Sovereignty in Morocco

Between Royal Legitimacy and Democratic Legitimacy

ABSTRACT This article tackles the issue of sovereignty in the Moroccan political system and argues that there are formally two sources of legitimacy, royal and democratic, with deeper implications for decision-making and political power. The article analyzes this phenomena as enshrined in the Moroccan constitution of 2011 and identifies the characteristics of a political system quite different from known democratic systems. This concept of political power makes the elected institutions play a secondary representative function compared with the high and transcendent representation of the royal institution.

KEYWORDS: sovereignty, Morocco, political system, democracy

INTRODUCTION

Sovereignty is among the most important principles ever created by political thought. In the eighteenth century, jurists and philosophers worked to change the function of sovereignty and move it from a principle embodied in the person of the king, 1 to a principle that falls within the sphere of the people, 2 and employed in such a way as to control political decision-making on the grounds that the state is solely a matter of the affairs of the people. However, the people cannot speak or manage their affairs except through their representatives, 3 whose role is not limited

1. The French thinker Jean Boudin introduced the theory of sovereignty.
2. Montesquieu and Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès’ concept of the sovereignty of the nation had a remarkable impact on the revolutionaries of 1789. The sovereignty of the people according to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a staunch defender of the principle of universal suffrage that goes beyond the exclusionary character, was the basis of the theory of the rule of the nation, thus forming the first nucleus of the embodiment of democratic culture.
3. In this sense, George Vidal says: “La Nation [...] est muette et c’est l’assemblée qui s’exprime à travers elle” (The nation is silent and it is through the assembly that the nation expresses itself) (Chagnollaud 2009, 206).
to the expression of the will of the nation but is considered as the organ through which that will crystallizes (Blachèr 2007, 44).

The concept of representation in the Moroccan political system is quite different from its meaning in democratic systems. From this point of view, sovereignty (along the lines of other principles and mechanisms of separation of power, rotation, political party, constitution, referendum, etc.) is a local concept in line with the concept of power in the Moroccan political system, which brings together two different sources of legitimacy: royal legitimacy emanating from several sources (religious, historical, hereditary, constitutional, etc.) and democratic legitimacy emanating from the ballot box.

The article is structured as follows. The next section will address the concept of sovereignty in the 2011 Constitution of Morocco. The third section examines the exercise of sovereignty through it.

**COLLECTIVIST CULTURE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE CONCEPT OF SOVEREIGNTY IN MOROCCO**

Elections are the primary means through which citizens exercise their right to sovereignty. The 2011 Constitution of Morocco clearly reflects the correlation between sovereignty and election as a mechanism for the delegation and exercise of political power through representative institutions, which states: “The sovereignty of the nation is exercised directly by referendum, and indirectly by its representatives. The nation chooses its representatives in the elected institutions by free, fair and orderly elections” (The Constitution, Chapter 2).

While Chapter 24 of the 2011 Constitution provides that “the King is the Head of State and the Supreme Representative [...]”, if the elected institutions act to represent the nation at the level of the legislative and executive branches, the king is the supreme representative of the state which considers the nation as being only one of its components. Thus, the new constitution is to be replaced by the king from being a supreme representative of the nation to a supreme representative of the state, who more emphatically confirms the supremacy of the royal institution at the expense of representative institutions (political parties, parliament, government), which remains inferior to the high political representation of the royal institution.

The constitutional text, in the present personal assessment, gives dual meaning to the two distinct forms of legitimacy of Moroccan privacy in the exercise of political power: democratic legitimacy and royal law, which coexist in principle in perfect harmony, but with different hierarchies.
Democratic Legitimacy

Political parties compete for political power through electoral programs that express the aspirations of citizens in a given time period. The representative institutions emanating from the ballot boxes, which enjoy democratic legitimacy, express the needs of the Moroccan citizen in a specific circumstance, linked to the present on the temporal level.

The elected institutions exercised limited sovereignty in parallel with the tasks and functions entrusted to them by way of election, which is only a delegation of authority by nature restricted by legal and time constraints. The representatives of the people are agents, but agencies, both jus cogens and actors, have several shortcomings. The first restricts the authority of the agent so that he is committed to the directions of his client; the second gives him the absolute freedom to be alone in making the decision without taking into account their views. This impedes the functioning of institutions in the first case and prevents the response to the real needs of citizens in the second.

The concept of political power in the Moroccan political system, based on the exclusion of intermediaries between the king and the people (the shepherd and the parish), makes the elected institutions play a secondary representative function compared with the high and transcendent representation of the royal institution.

