

CERS Working Paper

A critical analysis of the processes of racialisation in Morocco

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Contextualisation

‘Morocco has traditionally been described in local historiography as a racially and ethnically homogenous nation, defined religiously by Islamic doctrine and linguistically and politically by Arabic nationalism’ (El Hamel, 2013:2).

Morocco is a peculiar context when talking about race and racism. This essay will look at the processes of racialisation in Morocco. However, since it has been argued that Morocco is an ‘homogenous’ nation, free of racial attitudes, it will first be debated whether the notion of racism is applicable to this particular context. This will be followed by an analysis of: religion, presenting the Hamitic curse and Islamic thoughts on racism; slavery, which provides a practical account of the practices of slavery and their relationship to skin colour; music and poetry, as a testimony of the presence of colour and racial prejudice; and finally linguistics, upon which a clear differentiation between whites and blacks will be reflected. Throughout the essay, modern race theory will be challenged, evidencing the existence of racism in Morocco. Therefore, it will be concluded that the processes of racialisation in Morocco took place throughout slavery and are based on colour prejudice and discrimination of black people.

Many notions of racism exist within the literature. However, there are two crucial implications that need to be understood: difference and power (Frederickson, 2002:151). In other words, the existence of ‘distinctive attributes’ that are ‘usually considered to stand to one another in relations of superiority and inferiority’ (Banton, 1967:8). Memmi exposes a process to explain racism, which following the same argument, starts by the perception of an entire group as the other. This could be based on physical, cultural or religious characteristics and imposes negative connotations which ultimately explain acts of exclusion or violence (Memmi, 2000:170).

Is the notion of racism applicable to Morocco? This essay will argue that it is, while at the same time question the western idea of racism. For instance, as Hall explains, the main problem is to think that the Western narrow definitions of race are the model to be followed to understand racism elsewhere (Hall, 2011:10). This will be rejected, arguing that racism is not exclusive to the West and that it did not emerge with the development of capitalism (Law, 2014:6-7).

In fact, as Brown exposes, Northern Africa has been ‘the grey border zone where white ends meeting the area where black begins’ (Brown, 1967:464). Accordingly, it is a crucial location where to look at when trying to analyse the interactions and reactions to skin colour (Brown, 1967:464). Therefore, it is important to be able to understand the concept of racism in its ideal type and from then to apply it to the different contexts and in this case, Morocco. In order to do so, it is essential to introduce certain factors about Moroccan society that will in turn shape our understanding of the processes of racialisation.

Morocco is a patrilineal and patriarchal society. The son adopts his father’s nasab and religion, regardless of his mother’s status (El Hamel, 2013:95). Because of that reason, cohabitation between masters and black females gained legal entitlement. Consequently, since it is from the father that one acquires its racial identity, the Moroccan system emphasizes descent rather than purity. As a result, Ali Mazuri argued the acceptance of ‘impurities’. It is also recognized that in an Arabized society there is a classification related to skin colour which goes from ‘an Arab with a continuum from light complexion (like Syrian Arabs) to dark complexion (like black Arabs in Mauritania), or simply black (El Hamel, 2013:94).

Yet, El Hamel argues that such genealogical determinism has racist implications since it actually favours patrilineage from the Prophet Muhammad over black ancestry, which was often stigmatized (El Hamel,

2013:97). Descent, religion and skin colour will be the three major influential factors that shape the process of racialisation. Although it is clear that descent and religion are the motives that theoretically organise a fluid hierarchy, skin colour certainly plays an influential role in the construction of racial organisation.

