Urban Margins and Spatial Justice

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JSSJ: This interview is part of a series of meetings that the JSSJ journal has decided to hold with research collectives working on themes close to our own, in order to open up debates that we are already having in other settings. We proposed to meet with you because we have been following your work, which you have conducted mainly as part of the "Marges et villes" (Margins and Cities) program financed by the ANR (French National Research Agency), and because we know that your reflection on forms of urban marginality has led you to ask certain questions in terms of spatial justice. At the same time, you belong to a group that has long worked on issues related to inequalities in cities of the Arab world, and so there is certainly an important genealogy here. But perhaps we can start by asking you to tell us more about how your reflection on the definition of "margins" has unfolded? Can we parse out what you refer to as margins and how you connect margins to the notions of stigmatization and spatial justice? This touches on the question of representations and politics. Is the margin a discursive and political category, and not merely "what is far away"?

A. Urban margins are a discursive and political notion. Our central hypothesis is that they are produced by the representations and stigmatizing practices of what researchers refer to as "dominant urban actors." This is clearly an issue of representation, which means that margins are not "what is far away". In our studies, these may be found in the center, in the pericenter, or in the periphery. Nor are they defined solely by poverty. As Castel points out, there exists a variety of social situations, which range from greater or lesser stability to social disaffiliation. Urban margins are produced by representations, by stigmatization and exclusionary practices, by practices of marginalization. Admittedly, this central hypothesis has been the subject of debate among us, but few social scientists consider urban margins to have merely a spatial expression. Even geographers have long integrated the role of representations into their reflections. However, while about half the collective is made up of geographers, most of us have opted for a rather anthropological approach in the field. This has been facilitated by the fact that our team has built on years of study on working-class districts: For instance, prior to this ANR program, we published in 2014 the edited volume *Marges urbaines et néo-libéralisme en Méditerranée* (Urban Margins and Neo-liberalism in the Mediterranean). The genealogy of these reflections goes back to the many studies on the Arab world of the former research program UMR URBAMA (Urbanization of the Arab World).

During our four years of collective research, we have studied the links between public action and processes of socio-spatial marginalization, the integration strategies of populations living in the urban margins, and, above all, the forms of resistance and mobilization. This research has unfolded in about fifteen field sites located in very different settings—for the most part, medium-sized cities or large cities of the South and North: in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, and, in the North, in Turkey, Italy, Spain, and also, to a certain extent, France, with the Roma question.

Our first finding was that processes of marginalization strongly reflect the effectiveness of stigmatization, which proves to be one of the most important forms of symbolic violence today. This way of being designated, labelled, and categorized is experienced as an attack on one's dignity. People do talk about the shortage of facilities, etc., but the dominant negative image of the marginalized working-class district returns with force. In fact, this seemed to us so important that we made it the subject of the first chapter of our book-in-progress. We also found that this stigmatization, which is experienced as great violence, is one of the catalysts for mobilizations and struggles.

We then examined language expressions, the words and norms conveyed by stigmatization and by the ideologies behind this normalization, but also the ways in which populations "respond" to them: expressions of adaptation, counter-stigmatization, appropriation of stigma, etc. This allowed us to understand the correlations between the representations of actors that come from marginal areas and those of actors that are external to them. Margins clearly reflect power struggles and shed light on populations' emancipation from stigmatization—an autonomization that involves awareness raising in neighborhoods where there is resistance, as opposed to places where stigmatization, internalized by the population, becomes paralyzing.

A second avenue of research concerns the links between the trajectories of individuals and their families on the one hand, and those of working-class districts on the other, as these are being tested by urban transformations. How do family trajectories and strategies help us to understand processes of marginalization, integration, and even re-marginalization? This allows us to better grasp the effects of urban transformations—such as forced mobility, which is linked to urban projects that generally impact housing costs. Today, household trajectories reveal a tendency towards social fragility. These are complex processes in which populations' integration strategies are thwarted by public policies, including those implemented to combat poverty. In the current context of economic crises and neoliberal policies, low-income neighborhoods more than ever appear to function as a resource territory.

Lastly, the third avenue of research: Today, no matter the working-class district, no matter how it is affected by urban transformations, some forms of resistance can still be observed. These consist in holding a "demo," blocking a road, etc. Some refer to these forms as riots. We rejected this notion of a "spontaneous" or "flash-in-the-pan" riot because, on the contrary, there is always some prior preparation, organization, and reflection. We also focused on non-visible forms of resistance in working-class districts. Our aim was to understand how populations use the space of the neighborhood, the space of the city, to make their resistance visible, and, in turn, to grasp the impact of such resistance on life in those districts.

