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The party of authenticity and modernity (PAM): trajectory of a political *deus ex machina*

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This article sets out to retrace the genesis and evolution of a new political party in Morocco, which has become within a few months one of the country's strongest political parties and has dominated Moroccan political discourse. However, to date no academic account of this fulgurous rise has been written. This article tries to fill this apparent lacuna in research. After a short sketch of the party's historical trajectory, the party's programme and elite composition shall be the main focus of interest. It will be argued that the PAM reflects both a process of elite change under Mohammed VI and the politicisation of civil society actors and entrepreneurs. Regarding the party's larger role in Moroccan politics, the article proposes to understand the PAM as a possible remedy for the ailing Moroccan political party system and as a bulwark against Islamism.

Keywords: Morocco; political parties; elections; elites

Introduction

In August 2007, the calm of the political holiday was disrupted by the surprising resignation of Fouad Ali El Himma from his post as deputy minister of Interior. Within the ministry, El Himma had been deemed the lynchpin of the palace's system of control over the party political system. Being a close friend and former classmate of King Mohammed VI, El Himma's announcement to leave the government in order to run as a normal candidate in the upcoming legislative elections of September 2007 stirred immediate speculation within the media: Had he fallen prey to a palace intrigue? Was his resignation a sign of royal disfavour? In the light of the subsequent events, this hypothesis was quickly discarded. Shortly after his landslide victory in his home constituency of Rhamna, El Himma created a parliamentary group and a political movement, which became the basis for the Party of Authenticity and Modernity (*hizb al-Asala wa al-Mu^casara*; PAM), founded in August 2008, only one year after his resignation. Another 12 months later, the PAM had arguably become the most dynamic Moroccan political party. Akin to a political *deus ex machina*, the PAM came out as the strongest party in the communal and regional elections of 2009, imposed its secretary general as president of the second parliamentary

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chamber, and has today the largest parliamentary group due to mass defections from other political parties.

Moreover, the birth of the PAM coincides with a profound crisis in the Moroccan party landscape. Rapidly declining voter turnout and a splintered party landscape have reinforced the impression of a deep rift between the political parties and the Moroccan population. Parties are oftentimes perceived as platforms for self-serving elites, which have little say in the actual policy-making process. This is, correctly, viewed by most Moroccans as the reserved domain of the monarchy. The ailing party landscape starkly contrasts with Mohammed VI's rhetoric of democratic reform and political modernisation. The widespread apathy in the 2007 legislative elections, epitomised by a turnout of 37%, illustrates a political disconnect between political elites and the population, which has been perceived as dangerous by the parties and the monarchy alike. This is the political context in which the PAM and its rapid success must be situated.

However, as a new political phenomenon, the PAM has thus far been rather neglected by academic research.¹ This article sets out to close an apparent lacuna in research by producing a detailed academic account of this new political actor in Moroccan politics. It seeks to describe and analyse which societal groups have constituted the party, why it was founded, what it stands for, and what its political objectives are. The article shall focus in particular on the profile of the party's leadership as its composition arguably reflects a wider process of elite change that Morocco has experienced in the last decade. On the basis of this analysis, it also attempts a first assessment of the party's role in Moroccan politics at large. It will be shown that the PAM is more than a mere 'puppet party' of the Moroccan monarchy and that the role of El Himma, albeit important, should not be overstated. Based on primary sources and field work conducted in January 2010, this analysis of the PAM aims to combine elements of a historical narrative with a thematic analysis.

Genesis and evolution of the PAM

Before looking at particular aspects of the PAM in greater detail, it seems appropriate to start by retracing the short, yet significant history of the newly found party. This schematic overview aims to provide important background information on the chain of events that led to the establishment of the new party as well as on its difficult integration into the Moroccan political party system up until September 2010. Yet, first of all, it is worth giving a short biographical sketch of the PAM's founding father: Fouad Ali El Himma.

Fouad Ali El Himma: the friend of the king

Fouad Ali El Himma is one of the closest advisers of King Mohammed VI and considered 'the friend of the king'.² He was chosen to study with the then Crown Prince at the Royal College from an early age and followed him throughout university. After joining the Ministry of Interior, then directed by the notorious Driss Basri, he became director of the cabinet of Crown Prince Mohammed in 1997 and assisted him in preparing his succession to the throne in 1999 (Vermeren 2009, p. 67). His arrival at the side of Mohammed VI during the critical juncture of the young king's ascension to the throne, in addition to his intimate knowledge of the key Ministry of Interior, made him one of the key figures of the new king's rule. In 2000, he was appointed as deputy minister of Interior, a kind of 'shadow' minister of Interior, and in 2003 he took charge of the coordination of the country's secret services following the Casablanca terrorist attacks in the same year. In addition, he was one of the key figures in the establishment of

the Equity and Reconciliation Commission (IER) in January 2004. The IER allowed civil society actors, led by the Forum for Truth and Justice (FVJ) under the former political prisoner Driss Benzekri, to raise the delicate issue of political violence and repression under the defunct King Hassan II. This involvement earned El Himma important respect amongst leftist civil society activists, whilst he ensured that the monarchy as an institution was not harmed but rather gained legitimacy (Vairel 2008b, p. 239). El Himma was equally involved in the elaboration of the new law on political parties, enacted in 2006: 'El Himma thus imposed himself as the architect of the political landscape under the "new reign"' (Vermeren 2009, p. 67). His decision to submit his resignation from public office and to stand as a candidate in the legislative elections of 2007 meant that one of the most powerful players within the *Makhzen*³ had now directly entered the political field.

From El Himma's resignation to the creation of the PAM (August 07–August 08)

El Himma resigned on 7 August 2007 in order to run as a candidate without party affiliation in his home region of Rhamna. Together with his two fellow candidates, Fatiha Layadi and Hamid Narjis, he achieved a landslide victory of 72.2% and a voter turnout considerably higher than the national average of 37%. Following this victory, El Himma established two distinct power bases.⁴ In late October 2008, he created a parliamentary group called *Al-Asala wa al-Mu'asara* (Authenticity and Modernity), which comprised a number of small existing parties and parliamentary groupings,⁵ that were too small to attain group status on their own. Beforehand, El Himma had tried to join the faction of the National Rally of Independents (RNI), but his repeated attempts to join their group had always been refused. The RNI leadership had been worried that El Himma might be too powerful and might potentially overtake the leadership of the faction.⁶

The second power base was the Movement for All Democrats (*Mouvement Pour Tous les Démocrates*; MTD). Officially created on 17 January 2008, the group was a mixture of a civil society association and a discussion circle. Between 40 and 80 people, most of them handpicked by El Himma, represented the core of the group. It portrayed itself as a reaction to the low voter turnout in the 2007 elections and called for the mobilisation of the country's elites, who should overcome their state of 'indifference' (*'al-lāmubālāa'*) (MTD 2008). To get people back to the polls and to overcome the distance between citizens and elites, the MTD advocated an approach which they called the 'politics of proximity' (*'sīyāsa al-qurb'*) (MTD 2008). This essentially meant moving closer to the citizens and assisting them in solving concrete problems on the ground. Very quickly the MTD expanded and within weeks it was joined by a vast array of people (La Vie Éco 2008b). Treated as an 'arriviste' (*'al-wāfid al-jadīd'*) (Al-Sabah 2010c), the MTD was shunned by most of the political parties. Only the Constitutional Union (UC) and the RNI appeared eager to absorb the MTD. Indeed, many RNI members had previously joined the MTD.⁷

Between March and June 2008, the MTD organised six large regional conferences with an indeed remarkable turnout (Aujourd'hui Le Maroc 2008). The main purpose of these conferences was to establish 'a list of the real elites in these regions',⁸ on whom the MTD could rely to realise regional projects. In hindsight, these conferences can also be considered a barometer to test the potential popularity of a new political party.