The Hamitic curse and Islam approaches towards race and racism

Religion is an essential aspect to look at when trying to understand the processes of racialisation in Morocco. Not only because before science, religion was the source that justified race and racism, but because religious stories and texts provide a great amount of evidence of racial consciousness and colour prejudice. Indeed, it was in the religious writings of the pre-modern period that racial hierarchies began to emerge (Law, 2014:10). Moreover, the difference of colour among men originated in the family of Noah. (Sloan, 1867:58). Sloan explains how the human family were 'one in colour' before the time of Noah, therefore there was no distinction of colour among the human race. However, when the world was destroyed by the flood, it was repopulated with the three sons of Noah: Shem, Ham and Japheth (Sloan, 1867:55). The translation from Hebrew reveals that Shem was red, Japheth was white and Ham was black. It was, Sloan states: 'from these three great progenitors, that have sprung all the nations which now dwell on our earth' (Sloan, 1867:61). Hence, it is essential to understand the close relationship between the progenitors and colour, especially between Ham and black.

The Hamitic curse is a biblical passage upon which black slavery has been justified. It explains the incident in which Ham offended his father by seeing him naked:

'He [Noah] planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine, and became drunk, and lay uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside' (Goldernberg, 2003:1).

The two brothers did not look at the nakedness of his father but covered him and helped him. When Noah realised what his son Ham had done judged that he deserved a punishment and for that reason decided to enslave Canaan, son of Ham. As a result, Black enslavement has always been justified with reference to this biblical passage (Goldernberg, 2003:3). Thus, the crucial point is to understand the relationship between blackness, slavery and inferiority (Law, 2014:9). However, since there is no reference to black people in the biblical passage, how can this relationship be established?

A first connection can be detected in Hebrew language. As mentioned above, there is a linguistic relationship between Ham and black that allows to associate Ham as being the father of Africa. Therefore, if we apply the biblical passage to this assumption, it is clear that Ham, representative of blackness, acted wrongly and consequently was punished with slavery, which in turn, related blacks with inferiority. Thus, the relationship between blackness, slavery and inferiority is established. The Book of Genesis stated: 'Men of this race are called Negroes, their forefather Canaan commanded them to love theft and fornication, to be banded together in hatred of their master and never to tell the truth' (Graves and Patai, 1964:121). Hence, giving evidence of the adoption of the racial aspect associated with slavery and inferiority.

Yet, the Hamitic curse was not needed to justify slavery (El Hamel, 2013:78). Islam attaches responsibility to people for their acts, but refutes the idea that someone should be held responsibility for factors out of their control such as skin colour. Thus, the main principle of the Qur'an is that of equality among all men, promoting the unity of mankind and combating racial discrimination (Abd-al-Qadir Kamil, 1970:63). 'Islam sees mankind as a large garden, in which there are flowers of many colours, but no one colour is superior to any other' (Abd-al-Qadir Kamil, 1970:29). Accordingly, it does not accept skin colour to be the determinant for slavery. Instead, it argues that no man is superior to another except from faith and fear of God (Abd-al-Qadir Kamil, 1970:34). Thus, the only reason for enslavement is based on whether one believes or not. In other words, under Islam, slavery is not justified upon skin colour but upon the condition of their beliefs.

Abd-al-Qadir Kamil argues that Islam affirms equality over race and therefore opposes racism. Still, some have argued that he discusses the theory and not the practical application of its religion (Eunice, 1975:5). Islamic parables of the Qur'an provide evidence, and in effect construct this argument. However, a close analysis of the texts also reflect the existence of colour prejudice. The Qur'an reads:

'[...] Do you not see that Allah sends down rain from the sky, and We produce thereby fruits of varying colours? And in the mountains are tracts, white and red of varying shades and [some] extremely black? [35:27].'

This clearly corresponds with the idea that there is no colour or racial discrimination but that mankind is equal. However, other citations suggest that, in effect, colour and racial prejudice did exist. For instance, Muhammad said: 'You should listen to and obey your ruler even if he was an Abyssinian (black) slave whose head looks like a raisin' (El Hamel, 2013:63). Unquestionably, Muhammad is proclaiming equality and evenness of all people, regardless of their skin colour. Yet, it is curious to note the emphasis that he expresses saying 'even if he was an Abyssinian slave', or the comparison of its head with a raisin. It could be argued that these are derogatory terms that invite one to think that in Moroccan society there was not just colour prejudice, but a racial consciousness. Similarly, Abu Dharr insulted Bilal, saying: "You, son of a black woman!". The Prophet then argued that 'one's worth had nothing to do with one's lineage and all to do with one's righteousness' (El Hamel, 2013: 63). Hence, although theoretically religion does not support racial discrimination, the mere existence of these incidents are examples of the existence of racial prejudice within Moroccan society.

