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Covering Religion and Politics in Contemporary Moroccan Newspapers

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Doctorate Degree

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To my loving parents and adorable wife, I dedicate this work.

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مقتضب

في المجتمعات الانتقالية، كحالة المغرب، فانه من المفترض ان تحظى الصحافة المكتوبة باهتمام المفكرين والفاعلين السياسيين نظرا لدورها الحاسم في تعزيز القيم السياسية وجعل المؤسسات الدستورية مسؤولة عن السياسات المتبعة والميزانيات المرصودة. منذ2011، سنة الاحتجاجات والحراك الاجتماعي والاضطراب السياسي والإصلاحات في المغرب، صار من الأهمية بما كان الاهتمام بتغطية الصحافة المكتوبة (الورقية) للشأن السياسي والديني بغرض فهم مساهمة هذه الصحافة من عدمها في فتح نقاش صحي بين الجميع في المغرب، المتميز بالتعدد الثقافي، الحركية الاجتماعية والاستقرار السياسي مقارنة مع دول أخرى في شمال إفريقيا والشرق الأوسط. هذا البحث يروم أساسا مقاربة إشكالية تغطية الصحافة المكتوبة المغربية كمحاولة لتقييم الخطاب المغربي بخصوص حرية التعبير، الانفتاح السياسي والارتياح الإعلامي. تم اعتماد نهج تحليل الخطاب النقدي لتحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها. تسعى هذه الرسالة، التي تحاول النظر في كيفية تغطية الصحافة المغربية المكتوبة للحجاب، وتعدد الزوجات، والميراث، والتعليم، والفن، والقضايا المتعلقة بالجنس مثل الإجهاض، والجنس خارج الزواج، والمثلية، إلى تقديم فهم لإيديولوجية كل صحيفة تمت دراستها من أجل شرح سبب كون الموضوعات المذكورة أعلاه ساحات قتال للاشتباكات الأيديولوجية. فهو محاولة لرصد كيف أن: الإسلام، والملكية، ومطالبة المغرب بالسيادة على الصحراء ال المغربية، والحركات الإسلامية، والعلمانية والفساد والحراك الاجتماعي والإصلاح الدستوري ل2011، كيف يقدم هذا من طرف الجرائد اليسارية والإسلامية والدوريات الوطنية الأسبوعية والشهرية، وهو كذلك (البحث) يتوخى التحديات التي تواجه الصحافة المكتوبة لسبك أغوارها مع التركيز أساسا على مرتكزات "الصحافة الصفراء" وبروز المجال الرقمي والصحافة المواطنة (حالة"إعلام الأقليات" و"حركة ممفاكينش"). جلي أن الصحافة الورقية تنشر على الانترنيت في بلدان أوربا وأمريكا الشمالية حيث يسود المناخ الديمقراطي، في حين، كما يتبدى من خلال هذا البحث، بروز ظاهرة الإعلام الرقمي وتلاشي الصحافة الورقية، كل هذا سيؤثر سلبا على المغرب الذي لم تستنبث فيه بعد الديمقراطية. إلا أن كيفية تغطية هذه الصحافة للدين والسياسة تقول الكثير بخصوص البيئة السياسية والاقتصادية والسوسيوثقافية التي في إطارها تعمل هذه الصحافة وفق مغرب ما بعد2011. هذه المناولة هي محاولة لمقاربة إشكالية الصحافة الورقية وتغطيتها للدين والسياسة في بلد يقال انه في مرحلة انتقالية. إن بسط تحليل تغطية الجرائد للسياسة والدين هو– بالتأكيد- جواب لكل مستفسر عن معنى أن تكون صحافيا في مغرب ما بعد"الربيع العربي".

الكلمات المفاتيح : المغرب، الدين، السياسة،الصحافة الورقية، الجرائد، نهج تحليل الخطاب النقدي، المجال الرقمي

ABSTRACT

In transitional settings like Morocco, print journalism in supposed to be given every possible attention by scholars and political activists due to the crucial role it plays in the promotion of political values as well as in holding every constitutional institution accountable for the policies initiated and the budgets spent. Since the uprisings of 2011, a tumultuous year of uprisings, political unrest and political reforms in Morocco, it has become of paramount importance to examine the Moroccan print media coverage of politics and religion in order to understand how this industry is, or probably is not, contributing to the emergence of a healthy public debate regarding religion and politics in Morocco, a country characterized by cultural diversity, socio-cultural dynamics, and political stability compared to other countries in North Africa and the Middle East. This dissertation is primarily meant to problematize Moroccan newspaper coverage in an attempt to assess Morocco's discourse regarding freedom of expression and political openness. The Critical Discourse Analysis approach has been adopted to analyze the data collected. The dissertation, trying to look at how the veil, polygamy, inheritance, education, art, and sexuality-related issues such as abortion, sex outside marriage, and homosexuality, seeks to provide an understanding of the ideology of each newspaper studied in order to explain why the aforementioned topics are battlefields of ideological clashes. Islam, the Monarchy, Morocco's claim of sovereignty over Sahara, Islamism, secularism, corruption, social movements and the 2011 constitutional reform have also been studied to find out how they are covered by Moroccan leftist, Islamist and nationalist periodicals and weeklies. The dissertation also tends to explore the challenges facing the print press while particularly focusing on the existing political climate, the weaponization of advertisement, the rise of the digital sphere and the emergence of citizen journalism (the case of minority media and *Mamfakich* Movement). While it is true that print media is going online in various settings in Europe and North America where democracy has already been built, this dissertation argues that the going-online phenomenon and the decay of print journalism is going to negatively impact Morocco where democracy has not yet taken root. Still, how newspapers cover religion and politics should tell a great deal about the political, economic and socio-cultural environments within which they function and operate in post-2011 Morocco. This dissertation is an attempt to problematize Moroccan newspapers and their coverage of religion and politics of a country said to be in transition. Providing an analysis of newspaper coverage of politics and religion should eventually be an answer to anyone seeking to know what being a journalist means in Morocco.

Key Words: *Morocco; Religion; Politics: Content Analysis; Critical Discourse Analysis; Journalism; Newspapers*

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INTRODUCTION

1. Purpose of the Study

This doctoral dissertation is primarily concerned with examining and analyzing the coverage of religion and politics on contemporary Moroccan newspapers. In terms of religion, this research paper attempts to find out how Moroccan newspapers, both partisan and independent, approach Islam the Monarchy and the Moroccan claim of territorial integrity hrough looking at these as the sacred trilogy of the nation. It also analyzes how newspapers in Morocco cover Islam-related topics such as inhertance, gender reforms, polygamy, education, art, abortion, sex outside marriage, and abortion. Additionally, this dissertation is concerned with examining and analyzing Islamism and Islamists and how they are configured on liberal and leftist newspapers. Besides, it seeks to analyze the configurations of secularism and secularists in Islamist and conservative newspapers. In terms of politics, this doctoral dissertation aims at providing insights into Moroccan newspaper coverage of corruption, the 2011 constitutional reform, and social movements, particularly the February 20 Movement and *Hirak Rif*[1] (Rif Movement). Deploying a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore the evolution of Moroccan print media discourse on religion and politics, the study investigates how ideological stances and attitudes toward the issues selected for this study are manifested in the discourse of Moroccan print dailies and weeklies and how shifts in the ideological stances are realized discursively. To clarify this more, this research project aims to investigate the way issues related to religion and politics are framed and configured in Islamist, leftist, and nationalist newspapers, and also to discuss the current print media landscape in Morocco and its interconnectedness with the dynamics of power and reforms in both state and society.

Newspapers have been selected to be the primary sources of this study due to the fact that they, in countries around the world hold a special place in the gathering and

[1] *Hirak Rif* or the Rif Movement is a popular mass protest movement that has taken place in the Berber-speaking Rif region in Northern Morocco between October 2016 and June 2017 as a result of the death of Mohcine Fikri, a fishmonger who was crushed to death in a garbage truck after jumping in the back, following the confiscation of his allegedly illegal fish merchandise-- of which he was selling on the local market-- by local authorities.

the dissemination of information. Unlike their broadcast cousins, newspapers play an essential role in crafting the first draft of history. In addition, because of the very nature of the medium, newspapers serve as an important archive of history. It is for these reasons, among others, that print media in general are usually utilized in studies by mass communication researchers. It is for these same reasons that newspapers often hold position of tremendous importance to the public spheres in societies to which they belong. How they operate, and the ways they are constrained, can tell us a great deal about the political landscape as well as the state of human rights of the country where they are produced.

Morocco, as most Muslim-majority countries, is going through, at varying degrees, the global phenomenon of the resurgence of religion in the domains of politics and the media sphere. This explains why it is legitimate to argue that the Moroccan newspaper content has been appealing for academic and critical inquiries since the "Alternance Government" which saw light in 1998, exactly before the death of King Hassan II. The latter resorted to the oppositional party, Socialist Union of Popular Forces, in order "to fulfill a political consensus that would guarantee a smooth transition of power to his son Crown Prince Mohamed."[2] The liberalization of the press that Morocco adopted in 1998 allowed journalists to break down a set of rigid taboos such as religion, sexuality, and politics. Thus, the liberalization of speech in print media that Morocco witnessed in 1998 allowed journalists to start discussing and producing a multiplicity of news discourses, if not a polarized discourse, *vis-à-vis* sexuality, gender, politics and Islam, one of the essential foundations of the nation according to the Moroccan constitution. In fact, the political regime in Morocco seemed ready to reconcile with freedom of expression and with media independence when the opposition and socialist-led government was elected to power in 1997. The new government, as Zaid Bouziane stresses, did lead a campaign with the aim to formulate a new press law that promised to enhance press freedom, but "since Mohamed VI's accession to the throne in 1999, and following the reform of the press code in 2002, there was hope that radical reforms of Moroccan press laws would take place, but such aspirations have not been fully

[2] James N. Sater, *Morocco: Challenges to Tradition and Modernity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 65.

realized."[3] Additionally, Islam and the various discourses of Islamist movements and political parties in Morocco have been given extensive widespread media coverage since the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the bombings that hit Casablanca on May 16, 2003. It is also worth noting that after 2011, a tumultuous period of mass protests and turmoil in the Middle East and North Africa, religion and politics have become topical concepts and issues of social scientists, scholars, political scientists, economists, historians, and journalists.

This study is based on a content analysis of the coverage of Arabic dailies, one weekly and one monthly newspapers in Morocco on issues related to religion and politics. Content analysis will be adopted in this study since it is "a primarily quantitative type of formal textual analysis involving the systematic categorization and counting of recurrent elements in the form or content of texts."[4] This content analysis will adopt framing theory as a conceptual guide. Framing analysis will be applied to investigate as well as to provide an analysis of Moroccan newspapers and how they represent religion and politics to construct meanings. It is essential to mention that framing has been widely used as a theoretical framework in studies of media content, news coverage and public opinion. Many scholars, like Entman, Gofman, and Gitlin, have attempted to provide definitions of framing and frame. Theoretically speaking, framing, according to Entman, refers to a process of packaging communication messages through highlighting some aspects of situations and events and suppressing others.[5] Being an indispensable aspect of communication, framing is facilitated by information selection and placement, word selection, and the use of images and symbols.[6] Erving Goffman, in his very classic *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, regarded frames as "schemata of interpretation," that allow individuals "to locate, perceive, identify, and label".[7] Gitlin, on the other hand, defined

[3] Zaid Bouziane, "Moroccan Media in a Democratic Transition," *Conference Papers: International Communication Association*, (2009), p. 12.