Yet the foundation of a political party was a controversial issue within the group, which was divided into proponents and opponents of the creation of a new political party. Legally, the MTD was an association, but its final destination was highly disputed. Public communication concerning this point was contradictory and revealed considerable dissent within the group.⁹ It appeared,

however, that the majority within the MTD initially opposed the creation of a political party. Nonetheless, the announcement of the imminent foundation of a political party was made by El Himma in May 2008 (La Gazette du Maroc 2008c). Three reasons can account for this shift.

Firstly, unwilling to be co-opted by the UC or the RNI and rejected by the other parties, the MTD had remained rather isolated and without a political ally. Secondly, the enormous turnout of the conferences organised by the MTD convinced hesitant members of the potential success and mobilisation capacity of a new political party. There was also a demand for a political party from those attending the meetings. Thirdly, the parliamentary group Authenticity and Modernity felt increasingly neglected by the MTD. None of its board members belonged to the parliamentary group. Also, the group did not want to become a simple branch of the MTD and demanded a political perspective for the upcoming local elections. El Himma tried to 'offer' the group several times to RNI, yet without any success. In the end, parts of the MTD and the parliamentary group formed a strong lobby in favour of a new political party.¹⁰ In August 2008, four parties of the parliamentary group¹¹ plus the National Democratic Party (PND) of El Kadiri founded the Party of Authenticity and Modernity (PAM). Since then, the MTD has entered a period of 'hibernation'. As most of its members joined the PAM, the party can actually be considered a creation of the MTD.

The PAM since its creation (August 08–September 10)

Shortly after its creation, the PAM faced a considerable crisis. In by-elections that were held in five electoral districts in September 2008 only one of five of its candidates was successful. In addition to this electoral 'flop' came the defection of three of its founding parties before the holding of the party's first national congress.¹² The three defecting parties denounced what they viewed as a takeover of the PAM by the MTD (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat 2008), and indeed 9 out of 14 members of the PAM's board were from the MTD.

Several steps were taken to tackle the looming decay. Firstly, the PAM struck a parliamentary alliance with the RNI in October 2008 in order to enhance its cohesion and to prevent further scissions. Secondly, the PAM considerably reshuffled its leadership at its first national congress in February 2009. The PAM not only exchanged its secretary general – Hassan Benaddi was replaced by Mohammed Cheikh Biadillah – but also elected a new national council, with a markedly different profile. As a result of the previous splits, members of the founding parties of the PAM were largely underrepresented in the newly elected board.

The congress also revealed the important programmatic continuity between the PAM and the MTD. Its final communiqué advocated 'politics of proximity' as the party's main strategy to bring the citizens into the political system and the PAM also announced its willingness to end the 'balkanisation of the party landscape' (PAM 2010a). The first meeting of the national council, held from 13 to 15 March 2009, embraced another key theme of the MTD: the 'moralisation of public life'.¹³ As a result, the party's programme for the local elections in June 2009 was in many regards a continuation of the MTD; unsurprisingly so, given the dominance of its members in the newly founded party.

A third strategy of the PAM was the massive recruitment of 'notables'¹⁴ and the large-scale adoption of 'nomads' from other political parties, mostly from the Popular Movement (MP) and the UC (La Vie Éco 2009b). This aggressive recruitment strategy was one of the main reasons for the PAM's huge success in the 2009 local elections, which were held from 12 June to October 2009.¹⁵ The PAM was able to present the most candidates amongst all political parties¹⁶ and managed to obtain 6015 seats in Moroccan city councils and 21.69% of all votes cast. The

Independence Party (PI) came second with 5292 seats (19%). The subsequent regional elections saw the PAM taking the presidency of 6 out of 16 Moroccan regions and it managed to obtain most seats in the renewal of a third of the Chamber of Councillors, the second chamber of parliament.¹⁷ Its secretary general, Cheikh Biadillah, was elected as president of the second chamber on 15 October 2009. Thus, only 11 months after its creation and after a considerable initial crisis, the PAM had become one of the strongest political parties in Morocco. The daily newspaper *Al-Masa*³ (2010) described the victory of the PAM as an electoral 'tsunami'. It needs to be pointed out that these results were achieved in the absence of any systematic support from the state authorities.¹⁸

Throughout the electoral period, the PAM's relationship with almost all political actors was marked by conflict. The left-wing parties, in particular the USFP, did not alter their hostile stance, and MP and UC were worried to see their deputies be 'soaked up' by the PAM. The parliamentary bloc of PAM and RNI broke up when the PAM left the government coalition in May 2009 and went into opposition – officially because the PAM had not received enough support from the coalition parties (Aujourd'hui Le Maroc 2009c).¹⁹ There were also violent verbal and even physical clashes between the Islamist Party of Justice and Development (PJD) and the PAM. Despite a brief thawing in relations in May 2009,²⁰ this conflict has become a persistent feature in Morocco's inter-party relations. The PAM also clashed with the Ministry of Interior about the application of the Moroccan party law, whose strict application could have prevented many candidates of the PAM from running in the elections.²¹ In a second clash with the ministry, the PAM challenged the cancellation of the elections of Morocco's first female mayor, Fatima Mansouri (PAM), due to alleged ballot irregularities. Quite remarkably, the PAM obtained favourable court judgements in both cases. Since the end of the electoral period, the PAM has been trying to rebuild its ties with all political parties apart from the PJD. It has been particularly eager to portray itself as proactive opposition party. In July 2010, the party announced the coordination of its local activities with the RNI and the UC, which is seen by local observers as the first sign of a potential longer-term party alliance (Maroc Hebdo International 2010a). Conscious of its growing political weight, the PAM promised a landslide victory for the legislative elections in 2012 (Al-Sabah 2010a).

In summary, several landmarks in the party's genesis and evolution stand out. Firstly, its genesis actually begins with El Himma's campaign in Rhamna and the subsequent establishment of the MTD. Its protracted creation was the result of an interplay between various actors. Secondly, the ideological and grammatical core of the PAM reflects this genesis as most of its major themes have been recurring ever since El Himma's election in Rhamna. Thirdly, the party's interaction with other political actors has varied enormously, although it has had, at times, tense relations with almost all political actors including the authorities. Fourthly, the brief overview clearly shows that the PAM has so far reproduced essential features of Moroccan politics, in particular the use of local notables and 'nomads' from other political parties.

The profile of the PAM's leadership

However, it would be wrong to view the PAM solely as a force of continuity in Moroccan politics. Analysing the composition of the party's main decision-making body, the national council,²² it can be argued that the PAM mirrors a process of elite change that has occurred under Mohammed VI. Moreover, there are strong indicators that the PAM could capitalise on the increasing politicisation of civil society actors and entrepreneurs, which are two of the main elite groups within the party's leadership. It can therefore be argued that the demand for

a new political platform was present before the arrival of El Himma on the political stage. He thus served as a catalyst for an existing elite demand.