A close analysis of religion shows the contradiction between Islamic theory and its practice. Although it certainly argues for the equality of humankind regardless of skin colour, the observation of texts and expressions leads this essay to conclude that there is colour prejudice. As a result, Morocco at least in terms of religious practice, is not free of colour consciousness. This has contributed to the processes of racialisation, understanding the importance of both believing and skin colour.

Colour prejudice within the practice of slavery

Slavery is a crucial factor within the racial discourse in Morocco. While religion has provided with Islamic ideals, conceptions and attitudes towards race and racism, the analysis of slavery allows for a practical insight into the manner in which the processes of racialisation actually occurred.

The major issue relating race and slavery is to question whether the so-called colour-blindness was a characteristic of the practice of slavery. Scholars and European travel narratives seem to support and develop this argument, representing Morocco as free of racial and colour prejudice (El Hamel, 2013:60). Indeed, they certify that interracial relations and the positions within society did not lack. Thus, concluding that colour prejudice had never existed. For example, Lévi-Provençal wrote: "There was no lack of mulattoes in the Muslim bourgeoisie and aristocracy, among which we must acknowledge that colour prejudice has never existed" (Lévi-Provençal, 1999:178). Along the same line, Toynbee noted: 'While Muslims have demonstrated their freedom from race-feelings by the most convincing of all proofs: they have given their daughters to Black Muslims in marriage' (Toynbee, 1934: 226). Consequently, they all reached Richardson's conclusion which stated that colour implied no prejudice 'either in the sovereign or in the subject' (Richardson, 1860:30). In other words, the evidence that they give in order to justify the absence of colour and racial prejudice are twofold. The first time that 'mulattoes' were found within high society and therefore there was no racial prejudice in terms of power positions. Secondly, the existence of interracial relations, representing the absence of colour prejudice in terms of relationships.

To conclude, based on these two arguments, that Moroccan society and its practice of slavery is free of racial and colour prejudice becomes problematic in, at least, two different ways. It not only leads to misunderstand the practice of slavery, undermining the atrocious effects and repercussions on the enslaved person (El Hamel, 2013:62); but it generates a poor and weak notion of the process of racialisation in Morocco. Although these were two essential features of slavery and racial prejudice in Europe and America, the Moroccan case requires a more detailed and contextualised understanding. As introduced above, Moroccan system worked in a manner that allowed 'impurities' to be accepted, since it was only the father's racial identity that mattered. Moreover, its flexible character allowed for blacks to occupy positions of power. Yet, it is worth to take into account a possible explanation for this flexibility. Claude Meillassoux's Marxist study of slavery suggests that this distinction, and the possibility for them to achieve such a privileged position, was indeed a strategy to prevent resistance and revolution: 'The heterogeneity of the slave class, because of its origins and its constant renewal, made possible a number of different forms of social advancement . . . which created divisions within it' (Meillassoux, 1991:92). In fact, it is argued that Mawlay Isma'il's regime in Morocco followed a familiar philosophy. His intention, according to Meillassoux and Beach, was to create different "conditions" amongst slaves in order to guarantee that a slave revolt was not possible (Beach, 2013:339). However, regardless of its causes, the flexibility in terms of power positions is not a justification to colour-blindness. Indeed, it would be unrealistic and perhaps, naive to accept that these two reasons alone

allow one to conclude that Morocco is a society free of racial and colour prejudice, since in fact, skin colour played a considerable influence within the processes of racialisation.

Colour was a substantial aspect in terms of the practice of slavery and in turn the processes of racialisation. Although religion and legal documents never justified slavery based on skin colour, its practice shows the reality of the situation, in which black people were undeniably marginalized, stigmatized and associated with slavery.