The people choose their representatives through universal and universal suffrage and, therefore, choose the ones who can manage their public affairs. The supreme directives of the king, the president of the state and the supreme representative, determine its main features. In other words, these elected institutions have limited powers, in all their aspects, with the monarchical power that is unique to the power of strategic political decision. It is a situation that makes it fully subject to the directives of the king and the implementation of his decisions and orders, all of which are characteristics of the junta. The latter are not only practiced by the people, but by the king, as supreme representative of the state and the mastermind of “the maintenance of democratic choice” (The Constitution, Chapter 42).

The elected institutions, in addition to having limited and invaluable powers at the level of strategic political decision-making, on the one hand, and...
accountability, on the other, do not enjoy full freedom to exercise the functions and tasks entrusted to them, so they remain restricted at multiple levels:

- The Constitution authorizes the king as representative authority the right to address the nation and parliament. The royal discourse is seen as a real political program that contains legislative procedures that the deputies are called upon to comply with and abide by (Kalloush 2004). Even more, some of the bills passed to parliament include paragraphs of royal speeches (Al-Dukak 2009, 44). The king has the right to request a new reading of any draft or motion voted by parliament with a view to stopping and preventing it. Thus, it is a royal objection to legal proposals and projects. As well as the right to order the implementation of the law (Chapter 50), it singles out the legislative initiative in the religious field under Chapter 41 and introduces a draft review of some of the requirements of the Constitution to parliament under the Dahir (royal decree) (Chapter 174, para. 3).

- The proportional voting pattern can in no way whatsoever produce a clear majority qualified to form a coherent government capable of managing public affairs. It expands the representation of political parties within parliament in order to represent the largest number of social strata and transfer their demands within these lower representative institutions in order to crystallize and formulate them in a unanimous and unitary form, in line with directives and other orders of the king, the supreme representative of the state and the symbol of its unity (Chapter 42). Hence, the political parties become ineffective and thus unable to carry out the constitutional and political tasks entrusted to them.

6. Article 52 of the 2011 Constitution states: “The King may address the nation and the parliament, and his speech shall be addressed before both Houses, and its content shall not be subject to any discussion within them.”

7. The constitutional provisions do not specify the reasons for which the king requests this new reading, which gives him very broad powers to adapt the reasons for his taking this action.

8. The representation of the largest number of political parties within parliament is compatible with the monotheistic philosophy of the royal institution striving to consolidate it through a culture of unanimity.

9. The proportional voting pattern through the largest remaining component is the most democratic manner in which to exercise democracy. The difficulty in harmonizing their components and making representative institutions ineffective hinders them from carrying out their constitutional, legislative, and political tasks, which are undertaken by the royal institution as a sponsor of consensus culture. On this subject, see El Achouri (2006).
• The Council of Government, as an institution emanating from the ballot box, is one of the most important developments of the 2011 Constitution. However, the council made this institution operate under the king’s ministerial council, in which the Moroccan monarch (Al-Sassi 2011, 16) descends with all his symbolic, religious, and constitutional weight. In this direction, Chapter 92 of the Constitution states: “The Council of Government shall deliberate [...] in the general policy of the State before presenting it to the Ministerial Council.”

Restricting the will of government, as an institution emanating from the ballot box, to the obligation to implement its program, by royal will, significantly affects the substance of the contract between voters and their representatives:

• The representative institutions, despite their democratic legitimacy, exercise their functions by way of a mandate that can be seized at any moment by virtue of the actual powers of the king through Chapters 47 and 51 of the Constitution, respectively, by exemption members of the government and dissolve the Houses of Parliament.

Royal Legitimacy
The multiplicity of sources of legitimacy, which are unique to the royal institution alone, make it diffuse enough to cover all spaces of the Moroccan political system (religious–secular, modern–traditional, urban–rural, etc.), extending back fourteen centuries, while looking forward to the future through the present.

This perception, which controls Morocco’s political culture, makes the royal institution the only one capable of embodying the sovereignty of the nation, legally defined as a “political group” rather than a “social group.” According to Sieyès, the nation enables the human community, the people, to be free of differences and diversity (ethnic, linguistic, religious, etc.) which characterizes all its components (cited in Blachèr 2007, 42), and aspires to realizing the unity of the human group it represents, in which the king, in this case, is a symbol of its unity.

10. Article 47 of the Constitution states: “The King, on his own initiative, after consultation with the prime minister, may exempt one or more members of the Government from their duties.”

