Polity IV Country Report 2010: Morocco

Score:	2009	2010	Change
Polity:	-6	-6	0
Democ:	0	0	0
Autoc:	6	6	0
Durable:		45	
Tentative:		No	

Authority Trends, 1956-2010: Morocco

SCODE	**MOR**		CCODE	**600**		Date of Report	**1 June 2011**

Polity IV Component Variables

XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP
3	1	2	3	3	2

Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)

End Date	7 June 1965		Begin Date	8 June 1965

Polity Fragmentation: No, (contested sovereignty in Western Sahara)

Constitution	1972 (1992, 1996)
Executive(s)	King Mohamed VI; succeeded to the crown in direct hereditary line from his father, King Hassan II, 23 July 1999 Prime Minister Abbas El Fassi (PI); appointed by the king, 19 September 2007

Legislature	Bicameral:
	Assembly of Representatives (325 seats; 295 directly elected, 30 in national lists consisting only of women; most recent elections, 7 September 2007)
	       Independence Party (PI): 52
	       Justice and Development Party (PJD): 46
	       Popular Movement (MP): 41
	       National Rally of Independents (RNI): 39
	       Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP): 38
	       Constitutional Union (UC): 27
	       Other parties: 77
	       Non-partisans: 5
	Assembly of Councilors (270 seats; 162 elected by local councils, 91 by professional organizations, 27 by labor syndicates; most recent elections, 3 October 2009)

Judiciary	Supreme Council of the Judiciary; Supreme Court

Narrative Description:[1]

Executive Recruitment: *Dual Executive: Ascription + Designation* (2)

Morocco has been an Islamic monarchy since the Middle Ages. Its present Constitution defines the state as a "sovereign, democratic social monarchy." The royal crown is passed from father to son in the direct hereditary line. The king is the head of state and maintains supreme civil and religious authority; he also serves as commander in chief of the armed forces. The king is empowered to appoint and dismiss all important officials, including the prime minister. The prime minister is the head of government and possesses all executive authority that does not belong exclusively to the king. The prime minister appoints the Cabinet and is responsible for formulating the government's general policy upon approval by the legislature.

Executive Constraints: *Slight to Moderate Limitations* (3)

The king exercises ultimate political authority and may dissolve the parliament and rule by decree at his discretion, or call for new elections. However, King Hassan's constitutional reforms of 1992 and 1996 have somewhat increased the significance of the legislature. The creation of the upper legislative chamber (Chamber of Counselors) in 1996 has redistributed some powers away from the king. The legislature is empowered to adopt laws initiated by its members or by the prime minister. The Constitution upholds the legislature's powers to authorize declarations of war, initiate revisions to the Constitution, and approve state-of-emergency extensions beyond 30 days. The legislature can force the Cabinet to resign by adopting a censure motion or refusing to grant a vote of confidence moved by the prime minister. In absence of an institutionalized system of checks and balances, the judiciary historically has been subject to corruption and Interior Ministry influence.

Political Participation: *Authoritarian-Guided Liberalization* (3)

Since its liberation from France in 1956, the monarchy has made a continuous effort to transform the country from a hereditary sultanate into a modern constitutional monarchy. Beginning in 1977, King Hassan II permitted a guarded amount of political expression, holding legislative elections and convening parliament regularly. The present constitution declares that "a single-party state is prohibited and political parties, trade unions, communal councils, and other professional organizations are responsible for representing citizens." Morocco's numerous political parties represent a broad spectrum of views: communist, socialist, social-democratic, centrist, and conservative. Despite the institutionalized nature of political competition in Morocco, nonetheless, the political parties remain factional and unconsolidated in structure and their style of competition is not fully democratic. Elections tend to be marred by vote buying government interference. The government restricts participation and access for those organizations that it believes to be a threat to internal stability. Members of Islamic fundamentalist and radical left-wing groups were even imprisoned for some time during the 1980s. In May 2001, 36 members of the (independent) Moroccan Association for Human Rights (AMDH) were sentenced to three months' imprisonment for their part in a December 2000 demonstration held in Rabat to mark UN Human Rights Day; those imprisoned included the AMDH chairman and his predecessor.

The September 2007 parliamentary election was competitive, free and fair as opposition and pro-government parties competed on an equal playing field. While the King enforced a proportional representation voting system to limit the prospects of the opposition Islamist Party of Justice and Development (PJD) winning a parliamentary majority, nonetheless, this was an improvement over past elections in that the government relied on electoral gerrymandering, rather than direct interference in the campaign or balloting, to achieve their desired results. While the PJD came in second to the Conservative Istiqlal (Independence) party, even if the PJD would have won this election their power would have been undermined by the ability of the King to select key ministers, including the prime minister. Only 37% of registered voters cast ballots in this election and over 1/5 of those were deemed to be "spoiled".

One issue of ongoing contention involves the disputed sovereignty of the former-Spanish colony of Western Sahara. Moroccan forces, in conjunction with Mauritanian forces, attempted to establish their authority over the territories upon Spain's withdrawal in 1973. A protracted armed conflict ensued with the Polisario Front, representing the indigenous Saharawi population. Mauritania relinquished all claims to the

territory but Morocco continues to exert its claim. Hostilities ceased in 1991 with active UN involvement; however, a promised UN referendum to determine the sovereignty issue has been repeatedly postponed, mainly at the request of the Moroccan government. In late 2005 Polisario rejected a proposal for territorial autonomy offered by the Moroccan government, arguing that any discussion over the fate of Western Sahara must be passed through the UN-proposed referendum process. In April 2007 the Polisario Front agreed to UN-sponsored talks on the disputed territory. The UN has asked both sides in the conflict to negotiate unconditionally.