The national council of the PAM

The national council of the PAM was elected by its national congress, held in February 2009. A new national council will not be elected before the holding of the party's second national congress which is scheduled for October 2011. The national council is composed of 36 members. Within it, three main profiles can be distinguished, namely civil society activists, technocrats, and entrepreneurs. However, these categories are not mutually exclusive and cannot be neatly separated. For instance, some of the civil society activists had been part of the state administration at the moment of the party's creation, which gives them a somewhat technocratic profile. Others are both entrepreneurs and civil society activists.²³ To tackle this problem, the people's background will be taken into consideration, i.e. the trajectory through which they came to public interest. This has not been possible for all of them; however, as the following examples aim to show, the most influential members of the national council belong to one of the three groups.

Civil Society Activists	Technocrats	Entrepreneurs
Hakim Benchamach	Mohammed Cheikh Biadillah	Samir Abdelmoula
Ahmed Akhchichine	→	
←		Ali Belhaj
Habib Belkouch	Fouad Ali El Himma	Omar Farkhani
←	Khadija El Gour	
Milouda Hazeb	Abdelouahid Khouja	Mustapha Reddad
Khadija Rouissi		
Salah El Ouadie	→	
Driss Belhami		
Aziz Benazzouz		
Hassan Benaddi		

Regarding the civil society faction, many of them have a leftist background and a marked profile in human rights activism. Most of these civil society activists are also previous members of the MTD.²⁴ Salah El Ouadie, for instance, was a founding member of the Moroccan Organisation of Human Rights (OMDH), which is one of the two most important human rights organisations in Morocco.²⁵ Khadija Rouissi and the 'Rifi notable' (La Gazette du Maroc 2008b)²⁶ Hakim Benchamach also have a human rights background; just like El Ouadie, Benchamach was a member of the extreme left in the late 1970s.

As for the second faction within the national council, the technocrats, their common denominator is that all of them made their career within the *Makhzen*. In addition to El Himma himself, the former *wali* and government minister Mohammed Cheikh Biadillah²⁷ clearly falls within this category, just like Abdelouahad Khouja and Mohammed Benhamou.

The last important elite faction within the PAM's national council are entrepreneurs. Ali Belhaj, who coordinates the regional sections within the PAM, is head of a very successful family business based in Casablanca.²⁸ Another example of the entrepreneur faction is Samir Abdelmoula. Described as 'rich and young' by the journal *Tel Quel* (2009c), he is head of Morocco's largest maritime transportation company COMARIT. After his studies in economics and finance, he founded his own radio station in his native city of Tangiers and was elected mayor of the city in the 2009 local elections.²⁹

Regarding the political weight of the three groups, their influence within the PAM has varied since the party's creation. It seems, though, that the defeat of important civil society activists such as Salah El Oudie and Hassan Benaddi in the by-elections of October 2008 entailed a general loss of influence of the civil society faction in the PAM.³⁰ Other factions argued that one could not win elections with former political prisoners. The passage of the general secretariat from Hassan Benaddi to Cheikh Biadillah in February 2009 epitomises this shifting balance. Yet as interesting as this sociological profile may be in descriptive terms, it is also relevant from a more analytical perspective, since it reflects two important aspects of Moroccan politics under Mohammed VI: a process of elite change, mostly stimulated by the *Makhzen* itself, and the gradual politicisation of civil society actors and entrepreneurs.

The PAM as a mirror of elite change under Mohammed VI

Analysing the transformation of Morocco's political system since the advent of Mohammed VI, several authors have highlighted a shift in the country's elite structure as one of the most striking features of the new king's rule (Hibou and Tozy 2002, Zerhouni 2004, Vermeren 2009). It has also been argued that this shift came along with a more general change in the monarchy's style of governance from control-oriented top-down to more inclusive governance with bottom-up elements (Tozy 2008, p. 36). Two main groups, affected by this elite change, can be found in the PAM's leadership:

The first group is what Vermeren (2009, p. 81) has called the 'enlightened technocrats'. This notion underlines the idea that, as opposed to previous generations of technocrats, the cooperation with and not the control of society has become an important goal of Moroccan technocracy. Based on a 'new concept of authority' (Royaume du Maroc 1999b), introduced several months after the accession to the throne, Mohammed VI changed the recruitment pattern within the state bureaucracy in favour of technically skilled, development-oriented technocrats.³¹ Arguably, this elite shift is also visible in the composition of the PAM's national council. Mohamed Benhamou, for instance, is a bureaucrat who made his career outside the Ministry of Interior. As a graduate of a French *grande école*, he incarnates the kind of technically skilled elite the king has been trying to promote for the modernisation of Morocco. Finally, the name of his previous party, Civic Initiative for Development, reveals a sense of modernising pragmatism and is thus very much in tune with the king's reform agenda. El Himma himself does not neatly fall in the same category. His trajectory in the Ministry of Interior displays the Janus face of control on the one hand and cooperation on the other. However, as a close adviser of the king, he has been a main coordinator of this elite shift. Besides, those outside the *Makhzen* who have had to deal with him point out his liberal views and his capacity for dialogue.³²

Part of this new style of governance was also an opening of the state vis-à-vis civil society actors (Maghraoui 2008).³³ Under the new king's rule, the strategy shifted from containment to large-scale cooptation of civil society actors and from partly appropriating their discourse to embracing key themes of the human rights agenda. This coincided with the re-emergence

of a generation of former regime critics in the late 1990s that benefited from political liberalisation to gradually voice their demands. Most of them were highly educated and politicised elites that had been evicted from elite circulation in the 1970s because of their leftist ideas. The new king mainly used consultative bodies under his supervision, such as the Consultative Council of Human Rights (CCDH), to integrate and 'tame' these potentially dangerous actors.

Many members of the PAM's civil society faction epitomise this process of elite recuperation under Mohammed VI. Both Salah El Oudie and Hakim Benchamach are former political prisoners and were affiliated to revolutionary Marxist groups. Moreover, most of these actors were involved in the establishment of the IER commission, which was a showcase for the reintegration strategy of former revolutionaries (Vairel 2008b). Willing to accept their 'self-limitation' (Sater 2007, p. 56) as a consequence of the engagement with the state, many former leftists in the PAM's leadership embody not only an elite but also a strategy change: from changing *of* the state to changing *through* the state. Besides this exchange of elites, the emergence of the PAM also reveals another important phenomenon in Moroccan politics, that is, the gradual politicisation of civil society actors and entrepreneurs, which was successfully captured by El Himma.

The politicisation of entrepreneurs and civil society actors: El Himma as a catalyst

The 'politicisation thesis' is intimately linked to the work of the French sociologist Myriam Catusse. In her work, she has identified two simultaneous processes at work in Morocco: an increasing spill-over of civil society activists into the political sphere (2002) and an 'economisation of politics' (2000) in the sense of more and more entrepreneurs going into politics. Both groups are seeking to transform their acquired managerial skills into political resources.

Catusse explicitly points out Ali Belhaj's previous party, the Alliance of Liberties, as a showcase for an entrepreneur looking for a political platform. Another example is the party Civic Forces that was founded by the former head of Morocco's employer association CGEM, Abderrahim Lahjouji. Both Belhaj and Lahjouji joined El Himma's parliamentary group in 2007, and Belhaj's party co-founded the PAM in August 2008.³⁴

On the side of the civil society, examples of spill-overs of civil society associations into the political sphere are abundant. The association *Daba 2007*, which was created in the run-up to the legislative elections in 2007,³⁵ aimed to increase the voter turnout, on the one hand, and to politicise elites and make them join political parties, on the other. Most remarkably, the main elite groups joining *Daba 2007* are identical to those of the PAM: leftist activists, entrepreneurs, and technocrats (Zaki 2009, p. 244).