11. Article 51 of the Constitution states: “The King shall have the right to dissolve the Houses of Parliament or one of them with a dahir, in accordance with the conditions set out in Chapters 96, 97 and 98.”

12. On October 24, 2017, the Moroccan monarch activated the provisions of Chapter 1 of the Constitution, in particular its second paragraph, on linking responsibility to accountability by adopting a series of measures and sanctions against several ministers and senior officials.
The royal institution is not limited in time, but in chronological order. The expression that best conveys this is “The King died, the King lived,” in the sense that the king dies and the institution remains permanent and continuous because of its duration of statehood. This is confirmed in Chapter 42 of the Constitution, which states: “The King, the President of the State and its supreme representative, and the symbol of the unity of the nation, and the guarantor of the state’s permanence and continuity [. . .].”

This vision is completely compatible with the concept of the nation, which is not limited to the present, but simultaneously transcends it to the past and the future, on the one hand, and the concept of accounting provided by the Constitution, on the other. As such, the institutions emanating from the ballot box, which enjoy the delegation of authority, are held accountable for their performance, which empowers the voter, making them the primary decision-maker either through exercising their rights in re-voting or by voting for another majority. On the other hand, the royal institution remains unaccounted for, even though it is unique in its monopoly of strategic political decision-making.

The digital-majority system, underpinning democratic legitimacy, splits Moroccan society and, thus, undermines the foundations of the collective culture that leans on monarchy.

In this section, elections as a mechanism for the delegation of political power are a first phase to develop a picture through which the different orientations of the Moroccan citizen are drawn and identified, as an expression of the differences and diversity of Moroccan society at a certain period of time, so as to crystallize them, in a second stage, into the form of a collective component, beyond the digital character, in which the aspirations of the minority are in favor of the majority.

The Moroccan constitution gave the royal institution, as a supreme institution, the elements of activating the principle of unanimity, to overcome the manifestations of war and the shortcomings,\(^\text{13}\) that may be entangled in democratic legitimacy, and which may, in turn, tend towards the dictatorship of the majority (Ardant 2002). In such a case, a split could occur in Moroccan society and undermine the unity of the nation. This makes the Moroccan constitution give democracy a concept that does not stop at its source (the digital element), but which goes beyond it to its content, as André Philippe emphasized before the French Constitution Committee in 1946, when he demanded

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\(^{13}\) Article 42 of the Constitution states: “The King [. . .] is the symbol of the unity of the nation [. . .].”
that the moral values of “the civilization of a particular national group”\textsuperscript{14} be respected as the spirit of democracy.

The multiplicity of sources of legitimacy, which are unique to the royal institution, have made the Moroccan Constitution, through its various sections, grant the king a lofty status that gives him absolute freedom to make strategic decisions at all levels, whether religious or worldly, and penetrates all areas of the Moroccan political system (legislative, executive, and judiciary) and the vertical (the religious and political fields).\textsuperscript{15} This is a fundamental characteristic of the most significant novelty of the 2011 Constitution, which is to consider the system of government in Morocco as a constitutional monarchy.\textsuperscript{16}

This perception is consistent with the representative agency concept which is by its nature an unlimited agency (Chagnollaud 2009, 207). The Moroccan constitution, despite its amendments, has been formulated in various ways to achieve this goal: the freedom of the royal institution to move between the two religious fields (the principality of the faithful) and the secular (constitutional monarchy) and, thus, control decision-making in all its forms.

One element that confirms the extent of the royal institution’s authority over the elected institutions is accountability, and is less when compared with the high and transcendent representation of the king, which is, in contrast, the institution governing all institutions.

These manifestations of glory, unique to the royal institution, over and above those emanating from the ballot box, make them the true embodiment of the nation’s sovereignty.

**SOVEREIGNTY BETWEEN THE SUPREMACY OF DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMACY AND DEMOCRACY**

The new constitution was in total harmony with the prevailing political culture in the Moroccan political system, which makes the royal institution, as a sponsor of the culture of unanimity, the cornerstone of the Moroccan political system and the axis around which revolve the rest of the institutions of different sources and ranks. It has sovereign and arbitral functions that make

\textsuperscript{14} For Philippe’s speech, see Débbache and Pontier (1995, 104).

\textsuperscript{15} This is to prevent clerics (scholars) from interfering in the field of politics, but, in contrast, politicians intervene in the field of religion. However, the King of the Faithful is entitled to move freely between the religious and secular fields to ensure respect for the Constitution, the proper functioning of constitutional institutions, and the safeguarding of the rights and freedoms of citizens against any possible deviation.