JSSJ: At what point did the notion of justice seem relevant to you in this study of margins? Social justice and spatial justice: one or the other, or one and the other. Why? Or why not?

A. From the outset, we have drawn on your work (ANR Jugurta, publications on spatial justice, etc.). And what has interested us most is the idea that urban transformations reflect the rise of the entrepreneurial logic as a hegemonic mode of governance. And then, the fact that the contemporary emergence of new governance actors restricts political autonomy. We have also read Rawls and Sen, and we have tried to position ourselves in relation to these debates. The links you establish between spatial justice and democracy certainly also bring us closer together. The populations of marginalized neighborhoods often demand justice as much as they do democracy because they know that justice is essential to their integration.

In our interviews, social justice, which comes up regularly, involves spatial dimensions: "We have less facilities than other neighborhoods. Our water supplies (or) our sanitation systems are not as good as in other neighborhoods. Today, they put money into this or that part of the city, and in our neighborhoods there hasn't been a new school in years. Kids have to travel miles to go to school, etc." And so the notion of injustice is strongly mobilized in popular grievances, resistances, and struggles. In southern cities in particular, it also refers, as it were, to the colonial past and to a collective memory of injustice.

Moreover, you have significantly mobilized radical geography, and this has been particularly stimulating for us, even though not all our colleagues fully agree with this approach. For some of them, urban transformations in the cities studied do not reflect a neoliberal logic. It may be that the notion of neoliberalism is not really appropriate, and that the English-speaking literature on this topic is not accessible to all. But even for those familiar with this literature, local contexts and modes of regulation and exchange between the state and marginalized populations present more or less significant differences with the model. These debates have made it possible to refine the vision of a monolithic neoliberalism said to impose itself univocally.

JSSJ: Let us return to the question of the margin, to its definition. Since when do we talk about margins? Marie Morelle had done a bit of historiographical work on the term. She went back to public policies of the 1960s in South America, and she said: When we talk about margins, we talk about de-marginalization and integration. This is a fairly top-down vision. So have you considered that the very notion of margin might already refer to this vision, which comes from actors involved in public policy decision making?

And we can certainly extend this question of terminology to the uses being made of the term neoliberalism. What status do you give it? This can also bring us back to the question of radical geography and of the type of radical geography we are talking about. On the one side, there is the image of a city in a capitalist system that produces margins as a form of spatial fatality: The capitalist industrial system is said to always produce a differentiated space. And, on the other, I have the impression that neoliberalism intervenes for you instead as a deliberate action to marginalize spaces, because some people want to make showcases out of other spaces. And in this case, the issue is no longer one of system and fate; we are faced with dominant political actors. It follows from this that it is possible to counter these logics.

A. We see no difference between these two perspectives. In the large urban centers we have worked on, the issues underlying major projects—such as in central downtown districts or on corniches and waterfronts—correspond rather to the second logic, which does not preclude the existence of other neighborhoods where these major project policies are less or not at all implemented. This does not preclude forms of marginalization, fragmentation, isolation, etc. The analysis does not univocally shift from one logic to the other.

JSSJ: Isn't there, on the one hand, a discourse of Marxist radical geography that says: It is the capitalist system that produces inequalities, and so it is by questioning this very system that we can stop this process. This is David Harvey's discourse, taken from Henri Lefebvre: The capitalist city produces inequality. And your discourse seems more often to be: It is a dominant group of actors who act and produce spatial differentiations with the conscious aim of excluding part of the population. Could this be the distinction?

A. For us relations of domination stem intrinsically from the capitalist system which produces inequality, but we have not gone so far as to address reformist or revolutionary perspectives in our debate. Our studies, which focus on very different situations, highlight the representations of neighborhoods marginalized by dominant actors: public and private actors of urban planning, but also affluent social classes. Even colleagues who deny that they work in neoliberal contexts recognize that major urban projects are conceived as land development products for foreign and/or national investors. These are urban transformations that privatize and commodify the city, and that reclaim potentially profitable working-class districts by triggering the forced mobility of their populations. Gülçin has contributed much to these debates, thanks to his knowledge of the English-speaking literature, but also because of the obvious neoliberal character of the Turkish context where most of his fieldwork is based.