In the light of the above-mentioned examples, important parallels to the PAM's genesis and composition become evident. Firstly, the PAM was also created with the help of a civil society movement at the borderline between party politics and civic engagement, the MTD. Secondly and more importantly, the PAM was founded by some of the actors that have been considered the most visible examples of this politicisation process, such as Ali Belhaj. It can therefore be argued that the PAM has been able to partly capture this politicisation process in its favour. This underlines the fact that the *demand* for a political platform, at least on an elite level, and indeed for a new political party was present before El Himma's arrival on the political scene. This runs counter to the recurring argument that the PAM was artificially created and that it did not respond to a societal demand. A number of attempts at party formation by these groups have been made, yet without much success. Arguably, this time the presence of El Himma made the difference. He was able to catalyse this demand for two main reasons.

Firstly, as a result of his implication in the establishment of the IER commission, he was able to gain the confidence of a number of influential civil society actors. For actors such as Khadija Rouissi and Salah El Oudie, El Himma was the main interlocutor on the part of the state.³⁶ His role in the reconciliation dossier is thus crucial to understand their rallying to the PAM. In addition, El Himma maintains important networks in the economic sphere and, obviously, in the *Makhzenian* bureaucracy (Desrués 2007b, p. 240). He is himself a successful entrepreneur at the head of his own public relations company. Thus he seemed to be the ideal person to create a large and viable political network, broad enough to found a new political party.

Secondly, El Himma's access to the state and to the king himself has been an important factor in uniting people from various backgrounds. It seems simply less risky to start the endeavour of a new political party with El Himma at one's side. In social science terms, the presence of El Himma helps overcome a collective action dilemma. The number of political 'nomads' that joined the PAM illustrates his attractiveness on the political scene. Thus the claim that the PAM has merely reproduced well-engrained patterns of Moroccan politics needs to be qualified. Rather, the party mirrors both elements of continuity and change within Moroccan politics.

Programmatical positions

Given the heterogeneity of the party's leadership profile, it is little surprising that the PAM has failed to exhibit a clear programmatical, let alone ideological, stance. In general, ideological divisions have been rather weak in Moroccan politics (Willis 2002). However, two main elements can be highlighted as essential features of the party's programmatical discourse: firstly, what Bendella (2009, p. 51) has called 'ideology of public action' and, secondly, a marked anti-Islamist stance – these are the ideational binding elements of the PAM.³⁷

The PAM's 'ideology of public action'

Several elements of this 'ideology of public action' can be highlighted. Firstly, the PAM exhibits a strong developmentalism and promotes the idea of a development state, which should be active on the ground and open to the socio-economic needs of the local population. Especially *local* development is portrayed as a key to resolving the country's economic, but also political, problems. Insofar as development projects are supposed to induce the participation of the local population, local development also enhances democratic participation and is able to overcome the population's political apathy. Besides, the PAM has argued that only by pursuing such a participative approach, national initiatives, most notably the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH) launched by the king in 2005,³⁸ could have positive repercussions on local development. The PAM's idea of a 'strategic deputy' (Le Matin 2009b) becomes a key notion in this context. Playing the role of a facilitator and mediator, local politicians and deputies should pursue 'realistic' (Le Matin 2009b) agendas and see their main function in connecting their local constituencies to national reform initiatives, such as the INDH. This is also viewed as a possible remedy to political apathy, for only if voters see a concrete and noticeable return from going to vote, their participation can be assured in the long run.³⁹ Omitting the conflictual aspects of resource distribution on a local level, this managerial vision of a politician represents the core element of the 'politics of proximity', one of the main electoral slogans of the PAM and previously of the MTD. Thus the PAM continues the MTD's bottom-up rhetoric, emphasising 'local citizenship' (*'muwāṭana maḥalīyya'*) (PAM 2010c), dialogue, and participation.

However, this bottom-up rhetoric contrasts markedly with the second aspect of the PAM's 'ideology of public action', namely its endorsement of two expert reports as the party's programmatic backbone. Criticising the lack of public discussion and appreciation of these reports (PAM 2010b), the PAM has sought to carry them to the Moroccan countryside in an effort to make the state's reform agenda audible and visible. Bringing the state to the people rather than the people to the state, this approach features notable elements of an elitist top-down strategy.

The first report consists of the so-called IER recommendations (Royaume du Maroc 2005). Submitted to the king in November 2005, the recommendations were the product of the aforementioned IER. Their overall objective being the improvement of rule of law in Morocco, the recommendations call for considerable reforms of the Moroccan judiciary and a more thorough overhaul and reform of forms of government, which the authorities have appeared to studiously avoid. This also ties in with the king's 'new concept of authority', to which the PAM has frequently referred (for instance, *Le Matin* 2009c).

The second report the PAM has incorporated into its programme is the Fiftieth Anniversary Report (Royaume du Maroc 2006). This report represents a detailed academic summary of achievements and failures in terms of human development in Morocco. It stipulates a number of reform measures, especially in the realm of economic governance, which the PAM has taken onto its own agenda.⁴⁰

The third and last aspect of the PAM's 'ideology of public action' is the region and regionalisation. Mainly conceived of as a possible solution to the dragging Western Sahara conflict, regionalisation is currently the biggest reform project of the Moroccan state. It may indeed bring about a considerable reshuffling of responsibilities between the political centre and the periphery. However, the outline of Moroccan regionalisation has not been determined yet, and a royal expert commission, appointed in January 2010, is currently working on a reform proposal. Nonetheless, the PAM has made regionalisation one of its major programmatic cornerstones. It has repeatedly portrayed it as a vehicle for the country's democratic and economic development (Benchamach 2010).⁴¹ Thus far, the PAM has also been the only Moroccan party to present a detailed catalogue of recommendations on the shape of the regionalisation framework (PAM 2010c). Therein, it calls, amongst others, for the election of regional councils by direct suffrage and the transformation of the second parliamentary chamber into a representative body of the regions (PAM 2010c). This reform process should involve an overhaul of the country's constitution, yet in this respect the PAM has made clear this should not entail a weakening of the monarchy's position (*Aujourd'hui Le Maroc* 2009d). Pre-empting the political reform process, the PAM has proposed a regionalised framework for its own party structure with regional party boards and party parliaments (*Aujourd'hui Le Maroc* 2009a). This is a novelty in the Moroccan party system, which has generally been characterised by a neglect of regional structures (Jazouli, 2004, p. 127). These regional party structures are projected as largely autonomous in terms of their programmes and the selection of their political personnel (*Le Matin* 2009a).

Overall, combining bottom-up rhetoric with elements of a top-down approach, the three aspects of the outlined 'ideology of public action' heavily support the state's modernisation agenda. The PAM clearly seeks to portray itself as defender of the royalist reform projects of Mohammed VI. Whilst appealing to local autonomy and innovation, the PAM very much views the state, i.e. the political centre, as a generator of reform. The reform projects are preconceived by expert commissions in which especially the party's civil society and technocratic factions were heavily involved.⁴² Programmatically, the PAM has echoed the technical, developmentalist, and reformist vision of politics that is predominant in the king's modernisation discourse. It is remarkable to what extent the party has picked up the 'good governance' discourse of international

institutions. This partly reflects the party's elite composition. As Vairel (2008a, p. 232) has argued, civil society actors have come to advocate a vision of politics that thinks in terms of projects, budgeting, and supervision reports, which is much closer to *policies* than to *politics*.