\textsuperscript{16} For more information, see El Achouri (2012).
it control all means of strategic decision-making. This holds the fate of these elected institutions hostage to the will of the royal institution (Tariq 2014, 120–36).

It could be said that by holding the appointing authority in one hand and the control of constituent power in the other, these constitute the most important aspects that embody sovereignty in the person of the royal institution through the emphasis placed on the latter compared with that placed on the institutions through the ballot box.

Appointment Authority
The king has wide powers in appointing ministers and senior state officials.

Appointment and Exemption of Ministers
Unlike the 1996 Constitution, which gave absolute freedom to the king to appoint the prime minister, the Constitution of 2011 was restricted by his authority in this section. Article 47, para. 1, of the Constitution states: “The King shall appoint the Prime Minister from the political party that issues the elections of the House of Representatives and on the basis of its results.” In the same vein, para. 2 of the same chapter adds: “The [king] appoints the members of government on the proposal of its president.” Through the above, two observations can be made:

- The king is the symbol of the rule of the nation. He appoints the president of the highest representative institution emanating from the ballot box and the other members at the suggestion of the prime minister. This confirms the actual intervention of the royal institution in the executive branch (Tariq 2014, 133) and its name is clearly stamped on the elected institutions (Bouz 2014, 113–14).

- Despite the importance of tightening the power of the king, in contrast, he enjoys absolute freedom in the choice of the political personality he wants to take over the presidency of the leadership of the party winning the elections, who may not necessarily be the secretary-general of the party.

Alternately, note that the role of prime minister is limited solely to the proposed list of persons nominated for ministerial posts, whereas the king has absolute power to reject or accept the proposal submitted by the prime minister and, therefore, the power to appoint ministers remains one of the king’s reserved areas.
The relationship of the royal institution with members of the government goes beyond their appointment and extends to their exemption without any restriction other than the consultation of the prime minister, a formality that has no effect on the king’s authority (Bendoro 2011, 121). The authority of the prime minister, in this regard, is limited by a request to the king, who has absolute power, as in the case of the prime minister’s proposal, to accept or reject it.

The appointment and exemption of ministers by the king and the formation of the ministers of sovereignty creates bi-presidential rivalry, in terms of hierarchy, that makes the members of government recognize that their political destiny is dependent on the king. Justifications weaken the authority of the prime minister over members of his government and prevent him/her from enabling the implementation of the government program with complete independence.

These factors further deepen the citizen’s sense of the integrity of the royal institution at the expense of representative institutions, since the authority is in the hands of the king without the government. However, the role of the parties, despite the amendments they underwent, is limited to running for elections without looking to their basic and original function: the exercise of political power (Hareef 2011, 9). This increases the weakness of political parties and the loss of citizens’ confidence in the other representative institutions.

High-Ranking Appointment in the Civil Service

It is commonly understood that in order for the government team to ensure the implementation of its program in the desired manner and to ensure the success of its sectoral policies in various fields, it must have broad powers in appointing people who believe in the government’s program and objectives and are capable of managing the public affairs professionally and responsibly.

To this end, the new constitution gave the prime minister wide powers in this area to enable him/her to manage public affairs and supervise public administration and vital sectors in the country. In this regard, Chapter 91 of the Constitution states: “The head of government shall be appointed in the civil service, in public administrations and in senior positions in public institutions and enterprises.”

17. For more details on this issue, see The Constitution, Chapter 47, para. 3.
18. For more details on this issue see, al-Din (n.d., 18).
It is certain that the 2011 Constitution reduced the king’s powers in appointing senior positions by empowering the prime minister with important powers in this section, but he also restricted them in the requirements of Chapter 49 at two levels:

- The exclusion of some vital and sensitive functions and their removal from the areas of authority of the prime minister. In this context, Chapter 49 states: “The Ministerial Council shall deliberate on the following issues and texts: [...] Appointment by the Prime Minister, at the initiative of the Minister concerned, of the civil service, of the Bank of Morocco, the ambassadors, and those responsible for public institutions and contracting strategy.”

- Unlike Chapter 91, which deals with “public institutions and corporations,” Chapter 49 discusses “the institutions and the strategic public enterprises that will determine the organizational law of its regulations.” This poses a major problem with the definition of criteria which may make a particular institution or public enterprise strategic in nature and, thus, enter into the domain of the king without the prime minister (al-Din 2012).