Field studies further reveal that spaces and people escape or benefit from change. Colleagues from the South have clearly shown how the populations of so-called marginal neighborhoods can also take advantage of major projects. For instance, shopping malls are often appropriated and practiced by youth from working-class districts. Forms of "negotiation" and "arrangement," and sometimes positive representations of "flashy" urban planning, have also been highlighted. For instance, when we discuss the project of the great Hassan II mosque in Casablanca with local residents, including those of the nearby slums or the adjacent medina, they speak in glowing terms. They think it is beautiful and that this mosque was built to the glory of the city, despite the fact that struggles against expropriations occurred in that same place in the past. Similarly, the impressive redevelopment of the Casablanca corniche offers only expensive places of consumption, and the last public beaches are disappearing or being pushed to the outskirts. Yet the middle classes frequent this corniche and seem to fully appreciate it... We must be careful not to project our own representations, even our own ideological positions, on this neoliberal urbanism that finds little favor with us.

JSSJ: But when you talk about the malls or the Hassan II mosque, how is this different from the Champs Elysées or the large shopping center of La Défense? And these are spaces that were produced in the nineteenth century or in the 1960s and 1970s. So should we really use the term neoliberal, in its common understanding as a series of policies developed based on the writings of economic theorists from the 1970s, when ultimately considering that urban production, as a factor of inequality, differentiation, attractiveness, deviance, and subversion has existed for much longer?

A. Beyond terminology, the contemporary forms of capitalist accumulation produce a different form of fragmentation. The capitalist city of the early twentieth century was certainly segregated, but its functioning entailed relations and a form of coherence, of exchange, particularly in public spaces; whereas now we have shifted to a form of fragmentation in which people no longer cross paths—see, for instance, the 120 gated communities around Cairo... And this partitioning also exists in the city center. So for us this is one of the shifts, with a strong tendency to privatize spaces and to control access to them. This is not the case of the Champs Elysées (for now?), which is accessible to all, since it is frequented by residents of the suburbs.

The difference is also that space is increasingly considered exclusively as a profit-generating resource that must be exploited as such. The change does not lie in the development project itself, but in its logic and its aims, which preclude any social significance and any perspective of a shared urban space accessible to all.

Another change is that major urban projects have completely transformed governance. These are often *ad hoc* structures that fail to integrate local political actors, municipalities, etc. and *a fortiori* local populations. These *ad hoc* structures, often initiated by investors themselves, mobilize experts who are especially concerned with the profitability of urban operations. In the process of privatization of urban services, even informal neighborhoods regarded as nonstandard by the public authorities are now being penetrated by large groups such as Véolia, etc., which are unconcerned with whether or not the territory is illegal. Yet because of the high costs involved in, say, accessing water, the most fragile populations find themselves in difficulty. In any case, the populations concerned by these urban transformations are increasingly excluded. As a result, the only possibility of intervention lies in, say, blocking a road to express discontent. Nor should we forget the reign of technocratic and/or economic experts. There have been paradigm shifts in the logic of actions of urban transformation that have taken us into new territory.

JSSJ: There is an understandable interest in the notion of fragmentation, but what about that of stigmatization? Is it still relevant if there is no longer any democratic functioning and if people are already excluded from decision-making?

A. Stigmatization is an old ideological vision of low-income neighborhoods that has been remobilized in the context of urban transformations to legitimize the displacement of, say, a slum or an informal neighborhood. This political discourse is not new: Stigmatization predates neoliberalism, but it has been supplemented by policies aimed at "treating" the urban margins, the meaning of which ought to be understood. In some countries, access to property has been encouraged among the working classes, and everything is organized in such a way as to urge them to buy. "De-slumization" in Morocco, Algeria, or elsewhere has resulted in access to property for the populations concerned. A consequence of this is that the fragility of these populations often leads them to resell their property, which they cannot actually pay for. In other words, there is a policy concerning poverty and the urban margins that—still according to this neoliberal vision—consists in making the poor individually responsible for their own poverty. And this contributes to their stigmatization. This is also a way of depoliticizing the issue of urban margins and socio-spatial inequalities. Moreover, the vision developed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund regarding this issue seems to be inspired by De Soto's thought whereby it is necessary to mobilize the "dormant capital" of the poor. This explains why Véolia does not hesitate to invest in informal neighborhoods: there is money. Sanitation and drinking water systems must be built because people are able to pay for them.

