewed separately from the religion as its only separate entity. Also sharia law is something that has very negative connotations in the western world, but the

idea of sharia law isn't intended on being radical by nature. In fact, the whole point is to maintain peace and order; the radicalization of the law has made its reputation seem negative. One participant said that "a long time ago when sharia law was existent everything in the Arab countries was perfect but now because its non existent, there are more problems" (Participant 05, personal communication, April 2016). This led to the conclusion that using certain subsets of Islam is permissible within the Moroccan context.

Altogether the outlook on democracy is positive, and in the end all the participants agreed that it was the best form of government and that even though there isn't a strong presence of democracy within the Arab world, they believe that Morocco is in the right direction towards democratization. At the end of each interview I asked the last question being what they defined democracy as, and all participants were set on declaring that a democratic government gives freedom and equality to the people. Although this is true, there is still many features that democracies hold that wasn't present in many sentiments that Moroccan presented.

Conclusion

The lack of democratic governments in the Arab world has been explained through many different theories and external factors that lead to this current paradigm. Scholars have pinpointed the Islamic political cultures, other bring forth the ideas that the authoritarian regimes are the ones that are hindering the emergence of democratic states. This study attempted to understand the societal and public sphere's sentiment of what democracy is and how it is defined in their own terms of following general democratic practices and values. It was found that the acceptance and agreements that democracy is

the best form of government is due to the fact that the definitions of democracy are not completely in accordance with the general values and practices that democratic societies harbor. This then brings into question if a society's majority isn't in accordance with the general definitions of democracy is it truly the best form of government for these regimes. It also brings forth the questions as to whether or not these societies truly need to be transitioned to democracies. Lastly, this study does help contribute to the pressing point that the lack of democracy cannot be explained through the presence of Islam because religiosity didn't correlate to disapproving attitudes of democracy. It would be more beneficial for future research to focus on the developing the way these definitions are developed by considering the history of the country's society with different governmental laws and structures.

Appendix

Interview Questions

1. First I would like to begin with recording your age, gender and current occupation?

2. Have you ever participated in a public demonstration or protest?

3. Have you ever voted in a general election? Do you feel that your vote is important?

4. Do you believe that freedom of religion should be a fundamental right? Can Moroccans convert to another religion without repercussions?

5. Do you believe that the press (press, e-media, TVs), should have the freedom to talk about any issues?

6. Do you believe that speaking about any issue is a fundamental right for you as a human being and as a Moroccan?

7. Should political parties be banned to use religious ideas in political/electoral campaigns?

8. Should a government reflect the wants and needs of the majority of the population? Should minority voices be banned?

    a. Explanation: Should minority groups like shitte groups and organizations or homosexual associations or others be guaranteed their right to exist and act publically?

9. How important is your religion in your everyday life? To what extent does your religion influence your life?

10. Can Islamic practices and rules be integrated successfully into laws? For instance in sharia law, a thief is punishable with having his hand amputated, should these policies be implemented?

11. What do you know about the Moudaywana? Do you feel like the family code in Morocco reflects Islamic jurisprudence and values?Should the Moudaywana respond to the needs of women and men in a changing family and society?

12. Do you believe that democracy is the best form of government in North Africa and the Middle East?

13. A lot of scholars have pinpointed the fact that democracy in the Arab World has failed. Do you agree? If so, why do you think this is true?

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