The dispute over these two issues is a manifestation of a disagreement over the essence of political power in Morocco and an argument over who has the right to own the strategic political decision: Are they the elected institutions or the royal institution? In other words, the conflict over these two issues implicitly refers to the struggle over the institution that deserves to embody sovereignty.

The Moroccan legislator’s reference to the sectors mentioned in Chapter 49 was neither casual nor spontaneous; rather, these sectors were chosen for their vital importance to the sovereignty of the country. The exclusive institution of the monarchy is unique to the embodiment of sovereignty without other constitutional institutions, whatever their source of legitimacy. Those embodied by the king—the sovereignty of the nation, the stability of which is the spirit of continuity and permanence—require control of the means of strategic decision-making, economic and political meanings, and are necessary to ensure the political stability of the country (Iraqi 2012, 117). Alternately, the king does not preside over the ministerial council only in his capacity as

19. Some Moroccan researchers believe that despite the stipulation of Chapter 49 on these positions, they are in the private sphere of the prime minister and, therefore, must be appointed by decree and not by a dahir.
honorary president; deliberation on the issues before the ministerial council gives the king, as the highest representative of the state, absolute authority to accept or reject any proposal. No one is obliged to accept the proposal subject to deliberation, but the king's opinion is binding on all members of the ministerial council (Al-Sassi 2011, 17).

**Subsidiary Constituent Authority**

Constituent authority, both original and subsidiary, is of great importance. It is the power the constituent authority has that controls the fate and consequences of all political power. For this reason, it was the subject of a sharp conflict between the parties emanating from the national movement and the royal establishment. This conflict eventually ended in favor of the latter for several reasons, including the fact that the royal organization enjoyed a historic legitimacy that not only out-dated the national parties but also completely dominated the religious legitimacy, thus making the king—the Emir of the faithful—a sponsor of the pledge of allegiance on matters of the parish (nation). In the words of Hassan II: “This constitution is above all a renewal of the sacred allegiance that has always been brought together by the people and the King.”

The 1970 Constitution made fundamental amendments to the constituent authority, significantly restricting the authority of parliament and deterring the prime minister from any initiative in this area. It is a situation that has made political parties aware of the impossibility of any initiative from within the realm of parliament to resort to memos as a new means of demanding constitutional reforms. Such behavior is interpreted as an implicit recognition of the monarchy’s monopoly over the authority of the constituent authority.

All Moroccan constitutions, from 1970 until the last constitutional amendment, ensured that the royal institution could control all aspects of the exercise of constituent authority and its mechanisms. In this vein, the king says: “We have decided to amend a comprehensive constitution based on seven basic pillars.”

In keeping with the spirit of the rules laid down in the 2011 Constitution, which focuses on the establishment and affirmation of the hegemony of the

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20. Given the sensitivity of the tasks entrusted to the constituent authority and its vitality, democratic regimes were elected by the people to reflect the demands and tendencies of public opinion.

21. This is a citation from a letter from King Hassan II dated November 11, 1962.

22. The March 2011 speech states: “In accordance with our approach to the major reforms, we have decided to form a special committee to review the constitution. We have chosen to elect its members with competence, impartiality and integrity. […] We look forward to the high results of its business within the month of June.”

23. For further details, see the speech of March 9, 2011.
royal institution, as an executive and governing institution, over the other constitutional institutions, the Moroccan legislator has entrusted the royal institution with new vital powers in the domain of the subsidiary constituent authority at the expense of representative institutions. The expansion of the powers of the royal institution in the sphere of constituent authority was smooth and elevated the king from a supreme representative of the nation to a supreme representative of the state.

In addition to its traditional authority to present a draft constitutional amendment directly to a referendum, the king can “present a draft constitution to some of the requirements of the constitution” (Chapter 174, para. 3). His initiative in this direction is limited only by a formality that depends on consultation with the president of the constitutional court. Para. 4 adds: “The parliament, convened, shall be summoned by the King, to a joint meeting of the two houses, to indorse the draft by a two-thirds majority of the members.” This means that the king’s jurisdiction is not limited to the presentation of the project to parliament, but extends to the ratification stage, which will not take place unless the king calls parliament to the joint meeting of both houses, so that it can be controlled and processed to make it conducive to reach the desired goal.