The PAM's anti-Islamism

Anti-Islamism is the second major element of the PAM's grammatical discourse. The party vehemently opposes a perceived 'Islamist project of society' (Tel Quel 2008c) and the alleged carrier of this societal project, the Islamist PJD. For the PAM, the PJD is the main ideological antipode and the obscurantist spectre, haunting the modernist and democratic reform project promoted by the king. This explains the repeated and sharp verbal attacks that both parties have exchanged.⁴³

It is striking that anti-Islamism has been a constant theme ever since El Himma (2007) denounced the PJD as 'unpatriotic' and 'its' Islam as 'imported' in a TV interview, only shortly after his election in Rhamna. Salah El Ouadie emphatically underlines the difference of the PAM's and the PJD's political convictions (Le Journal Hebdomadaire 2009b), and Hassan Benaddi has claimed that the PJD's political convictions would ultimately have 'fatal consequences' (*'nata'ij ma'sāwiyya'*) (Al-Sabah 2010c). Finally, the condemnation of a 'political instrumentalisation of religion' (*'al-isti'māra al-sīyāsawīa lil-dīm'*) is ubiquitous in the PAM's grammatical declarations (PAM 2010b).

The core of this conflict lies in differing conceptions of the role of religion in Moroccan society. The PAM advocates a rather personalistic vision of religion, which does not give it any privileged societal or political significance beyond the personal sphere. In striking clarity, the PAM's deputy secretary general Hakim Benchamach (2010) advocated a clear separation of religious and political affairs (*'faṣl al-shu'ūn al-dīniyya wa al-shu'ūn al-sīyāsīyya'*). Supporting a spiritual, but secular vision of religion, the PAM has denounced the PJD's vision of Islam as 'not authentically Moroccan' (Tel Quel 2008c). The actual name of the PAM can be interpreted as an attempt not to leave the question of Moroccan 'authenticity' to the PJD, which has been trying to promote an image of the party as being the sole legitimate defender of Moroccan Islamic authenticity (Zeghal 2005, p. 218). By promoting the idea of an 'authentically Moroccan' Islam, the PAM also presents itself as a defender of the king's pre-eminent role as Commander of the Faithful against any competitor in the religious field. And the fierce and systematic attacks against the PJD suggest that this defence of the king's religious role is rather strategic than coincidental.

Another theme the PAM has sought to take away from the PJD is 'proximity'. The PJD has often portrayed its 'proximity' to the voters as one of its major assets, thanks to an efficient network of local supporters (Catusse and Zaki 2009, p. 83). Similarly, the PAM has also sought to promote the 'moralisation of public life' (Aujourd'hui Le Maroc 2009b), which represents another key notion in the PJD's political programme.⁴⁴ In an attempt at 'political mimicry', the PAM also copied an important institution of the PJD by establishing an ethics commission to pursue fraudulent practices of its members. Thus, the PAM's pledge to moralise politics, rein in corruption, and introduce a new style of politics is a clear attempt to tackle the PJD on its own ground.

The PAM's role in the political system: a preliminary assessment

Having analysed the PAM's elite composition and its grammatical discourse, it is now worth attempting a preliminary assessment of the party's role in the Moroccan political system. Two

aspects are worthy of notice: firstly, the party's positioning as bulwark against the PJD and, secondly, its attempt to remedy the patterns of elite recruitment within the Moroccan party system.

The PAM as a bulwark against the PJD

Despite the claims that the PJD has been completely '*makhzenised*' (for instance, Belal 2009), many political actors, including not only PAM members but also high-ranking state bureaucrats (Willis 2008, p. 6), refuse to consider the PJD an entirely 'normalised' and harmless actor. The monarchy and indeed many high-ranking members within the *Makhzen* are frightened of a gradual Islamisation of Moroccan society, especially of the most fragile and politically most relevant layer of society: the urban middle class (Vermeren 2009, pp. 176-178). Besides, in the light of the gradual decay of the governing historical nationalist parties,⁴⁵ elections have been an important 'show room' for the PJD. Its tactic has been to continuously enlarge its leverage by showing electoral strength. In a new context where electoral results are increasingly determining the power of negotiation with the monarchy, the PJD has sought to occupy as much space as possible (Zeghal and Mohsen-Finan 2006, p. 116). Thus far prevented from governing, the Islamist party has been able to capitalise on its status as 'sole' remaining opposition party (McFaul and Wittes 2008, p. 22). Finally, for the monarchy it has been troubling that the PJD seems to be the only party responding to the king's reform agenda and his call for a modernisation of the political institutions. Contrary to other political parties, the PJD has actively recruited youth and women. Its congresses are held on time and its deputies are the most assiduous ones in parliament (Desrues 2006, p. 262). In addition, the party's attempt to portray its local deputies as effective managers and experts, who can alleviate the people's needs on the ground and seek their proximity to find corporative solutions (Smaoui 2009), appropriated important aspects of the king's reform rhetoric. And as no other political party has been capable to successfully contain the PJD, the PAM has, since its inception, given itself the task of neutralising the Islamist party.

The PAM has essentially pursued its containment strategy by two means. Firstly, portraying itself as the carrier of the royalist reform project, the PAM has challenged the position of the PJD as a credible alternative to the ruling government coalition. At the same time, the PAM has also tried to contest the PJD's role as sole parliamentary opposition. According to party insiders, its decision to leave the government and go into opposition was mainly an attempt to counter the PJD, which was 'leading the dance'⁴⁶ in parliament. Perceived as *the* new royalist party, the PAM has started to vociferously criticise the ruling government coalition from a royalist point of view. To give an illustrative example, the party has criticised the government for not completely implementing the king's wishes (Al-Masa' 2009c), and its secretary general declared in June 2009 that the party wanted to 'transform Morocco in the country desired by the king' (MAP 2009). Thereby, the party has been able to oppose its own style of a 'constructive opposition' to the supposedly 'populist' opposition practised by the PJD (Benchamach 2010). Quite remarkably, the PJD's dominance in the media has significantly decreased since the emergence of the PAM.

Secondly, the PAM has been trying to set up an anti-PJD cross-party coalition. Since its creation, the party has repeatedly proclaimed its willingness to 'upgrade' (*mise à niveau*) (La Vie Éco 2009b) and 'rationalise' (Tel Quel 2008c) the Moroccan political landscape. Seeking to reshape the Moroccan party system, the PAM strives to replace 'party pluralism' (*ta'addudīyya hizbīyya*) by 'bloc pluralism' (*ta'addudīyya qutbīyya*) and favours the emergence of several dominant poles in the Moroccan party system (Benchamach 2010). Although

not solely aimed at the PJD, this effort partly seeks to re-polarise the party landscape into a 'democratic' and an 'anti-democratic', i.e. PJD camp. Other political parties have joined the anti-PJD front. For instance, Salaheddine Mezouar, who became the new president of the RNI in January 2010, harshly criticised the PJD shortly after his election, stating that cooperation with the Islamist party would cross 'the red lines' ('*al-ḥudūd al-khamrā*') (Al-Masa⁹ 2009b). Given that the RNI and the PAM are working on the establishment of a common 'liberal' bloc,⁴⁷ this statement shows that this bloc is likely to be very much anti-PJD. The PAM's strategy has also aimed to undercut possible alliances of other parties with the PJD, especially during the 2010 local elections. Besides adroit alliance formation, the PAM also systematically excluded members amongst its ranks who had cooperated with the PJD (La Vie Éco 2009a). According to a senior party member,⁴⁸ 'there is one red line in the PAM that should not be crossed, that is, to make a deal with the PJD.'