[4] Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 72.

[5] See Robert M. Entman, "Framing: Towards clarification of a fractured paradigm," *Journal of Communication*, Vol.43, N. 4 (1993), pp. 51–58.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Erving Goffman*, Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 21.

frames as "devices that facilitate how journalists organize enormous amounts of information and package them effectively for their audiences."[8] A discussion of content analysis and framing analysis will be provided in the Methodology section. Moreover, this study pays tribute to Stuart's Hall theory of representation for the possibility it provides to both examine the various ways representations are shaped and the prevailing dominant powers responsible for these representations.

Along with their coverage of religion and politics, newspapers' massive shift towards tabloidization will also be scrutinized through studying Moroccan newspapers' shift from using texts to overusing pictures. A substantial number of newspapers, both partisan and independent, of different editorial lines will be studied in order to find out the way and the extent to which they problematize religion and politics. *Al Alam*, *Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki (daily partisan)*, *Attajdid (monthly partisan)*, and *Annahj Adimoqrati (weekly partisan)*, four essential partisan newspapers of different ideologies in Morocco, will be studied along with *Al Massae (daily independent)*, *Akhbar Al Yawm (daily independent)*, *Al Ahdath Al Maghribia (daily independent)*, *Assabah (daily independent)*, and *Assabil (monthly independent)*, which are six daily and monthly independent newspapers. The papers selected for this study are among the most established and circulated titles in Morocco. The main reason behind the selection of these newspapers is their relative diversity at the political and ideological levels. As an important remark, *Attajdid* newspaper stopped appearing starting from March 30, 2017. Jawad Chefdi, the editor-in-chief of the newspaper noted in a press conference that the *Attajdid* Foundation had decided to stop issuing the *Attajdid* newspaper starting from March 30, 2017 due to "severe economic circumstances".[9] Jawad Chefdi did also point out that the newspaper cannot still be issued due to difficult economic conditions, "especially after the suspension of advertising contracts with *Attajdid* institution."[10] This should tell actually a great deal about the economic environment within which the print press operates in Morocco.

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[8] Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 248.

[9] See https://m.medi1tv.ma/ar/مؤسسة-جديد-وموقع-الأسبوعية-التجديد-جريدة-إصدار-توقف-التجديد-85132-الأخبار-متفرقات-مجتمع, accessed on March 27th, 2017.

[10] Ibid.

Generally, the Moroccan print press "provides a variety of editorial lines and politically engaging perspectives given its longer presence in the political development of modern Morocco."[11] The period of coverage that will be studied varies according to the religious and political aspects this dissertation examines. It also depends a great deal on two main reasons: the historical availability of each newspaper in the print media landscape in Morocco and on the possibility to have access to the archive of each newspaper. A content analysis of data collected from press clippings published between February 2011 and January 2020, a period which witnessed socio-cultural and political transformations that have significantly impacted the print media news content.

As far as the coverage of the sacred trilogy in Morocco is concerned, the newspaper coverage this study examines starts from February 2011 and ends in February 2015. The period of coverage of media representations of Islamism/ Islamists and Secularism/ secularists starts from January 3, 2012, when Abdelilah Benkirane's governmental coalition was first appointed by King Mohamed VI and ends on January 3, 2016.[12] Regarding the theme of corruption, newspaper articles have been selected for the analysis of Moroccan print media industry, its problematization of corruption in state and society, and for the limitations of their coverage. While attempting to associate this coverage with the existing political culture, the economic, and the various power relations, the study of corruption and how it is covered by Moroccan newspapers ultimately provides insights into the role newspapers play in Morocco in order to shape public opinions on the menace of corruption. The collection of data to examine and analyze *Hirak Rif*/ *Rif* Movement in Morocco starts from October 28, 2016 when Mohcin Fikri was crushed to death in a garbage truck after jumping in the back to follow the confiscation of his allegedly illegal fish merchandise, and ends on May 29, 2017 when Nasser Zefzafi was jailed by the authorities.[13] Essentially, how newspapers operate, how the selected issues are covered and problematized, and the ways the print media industry is constrained, could provide us with a valuable possibility to understand

[11] Loubna H. Skalli, "*Constructing Arab Female Leadership Lessons from the Moroccan Media,*" *Gender and Society*, Vol. 25, N. 4 (2011), p. 481.

[12] Abdelilah Benkirane, born on April 8, 1954, is a Moroccan politician who was Prime Minister of Morocco from November 2011 to March 2017. He is one of the founding members of the Justice and Development Party, an Islamist political party in Morocco.

[13] Nasser Zefzafi, born on November 4, 1979, is a Moroccan political activist, who has been described as the leader of the protest movement in the Rif and the city of Al Hoceima.

the setting in which they exist. This very dissertation is an attempt to explain the political, socio-cultural and economic environment within which the print media industry operates in contemporary Morocco. It is particularly more concerned with analyzing the situation of independent journalism in Morocco because of the important role independent journalism is supposed to play in transitional settings like Morocco.

The qualitative data on which this study is built was often the front-page texts of the newspapers and the unit of analysis was the entire news story under investigation. In order to study how each newspaper represented the topics and themes selected in this study, I needed to dig deeper, interpret many aspects of the news stories. To accomplish this goal, a purposive data sample was chosen in order to determine how each religious and political topic/ theme chosen in this study was represented in newspapers. According to Patton, the power and logic of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling.[14] The purpose of studying information-rich cases is because they yield insights and in- depth understanding.[15] Further, Maxwell explained that purposeful sampling is "a strategy in which particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices".[16] In addition to this, the usefulness of the purposeful sampling or qualitative sampling lies in the ability it gives to select specific elements or cases based on specific purposes related to the research.[17] In this regard, the population for the data sample was selected in order to draw conclusions regarding the subject matter and answer the research questions. According to an overview study of the qualitative methods literature published by Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, and McKibbon, purposeful sampling is "the most commonly described means of sampling

[14] Micheal Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002), p. 230.

[15] Ibid., p. 230.

[16] Joseph A. Maxwell, "Designing a Qualitative Study," in L. Bickman and D. J. Rog (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Applied Social Research* Methods (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2009), p. 235.

[17] See Abbas Tashakkori and Charles Teddlie, *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003).

in the qualitative methods literature today".[18] The purposive samples are useful in the analysis of data collected and their "contextual meanings and institutional genealogies of strategically chosen examples of news artifacts and representational practices."[19] Briefly, purposeful sampling is a process where cases are intentionally and purposively selected in order to serve certain conditions that help the study. In this sense, purposeful sampling and textual qualitative methodology are the most appropriate approaches by which to answer the concerns of the current study in regard to examining and analyzing the Moroccan newspaper coverage of religion and politics.

The main argument this paper attempts to highlight is that the Moroccan state's interpretations of religion, the contemporary political landscape, the penal code, and the press code significantly affect the print media content, a content that has been brimming with religion and politics since 1998. Another argument that will be discussed in the analysis is that the agenda-setting of Moroccan newspapers could explain some biases inherent in news reporting about religion and politics, which makes the print media industry unable to significantly contribute to the making of contemporary modern Morocco or to a healthy public debate regarding Morocco's transitional phase of democratization and liberalization.

In the analysis, journalists will be regarded as prompters of awareness as they are meant to provide citizens with the chance to engage in democratic public debate about important issues, including those related to religion and politics. The selection of the aforementioned newspapers emanates from the fact that they reach a large audience and, accordingly, contribute to the construction of meanings in society. This study will also be based on interviews. Along with including some journalists' statements made in Youtubed or televised interviews, some readers of newspapers will be interviewed in order to examine the journalistic environment journalists work in, to have an idea about the problems they encounter when they want to produce news, and to find out the audience's attitudes towards the print news industry in Morocco. Relevant journalists'

[18] Stephen J. Gentles, Cathy Charles, Jenny Ploeg and K. Ann McKibbon, "Sampling in Qualitative Research Insights from an Overview of the Medthods," *Qualitative Report*, Vol. 20, N. 11 (2015), p. 1778.

[19] Radhika Parameswaran, "Spectacles of Gender and Globalization: Mapping Miss World's Media Event Space in the News," *The Communication Review*, Vol. 7, N. 4, p. 381.

answers will be selected and smoothly pointed out during the analysis of the findings. It is reasonable to assume that writing on media coverage of religion and politics could warrant careful concern – writing anything with a negative tone as it concerns Islam, the Monarchy, or the territorial integrity.

The academic significance of this study lies in various major reasons. First, it lies in the fact that it is, according to the best of my knowledge, the first doctoral project that treats religion and politics in relation to print media. Not only is this doctoral dissertation meant to look at how religion and politics are configured and debated on Moroccan newspapers, but it is also meant to create and foster a vibrant academic platform that allows for conversation on diverse contemporary issues, issues that were deemed taboos and unspeakable three decades ago. In this sense, this doctoral dissertation is meant to provoke and stimulate. It is the outcome of a purely academic desire to deal with this provocative topic that has never been looked at in Morocco. I also aim to utilize this provocation to stimulate new research directions, paving the road for Eastern and Western scholarships on Moroccan media landscape as a whole. Moroccan media landscape has been sidestepped in Western scholarship which tends to favor issues of Orientalist representations, postcolonial thought, women and the dynamics of change in society. What is striking in fact is that many Ph.D. theses have been written in the United States on Morocco's process of democratization and the Islamist challenge, but none of them has devoted a space to discussing the status of media landscape in Morocco. This could be explained by the fact that any discussion about Morocco's reforms routinely focus on the family code, the penal code, and religious reform without including media. Second, this doctoral project fits in with the university reform in Morocco that tries to introduce and develop media and journalism studies in university curricular. I should also stress that my interest in, and study of, Moroccan print media arises from my conviction that the letter are forms of public sphere best suited to be discussed in relation to religion and politics, and that the process of democratization would always be hampered if the print media do not function properly or rather do not enjoy the margin of freedom of expression needed to function.