As introduced before, the only justification for enslavement was the condition of disbelief and according to Islamic values had nothing to do with skin colour. However, when slavery routes changed with Islamic countries turning to sub-Saharan Africa by the sixteenth century, the enslavement of sub-Saharan Africans became ambiguous. Although many of them had beforehand converted to Islam, and therefore did officially believe, they were still enslaved (El Hamel, 2013:79). This shows that slavery was not just based on religion but skin colour features. Such fact provoked controversy and disagreement amongst scholars and jurists. For example, in response to the matter, the jurist Makhluḥ b 'Alī b. Salih al-Balbali, expressed disagreement with the enslavement of black people that converted into Islam, declaring in his legal opinion that the only justification for enslavement was the disbelief of others. Accordingly, he published a list of blacks whose enslavement was illegal (El Hamel, 2013:79). Thus, although theory ultimately states that the equality of mankind will eradicate the issue of race, the practice points to the opposite direction.

In fact, racist ideologies played a reasonable part in Moroccan's practice of slavery (Beach, 2013:336). Skin colour achieved a supreme position in Mawlay Isma 'il's regime, that represented the consolidation of the significance of skin colour related to slavery. At the end of the seventeenth century he wanted to create a 'slave army' to ensure its own survival and therefore initiated a campaign to enslave all black people, regardless of their religion, and including the Haratin (free blacks) (El Hamel, 2013:103; El Hamel, 2010:90). The *Daftar Mamalik as-Sultan Mawlay Isma 'il*, the register of slaves belonging to Mawlay Isma 'il, presents real accounts of the nature of slavery in Morocco (El Hamel, 2013:62). The illegal enslavement of the Haratin demonstrates not only racial consciousness and that slavery was clearly associated with blackness, but also that practice was not coherent with Islamic ideals. Mawlay Isma 'il created a system of domination based on 'race and colour', focusing on their black ancestry rather than their religion (El Hamel, 2010:98; El Hamel, 2013: x). Hence, that represented a case of state racial oppression that has influenced later forms of racial prejudice. Although slavery ceased in 1950, its legacy persists in contemporary racism against sub-Saharan Africans.

A critical analysis of slavery allows us to identify that high-status within black people and interracial relations does not mean the absence of racial prejudice but the existence of a fluid hierarchy. Instead, it leads to conclude that colour plays a major role in terms of slavery, as exemplified in Mawlay Isma 'il's regime. Therefore, Morocco in terms of slavery is not free of colour prejudice. This shapes the process of racialisation when one accepts that colour was actually used to racialise the other and justify its enslavement.

Music and poetry: a testimony of racial consciousness

As introduced above, modern race theory claims that racism is exclusive to the West and a modern phenomenon that emerged with capitalism. This is however, not the only difficulty when trying to understand the processes of racialisation in the particular context of Morocco. There are also a set of issues that seriously constrain the debate about racism in Morocco. These are: first the refusal to discuss racism; and second the continuous denial of the existence of racism within the particular context itself. As a result, written history has been silent with regard to discrimination and marginalization, racism having been academically taboo (El Hamel, 2013:2).

El Hamel explains how two different professors claimed at a conference at Duke University in May 1999 that there was not Africanity, in other words black consciousness, in Morocco (El Hamel, 2013:2). Regardless of his intention or purpose to maintain the theoretical hybridity of the country: it is a strong piece of evidence of the extreme denial of the subject matter. Another example is the absence of any mention to racism issues or racial attitudes in books analysing Morocco. 'Morocco, a country study' serves as an example, where a full study is conducted including all areas, such as history, society and economy, but no

mention to racism or colour prejudice (Nelson, 1985). Given these difficulties, music and poetry become a valuable source to examine when trying to analyse the process of racialisation in Morocco.