The PAM as a 'remedy' of the party system

The second role the PAM has vested itself with is to reform and modernise the Moroccan political party system. It thereby responds to an apparent deficiency of elite recruitment and circulation within the party system (Tozy *et al.* 2009). In the mid-1990s, Hassan II had already revealed his wish to correct the political scene in Morocco and stop the mushrooming of political parties. After the advent of the *alternance* government in 1998,⁴⁹ elite recruitment patterns had been subject to a considerable change. Firstly, the former opposition parties could now partake in the elite recruitment circle and were granted national and local government offices. The Arabic name for the *alternance* is very revealing here: *tanāwub* means 'rotation' and shows that the *alternance* was first and foremost an enormous elite 'swap' under the supervision of a still hegemonic monarchy (Vairel 2007, p. 112). Henceforth, with the gradual establishment of competitive, free and fair elections, elite selection could be based on a competitive mechanism that would give the strongest parties the biggest share in terms of personnel. This would allow the regime to 'outsource' the elite selection process to an institutional mechanism and delegate elite recruitment to the electoral 'market'. This shift from allocative to self-selecting cooptation was also better adapted to the increased pluralisation of society due to rapid socio-economic changes (El Iraki 2005, p. 84) and was meant to open the political parties to new, technically skilled aspiring elites, which King Mohammed VI has persistently called for (Royaume du Maroc 1999a, 2000, 2004).

For several reasons, however, increased electoral competition did not yield the desired results in terms of elite recruitment. Firstly, upward mobility within the political parties remained very limited as many party cadres feared to lose their access to clientelistic networks (Posusney 2005, p. 108, Storm 2007, p. 171). Another reason was the lack of democratic procedures within the political parties. The pre-eminent role of the party leader, the *za'im*, the centralised decision making by the party bodies, and the irregular holding of party congresses were particularly frustrating for younger party members (Maliki 2004). As a result, political parties have become increasingly disconnected from the population. They have remained aloof of the aspiring post-independence and even post-*alternance* generations (Maliki 2006, p. 279). The limited pluralism within political parties (Santucci 2006, p. 167) has spurred the proliferation of civil society associations and new mini-parties, which are most of the time split-offs of larger political groupings. Attempts to reform the party system by law⁵⁰ have not been successful. Thus the impulse to modernise the political party system had to come from within the party system. This is where the PAM comes into play. Three aspects need to be highlighted here.

Firstly, as this article has tried to show, the PAM contributes directly to the renewal of Morocco's elite. It provides three aspiring elite groups, i.e. civil society actors, entrepreneurs, and technocrats, with a platform to organise their political interests. It allows these groups to gain direct access to the state and voice their demands. Given their considerable social and economic capital, they may well represent the competent elites the king wants to draw on for his modernisation agenda. With regard to the PAM's recruitment policy in the run-up to the communal elections in 2009, the party has shown some capacity to attract also local elite groups. According to the party, 68% of its candidates have never run for an election before (Tel Quel 2009b). Yet, thus far, there are no data showing how many of these newcomers were actually elected. Moreover, there has been no impartial confirmation of these figures. Anecdotal evidence, however, points to the fact that the younger generation has indeed preferred the PAM to the established political parties because of enhanced opportunities of upward mobility. As a young congressman of the PAM summarises this logic in February 2009: 'In a political party of the national movement, you need more than 20 years to be elected into the decision making bodies of the party. Here [in the case of the PAM] I believe that this will be much quicker' (quoted in Tel Quel 2009a). The party's innovative regionalised structure is particularly interesting in this respect. It multiplies the potential leadership positions within the party and thus makes it more interesting for 'ambitious newcomers'. It is a means to provide sufficient upward mobility in order to bind the new adherents permanently to the party. However, this elite renewal strategy has been limited by the need to co-opt a considerable number of 'old elements' into the party in order to win elections. In the words of Desrués and Kirhlani (2009, p. 312), El Himma had to face the 'anthropological reality of politics in Morocco'.

Secondly, the PAM is likely to provide the long-term impulse for the building of political blocs in Morocco. Thereby the focus would shift from *inter*-party to *intra*-party competition and reduce the number of groupings that need to be co-opted into the political system. Apart from the side effect that the 'political map' would become more understandable to many voters, bloc building is likely to have a positive repercussion on the internal democracy of parties. As stated before, increased intra-party competition has the potential to enhance elite rotation. As a side-effect, this would alleviate the monarchy's need to co-opt the 'losing' groups into the system.

Yet why should the PAM succeed in bloc building better than any other party? Arguably, it is the presence of Fouad Ali El Himma that makes the crucial difference. On the one hand, he has triggered an 'anticipation effect' which makes politicians and voters rush to his party, as the massive inflow of local notables into the PAM has shown. In general, it is very unusual that local notables join a party that is in the opposition as they seek to gain access to state resources. The only plausible explanation in the PAM's case is thus an 'anticipation effect' on the part of the notables. Similarly, there are the first indicators that El Himma has been able to alter the risk perception regarding the formation of political blocs. Whereas beforehand this endeavour seemed highly risky and prospects of success were poor especially for small rent-seeking parties, the prospect of forming a political bloc on the side of El Himma considerably alters the cost-benefit balance. Even for those who do not want to coalesce with El Himma, such as most of the left-wing parties, forming a political bloc becomes rational *in anticipation* of the other side. Otherwise, the noticeable dynamic of alliance formation⁵¹ under circumstances that have remained legally and institutionally unchanged is simply not comprehensible.

Thirdly, from the monarchy's point of view, the PAM helps 'square the circle' of soliciting cooperation and thereby bringing elites back to politics, whilst making sure that this participation remains essentially depoliticised.⁵² This means that the two defining characteristics of

politics, i.e. political power and the distribution of resources, are deliberately marginalised in its discourse. Instead, priority is given to *policies* and the output side. Political participation is valorised in as much as it contributes to concrete results on the ground and to the modernisation of the country. Thus the PAM views political participation as a means to an end, which is economic development. The PAM's emphasis on the 'politics of proximity' is interesting in this respect. It opens up new spaces of legitimate political participation where elites are encouraged to bring in their managerial and technical competences. Indeed, the ongoing regionalisation process is likely to offer new venues for participation by delegating technical issues from the centre to the periphery. By putting forward its idea of good and legitimate politics, the PAM's discourse inevitably de-legitimises all those parties and politicians that aim to do *politics*. In other words, it is inappropriate to question the distribution of political power whilst the country is still largely underdeveloped. Arguably, this is also the core message of its slogan 'doing politics in a different way' (*faire de la politique autrement*). Thus the PAM's discourse further contributes to 'defusing' (Tozy 2008, p. 37) Moroccan politics by politicising and mobilising elites with essentially apolitical issues.

Conclusion

In view of the above analysis, it may seem surprising how little the relationship between El Himma and King Mohammed VI has been dealt with. This deliberate omission is not to signify that this relationship is not important to the genesis and development of the PAM. But their relationship represents a kind of 'black box' that can hardly be opened without resorting to considerable speculation. In fact, the preceding lines were meant to show how much can be discovered if one analyses the PAM *not* as a mere tool of the monarchy or a personal project of El Himma. Three particular findings stand out.