2. Background of the Study

Morocco, as most North African countries, is said to be in transition towards democracy. The status of media could give us an idea about the degree of freedom of expression the state can stand up with. That is, the liberalization of the press and mass media in general is the key to any shift to democracy. However, analyzing the liberalization of the press in Morocco, as Driss Maghraoui argues, is very complex because all the reforms that have taken place in the country are contradictory. He contends that the reforms do not follow a democratic transition paradigm and, thus, seek change while at the same time continue to preserve continuity.[20] It is true that since the 1990s, and with the arrival of King Mohamed VI in 1999, more space has been open for debates in media. The independent press, in spite of the censorship and self-censorship phenomena, has recently experienced a slight broadening of its range of action. Nevertheless, even with the limited democratization of the press, journalists are not allowed to critically tackle the sacred trilogy, or what is popularly known as the '*lignes rouge'*, that are Islam, the Monarchy, and the territorial integrity. Therefore, the complexity of any study on media culture in Morocco requires a background-knowledge of the political landscape as well as the socio-cultural, legal, and political reforms the state has initiated. While it is true that the new constitution the King initiated in 2011 as a response to the 20 February Movement puts a strong emphasis on the respect of freedom of expression, it also, along with the penal code and the press code, confines this freedom with the respect of the foundations of the nation: Islam, the Monarchy, and the territorial integrity. In this context, it is very difficult to envisage genuine democratization taking place in the country as long as the new constitution guarantees freedom of expression and the four board members of the High Authority for Audio Visual Communication are still monitoring content to ensure compliance with licensing requirements. Agatha Koprowski clearly concludes that "while the Constitution and other major laws officially support free speech and a free press, the system is easily manipulated so that its actual exercise becomes practically impossible."[21]

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[20] Driss Maghraoui, "Introduction: Interpreting Reform in Morocco," *Mediterranean Politics*, 12, N. 2 (July 2009), p. 144.

[21] Agatha Koprowski, "Restrictions on the Press under King Mohammed VI and Morocco's Obligations under International and Domestic Laws on Freedom of Expression," *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 7, Issue 2, (2011), p. 31.

Not only will this study focus on the newspaper coverage of religion and politics, but it will also be an endeavor to provide an insight into the political culture and its direct affinity with the press of Morocco, an exceptional and diverse North African country that has press traditions going back more than a century. William A. Rugh notes that the Arab information media, including the Moroccan one, "have always been closely tied to politics" and that the first newspapers Arab countries witnessed in the 19th century were official government publications through which selected information were transmitted to the public.[22] For this reason, Rugh stresses that the media systems in the Arab world in general, and in Morocco in particular, cannot be understood without taking into consideration the specific political conditions prevailing the country.[23] Indeed, newspapers do reflect their particular socio-cultural and political environments. In Morocco, as in most neighboring countries, newspapers in particular have taken on an increasing importance in society in recent years.

Newspapers, as essential forms of media culture, play a key role in any society, especially in transitional societies like Morocco. Along with allowing citizens to have a direct access to information, newspapers provide them with an invaluable public sphere where they learn, debate, and discern. However, no one can deny that the Moroccan media in particular has played a crucial role in the democratic changes the country witnessed during the last two decades, without ignoring the oppositional role it played during the reign of King Hassan II. Many journalists, of course not all journalists, lobby the state to respect freedom of expression and human rights. Indeed, the price of this endeavor is often costly. According to the respected Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), press freedom in Morocco had a very rough time as the number of journalists who have faced effective prison terms or the shut-down of their newspapers or magazines has been on the rise since 2000.[24] William Rugh strongly argues that in order to succeed, the Arab journalist in general "must be highly sensitive to the political realities prevailing in his country." He adds that the organization the

[22] William A. Rugh, *Arab Mass Media: Newspapers, Radio, and Television in Arab Politics* (USA: Greenwood Press, 2004), p. 5.

[23] Ibid., p. X.

[24] Anouar Boukhars, *Politics in Morocco: Executive Monarchy and Enlightened Authoritarianism* (New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 22.

journalist works for must fit into his country prevailing political system.[25] Indeed, the Moroccan journalist is not an exception. This very complex landscape makes this doctoral research very interesting and challenging. The very challenge is, on the one hand, to tackle the political and legal conditions prevailing Morocco and that have an influence on the media culture, and, on the other hand, to examine the frames and meanings newspapers construct in society under these conditions. What is said about religion and politics particularly on print media shape perceptions in society. This content analysis is also meant to see if there are any indicators of political trends and probable future political development in Morocco.

The importance of this study does emanate also from the fact that all discussions about religion, politics, and media play a very prominent role in the Moroccan democratization process, and all public and private institutions are expected to get involved in this debate even though the notion of democratization, as Azzedine Layachi stresses, is "often used to refer to a process that is not well understood and is, in fact, more complex and uncertain than usually thought."[26] Indeed, print media in Morocco have always been part of this debate and it is expected to contribute to enlightening audiences about the socio-cultural, political, and economic ills that impede any transition to democracy. Actually, since Mohammed VI's succession to the throne, Morocco has neither been officially described as a dictatorship nor as a democracy, but it has been claimed that the country is adopting the gradual shift towards democracy. While it is true that Morocco has already started the process of democratization, the actual problem is that almost all discussions or studies on democratization seldom give space to mass media. Rather, they routinely cover topics related to constitutional reforms and political parties. No one can deny the importance of the free independent press, which is "an absolute necessity for a democratic environment in which an effective civil society can exist."[27] Milton, Locke, Madison, John Stuart Mill, and many other Classical liberal theorists strongly argue that free and independent media outlets can play a crucial and critical role in the democratization process. Edmund Burke's

[25] William A. Rugh, *Arab Mass Media: Newspapers, Radio, and Television in Arab Politics*, p. Xvi.

[26] Azzedine Layachi, *State, Society, and Democracy in Morocco: The Limits of Associative Life* (Georgetown: Georgetown University press, 1998), p. 15.

[27] Ibid., p. 68.

concept of the `fourth estate' has traditionally been regarded as one of the most efficient mechanisms of checks and balances. Not only does the independent press serve as a medium for civic associations to express their demands and objections, but it also serves as a tool in which to publicly question and evaluate the office holders and analyze their accountability.

Religion and politics in Moroccan newspapers take us to the unavoidability of looking at how the State's religious and historical legitimacy, its actions, its forms of mobilization, and its discourse of human rights are conspicuously present in the news coverage. The news here emerges as a very important, and sometimes worrisome, source of information that may, thanks to the choice of words used, denote journalistic or public attitudes about events and the institutions or actors the news revolves around. In this context, the news becomes representation or sometimes misrepresentations that irrefutably bring about public perceptions within societies, and the complexity rises here when the rate of illiteracy is high as is the case of Morocco. J. Hartley states here that "news comes to us as the preexisting discourse of an impersonal social institution which is also an industry" and that "as we get used to its codes and conventions, we become news-literate not only able to follow the news and recognize its familiar cast of characteristics and events, but also spontaneously able to interpret the world at large in terms of the codes we have learnt from the news."[28] Here, it is normally arguable that the function of news becomes very ideological when it contributes to shaping socio-cultural norms and political beliefs. The meaning of "ideology" that Antonio Gramsci introduced in his interesting *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* helps us better understand the news which, following his reading of hegemonic ideology, functions as a set of beliefs or body of knowledge[29], a knowledge that is, for Sholle, "produced" and opposed to truth.[30] For the aforementioned reasons, one should be careful while reading the news because they can also be regarded as "media frames" that shape our conceptualizations of religion and politics. In this respect, the news could conceive various meanings conforming to the 'maps of meaning' (common sense) when they, as

[28] John Hartley, *Understanding News* (London, Routledge, 1982), p.5.

[29] See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971).

[30] See David J. Sholle, "Critical Studies: From the Theory of Ideology to Power/Knowledge," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, N. 5 (1988), pp. 16-41.

Morley argues, construct reality.[31] This dissertation won't look at the news without also considering it as a symbolic system that differently presents issues related to religion and politics to the culture and society. For this very important reason, this study will aim at looking at the socio-cultural and political context in which journalists construct news stories; that is, this study will investigate also the degree of objectivity of news as well as provide a deep analysis of the multiple factors affecting news reporting in a balanced and fair way. Here, the political context as well as the red lines that the penal code and the press code in Morocco emphasize will be looked at thoroughly.

It is true that the print media landscape is very pluralistic in Morocco, but it always faces several problems. First, the press code and the penal code highlight the red lines that journalists cannot trespass. This affects the production of news and the circulation of information. Second, King Hassan II left Morocco with high rates of illiteracy in the country, and this, as Valérie Orlando notes, is a major factor of the weak circulation numbers, especially of newspapers and magazines of French expression.[32] She adds that "*les gens ne lisent pas dans ce pays*" (people don't read in this country", as journalists stress, which "contributes to feeble sales for books and other printed media."[33] It is obvious that the governments of the last two decades carried out a set of measures to eradicate illiteracy, especially in rural areas and remote mountains, but the issue is still precarious in the country. Due to high rate of illiteracy in rural Morocco, newspapers are available only in cities. Third, the availability of the internet has affected dramatically the print press, and even Moroccans who are able to read and buy newspapers and magazines have become more oriented to the online journalism. Here, journalists, or the "keepers of history" as Orlando describes them, find themselves in front of a set of big challenges that impede journalists, like the ones of *Tel Quel*, to keep a vigilant eye on the Moroccan democratization process and on the dynamics of change taking place in society. Following Orlando, these are the big problems facing the independent print press in Morocco, particularly the press of French expression, and change "will only occur if contemporary abuses of power are eradicated and society

[31] See David Morley, "The Nationwide Audience: A Critical Postscript," *Screen Education*, N. 39 (1981), pp. 3-14.

[32] Valérie K. Orlando, *Francophone Voices of the "New" Morocco in Film and Print: (Re)presenting a Society in Transition* (New York: Palgrave Press, 2009), p. 135.

[33] Ibid.

adopts its own codes of citizenship that are reflective of both civic traditions inherent in Moroccan culture and modern, democratic ideals."[34] Because of the very limited number of national institutes and schools of media, journalism, and communication, the number of graduates in these fields is not sufficient enough to represent an alternative voice in the realm of journalism in Morocco. In his very interesting study on the disparity between journalism education and journalism practice in four Maghreb States, including Morocco, Kuldip Roy Rampal concludes that a variety of political, legal, structural, and cultural constraints have a major effect on the professional practice of journalism as they highly contribute to the disillusionment of an increasing number of professionally trained journalists who, therefore, turn away from journalism to enter public relations and advertising.[35] It is also important to point out that the Moroccan print press, as is the case in neighboring countries, have been set up on a weak economic base.[36]

Indeed, studying religion and politics and the way they are covered in Moroccan newspapers obliges us to give due scrutiny to the multiplicity of socio-cultural, economic, political, and legal factors that affect this coverage. In fact, Reporters without Borders has acknowledged that the overhaul of the press Mustapha El Khalfi, the Minister of Communication in the "Islamist" government, proposed. This distinguished organization has recognized the proposal as it contains some improvements such as the abolition of prison sentences for media offences.[37] Finally, in July 2016 the Moroccan parliament approved a revised press code that abolishes prison sentences for press offences. Minister of Communications Mustapha El Khalfi, in his interview with *Huffpostmaghreb.com*, has called the new law an "essential step in the path of reforms that our country is undertaking to establish a democratic path and

[34] Ibid., p. 138.

[35] Kuldip Roy Rampal, "Disparity between Journalism Education and Journalism Practice in Four Maghreb States," *Global Media Journal*, Vol. 8, N. 14 (2009), p. 1.