Moroccan music and specially music from the Gnawa contribute substantially to the racial discourse in Morocco, providing valuable information related to racial prejudice and slavery. Etymologically speaking, the term gnawa refers to physical colour and is in particular attributed to black people from West Africa (El Hamel, 2013:270). However, the importance of the Gnawa remains in their identification as a spiritual order and musical group created by black slaves that had at some point achieved freedom (El Hamel, 2013:270). Consequently, the Gnawa were closely associated with slavery, and as El Hamel exposes: ‘gnawa spiritual group provides a window through which we may view the history of blacks in Morocco, making it possible to discover and recover West African roots and dialogue that still live on in Morocco’ (El Hamel, 2013: 296). Even more importantly is the testimony that they leave of the practice of slavery and its legacy in Morocco. Indeed, it has been admitted the view that blacks do occupy a marginal position in Moroccan society and that this is a result of their history as slaves (El Hamel, 2013:4).

Thus, a key aspect is not only to understand their role within society and what they testify, but to closely inspect their songs, trying to read signs of blackness associated with slavery and inferiority. Gnawa music represents resistance to slavery and nostalgia for the land they had to leave. It is through their songs and ceremonies that they connect with their past and origins (El Hamel, 2013: 289). Thus, as Kapchan explains, such ceremonies are understood as a way of liberation and therefore attract those who are oppressed, for either racial or sexual reasons (Kapchan, 2007:35).

The songs bring feelings of displacement from their land:

They brought from the Sudan

The nobles of this country brought us They brought us to serve them

They brought us to serve them.

I was enslaved, I was sold,

I was taken away from my loved ones (El Hamel 2013: 290)

They also reproduce the distinction between slaves and masters while exposing their conditions and tasks:

My uncle Mbara is a poor man

Our lady eats meat

Our master eats meats

My uncle Mbara gnaws at the bone (El Hamel 2013:292)

The lyrics therefore express the disgust from slavery, while also confirming a distinction full of abuse and injustice. They subtly present the miserability of black slaves in the position of inferiority that is, as evidenced above, strongly associated with blackness. Therefore, as seen in their lyrics, ‘the salience of race as a discourse tied to their music is historically contingent’ (Kapchan, 2007:234). Subsequently, Gnawa’s story and music, as Deborah Kapchan argues, create identity while also creating race and racism (Kapchan, 2007:234).

Poetry can also be understood as a testimony of the existence of racial attitudes and racial prejudice. Poems reflect reality, evidencing the presence of colour consciousness related to slavery. For instance, Badawi discusses ‘a sharp sensitivity over colour among the black poets before Islam’, explaining that they were living excluded as a poor and depressed group (Badawi, 1973: cited in Akande, 2012 p.xvi). Following Badawi’s argument, it can be again confirmed that blacks were marginalised and stigmatized.

Ar-Rasmuki composed a poem together with three friends in which colour and racial prejudice is clear and explicit. “When one buys a slave must also get a stick” is one of the verses. The poem supports the notion that the Haratin is full of negative connotations. They are referred to as vile and unclean, among other disrespectful assumptions (El Hamel, 2013:119). Another example is an Andalusian proverb among the Arabs: “Never trust a black slave; whip him well, and feed him well, and the work will be done” (El Hamel, 2013:119). Poetry therefore, offers an interesting account of the conception of race and racism in Morocco. Once again, there is a noticeable connection between colour and racial prejudice, slavery and inferiority.

A precise exploration of music and poetry explicitly evidences the existence of colour prejudice attached to blacks and strongly associated with slavery. Gnawa songs present a memory of slavery and colour prejudice against blacks. Similarly, poetry is a testimony of the racial attitudes towards blacks. Hence, this supports the argument that Morocco is not free of racial consciousness and that the processes of racialisation were based on blacks understood as ‘the other’ throughout slavery.

The representation of a racial structure in linguistics

Language is an intriguing aspect to look at in terms of the processes of racialisation. Ultimately Al-Tabari explains that, 'as in other contemporary nation-states undergoing social change, language in Morocco reflects and in part shapes its social context' (Al-Tabari, 1987: 13). Hence, it reflects how race and racism are constructed in terms of linguistics.