JSSJ: This brings us back to the question of justice. Because all these policies bear a discourse on social justice that is centered on forms of redistribution. This means that discourses on justice are not just the popular expression of feelings of injustice. Hence the question of the norms of justice. Who defines them? And to what extent can the expression of injustice be instrumentalized, manipulated to defend the particular interests of this or that neighborhood? Is this question posed in the same terms when the topic is marginalization? Because this question always arises when we work directly on justice. What is this feeling, and what social reality, political will, particular interest does it conceal? Let us take the example of "de-slumization" you discussed earlier. Is it a "just" policy in the sense that it erases from urban space a space that

should not be there, because it is informal, because it is under-equipped, because it is inhabited by the poor?

A. There are two outlooks. On the one side, political actors consider or claim that removing substandard housing—in itself a form of injustice—is a matter of justice. On the other side, residents develop another discourse on "de-slumization," and feel that they are being pulled out of the city center insofar as slums are often central or pericentral. They feel that they are being banned to the outside, moved away from employment areas, and that their budgets are being burdened with huge transportation costs.

However, since the social movements in the Arab world, political actors have shown an increased sensitivity to popular demands. We cannot deny that there is now a certain openness to the expression of grievances, which is accepted to preserve social cohesion or peace. At the same time, in many cases, such as in Egypt, Morocco, or Turkey, authoritarianism and violent repression are returning. In Turkey, for instance, slums are no longer the subject of negotiations between residents and public actors. A law dated 2004 now stipulates that the construction of a slum is a crime punishable by imprisonment.

In any case, for us who work mostly on the Arab world, the word "justice" burst our ears during the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions! Even though we had read works on spatial justice, we had not fully tackled the term because it was not used as such in our fields; whereas at that time it obviously made sense to focus on justice/injustice. Marginalization was then strongly encapsulated in the term "justice," which is the engine of struggle or resistance. This feeling of injustice that was chanted during the revolutions was at the origin of mobilizations. One of the most significant examples concerns the demonstrations in Istanbul that followed the Turkish government's attempt to destroy Gezi Park.

We focused in particular on mobilizations and discreet struggles... We initially referred to them as "small" struggles, and then some of us pointed out that "when people struggle like this, it is not small to them. They risk their lives in authoritarian and repressive contexts." And so now we speak of invisibilized struggles. In fact, the movements of 2011 forced us to revisit the mobilizations we had studied in the 1990s, and especially in the 2000s, and to try to determine whether there had been a shift between the 1980-1990 mobilizations and those of the 2000s. We could say that we found a shift in registers of struggles that is linked precisely to those forms of urban planning, to major urban projects driven by a neoliberal logic.

Bénédicte worked with Agnès Deboulet, who had focused on struggles for housing rights in Cairo. Starting in the 2000s, they both noted that the people who mobilized and the places of mobilization had changed: Before the 2000s, those involved were mostly political activists or trade unionists. To take another example, in the 1990s, unemployed graduates marched daily in front of Parliament in Rabat. At the same time, resistances occurred in the so-called marginalized neighborhoods, but they were everyday resistances in which the political dimension was not clearly expressed. In spatial terms, these movements remained confined to the working-class districts; they were relatively invisible and little publicized.

Nevertheless, it is in the spatial dimension of struggles that a shift occurred: the new struggles concern the desire to change the morphology of the neighborhood; they emerge from the latter to express themselves in the emblematic spaces of the city, and they in turn impact the urban margins. To take an example, there is a ring road in Cairo that does not serve certain working-class districts, but literally flies over them. In 2012, the residents of one of those districts took the initiative to build an access ramp to the motorway! People put together resources, solicited

engineers, experts in building access ramps to motorways... They implemented an entire strategy that required substantial collective resources. So while it is true that this strategy was aimed at gaining access to an infrastructure, it could unfold only because it was underpinned by a demand for democracy, dignity, or justice...

Right now, in the Rif (or during the movement of 20 February in Morocco), working-class populations are leaving their neighborhoods to protest near places of power, even at the risk of being shot by law enforcement forces. For us, these constitute different registers of action. Those city dwellers are of course fighting for better redistribution of wealth, for less economic inequality, but when they chant slogans of dignity, social justice, democracy, when they directly appeal to, or even attack, the King, there is a shift in the registers of action, and hence in the forms of action and the spatialities of mobilization. And this process is linked to the memory of previous mobilizations, in particular to the memory of struggles against the colonizer. There is an explicit reference to 1926, to the Republic of the Rif of Abdelkrim.