[36] William A. Rugh, *Arab Mass Media: Newspapers, Radio, and Television in Arab Politics*, p.5.

[37] See "Monarchy's Red Lines Gag Morocco's Independent Media," 17 September 2015, Reporters without Borders, https://rsf.org/en/news/monarchys-red-lines-gag-moroccos-independent-media.

Retrieved on May 4, 2016.

establish a country of rules and laws."[38] but the Moroccan penal code still effectively allows journalists to be prosecuted and jailed for the work they do. For the same of objectivity, the new press code approved by the parliament remains much better than the previous one even though several independent journalists like Ali Anouzla and Hamid El Mehdaoui are dissatisfied with the penal code that still criminalize the work such journalists believe they must do. While these progressive steps are still not enough to establish a democratic media landscape in Morocco, the judicial apparatus makes the matter more complicated. The latter's independence is normally very essential for any genuine transition towards democracy. Nevertheless, Morocco's judiciary system is often criticized when journalists cover issues that are off-limits in society. While still minister of justice, exactly on April 5, 1999, Omar Azziman acknowledged that "the judges and presidents of courts acts according to instructions (meaning at the behest of the regime)."[39] Surprisingly, Taieb Fassi Fihri, minister of Foreign Affairs from 2007 to 2012 and a current King's advisor on foreign affairs, clearly says in his talk "Embracing Reform: A Message from King Mohamed VI of Morocco" delivered at Brookings, an influential non-governmental public policy organization based in Washington D.C., on March 12, 2011 that the independence of the justice system in Morocco is not a reality today and that some judges still receive phone calls from weighty people in the country.[40] If Azziman and Fassi Fihri say so, then it is most likely that independent journalists, especially the ones involved in investigative journalism, do not find the Moroccan judiciary body independent and credible as well. Therefore, the judiciary system could be regarded as another key challenge facing independent journalists in Morocco.

A heated public debate on identity, religion, and *hchouma*[41] dominate the scene when journalists go very far while approaching sex, gender, and Islamic law. While

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[38] See Mustapha El Khalfi's interview with Huffpostmaghreb.com at https://www.huffpostmaghreb.com/2016/02/10/code-presse-maroc-khalfi_n_9203908.html. Retrieved on February 12, 2016.

[39] Anouar Boukhars, *Politics in Morocco: Executive Monarchy and Enlightened*, p. 23.

[40] Taieb Fassi Fihri, "Embracing Reform: A Message from King Mohamed VI of Morocco", lecture at Brookings Institution, March 12, 2011, page 15 (uncorrected transcript). https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/032311_morocco_transcript.pdf.

[41] In Moroccan Arabic, the closest translation of *shame* is *hchouma*. It encapsulates a complex moral order which prescribes norms of behaviour, strict societal roles and expectations.

many independent journalists find it necessary to fulfill a smooth secularization of society, the latter still does not seem to be ready for such a transition. Generally, secularism and seculars are not tolerated within the majority of Muslim-majority countries, including Morocco, in spite of their fascinating pluralism in structure and orientation. It should be stressed that secular and progressive forces have not seized power in Morocco, as is the case in most Muslim-majority countries, the reason why they cannot be held accountable for the rampant abuses of human rights and for the lack of good governance. What Moroccan seculars do, as most seculars elsewhere in the region, is speaking gallantly on behalf, and not to, the people. As one of his critics to secular and progressive forces in the Middle East and North Africa, Halim Barakat concludes that these forces, unlike the rest of the educated elite, "have gallantly defended the cause of the people, but somehow they have done very little to involve them in the struggle."[42] The relationship between religion and politics in Morocco, as in all Muslim-majority countries, is too complicated that it makes it very hard for journalists, artists, film-makers, and politicians to address secularism as an alternative. In Morocco, one of the conservative societies in North Africa, secularism is still one of the most controversial and sensitive notions as it is perceived as the enemy of religion as well as the destructor of sanctity and moral values. As a result, journalists pay a heavy price when they make it a moral commitment to publish articles that call for the secularization of state and society. It is this challenge, among others, that affect a great deal the journalistic coverage in contemporary Morocco.

3. Defining Terms and Concepts

- Islam: the word is derived from an Arabic stem which means *peace* and *submission* to *Allah.* It is the religious faith of Muslims including belief in *Allah* as the sole deity and in *Muhammad* as his prophet.

- Politics: one of the terms that cannot be easily defined. It has a wide range of meanings when used in everyday life. Politics can mean the study of condlict resolution, the art or science concerned with winning and holding control over a government, or the conduct and management of public affairs.

[42] Halim Barakat, *The Arab World: Society, Culture, and State* (Berkeley: University of California Press: 1993), p. 282.

- **Islamism**: also known as political Islam, is an ideological impetus for mass mobilization around radical social and political change. Islamism expresses the problematization of Muslim identity both by returning to the past, and by a non-assimilative attitude towards Western modernity.
- **Secularism**: it is the principle that focuses on the separation of religion from the state institutions. It is also the freedom to, or not to practice one's faith without harming others.
- **Corruption**: could be defined as the abuse of entrusted power for personal interests. Corruption occurs in both the public and private spheres. In corrupt societies, citizens can only secure access to public health or education only if they paid bribes, one of the forms of corruption.

4. Research Questions

Based on the previous theoretical background, this doctoral dissertation presents the following research questions:

RQ1: How do Moroccan partisan and independent newspapers approach Islam, the Monarchy and the territorial integrity? Does their coverage of the sacred trilogy tell about the status of journalism in the country?

RQ2: How are religion-related issues like polygamy, inheritance, gender reforms, education and Arabization, art, abortion, homosexuality, and sex outside marriage represented on Moroccan Arabophone partisan and independent newspapers?

RQ3: How often do Moroccan newspapers cover corruption? In other words, is there any prominence given to the coverage of corruption-related stories by Moroccan print media? Is there any depth in the treatment of corruption in Morocco? What are the limitations of the coverage and how could they be interpreted?

RQ4: How do leftist and liberal newspapers configure Islamism and Islamists and how are secularism and secularists represented in Islamist and conservative newspapers?

RQ5: How did Moroccan newspapers cover the February 20 Movement and the King's 2011 constitutional reform? Did the agenda-setting adopted during this important period of time play a role in the construction of public opinion? How did newspapers cover *Hirak Rif* and *Rif* Movement leaders?

RQ6: What are the major challenges facing print journalism in Morocco?

These questions are what this doctoral dissertation seeks to answer.

5. Review of Literature

A quick look at the literature written on Moroccan media in general indicates that there is a paucity of academic works on the topic. Moroccan media, particularly print journalism, has been given inadequate academic consideration and scrutiny neither by Eastern scholars nor by Western ones. In fact, knowledge and research about Morocco should move from a focus on history, politics, religion, and gender to a focus on media and their production of news and meanings. One of the most interesting references written about Morocco's print press is Jamàa Baida's *La Presse Marocaine D'expression Français: Des Origines à 1956*. In over five hundred pages, J. Baida gives a clear idea about the journalistic production of French expression in Morocco from 1870 to 1956; that is, he sheds light on Moroccan newspapers of French expression in the pre-colonial period and shortly after independence. This invaluable reference was specifically intended to bring to the fore a historical debate on the origins of the print press in Morocco. Deriving his sources from an archival hard work, the author stops at the characteristics of the Moroccan press of French expression and the political role it played in different historical period. Jamàa Baida, in the introduction of his reference book, argues that the history of the press, especially the pre-independence press, has a marginal place in historical research conducted in Morocco. The reason behind this, he argues, is that the absence of archives and collections of newspapers maintain the press in a marginal position as an object and as a source of scientific historical research.[43] The book covers the whole period between 1870 and 1956 through five parts, designed on a chronological fashion and on the basis of Morocco's political history during this period. The conclusion of each part sums up the changes witnessed during every historical phase studied. The first part was devoted to the Moroccan press of French expression during the pre-colonial period (1870-1912). In the second part, the author studied the evolution of this press under the protectorate system with a focus on its situation from 1912 to 1925, exactly under the first Resident-General Lyautey[44]. The

[43] See Jamàa Baida, *La Presse Marocaine D'Expression Française: Des Origines A 1956* (Rabat: FLHS. 1996).

[44] Louis Hubert Gonzalve Lyautey (17 November 1854 – 21 July 1934) was a French Army general, the first Resident-General in Morocco from 1912 to 1925.

third part focuses on the outbreak of the Second World War and the condition of the print press in Morocco, something that is thoroughly discussed in the fourth part with an attention to Moroccan political history prevailing from the end of the World War II till 1956 when Morocco got independence. In sum, Jamàa Badia's book is a very essential reference for any researcher interested in the history of the Moroccan print press of French expression as well as in the national and international political factors that paved the way to the construction of print media culture in contemporary Morocco.

Another interesting work on Moroccan print media is Valérie Orlando's *Francophone Voices of the "New" Morocco in Film and Print: (Re)presenting a Society in Transition* in which she devotes a chapter to examine *Morocco as It* is in the journals, magazines and newspapers of the Francophone press. The purpose of this very chapter is to study how Moroccan print media, such as the newsmagazine *TelQuel: Le Maroc tel qu'il est* (loosely translated: "*As It is: Morocco as it is*") are changing the political climate of the country. She notes that journalists of French expression in contemporary Morocco like Ahmed Reda Benchemssi (founder of *TelQuel*), Ali Amar (*Le Journal*), Ali Lemrabet (*La Vie Economique*), and Taibi Chadi (*Le Journal Hebdomadaire*) have taken hazardous steps to democratize the new Moroccan media landscape.[45] Orlando's book was published in 2009, three years before the Arab Spring revolts, and it is quite surprising that all the journalists she mentioned in her books had all sold their magazines and newspapers before they left Morocco to live in Europe (Ali Amar in Belgium and Ali Lemrabet in Spain) or the United States (the case of Ahmed Reda Benchemssi). Orlando argues that "with regards to political changes transpiring in the country, the francophone press continues to adopt a "wait-watch-and see" attitude, while fulfilling the vital purpose of informing the readers about the inter-workings of Moroccan legal and political systems."[46] Despite the legal regulations and harassments journalists face in Morocco, Orlando believes that Morocco, unlike its neighboring countries like Algeria and Tunisia, enjoys a pluralist print media landscape. She clearly argues that "although Hassan II's regime was known for its repression, it surprisingly cultivated a pluralist press unlike the official state presses of

[45] Valérie K. Orlando, *Francophone Voices of the "New" Morocco in Film and Print: (Re)presenting a Society in Transition*, p. Xviii.

[46] Ibid., p. 155.