Firstly, the foundation of the PAM was to a large extent the result of an interaction between the parliamentary group 'Authenticity and Modernity' and the MTD. It was also contingent upon the negative reaction of other political parties that refused to take on the parliamentary group and largely boycotted the MTD. If a plan to found a new political party or to revive the party landscape existed at the moment of El Himma's resignation, the chain of events suggests that its implementation followed very much a pattern of 'trial and error'. Secondly, the demand for a new political platform on the part of politicised civil society actors and entrepreneurs was clearly present *before* El Himma's arrival on the political party scene. In addition, it has been argued that the emergence of the PAM's main elite groups, i.e. civil society actors, entrepreneurs, and technocrats, reflects a general elite change in Moroccan politics, as a result of a new style of governance introduced by Mohammed VI. Thirdly, the PAM's programmatical and ideological positions have been partly a function of its elite composition. All three groups share a pragmatic, post-ideological approach to politics, which adheres entirely to the reformist modernisation project of the king. More interested in governance than in politics, their 'ideology of public action' encourages a 'technicisation' of politics that focuses on the concrete socio-economic needs of the local population. The PAM's leadership also shares a marked anti-Islamism. Overall, the absence of any outright and systematic support from the authorities fits uneasily with the vision of the PAM as a mere 'puppet party'.

However, this is not to say that El Himma was unimportant for the success of the newly found party. On the contrary, he served as a main catalyst of the elite demand for a new political platform due to his excellent connection to all three elite groups. In addition, the fact that El Himma has charged himself with carrying out the royal agenda of 'rationalising' the party landscape

made the PAM considerably more attractive – either out of a strategic calculation to ‘back the right horse’ or, for the political opponents of the PAM, in anticipation of an emerging bloc around it. Moreover, El Himma’s privileged access to information from within the state and his sophisticated understanding of the decision-making process of the palace has allowed him to considerably orient the positioning of the PAM. For example, by setting up regionalised party structures the party has effectively pre-empted the ongoing regionalisation project.

Regarding the party’s role in the Moroccan political system at large, the PAM has thus far vested itself a double-function of containing the PJD and reviving the deficient patterns of elite recruitment in the Moroccan political system. In this respect, the PAM contributes to keeping the legislature as potential arena of contestation under control, which obviously plays into the hands of the Moroccan monarchy. Looking back in history, the monarchy has always needed a political actor to carry its message as it views itself above the political parties and does not possess a permanent political platform: ‘managing the politics of others’ (quoted in Desrues and Kirhlani 2009, p. 307), as Hassan II called it. Yet as political parties do not have a great say in the making of public policies, and the size of the monarcho-*Makhzenian* ruling coalition is relatively small, the soliciting of elite cooperation is complicated and the need to keep the mechanisms of cooptation running is urgent. Moreover, the monarchy has had to face a ‘dilemma of trust’ (Desrues and Kirhlani 2009, p. 338) entailed by its need to confer its political projects on a political party which is, however, not supposed to reap the benefits of their realisation and hence become an autonomous, potentially dangerous political actor.

In this respect, the foundation of the PAM clearly represents an element of continuity in Moroccan politics. Again, the ‘dilemma of trust’ has seemingly been solved by sending someone from the king’s closest and most trusted elite circle to reshape the party system from within. El Himma strikingly resembles the founding father of the royalist RNI, Ahmed Osman, who was one of Hassan II’s closest advisers and his brother-in-law. However, and in this sense the PAM clearly reflects an important transformation of the Moroccan political system, in marked difference to previous ‘royalist’ parties, such as the RNI and the UC, the context of free and fair elections eliminates the possibility to guarantee the success of a royalist regime party by coercion or ballot rigging. In the competitive electoral system under Mohammed VI, the monarchy has to resort to ‘softer’ strategies to manage the party system. In contrast to the past, it operates much more by setting incentives for elite cooperation, rather than coercing it. El Himma’s presence in the political system represents such an incentive. In addition, compared to the previous administration parties, the PAM has a higher degree of autonomy, if perhaps not programmatically, at least in terms of the selection of its personnel. Nonetheless, provided that ballot rigging remains off the table, it remains an open question whether and how the PAM will manage to secure its political success in the long run.

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Notes

1. A few authors have touched on the PAM, yet they either focus on a specific period in the party’s development (Bendella 2009, Boussaid 2009, Wegner and Pellicer 2009) or a particular thematic aspect of the PAM (Tozy

- et al.* 2009). Desrue's and Kirhlani's (2009) historical overview of the PAM unfortunately ends before the crucial moment of the 2009 local elections.
2. El Himma has been called repeatedly 'the friend of the king' (for instance, Tel Quel 2008b) and neither of them has ever denied it.
 3. Deeply anchored in Moroccan political history, the *Makhzen* (lit. warehouse) is difficult to define. Generally, it designates an institution of political power and control, consisting of politico-administrative circles of advisers, bureaucrats, and clients around the king.
 4. The following description is based on personal interviews with Fatiha Layadi, fellow candidate of El Himma in Rhamna, founding member of the Movement for All Democrats (*Mouvement Pour Tous les Démocrates*; MTD), and current member of the PAM, and with Bachir Zangui, who was the first spokesperson of the MTD, Rabat, 12 and 17 January 2010.
 5. These were *Al-Ahd* (The Covenant) of Najib Ouazzani, the Alliance of Liberty (ADL) of Ali Belhaj, the Civic Forces of Abderrahim Lahjouji, the Moroccan Union for Democracy (UMPD) of Abdellah Azmani, the Party of Environment and Development (PED) of Ahmed Alami, the Civic Initiative for Development of Mohamed Benhamou, and the Party of Renewal and Equity of Chakir Achahbar. Some of these formations, such as the Civic Forces or the ADL, were essentially 'one-man shows' as they held only one parliamentary seat.
 6. Fatiha Layadi (personal communication, 12 Jan 2010).
 7. The inflow of RNI members to the MTD was considerable and included leading figures such as Salaheddine Mezouar, who was elected as new president of the RNI in January 2010. Mezouar wrested the party's leadership from Mustapha Mansouri in January 2010. Recurrent media reports have portrayed the MTD and the PAM as the root of the conflict between Mezouar and Mansouri, who was very sceptical of a collaboration with the MTD (Maroc Hebdo International 2008b). The PAM has consistently denied any interference (Benchamach 2010).
 8. Bachir Zangui (personal communication, 17 January 2010).
 9. For instance, MTD board member Khadija Rouissi ruled out any possibility to found a political party (Maroc Hebdo International 2008a), whereas El Himma stated that the MTD would be involved in the communal elections in 2009 (La Gazette du Maroc 2008a, Tel Quel 2008a).
 10. El Himma's position during this conflict is not quite clear. According to Bachir Zangui (personal communication, 17 Jan 2010) he was not amongst those who pushed most for a political party, but as a political actor he was clearly looking for a powerful platform.
 11. These were the *al-Ahd* party of Najib Ouazzani, the PED of Ahmed Alami, the ADL of Ali Belhaj, and the Civic Initiative for Development of Mohamed Benhamou.
 12. El Kadiri's PND withdrew in September 2008, Ahmed Ouazzani's *al-Ahd* party and Najib Alami's PED left the PAM in January 2009.
 13. This expression had been in circulation some time before the foundation of the PAM and has been used by various political actors, including the king himself (Mattes 2002, p. 2).
 14. Although widely used, the concept of 'notability' is empirically elusive. Several Arabic terms (*'ayn*, *nukhba*, *za'im*) are used interchangeably to denote the same idea (Hénia 2004, p. 13). In its most generic sense, the term describes the outstanding position and the prestige of a person endowed with social, economic, or cultural capital. Notables can be understood in the sense of local elites. Ascriptive by birth or acquired by economic success or political appointment, the 'notability' status has been subject to major transformations in the wake of state formation and socio-economic changes within Moroccan society (Hénia 2004, pp. 24–32).
 15. The system of Moroccan local elections consists of subsequent rounds of communal, regional, and professional elections, at the end of which a third of the second chamber of parliament is renewed. However, direct suffrage is only involved in the elections of the local councils, which then elect the mayors.
 16. In total 16,793 candidates.
 17. The PAM obtained 22, the PI 17 and the MP 11 out of 50 seats in total.
 18. This was confirmed by several independent sources, amongst others the Moroccan political scientist Mohamed Darif (quoted in Le Journal Hebdomadaire 2009a) and Kamal Lahbib (personal communication, 14 Jan 2010), who was a member of the committee responsible for electoral monitoring.
 19. It will be shown later that different motives induced the PAM to take this step.
 20. According to Lahcen Daoudi (personal communication, 21 Jan 2010), who is a member of the PJD's general secretariat, there were also several meetings of both parties to wind down the conflict.
 21. The dispute revolved around the interpretation of article five of the party law, which stipulates that deputies who change the party during an electoral term are not allowed to run for their new party in the next elections. The PAM argued that this *only* meant the national elections, not the local ones.
 22. Due to a lack of data, the profile of the party's wider membership base cannot be analysed at this point.