In any case, all struggles cannot be put on the same level, which is also what prompted us to work on these famous "action brokers": smugglers, activists, trade unionists, lawyers, associations, etc.

JSSJ: And are these brokers necessary? Is it through them that the transition is made from demands for resources to ones centered on justice in general?

A. One example is the rag pickers of Cairo. These people have been working in Cairo since the 1930s, collecting 5,000 tons of waste a day, as there are no public collection services as such. Since the 1930s they have been doing their "job," without asking for anything from anyone, and without receiving payment from the municipality or the government; they earn a few coins from the residents who are willing to give them some. They live and work in the most marginal neighborhoods of Cairo, with the added stigma linked to waste, the presence of pigs, the fact that they are Copts, etc. It is as if they did not exist, when in fact there are 100,000 of them and they collect 2/3 of Cairo residents' waste. This invisibility is absolutely incredible!

In 2003, the government solicited European collection companies to sign juicy contracts with even juicier bribes. At that point, the rag pickers left their neighborhoods to make themselves visible; they demonstrated and blocked a highway. But they were shot at, and they retreated to their neighborhoods. However, from that moment on, they began speaking publicly via the media. What have they been saying? "We've never asked for anything from anyone, we've always done this for no pay, but now you are restricting our access to this resource." What they want, then, is not money, but access to the resource of waste. It is truly a right to the city that is being denied to them. Afterwards, they adopted all sorts of strategies and tactics to hamper both the European multinationals and the authorities. Finally, ten years later, they (almost) prevailed in a situation that they experienced as a great injustice.

As for the word "justice" itself, it often comes up in interviews. It is not dominant, but it is stated regularly. Sometimes it is stated publicly—for instance, in Algiers, when a road was blocked by protesters demanding rehousing, "justice" was written on a banner in large letters!

JSSJ: Besides, the word belongs to the vocabulary of Islamist parties...

A. Yes, that is true, the idea of justice has been instrumentalized, notably by Islamists in Morocco, in Turkey...

JSSJ: Is it useful for you then to distinguish what counts as distributive? For instance, those rag pickers in Cairo are not demanding distributive justice at all, but recognition of their existence. In other words, can we say that the stigmatization of working-class districts essentially concerns their non-recognition—which stems from the fact that they do not correspond to the city norms set by the authorities—as much as it does their insufficient facilities? Do you consider this to be a good dividing line between what is marginalized and what is not?

A. We are in complete agreement. Because ultimately, the waste pickers of Turkey, Morocco, and also Egypt, are not demanding things like access to the formal sector. They claim social rights and the right to work, but they refuse to formalize their activity, because this would imply norms, controls, and, above all, the payment of taxes. Admittedly, their recurrent demands also concern minimal facilities, access to healthcare, schooling, etc., but above all they want to be allowed to do their work, and, indeed, to be recognized.

In fact, there is both a claim for recognition and a desire to be involved, which converges towards a demand for democracy. These cannot be dissociated. Our work is meant to contribute to a history of research on socio-spatial inequalities that has always posed, in an implicit fashion, the question of redistribution. But redistribution raises the issue of the involvement and recognition of those populations. And so we still touch on distribution and recognition, even though we do not express things the way you do.

There is, however, one substantive issue that has not been discussed in the ANR Marges research program. Do redistribution and the involvement of populations in decision-making challenge the structural organization of society and the social order that generates inequality? Many of us are uncomfortable with the idea that redistributing facilities, putting money where shortages are severe, and conducting "priority geography" (as in France) through developing participation would be enough for the problem of marginalization to be more or less resolved. Relations of power and domination are present in the analysis, but the issue of social classes is not raised. The prospects for social transformation to which this research might contribute are not mentioned. Does our work also address the question of the transformation of relations of production in the societies studied, or is this ultimately a reformist vision?

JSSJ: At some point during the discussion we were having on our way to the interview, we tried to convey this by saying that the notion of justice could be challenged if it were construed as "the priest who comes after the conquistador." Does the expression speak to you or not? In other words, can we consider that justice serves merely to regulate a system based on relations of production that produce inequalities?

A. To be clear, this is the Marxist position. Many of our colleagues are Marxists without saying it or defend positions that approach Marxism. The only time we addressed the question of our political positioning in our group was precisely when debates arose over neoliberalism. Our colleagues said: "Yes, but there are many social regulations." But neoliberalism also entails social regulation! And the state is very present in neoliberalism. It is being reconfigured, it is playing another role, but it is still an essential actor. The fact remains that this research has clearly enabled the group to conduct this debate.