Algeria and Tunisia."[47] Through her adoption of the Sartrian model, Orlando emphasizes that journalists should be very intellectually engaged and that their ethical task is to responsibly write for his/her society. For Orlando, and based on what Jean Paul Sartre thinks of the engaged writer in his *Qu'est ce que la littérature*[48], the journalist could be regarded as the interpreter of signs "who is obliged by the very act of picking up the pen to impart societal messages to readers.[49] She finds that the job of journalist is not only to establish a "*dialectique*" between himself/herself and the reader in order to fulfill freedom in society, but to also contribute to the alteration of the way citizens think about the ongoing socio-cultural and political developments their country is experiencing.[50] Male and Female Journalists, according to Orlando, do not only write because they are talented with the pen, but also because they "feel their roles are vital in order to tell the stories of history that have not been told."[51] Recognizing the crucial role Moroccan journalists of French expression play in society, Orlando analyses these journalists' reporting on the 'schizophrenic Morocco'. She clearly focuses on the secular perspective Moroccan journalists of French expression adopt in their coverage of the Monarchy, religion, and sexuality. In her personal documented interview with Adil Hajji, one of the famous Moroccan journalists, the latter suggests that "someone needs to explain to politicians that separating the church and state does not mean the bankruptcy of cultural values.[52] Indeed, Orlando's book represents an indispensable reference for any researcher willing to have a clear idea about contemporary Moroccan print press of French expression and the heatedly debated challenges facing them. The only limitation of Orlando's study is that it has not treated the Moroccan Arabic press, making the shortage of studies on Moroccan Arabic newspapers and magazines even bigger.

In fact, there is no book that has been written in English on the contemporary Moroccan print media landscape. Many authors like James N. Sater, Anouar Boukhars,

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[47] Ibid., p. 135.

[48] See Jean Paul Sartre, *Qu'est ce que la littérature* (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), p. 33.

[49] Valérie K. Orlando, *Francophone Voices of the "New" Morocco in Film and Print: (Re)presenting a Society in Transition*, p. 130.

[50] Ibid., pp. 130-31.

[51] Ibid., p. 130.

[52] Ibid., p. 141.

Moha Ennaji[53], William A. Rugh, and Jonathan Smolin[54], to name but a few, have devoted brief chapters or very concise paragraphs to shedding light on the status of contemporary Media and the legal and political challenges facing it. However, Moroccan journalists, like Khalil Hachimi, the director of *Aujourd'hui le Maroc*, provide a critical perspective of the prevailing legal, political, economic, and professional issues standing in the way of building up a strong infrastructure of journalism in Morocco. For instance, Khalil Hachimi, in a 2007 published report on Morocco, clearly argues that the Moroccan press is currently facing three primary challenges: "first, professional weakness, which is the result of a lack of good-quality training; second, the very low capitalization of the sector, which has never really attracted serious investment; and third, the lack of transparency within the sector, due to poor regulation."[55] While the Moroccan press mechanisms are, according to Hachimi, below the international standards, "press freedom is evolving at a reasonably quick pace in regards to the press's relationship with the state."[56]

Many scholarly articles have been published on the Moroccan media in general, and on the print press in particular like Zaid Bouziane's "Moroccan Media in a Democratic Transition", a conference theoretical paper par excellence, in which he tends to examine the interplay between media policy, media institutions, and the government. He attempts to highlight the essential political role media play in transitional countries like Morocco and its affinity with three major factors: the legal, the economic, and the political environment. Bouziane's interesting article first examines the media policy as enacted in the Constitution, the Press Law, and the Audiovisual Communication Law in an attempt to provide theoretical insights into the economic and political environments, the issues of ownership, and the degree of political control over the content of news media. Bouziane stresses that one of the major outcomes of his research paper is "that it will help determine whether Morocco's democratic reforms are meaningful reforms, or just empty attempts to pacify domestic

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[53] See Moha Ennaji, *Multilingualism, Cultural Identity, and Education in Morocco* (New York: Springer, 2005), pp. 103-05.

[54] See Jonathan Smolin, *Moroccan Noir: Police, Crime, and Politics in Popular Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), pp. 1-13.

[55] Khalil Hachimi, "Change with the Times," in *The Report: Emerging Morocco 2007* (Oxford Business Group, 2007), p. 230.

[56] Ibid., p. 230.

and international public opinion."[57] His article still proves useful in any discussion about the audio-visual and print media scene in Morocco, except that the article was written before the new constitution Morocco adopted in 2011, a year of uprisings and turmoil in the region.

I have come across only one article in which content analysis was adopted to investigate the characteristics of newspaper editorials in Morocco, with a particular focus on *Al Massae* Newspapers and its last famous column '*Chouftchouf*'. The article was written by Nabila Elyazale and first appeared in 2014 on *New Media and Mass Communication Journal*. Elyazale's tends to focus on the argumentative techniques, including the linguistic ones, which have allowed *Al Massae* newspaper to be very influential in the independent print media scene in Morocco. One of the first major remarks the author makes from the very outset is that the newspaper editorials have been neglected by researchers[58], but in fact Moroccan newspapers and magazines have not been given due academic attention and scrutiny, an idea that was discussed earlier in this introduction. Elyazale notices that *Al Massae* Newspaper editorial 'choftchouf' gained a very remarkable popularity in Morocco because of Rachid Nini's extensive use of metaphors, cause expressions, sarcastic expressions, rhetorical questions, antithesis, and switching word position, to mention but a few.[59] These techniques, among others, are what helped Nini's *Al Massae* gain popularity and, therefore, increase its circulation rate. This article, which presents only a sample of three articles from one editorial, does provide a preliminary step towards deeper research in Moroccan newspaper editorials to investigate their structural organization, types of opinion adopted, and in terms of language use as well.

Another academic article written on magazines and newspapers is Loubna Skalli's "Constructing Arab Female Leadership: Lessons from the Moroccan Media" in which

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[57] Zaid Bouziane, "Moroccan Media in a Democratic Transition," p. 1.

[58] See Nabula Elyazale, "Characteristics of Newspaper Editorials: 'Chouftchouf' in 'Almassae' Moroccan Newspaper as a Case Study," *New Media and Mass Communication*, Vol. 32 (2014), pp. 21-41. The article is available online at https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiKwuGdncXMAhWGI8AKHXTdC7IQFggdMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.iiste.org%2FJournals%2Findex.php%2FNMMC%2Farticle%2Fdownload%2F18405%2F18687&usg=AFQjCNFIuT2QasaR8GQ9DLWN3BKLOFu0hg&sig2=CBaL036Jerhue-wO4vNhvA. Retrieved on May 6th, 2016.

[59] Ibid., pp. 39-41.

she examines how women's political leadership is (un)covered in Moroccan media, an issue that the author finds highly neglected not only in Morocco but in the Middle East and North Africa in general.[60] While Skalli's article tackles the important positions women have managed to reach in Morocco, it also criticizes the media institutions for not recognizing these achievements and playing a key role in inspiring women to be more active and involved in the political sphere.[61] Very interestingly does Skalli problematize how gender matters in the profession of journalism in the sense that female journalists tend to be more interested in quoting female politicians and interviewing women leaders.[62] Skalli's scholarly article represents a criticism of print Moroccan media institutions which, regardless of the modernization they have known during the last decades, still frame women in a way that indicate a "deep-seated resistance to women's political participation."[63] She stresses that women's leadership is, in both partisan and independent newspapers of different ideologies and editorial lines, "invariably seen through a lens that is patriarchal, paternalistic, and patronizing."[64] A similar work was done by Maha El Bayadi, a Professor of English at Dhar El Mehraz Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences of Fez, in which she studies the representation of gender in the Moroccan tabloids through the use of Critical Linguistic Approach. The major goal of the study is to find out whether the language used in Moroccan popular newspapers displays a difference correlating with the gender of the participants in the articles. El Bayadi's study has revealed that the texts researched "represent men and women unequally at the level of experiential function, exhibiting gender-related differences, which can be best seen when one looks at material processes."[65] El Bayadi concludes that even women agency is much exaggerated in the headlines; that is, it is not regarded as men's. Even men's deviancies

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[60] Loubna Skalli, "*Constructing Arab Female Leadership Lessons from the Moroccan Media,*" p. 492.

[61] Ibid., p. 491.

[62] Ibid., p. 489.

[63] Ibid., p. 488.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Maha El Bayadi, "Quantifying the Representation of Gender in the Discourse of the Moroccan Tabloid Newspapers: a Focus on the Experiential Function of Language," *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 11, Issue. 1 (May- June 2013), p. 97. The article is downloadable at http://iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol11-issue1/N01118997.pdf?id=6276. Retrieved on May 7th, 2016.

are not as stigmatized as women's, the fact that explains how popular newspapers look at genders through androcentric lenses.[66] Both Skalli and El Bayadi encourage researchers to examine representations of women in Moroccan print media because of the immense importance the latter play in the construction of meanings in society.

Generally, there is a dearth of scholarly works providing a content analysis of Moroccan newspapers or magazines. Book chapters, brief book sections, and scholarly articles are somewhat available, but they only provide theoretical insights about the current Moroccan media landscape and the prevailing legal, economic, and political conditions affecting it. Because of this, this doctoral study is meant to represent a reference for any researcher interested in the newspaper coverage of issues related to religion and politics in the *Sherifian* Kingdom.

6. Overview of Chapters

This dissertation consists of three parts, the first of which is theoretical while the second and third ones are analytical.

The first part consists of four main chapters, the first of which is devoted to providing theoretical insights into Critical Discourse Analysisl, its goals, common features, approaches, the criticism its has received, and a response that could be addressed to the critiques. The second chapter of this part provides a historical overview. Here, the history of print and its early beginnings and trajectories are thoroughly discussed. The chapter does also provide various definitions of news and their applicability in a variety of contexts, the importance of media in the formation of public opinion, and also into the prospects of the public sphere in a global media landscape that is remarkably going digital. This theoretical discussion will make it easier to discuss the rise of digital media and the importance they play nowadays in the dissemination of news, in the formation of public opinion, and also in the empowerment of public debates regarding democratization and good governance in Morocco. This first chapter is also meant to provide theoretical understandings of media and how they function in order to pave the way for the examination of Moroccan newspapers coverage of a variety of issues related to religion and politics.

[66] Ibid.

The third chapter of the theoretical part is an overview of the history of Moroccan print media and the press in the context of the Arab Spring. The chapter does also provide an assessment of the press code and regulations, with a particular focus on the revised press code the parliament adopted in 2016. The importance of this chapter emanates from the insights it provides the Moroccan legal and political contexts within which print journalism in Morocco operates.

The fourth chapter of the theoretical part is meant to shed light on Islam and Moroccan Islam in contemporary context, the Commander of the Faithful as the highest religious authority in the country and the religious reform Morocco adopted after 2003, a year marked with terrorist bombings in Casablanca. Besides, this chapter does provide a discussion of the secular force and the Islamist challenge, corruption, the constitutional reform the King led in 2011 as a strategic response to the initial turmoil, and of the notion of *'hoghra'*/ humiliation while discussing two social movements, namely February 20 Movement and Rif Movement. The next analytical part is about the examination and analysis of Moroccan newspaper coverage of the elements the third chapter of the theoretical part discusses.