As mentioned before, to try and apply the western model and conception of racism to other contexts can be problematic. Language is an explicit example that confirms the need of not only the literal translation of the text but to also understand the concepts and their character. For instance, the word "race" in Arabic is "irq (pl. 'uruq). Etymologically speaking, it means root, however it is used to mean the origin or source of something. Therefore, it was used to highlight the origin of lineage since the divisions of mankind. Various terms were used meaning race such as: umma (pl. umam); sh 'b (pl. shu 'ub); qawm (pl. aqwam), jins (pl. ajnas), qabila'il, and so on (El Hamel, 2013:99). However, it is important to note that the fact that they had such a range of words to denote race does not mean that racialised order did not exist. In fact, many terms and concepts were related to racial and skin colour characteristics.

There are several examples of terms denoting racial characteristics: 'Abid (plural of 'Abd) means "slaves"; Haratin (plural of Haratini) means free black people; Sudan (plural of Aswad), "black Africans"; Gnawa (plural of Gnawi) means "black West Africans"; Drawa (plural of Drawi), "blacks from the Draa region", and so forth (El Hamel, 2013:5). It is interesting to observe that they all, except from "slaves", refer to black people from different regions. Hence being related to skin colour. Another example are freeborn children of concubinage, who were called "wuld al- 'abda", which literally means "the son of of a black woman" (El Hamel, 2013:97). Similarly, 'Bilad as-Sudan' meant "land of blacks" and was used to refer to mainly black West Africa but also to randomly refer to all black Africa (El Hamel, 2013:74). There was a collective image of black people as an apparent "other", which was indeed associated with slavery. This racial conception was covered under the term "al- 'Asabiyya or al- 'Irqiyya" or "at-Ta 'ssub al- 'Irqi'" (El Hamel, 2013:98). Indeed, it is curious to note that for example Muhammad b-Ahman ar-Rasmuki, referred to Haratin using three different terms: 'Abid (slaves), Haratin (free blacks), and sud (blacks). The facts that these three terms were used interchangeably not only gives evidence of the practical marginalisation of blacks, regardless of them being slaves or Haratin but also supports the link between blackness, slavery and inferiority. It can be argued that linguistic terms have racial connotations related to colour and condition, therefore, contributing to the process of racialisation.

An interesting and plausible factor is that the colour labelling only occurs within black people. Ibn Khaldun explains that Arabs or light-skinned north Africans did not use terms related to colour to refer to themselves. He argues that this is due to the fact that the people who established the conventional meanings were themselves white. Therefore, since whiteness was something common and usual to them, they did not see the necessity to use a specific term related to colour (Khaldun, 1969:60-61). This supports the theoretical approach of 'the other' by Tahar Labib, who explains the necessity of something understood as 'common' to create, identify and even discriminate 'the other' (Labib, 2008). Consequently, there is an obvious differentiation between black and white that not only understands whiteness as 'common' or 'usual' but distinguishes blackness as 'the other'. As a result, many references to colour have been found in terms to denote black people, based therefore on their origin and constructing racial discrimination.

Besides the distinction of black and white, there are other interesting cases to look at related to language. For instance Kamil Qadil explains how Islam refers to pre-Islamic society as the age of 'ignorance' (al-Jahiliyah). It is noteworthy to clarify that ignorance does not refer to knowledge but injustice. Indeed, Kamil Qadir explains how that was used to refer to racial discrimination in every aspect, including lineage, tribal convention, and economic situation (Abd-al-Qadir Kamil, 1970:34).

There are more references to colour that denote racial prejudice. For instance, religious terms are also related to colour. As introduced before, there are debates around 'Ham' and its etymological meaning. While David Goldernberg denies the term 'Ham' to mean black in Hebrew, James Sloan affirms that the word 'Ham' in the Coptic and Hebrew languages meant black and heat (El Hamel, 2013:65). Sloan develops the philological arguments, exposing that there is a peculiarity in the person which influences its name. In that

regard, Ham means black (Sloan, 1867:60). Thus, it is clear that there is a relation between 'Ham' and the black colour.