This new measure is a double guarantee of royal authority, according to Rukaya al-Musadiq: “First, it believes the King would hold a referendum whose results are not necessarily guaranteed, and could, therefore, become a serious risk. It avoids the King taking the risk of reconsidering some of the

24. Contrary to the trend observed in the speech of March 9, 2011, on upgrading elected institutions and providing them with the means to make them effective institutions, the 2011 Constitution extended the powers of the royal institution to the detriment of elected institutions in the constituent authority.

25. The term “state” comprises two different but complementary issues: a broad meaning related to territory, human community, and political power; and a more restricted meaning related to political power that possesses the means of material coercion, that is, the rulers without the governed. In this sense, it is thus a moral person, sovereign but limited by law (by the legal basis). The human community (the nation) is closely linked to the territory, that is, the domain in which rulers exercise their political power within its scope and are thus linked to sovereignty. The state is essentially a mountainous phenomenon, meaning that there may be a nation without a territory, but no state without a territory can be imagined. The state in the sense of the territory is the container in which the nation is located, which is a fundamental element in its legal composition. From this point of view, the Constitution of 2011, contrary to what many Moroccan researchers see, using the words of the supreme representative of the state instead of the supreme representative of the nation, raised the Moroccan king to a higher level, and not vice versa.

26. Chapter 172 of the Constitution states: “The King may directly submit to referendum the project on which the initiative was taken.”
content of the Constitution he might have to redress [...]” (al-Musadiq 2011, 66). It is a reserve weapon “to correct some imbalances in the constitution” (Al-Sassi 2011, 17).

The proposal made by the prime minister in this regard must be presented “to the Ministerial Council after deliberation in the Council of Government” (Chapter 173, para. 3). In other words, it must be authenticated before it is presented to the referendum by a dahir.

Regarding the initiative submitted by one or more members of a house of parliament, it must be approved only by a two-thirds majority vote by the members of the council.27

From this point of view, note that there is no fair distribution of the constituent authority, inasmuch as the monopoly of this authority is confirmed by the king—the head of state, who cannot in any way envisage any amendment to the requirements of the constitution without his blessing, as long as he is the only one who has the power to present any project or proposal to amend the constitution to the people for referendum under the dahir. From this section, the king alone controls all avenues for amending the Constitution. The king, who had no control over the constituent branch authority due to the 1962 Constitution, became the sole ruler of it.

CONCLUSIONS

It can be seen from the above that this perception, embodied in Chapters 2 and 42 of the Moroccan Constitution, makes sovereignty a concept in which the principle of representation differs from the institution of elections. The statement: “The prosecution is not based on the choice of my vote, but its origin is a constitutional privilege” illustrates this fact. In other words, if parliament is the representative of the nation, the king is the supreme representative of the state, with all its components and elements, having the right to direct contact with them, bypassing the intermediate and elected institutions and preventing it from becoming a barrier between the shepherd and the parish.28

27. Given the nature of the current voting pattern of proportional representation that prevents any party from gaining a majority, a quorum of two-thirds is impossible to obtain.
28. The principle of exclusion of intermediaries represents the spirit of the collective culture established by the late King Hassan II in Moroccan political culture based on the concentration and unification of power in his person: “The main difficulty lies in the implementation of the constitutional requirements and the principles of the constitutional monarchy without constitutional institutions, such as the parliament or the executive apparatus becoming a veil between the King and his people. […] As long as there is no link between the King and his people, it will not pass then […]”
This makes the elected institutions of the royal institution an integral part of it. Considering this situation, we cannot help but wonder about the function of political parties and elections in the Moroccan political system, especially since the 2011 Constitution recognized Morocco as a country with a parliamentary system.

The political parties, of all types and ideologies, do not represent the people within the legislative establishment (Moatasem 1992, 122), but instead work to translate the culture of difference that characterizes Moroccan society at the institutional level in order to frame the difference and formulate it in a collective form that achieves the unity of the Moroccan nation around the royal institution. Thus, it brings harmony between the shepherd and the parish (Dharif 1996, 71–72).29 This rids the legislative establishment of its constitutional and political institutions in expressing the will of the nation and strips it of the exercise of political power, as it is an institution that appoints the supreme representative of the state (besides the ministers) to bear the burdens of the state alone. This perception empties the elections as a mechanism for deliberating political power, of its content which takes into account the specificity of Morocco’s political culture, making the concept of political power incompatible with any political exercise that aspires to political power (Zakaria 2007, 31).

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29. Mohammed Dharif believes that the king—the Emir of the Believers—has two central functions: the political function of managing political differences that requires multi-parties and a religious function embodied in preserving the religious unity of the nation (Dharif 1996).


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