The second part is purely analytical. It is divided into three main chapters, the first of which is a content analysis of Moroccan newspaper coverage of topies that are the battlefield for ideological clashes in Morocco such as inheritance, polygamy, art, education, abortion, sex outside marriage, and homosexuality. Several issues from early 2000s to 2020 have been collected to provide an analytical overview of how newspapers in Morocco are not only a source of information but also a source of polarization. The second chapter of this part analyzes the representations of the sacred trilogy in Morocco: Islam, the Monarchy and the Morocco's claim of sovereignty over the Sahara. The period of coverage examines starts from February 2011 and ends in February 2015. The third chapter is the analysis of newspaper portrayal of Islamism/ Islamists and secularism/ seculars in Morocco. The period of coverage of media representations starts from January 3, 2012, when Abdelilah Benkirane's governmental coalition was first appointed by King Mohamed VI and ends on January 3, 2016.[67]

[67] Abdelilah Benkirane, born on April 8, 1954, is a Moroccan politician who was Prime Minister of Morocco from November 2011 to March 2017. He is one of the founding members of the Justice and Development Party, an Islamist political party in Morocco.

The third part is also analytical, and it is an attempt to analyze and interpret the data collected. It consists of three chapters, the first of which is the analysis of Moroccan newspaper coverage of the theme of corruption. Newspaper articles have been selected for the analysis of Moroccan print media industry, its problematization of corruption in state and society, and for the limitations of their coverage. While attempting to associate this coverage with the existing political culture, the economic, and the various power relations, the study of corruption and how it is covered by Moroccan newspapers ultimately provides insights into the role newspapers play in Morocco in order to shape public opinions on the menace of corruption. Content analysis is used to determine the newspaper coverage of corruption news in the newspapers selected over a period of ten years (February 20, 2011-January 20, 2020).

The second chapter is the analysis of newspaper representations of social movements and the King's 2011 constitutional reform. The period of coverage this dissertation studies starts from February 20, 2011, when February 20 Movement took to the streets in several cities and towns in Morocco for the first time and ends on February 20, 2013 when the New Constitution had already been adopted. The collection of data to examine and analyze *Hirak Rif*/ *Rif* Movement in Morocco starts from October 28, 2016, when Mohcin Fikri was crushed to death in a garbage truck after jumping in the back to follow the confiscation of his allegedly illegal fish merchandise and ends on May 29, 2017 when Nasser Zefzafi was jailed by the authorities.[68]

The last analytical chapter is meant to discuss the development of the print press in Morocco with a particular focus on the challenges the print press industry, independent journalists, encounter. Here, the chapter provides insignts, through a focus on concrete cases, on the weapanization of funding, digitalization, the existing political climate and how it affects journalism in Morocco, and also the dependence of minority groups on the digital sphere to make their voices heard instead of resorting to the print press.

Essentially, how newspapers operate, how the selected issues are covered and problematized, and the ways the print media industry is constrained, could provide us with a valuable possibility to understand the setting in which they exist. This

[68] Nasser Zefzafi, born on November 4, 1979, is a Moroccan political activist, who has been described as the leader of the protest movement in the Rif and the city of Al Hoceima.

dissertation is an attempt to explain the political, socio-cultural and economic environment within which the print media industry operates in contemporary Morocco. It is particularly more concerned with analyzing the situation of independent journalism in Morocco because of the important role independent journalism is supposed to play in transitional settings like Morocco.

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PART ONE

THERETICAL BACKGROUND

CHAPTER I: METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK: CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the Critical Discourse Analysis theory. It is the threoretical and methological frameworks deployed in this present study because CDA is very useful in the study of media discourse in general and newspaper in particular. The chapter sheds light on its definitions, theoreticl concepts, and relevance to the analysis of media and newspaper discourse in particular. The chapter will focus on the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis as developed by Fairclough's social approach as this study draws heavily on it. This chapter closes by laying down the criticisms that could be directed at the Critical Discourse Analysis theory.

2. Critical Discourse Analysis: Origins and Goals

Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday defines Critical Discourse Analysis as "a range of approaches to the analysis of texts and talk in relation to the social contexts which give rise to them."[69] More specifically and as Fairclough stresses, CDA is "an approach that views language as a social practice and that seeks to identify the reproduction of power relations and ideological processes in discourse."[70] CDA is concerned with providing methods and tools to help conduct empirical studies that are meant to explore the relations between discourse, society and culture. This theory, which can be traced back to the 1970s in the work on power, ideology and control by Fowler, Hodge and Kress (1979), aims at unveiling minute details of discourse-society relation. Fowler, Hodge and Kress introduced the deployment of the Critical Discourse Analysis theory as an essential tool useful in explaining how language works in the social context and how it is related to power, ideology and hegemony. This makes it of high importance to refer to the essential work of Halliday who describes language as a social semiotic.[71] Halliday does also stress on the role of language as an influential drive to exsmine in-

[69] Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication* (New York, Oxford University Press: 2011), p. 43.

[70] Ibid.

[71] M.A.K. Halliday, *Language as a Socal Semiotic* (London: Arnold, 1978), p. 25.

depth the language-ideology relation as it shapes and gets shaped by social and cultural context.[72] In his interesting *Discourse and Power in a Multilingual World*, Blommaert makes a reference to the work of Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies as a sourse of significant influence on the Critical Discourse Analysis Theory.[73] Following Blommaert, the aforementioned Centre dealt with the areas of a political, social, and cultural nature in British capitalist society as essential topics in CDA.[74]

The Critical Discourse Analysis is not a school of one trend. On the contrary, it is an approach under the scope of which we can find a variety of trends. This explains why it is impossible to come up with or even accept one single definition of CDA. Here, CDA could be defined only based on the goals of each trend's techniques and analytical tools. To simplify it, CDA is essentially meant to unveil the socio-political inequalities, whether based on political, economic, religious, or cultural grounds existing in societies. In this regard, Faurclough's definition proves useful in understanding CDA. He defines Critical Discourse Analysis as the study of

> often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony.[75]

Here, the Faicloughian definition of CDA tends to build a theoretical approach that is awere of the socio-cultural events, the discursive practices producing these events, the dialectical relationship between them and discourse which is after all a product of social and discursive practices in maintaining social relations of power and ideology. In order

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[72] Ibid.

[73] Jan Blommaert, *Discourse and Power in a Multilingual World* (Amsterdam: John Benjamin, 2005), p.11.

[74] For a detailed historical background on the origins of CDA, see Jan Blommaert and Chris Bulcaen, "Critical Discourse Analysis," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, N. 29 (2000), pp. 447-466.

[75] Norman Fairclough, *Media Discourse* (London: Edward Arnold, p. 132.

to clarify more the role CDA plays in modern societies, Huckin defines it as "a highly context sensitive, democratic approach which takes an ethical stance on social issues with the aim of improving society".[76] The theory, as Faiclough puts it, helps explore how nontransparent relationships are vital in securing power and hegemony, and allows people to pay attention to forms of domination, social inequalities, nondemocratic practices, and other injustices while seeking to encourage people to initiate corrective actions and to eventually bring about equality.[77] For both Huckin and Fairclough, Critical Discourse Analysis equips readers with necessary analytical tools and makes them aware of the guising and indoctrinating ideologies produced to manipulate them.

It could be argued that all CDA practitioners agree that everyone should be concerned with issues of power and change social practices bring about. Indeed, the gist of Critical Discourse Analysis is to display how discourses constructs meanings and the world around us. Here, Harvey goes further and stresses that the job of Critical Discourse Analysis is not only to demonstrate what is occurring within in the text, but also to detect what is absent from the text.[78] Harvey and Huckin both argue that CDA proves useful to better understand why a particular selection or reduction happens. In this sense, the role of CDA is to help us detect the ways in which institutions and their discourses shape society Simply put, Kress argues that Critical Discourse Analysis aims to show how "linguistic discursive practices" are linked to "socio-political structures of power and domination".[79] To accomplish this, as van Dijk contends, "the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance" needs to be emphasized.[80] Wodak and Meyer, too, argue that the purpose of Critical Discourse Analysis is to analyze "opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance,

[76] Thomas Huckin, "Critical Discourse Analysis," *The Journal of TESOL*, 2:3 (1995), p. 95.

[77] See Norman Fairclough, "Critical Discourse Analysis and the Marketization of Public Discourse: The Universities," *Discourse and Society*, 4:2 (1993.

[78] David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996), p. 56.

[79] Gunther Kress, "Critical Discourse Analysis," *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 11 (1990), p. 85.

[80] Teun A. Van Dijk, "Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis," *Discourse and Society*, 4:2 (1993), p. 256.

discrimination, power and control as manifested in language".[81] To be more specific, Critical Discourse Analysis, as Fairclough and Wodak state, tends to study "real, often extended, instances of social interaction which take (partially) linguistic form. The critical approach is distinctive in its view of (a) the relationship between language and society, and (b) the relationship between analysis and the practices analyzed".[82]

It is important to point out that Critical Discourse Analysis is not similar to other approaches that help analyze textual content for it does not limit itsef to analyzing the immediate formal properties of the text. Critical Discourse Analysis goes beyond that and seeks to situate the text in its wider social, economic, political, historical, and cognitive context and critically examines how the text relates to other texts and how it is shaped by the existing social practices. Following Wodak, "critical" could be grasped as having "distance from the data, embedding the data in the social, making a political stance explicit, and having a focus on self-reflection as scholars doing research."[83] For Fairclough, being "critical" also means showing how our "use of language in particular is bound up with causes and effects which we may not be at all aware of under normal conditions".[84] To put it differently, Critical Discourse Analysis tends to demystify "discourses by deciphering ideologies".[85] It is essential to note that "critical" does not mean detecting only the negative sides of social interaction and processes and painting a black or white picture of societies. Wodak says it is quite the opposite, stressing that "*critical* means distinguinshing complexity and denying easy, dichotomous explanations, and making contradictions transparent".[86]

Many see Critical Discourse Analysis as a tool used to judge what is right and what is wrong. As a response to them, Wodak and Meyer respond in defense of Critical Discourse Analysis theory. Wodak stresses that the role of CDA should be, above all,

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[81] Ruth Wodak and Micheal Meyer, *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (London: Sage, 2001), p.2.

[82] Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak, "Critical Discourse Analysis: An Overview," *Discourse and Interaction*, ed. T.A. van Dijk (London: Sage, 1997), p. 258.

[83] Ruth Wodak, "Pragmatics and Critical Discourse Analysis: A Cross-Disciplinary Inquiry," *Pragmatics and Cognition*, 15:1 (2007), p. 209.

[84] Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis* (London: Longman, 1995), p. 54.

[85] Gilbert Weiss and Ruth Wodak (eds), *Critical Discourse Analysis: Theory and Interdisciplinarity in Critical Discourse Analysis* (London: Palgrave, 2003), p. 14.

[86] Ruth Wodak, "Critical Discourse Analysis at the End of the 20th Century," *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 3:2 (1999), p.168.