The term 'Gnawa' as mentioned above, also has colour connotation in its meaning. Deriving from Berber's term *gnawi*, it means 'black man' contrasted to lighter skinned Berber. On the other hand, deriving from Sanhaja language, it comes from a word root *gnw*, which means "black" (El Hamel, 2013:274).

A detailed analysis of linguistics leads one to believe that the existence of colour prejudice is a determinant for the creation of race. Language itself is constructed in a way representative of the needs and thoughts of the population. The fact that there is no reference to colour when denoting whites but so many terms related to colour and origin to denote blacks, shows that the distinction that made them to be 'the other' was actually their skin colour. Therefore, the comprehension of the formation of language shapes and in turn reflects the processes of racialisation. Consequently, the evidence found in language support the argument that Morocco is not free of racial prejudice.

Conclusion

The paper began by introducing the notion of racism and recognising North Africa as a crucial context to look at when analysing interracial relations. It has been acknowledged that Morocco emphasized descent rather than purity, since it is only from the father's ethnicity that one acquires their racial identity. This constructs a more fluid hierarchy, also seen in terms of achieving position of power and privilege.

Taking these peculiarities into account, this essay has looked at religion, slavery, music and poetry and linguistics with the intention to understand the processes of racialisation in Morocco. To establish the connection between blackness, slavery and inferiority has been an essential aspect since these are the critical conditions when trying to understand the constructions of race and racism in Morocco.

The evaluation of religion has exposed the first division of colour in the family of Noah and explained the Hamitic curse. It has also provided Islamic ideals of equality of all mankind over race and critically analysed religious texts trying to illustrate whether they reflect Islam ideals or whether there are any signs of colour or racial prejudice. It has been concluded, in terms of religion, that regardless of Islamic values, colour prejudice did exist and played a major role in the processes of racialisation.

An analysis of slavery has provided with a practical account of race relations, since enslavement has been the most obvious scenario to look at in order to understand relations of superiority and inferiority. Although Islam argues that the only justification for enslavement is the disbelief, practice has shown that in fact, most of the slaves were blacks. The regime of Mawlay Isma 'il represents the consolidation of such argument, when a code of enslavement was based on colour and race. Thus, slavery has shown the contradiction between Islamic theory and the actual racial practices in Morocco, concluding that colour was a determinant, not only for slavery but for the processes of racialisation.

An analytical development of Moroccan music and poetry have reflected in artistic terms the above mentioned arguments. Gnawa songs evoke the practices of slavery which associated with black people consequently position them in a condition of inferiority. Poem verses have been a clear and explicit example of colour and racial prejudice towards black slaves. Hence, it has been concluded that music and poetry provide us evidence of the existence of colour and racial prejudice towards blacks, shaping therefore, the processes of racialisation.

The inspection of linguistics has allowed us to identify the processes of racialisation based on the structure and existent terms of Arabic language. The fact that a term related to colour is not used to denote white people but there are many colour-related terms to denote black people, leads to confirm that the distinctiveness that constructs them as being 'the other' is based on their skin colour. Therefore, this signifies that colour consciousness and racial prejudice is indeed a reality. Consequently, also in terms of linguistics, it has been concluded that the stigmatization of black people constructs the processes of racialisation.

In conclusion, the incoherence between theory and practice makes the processes of racialisation ambiguous. While theoretically, descent and religion are the factors that organise society, practice leads to conclude that skin colour is the actual determinant of a racist society. The practice of slavery under Mawlay Isma 'il, being the major example. Throughout slavery, blacks have been and continue to be understood as 'the other'.

This has also been reflected in terms of language. Therefore, besides proving that Morocco is not a society free of colour consciousness and racism, it can be concluded that the processes of racialisation in Morocco are indeed based on colour prejudice towards blacks. Regardless of Islamic principles interlinked with the equality of mankind over race and a fluid hierarchy, the inspection of texts, slavery, music, poetry and linguistics prove that actual practice is racist towards black people. Hence, from pre-Islam to present, blacks have been positioned as inferior, constructing therefore a racial structure based on difference and power.

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