JSSJ: This brings us back to the question raised earlier about system vs. actors. In other words, if we changed actors and if we had generous and redistributive actors, would everything be fine in that same economic system? We are also having these debates, internally, on the JSSJ editorial board.

A. These are difficult questions. But the notions of spatial justice and urban margins, whatever their inadequacies, help to open up debates.

JSSJ: When we created the journal, many of us got involved in the project with the feeling that we had in fact long been working on issues of justice, but without using the notion directly. However, when you unpack the notion itself, you realize that it is polysemic and that it also poses problems. What exactly is our work about, if it does not strictly focus on working-class districts? People, groups? Local and regional authorities that claim to be marginalized?

A. At one point, we presented our work to master students in a seminar. We presented the research in a very didactic manner, explaining that we constructed margins as representations, especially those of dominant actors. We then addressed what constitutes representations. They had trouble understanding this. Obviously, when we started explaining the notion with field data, it got easier. But our conceptual approach did not convince the students at first.

JSSJ: Because it is not easy to understand. There are representations, but there is also a materiality of marginality: namely, a shortage of facilities, etc.

A. Yes, exclusion, yes.

JSSJ: Could we imagine a perfectly equipped, perfectly endowed neighborhood, in short, a neighborhood that would have benefited from the most massive redistribution possible but that would still be marginalized...

A. By stigmatization.

JSSJ: ...by stigmatization? Could it be cultural, for instance? Would that be a Coptic neighborhood?

A. Or the Romani quarter in Istanbul. But the Romani quarter of Sulukule is also poorly equipped, abandoned, and impoverished. It is difficult to find a stigmatized neighborhood without the material reality of lack, of the shortage of social goods.

JSSJ: So there is always a material dimension?

A. Yes, always.

JSSJ: But, conversely, can you imagine a neighborhood that is not stigmatized but is plagued by extreme inequalities in urban space? That is, a pleasant neighborhood, with music, where everyone can go for a leisurely walk...

A. It is possible. Once again, we have in mind the Roma of Sulukule, a district that was formerly frequented by tourists. But when the decision was made to raze the district, the stigmatization was reactivated. Moreover, during the 1980s and 1990s, there were many slums in every large Turkish city—including Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir—that suffered from important inequalities yet were not at all stigmatized. You did not go there for a leisurely walk, but they were not deathtraps either. They were informal neighborhoods, of course, but they were nevertheless quite peaceful.

JSSJ: Considering that this was a North-South project, what did the comparative dimension bring to your work?

A. We found a real circulation of models, especially in terms of governance: major projects, the way they are managed, their impact on working-class districts... Also circulating are models of stigmatization and models of resistance. It is interesting to note, for instance, that the residents of some neighborhoods in Cagliari marched in the streets with the name of the regional prefect and the slogan "X Get Out!" on their banners. Social networks play an important role in these flows. However, there is a difference between the North and the South in terms of how the authorities respond to this type of movement! Even though in the South today there is a relative—perhaps "utilitarian"—openness to the expression of grievances, the powers that be do not want what happened in Egypt or Tunisia to repeat itself. And so they definitely strive for social peace, even if it means a return to authoritarianism.

JSSJ: Even in Algeria?

A. Oh yes, even in Algeria. There is such a connection with France that it is presented in the French media as "the most mysterious country" in the Maghreb today. American media and researchers are very present in the country—unlike Europeans, who evidently rely heavily on France's perception of Algeria, since it is supposed to be the country that knows Algeria best.

JSSJ: So for you, there was indeed an Algerian spring in 2011?

A. Not at all. There were demonstrations organized by individuals who wanted to see if things could pick up. They did not. They did not because Algeria was emerging from a 10-year civil war. The population was absolutely exhausted and wounded to the core. And so the people said very clearly: "We don't want to start all over again."
But we think there was the same fear in Morocco. There were demonstrations and there was the 20 February movement, but most people said "especially not like Algeria in the 1990s." And today, they are saying: "especially not like Egypt, Libya, or Syria." The Libyan case is a real political lesson. It is clear that these movements have been instrumentalized to destroy states. Anyway, that is another story.

JSSJ: Not really, because these are clearly forms of instrumentalization of justice claims. But I think it is time, alas, to end this interview. Thank you very much!

A. We just want to throw your questions back at you...

JSSJ: Don't even think about it!

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