"to make choices at each point in the research itself and should make these choices transparent. It should also justify why certain interpretations of discursive events seem more valid than others".[87] Therefore, Critical Discourse Analysis paves the way to the tools and makes them at disposal for those willing to practice and lead critical thinking and social change. It does not really seek to impose certain ideologies on situations or problems.

3. Common Features

Generally, five common features among the various approaches of Critical Discourse Analysis could be identified. The following features have been concluded from the remarks made by Fairclough and Wodak in their "Critical Discourse Analysis: An Overview"[88]:

- Socio-cultural structures are partly linguistic-discursive. Here, discursive practices, thanks to which the production of texts occurs, are essential factors in shaping social practices. This means that not every social practice is formed by language.
- Not only is discourse constitutive but is also constituted. Here, social relations between individuals and groups in socities are constituted by discourse which is at the same time constituted by social relations. Here, the Islamists in Moroccan print newspapers as the analytical part shows could be a case in point as their representation is simultaneously socially constitutive (produced by the elite and those in power) as well as constating of more social practices *vis-à-vis* Islamism.
- The analysis of language use within its social context is necessary. Here, Critical Discourse Analysis is not similar to other approaches in terms of degrees of focus in lieu of the difference in qualitative analysis. In this regard, Critical Discourse Analysis becomes an empirical linguistic textual analysis of language use in social interactions.

[87] Ruth Wodak and Micheal Meyer, *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (London: Sage, 2001), p. 65.

[88] Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak, "Critical Discourse Analysis: An Overview," *Discourse and Interaction*, ed. T.A. van Dijk (London: Sage, 1997), p. 74.

- Discourse does function ideologically. Therefore, Critical Discourse Analysis is based on the fact that discursive practices bring about unbalanced social powers and unjust relations between groups based on racial, religious, political, ethnic, or gender issues. All these issues deal with ideology.
- Critical Discourse Analysis is above all ethically critical in the sense that it commits itself to an agenda, it plays a crucial role in social change, and it helps uncover the manipulative power in societies. Here, Critical Discourse Analysis stands in support of the oppressed and those who are unfairly treated.

4. Approaches in Critical Discourse Analysis

Many are the approaches that could be presented under the umbrella of Critical Discourse Analysis. Since its beginnings, some practitioners of Critical Discourse Analysis have been using systemic-functional linguistics as an analytical framework. Still, concepts and categories have been borrowed from a variety of disciplines such as text linguistics, discourse analysis, stylistics, social cognition, social semiotics, rhetoric, social psychology and conversation analysis. Chouliaraki and Fairclough welcomed the diversity of methodology in their seminal work of 1997[89] while other practitioners, van Leeuwen as a case in point, have committed their works to defending a systematic and focused framework based on concepts of genre and field and on the socio-semantic representation of social actors.[90] However, Critical Discourse Analysis has always been inclined toward analysing and examining the textual and structural levels of discourse and how they play a role in the production of power, ideology, domination, manipulation, authority and forms of inequalities regardless of the efforts some practitioners, Kress and van Leeuwen for instance, made while seeking the incorporation of visual images into concepts of discourse and to the multimodal conceptions of semiotics.

Generally, three main approaches existing withing Critical Discourse Analysis could be defined here: the historical discoursal, the social discoursal, and the cognitive

[89] See Lilie Chouliaraki and Norman Fairclough, *Discourse in Late Modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 17.

[90] See Theo van Leeuwen, "Representing Social-Action," *Discourse and Society*, 6:1 (1995), p. 87.

discoursal. As this dissertation makes use of Fairclough's socio-discoursal approach, the following section will discuss thoroughly this approach while briefly defining and discussing the features of the other two approaches existing under the umbrella of Critical Discourse Analysis.

4.1.Historical- Discoursal

Ruth Wodak's theorical insights are always discussed while defining the features of the historical discoursal approach of Critical Discourse Analysis. Here, Wodak's perspective puts an emphasis on both the contextualized nature of discourse within its present state of occurrence as well as on the importance of explaining the development of discourse through a historic continuum. Wodak's research has focused on issues related to anti-Semitism while developing a discourse-historical method devoted to tracing the intertextual history of arguments.[91] This method starts with examining documents augmented by previous ethnographic research, and then moves into wide-ranging data collection and analysis of news reporting, political discourse, lay beliefs, and discourse. [92] For Wodak, it is not possible to decipher the discursive strategies adopted in any discourse without having a deep understanding of the social/historical background which they have been created against. Wodak and Meyer attempted to list some features of the discourse-historical approaches and they are briefly explained below:

- It closely and rigorously adheres to socio-philosophical orientation of critical theory.
- It seeks to embrace three essential elemets. The first element is "text or discourse immanent critique" which aims at finding out the inconsistencies, self contradictions, gaps, paradoxes in the text --internal. The second element is referred to as the "socio-diagnostic critique" which seeks the demystification of exposures and the inherent manipulative features of discursive discourses

[91] See Ruth Wodak, "Critical Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis," *Handbook of Pragmatics*, eds. John Verschueren, J.-O. Östman, J. Blommaert and C. Bulcaen (Amterdam: John Benjamins, 1995).

[92] Theo van Leeuwen and Ruth Wodak, "Legitimizing Immigration Control: A Discourse-Historical Analysis," *Discourse Studies*, 1:1 (1999), p. 89.

through the usage of historical and social backgrounds. The third element is called the "perspective critique" that aims to bring about a transformation and improvement of communication.

- It attempts to involve a large quantity of available knowledge regarding historical sourcres of social and political backgrounds which discursive events are embedded in.[93]

4.2.Cognitive- Discoursal

Trying to reconcile cognitive sciences and Critical Discourse Analysis with its focus on linguistic and social aspects is never an easy task to accomplish. It is still in its embryonic stage as well. The search to involve cognitive psychology in Critical Discourse Analysis research is always associated with the academic efforts made by Teun van Djik who has searched to build a multidisciplinary approach to Critical Discourse Analysis for more than three decades.[94]

Following van Djik's seminal work published in 2006, there exists a consensus among discourse analysts that communicative events need to be approaches on the basis of their immediate constituents: stylistic, grammatical, rhetorical, pragmatic, argumentative, interactional or other structures.[9596] There is no significant concensus on neither adding text to the list nor on studying the cognition of speakers' beliefs, intentions and processes involved in the production of discourse. Van Dijk remains a strong advocate of reconciling cognition and the study of discourse. For instance, while studying metaphors Van Djik believes they are too often examined as lexical or even rhetorical devices instead of looking at them as conceptual and cognitive phenomena.[97]

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[93] See Ruth Wodak and Micheal Meyer, *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* pp. 32-43.

[94] Teun A. Van Dijk, "Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis," *Discourse and Society*, 4: 2 (1993), p. 263.

[95] See Teun A. Van Dijk, "Ideology and Discourse Analysis," *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 11: 2 (2006), p. 124.

[96] Teun A. Van Dijk, "Discourse and Manipulation," *Discourse and Society*, 17:3 (2006), p. 363.

[97] Teun A. Van Dijk, "Ideologies in Political Discourse on Immigration." http//hum.uva.nl/teun/ideo-rac.htm. Accessed in July 2019.

According to van Djik, ideologies should be regarded as "interpretation frameworks" that play an important role in organizing sets of attitudes about other elements in modern society. In this respect, ideologies are providers of a "cognitive foundation", as van Djik puts it, for the attitudes of a variety of social groups as well as of their ability to fulfill their own goals and interests.[98] In order to show the central role of ideology in discourse, van Djik defines it as "the overall, abstract mental systems that organize such socially shared attitudes".[99] He also contends that "Ideologies may be exhibited in many social practices."[100] Among these practices, "discourse, that is, socially situated text and talk" may be regarded as "one of the most crucial social practices".[101]

It is worth noting that van Djik is also studying how cognitive theories deal with discourse processing. In order to comprehend language, mental representations need to be constructed like is the case with prior knowledge when use to construct a model of the incoming discourse for instance.[102] Additionally, discourse comprehension is an ongoing process operating both at a local or microstructural level and at a global or macrostructural level. At a microstructural level, every utterance is analyzed and encoded into memory while macrostructural processes operate over a series of utterances to form a coherent representation by providing the summary of an extended discourse. Schematic processes, according to van Dijk, operate at a macrostructural level and eventually provide expectations concerning the flow of information.[103]

Offering a "schema" of relations between ideology, society, cognition and discourse, social interaction, according to van Dijk, occurs within social structures. This

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[98] Teun A. Van Dijk, "Racism and the Press," *Critical Studies in Racism and Migration*, ed. Robert Miles (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 36.

[99] Teun A. Van Dijk, "Discourse Analysis as Ideology Analysis," *Language and Peace*, eds. C. Schâffner and A.L. Wenden (Alershot: Dartmouth, 1995), p. 18.

[100] Teun A. Van Djik, *Racism, Discourse and Textbooks: The Coverage of Immigration in Spanish Textbooks* (Istanbul: History Foundation, 2004), p. xviii.

[101] Teun A. Van Djik, "Contextual Knowledge Management in Discourse Production: A CDA Perspective," *A New Agenda in Critical Discourse Analysis: Theory, Methodologhy and Interdisciplinarity*, eds. Ruth Wodak and Paul Chilton (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005), p. 73.

[102] See Teun A. Van Djik and Walter Kintsh, *Strategies of Discourse Comprehension* (New York: Academic Press, 1983) and Johnson Laird P.N., *Mental Models* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[103] Teun A. van Dijk, *News as Discourse* (Hillsdale: NJ: Erlbaum, 1988), p. 45.

social interaction is presented in the form of text/discourse, which is then cognitively processed according to a cognitive system/memory. This "system/memory" consists of short-term memory, in which "strategic processing," or decoding and interpretation happens. However, long-term memory serves as a holder of "socio- cultural knowledge," which consists of knowledge of language, discourse, communication, persons, groups and events existing in the form of "scripts." "Social (group) attitudes" also reside within long-term memory and provide further decoding guides. Each of these "group attitudes" can represent a set of ideologies meant to create one's own personal ideology that conforms to one's identity, goals, social position, values and resources.

Following van Dijk, hegemonic power takes the form of controlling people's minds.[104] This phenomenon is, in social cognition, referred to as *mental models structuring ideologies*. These models are acquired and (re)produced through social, including discursive, practices and interact with the personal cognition of group members. Hence, ideologies that are cognitively structured lead to group cohesion by defining membership in a group as well as its tasks/activities, goals, norms/values, position and resources.[105] Thus, ideology both socially and cognitively functions and it, according to van Dijk, can be the interface between the cognitive models (representations and processes underlying discourse and action) and the societal position and interests of social groups.[106] As a consequence of this, power relations are subject to be reproduced and legitimated at the ideological level; that is, so as to control other people, it is of paramount importance to try to control their group attitudes and attitude-producing, ideologies.[107] The result of this process is that audiences will behave out of their own "free will" which does not eventually conflict with the interests of the powerful. Van Dijk's thesis implies that the exercise of power in modern democratic societies is no longer primarily coercive, but persuasive/ideological.