23. This is highlighted by the arrows in the chart.
24. Akhhichine, El Ouadie, Rouissi, Benchamach, Belkouch, and Benaddi were all members of the board of the MTD.
25. His profile is particularly interesting as in the 1970s he joined the extreme leftist organisation Movement 23 March, which sought to violently overthrow the monarchical regime (Vermeren 2006, pp. 49–50). Arrested in 1974 and condemned to 20 years imprisonment in 1977, he was released in 1984. He then co-founded the Forum for Truth and Justice (FVJ) in 1999.
26. The Rif is mostly populated by ethnic Imazighen and lies in the very north of Morocco.
27. Being an ex-militant of the Polisario and originally trained as a doctor, Biadillah was appointed by Hassan II as head of the prefecture of Salé in 1992. In 1998, he became *wali* of the region of Safi and in 2002 joined the government under Prime Minister Driss Jettou (2002–07) as Minister of Health. As a Sahrawi and current secretary general of the party, he provides the PAM with a valuable linkage to one of the most conflictual regions in Morocco.
28. Holding a degree in economics and an MBA of the University of California, Belhaj has been active in Morocco's largest employer association, the General Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises (CGEM). Besides this, he was a member of parliament for the royalist UC (1992–97) and for the socialist PPS (1997–2002). With the support of his civil society association *Maroc 2020*, Belhaj founded his own party, the Alliance of Liberties (ADL), on the eve of the 2002 elections. The ADL obtained only one seat in the national elections of 2007 and was struggling to survive before joining El Himma's group. Unsurprisingly, Belhaj appeared to be amongst the strongest proponents of the creation of a new party within the parliamentary group Authenticity and Modernity.
29. In a surprising move, even for his party, Abdelmoula resigned from his post in October 2010 over repeated allegations of corruption, mainly voiced by the PJD.
30. Fatiha Layadi (personal communication, 12 Jan 2010).
31. The ministry of Interior has been gradually sidelined as a recruitment base and today the modernist elite is almost exclusively trained and recruited through French and Moroccan elite universities such as the *École polytechnique* and the *École des Ponts et des Chaussées* (Vermeren 2009, pp. 79–80). Azzouzi (2006, p. 113) speaks of the birth of a '*neo-Makhzen*' in this context.
32. Bachir Znagui (personal communication, 17 Jan 2010).
33. Certainly, the emergence of civil society actors is not a phenomenon that came with Mohammed VI. Already in 1995, a flourishing associational life existed in Morocco (Denoeux and Gateau 1995). Yet the relationship of civil society actors and the state was marked by mutual distrust during the reign of Hassan II. The state adopted a strategy of containment, which partly consisted in appropriating the dominant human rights discourse (Sater 2007, p. 75).
34. Belhaj's and Lahjouji's parties had announced their fusion in April 2007 (MAP 2007). However, Civic Forces has not joined the PAM and in the local elections of 2009 it ran a separate list. I have been unable to identify the specific reason for the Civic Forces' reluctance to join the PAM.
35. Comparisons between the MTD and Daba 2007 were also drawn in the Moroccan press (La Vie Éco 2008a, Tel Quel 2008).
36. A first meeting between El Himma and El Ouadie is reported as early as in 2000 (Le Journal Hebdomadaire 2008).
37. The following analysis is based on the PAM's two main programmatical declarations, 'Principles and Directions' (*'mabadi wa tuwajahat'*) and 'Aims and Priorities' (*'ahdaf wa awlawiyat'*) (PAM 2010b) as well as numerous press articles and interviews.
38. The INDH was elaborated in close cooperation with the world bank and is supposed to mend Morocco's lag in terms of human development. It mainly distributes funds to local development projects, many of which are run by local NGOs. The INDH has also been interpreted as a means to undercut the economic roots of radical Islamism (Desrues 2007a, p. 286, Faath 2009, p. 112).
39. In his campaign in Rhamna, El Himma had proposed his voters a 'political pact', which was meant to trade economic development projects for political support (Bendella 2009, p. 53).
40. For instance, the report calls for the association of the local population, particularly women and youth, to local development projects and urges the renewal of local elites (Royaume du Maroc 2006, pp. 23, 44). Especially the theme of elite renewal is a recurring element in the PAM's programmatical rhetoric. As its secretary general, Cheikh Biadillah, declared in May 2009: 'We want every region to have its own influential elite that should be capable of bringing a positive change' (Le Matin 2009b).
41. This explains the choice of a tractor as the party's symbol.

42. Khadija Rouissi, Salah El Oudie, and Fouad Ali El Himma participated in the IER commission. Ahmed Akhchichine and Hassan Benaddi were part of the commission in charge of the Fiftieth Anniversary Report.
43. Al-Masa² (2009a) provides an impressive list of the PAM's verbal invective vis-à-vis the PJD.
44. 'Moralisation of political life' was the parties main political slogan in 1997 (El-Mossadeq 1999, p. 241) and the main theme of its national congress in 2008 (Callies de Salies 2008, p. 114).
45. These are the Independence Party (PI), the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP), and the Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS). For reasons of clarity, their smaller split-offs shall be omitted here.
46. Fatiha Layadi (personal communication, 12 Jan 2010).
47. Both the RNI and the UC have voiced their interest in establishing a 'liberal' party coalition with the PAM (Maroc Hebdo International 2010b), and RNI and UC have surged ahead by melding their parliamentary groups. The fact that all three parties agreed on coordinating their local activities in July 2010 (Maroc Hebdo International 2010a) suggests that the emergence of such a party bloc is indeed a realistic scenario.
48. Fatiha Layadi (personal communication, 12 Jan 2010).
49. This designates the establishment of a government under the leadership of the historical nationalist parties that occurred in 1998. The nationalist parties had historically constituted the opposition against the monarchical regime.
50. Both the new electoral code of 2002 and the new party law of 2006 intended to strengthen the representation of new elites in the political parties (Ferrié 2003, p. 313, Bendourou 2007, p. 294).
51. New political blocs have also emerged amongst a small set of micro-parties (Aujourd'hui Le Maroc 2010) and, more importantly, the historical nationalist parties (PI, USFP, PPS) formed a common committee to prepare together for the 2012 legislative elections (Al-Sabah 2010b).
52. Depoliticisation has been a central theme in academic research on Moroccan politics (Vairel 2007, Kohstall 2009).

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