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[104] Teun A. van Dijk, "Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis," *Discourse and Society*, 4: 2 (1993), 251, and Teun A. van Dijk, "Discourse as Interaction in Society," *Discourse as Social Interaction,* ed. Teun A. van Dijk (London: Sage, 1997), p. 22.

[105] Teun A. van Dijk, "Discourse Analysis as Ideology Analysis," *Language and Peace*, eds. C. Schäffner and A.L. Wenden (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1995), p. 19.

[106] Ibid., p. 18.

[107] See Teun A. van Dijk, "Racism and the Press," p. 179.

Studying and analyzing the 'implicitness of discourse' is essential in van Dijk's approach. Implicitness occurs when we say without saying while aiming at transmitting the idea/ideology without clearly stating it in the text/ discourse. This concept is relevant to the study of media discourse in relation to ideology. Van Dijk stresses on the "the systematic analysis of implicitness" as journalists and media users are in possession of "mental models...about the world." Consequently, the text is really like "an iceberg of information" and it is only the "tip" which is "actually expressed in words and sentences. The rest is assumed to be supplied by the knowledge scripts and models of the media users, and therefore usually left unsaid." Therefore, Van Dijk concludes that "the analysis of the implicit...is very useful in the study of underlying ideologies."[108]

In many of his publications, especially the ones that appeared in late 1990s and early 2000s, Van Dijk acknowledged that Critical Discourse Analysis does not have one theoretical framework or methodology but rather encompasses a range of approaches. Like Wodak, van Dijk is calling for is a discourse framework in terms of the social aspect and "*also, but not exclusively*, in terms of mental representations".[109] (van Dijk, 1998a: 22; original emphasis). Advocating for a broad multidisciplinary approach to discourse, Van Dijk interestingly states that

> a broad multidisciplinary approach to discourse, which integrates a detailed and explicit study of structures of text and talk with an analysis of their social and cognitive contexts as a basis for problem-oriented critical discourse analysis. In such an approach, the study of relevant knowledge, ideologies and other socially shared beliefs is crucial in describing many of the properties and social functions of discourse.[110]

4.3.Social- Discoursal

[108] Ibid., pp. 181-183.

[109] See page 22 of Teun A. Van Dijk, "Ideologies in Political Discourse on Immigration." http//hum.uva.nl/teun/ideo-rac.htm. Accessed in July 2019.

[110] Teun A. Van Dijk, "Discourse, Context and Cognition," Discourse Studies, 8:1 (2006), p. 161.

The social-discoursal approach of Critical Discourse Analysis has been theoretically introduced by Norman Fairclough. This dissertation does also pay tribute to his theoretical insights as they have proved useful in analysing Moroccan newspaper coverage of religion and politics and their social and discursive practices along with textual aspects. Generally, Fairclough's approach is, as Reisigl, Wodak and van Dijk confirm, different from both the historical-discoursal and the cognitive discoursal as it emphasizes the social aspect.[111]

Following Fairclough, there exists a dialectical relationship between language and other social practices. Language, for Fairclough, is socially shaped while simultaneously shaping other social practices.[112] While adopting this approach, Fairclough has saught to study language and globalization, social change, education, and power. Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis has become an indispensable methodology used in examining and analysing, as Wodak puts it, "opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language."[113][114] Attempting to deconstruct society, Fairclough's theoretical and methodological framework allows practitioners to critically investigate possible social inequalities and how they are expressed, formed and legitimized by discursive practices. Here, Critical Discourse Analysis seeks to make the opaque aspects of discourse more visible, transparent and easily detectable. As Chouliaraki and Fairclough argued in 1999, the social-discoursal approach pays tribute to the Critical Theory developed by the Frankfurt School.[115] Following Kicheloe and McLaren, Critical Theory

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[111] Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak, "Discourse and Racism: European Perspectives," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, N. 28 (1999), p. 179, and Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak, *Discourse and Discrimination: Rhetorics of Racism and Anti-Semitism* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 32, and Teun A. van Dijk, "Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis," *Discourse and Society*, 4: 2 (1993), p. 252.

[112] Norman Fairclough, *Media Discourse* (London: Edward Arnold, 1995), p. 131.

[113] Ruth Wodak, "Critical Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis," *Handbook of Pragmatics*, eds. John Verschueren, J.-O. Östman, J. Blommaert and C. Bulcaen (Amterdam: John Benjamins, 1995), p. 204.

[114] Gilbert Weiss and Ruth Wodak (eds), *Critical Discourse Analysis: Theory and Interdisciplinarity in Critical Discourse Analysis* (London: Palgrave, 2003), p. 15.

[115] Lilie Chouliaraki and Norman Fairclough, *Discourse in Late Modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 19.

> analyses competing power interests between groups and individuals within a society – identifying who gains and who loses in specific situations. Privileged groups, criticalists argue, often have an interest in supporting the status quo to protect their advantages; the dynamics of such efforts often become a central focus of critical research...critical research attempts to expose the forces that prevent individuals and groups from shaping the decisions that crucially affect their lives.[116]

Hence, the Critical Theory is meant to identify and challenge assumptions behind ordinary ways of perceiving, conceiving and acting. It also aims at highlighting the impact of history, culture and social beliefs and actions. Besides, the Critical Theory helps imagine and find out useful alternatives, especially the ones that are able to shake off routies and the ordinary orders. Last but not least, the Critical Theory, as Alvesson and Deetz content, remains skeptical about any knowledge or information presented as the absolute truth or alternative.[117]

Fairclough's input remains very important as he managed to connect Critical Theory to discourse analysis. Thus, a critical analysis explains the strategies adopted to unequally treat or position people. It also helps explain the ways meanings are constructed by both language production and consumption. Here, the dialectical and reciprocal relationship between the social and the linguistic could be brought to the surface as language, according to the Faircloughian model, does both constitute the social practice and is constituted by the social practices. This dialectical relationship marks Critical Discourse Analysis as an interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary framework drawing on works from different fields: Gramsci, Althusser, Habermas, Halliday, Kress and Bakhtin. For Fairclough, the multidisciplinary nature of Critical Discourse Analysis makes it the task of CDA practitioners to

[116] Joe L. Kincheloe and Peter McLaren, "Rethinking critical theory and Qualitative Research," *Handbook of Qualitative Research,* eds. N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2000), p. 281.

[117] Mats Alvesson and Stanley Deetz, *Doing Critical Management Research* (London: Sage, 2000), p. 8.

> systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate. How such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony.[118]

In addition to this, Critical Discourse Analysis, through textual analysis, seeks to describe the nuances of unequal relations of power, domination, hegemony, marginalization and exclusion. It is a "democratic approach which takes an ethical stance on social issues with the aim of improving society".[119] In order to accomplish this, Critical Discourse Analysis attempts to both provide explainations concerning how social injustices are produced, reproduced, and legitimized and comprehend the agencies that institutionalize them. It allows to relate these interpretations to wider socio-cultural, political and historical contexts.

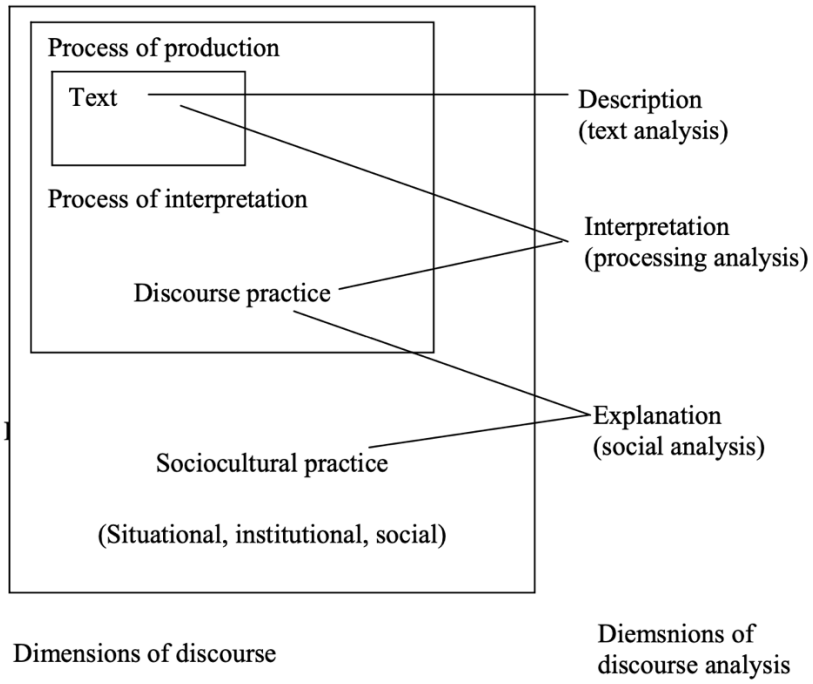
In his *Discourse and Social Change* published in 1992, Fairclough introduced the social-discoursal approach in Critical Discourse Analysis. In his seminal work, Fairclough prescribed a social theory of discourse with a methodological blueprint for critical discourse analysis. The next figure sums up Fairclough's plan of action to conduct a comprehensive analysis.[120]

[118] Norman Fairclough, *Media Discourse*, p. 135.

[119] Thomas Huckin, "Critical Discourse Analysis," *Functional Approaches to Written Text*, ed. Tom Miller (Washington, DC: US Department of State, Office of English Language Programs, 1997), p. 1.

[120] Norman Fairclough, *Media Discourse* (London: Edward Arnold, 1995), p. 98.

Figure 1: Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis Model



Three distinct but intrisincally interwoven levels of analysis are shown in the diagram above: the text level, the discursive practice level, and the socio-cultural level. In Fairclough's model, "the connection between text and social practice is seen as being mediated by discourse practice".[121] Here, "each discursive event has three dimensions or facets".[122] These dimensions lie in the fact that the event is a spoken or written language text, it is an instance of discourse practice that involves the production and interpretation of text, and that it is social practice. Overally, threre are three dimensions of Fairclough's model: discourse as text, discourse as discursive practices, and discourse as social practices. In the first dimension, discourse as text, the focus is on the contents of the text, the linguistic characteristics of the text, choices of words and patterns in the vocabulary used, grammar, cohesion, semantics, and text structure. These elements are all analyzed. Here, practitioners of Critical Discourse Analysis examine what is represented in the text, what is represented in the theme and the sentences and how they have been composed. The second dimension tends to consider

[121] Ibid., p. 133.
[122] Ibid.

discourse as discursive practices that include all the factors that help produce the text. Fairclough, in this respect, argues that this dimension "involves various aspects of the proceses of text production and text consumption. Some of these have a more institutional character whereas others are discourse processes in a narrower sense".[123] Discourse practice here is a reference to the production and reception of messages. The third dimention considers discourse as social practices. Here, social, ideological and hegemonic practices taking over the landscape in society are looked at. Social practice includes discourse but does not present a factural reflection of reality. It does have an impact on social structures and is able to play an indispensable role in bringing about social change. Adopting Critical Discourse Analysis here becomes ethical as it provides practitioners and anlysts with the tools needed to unveil how the text/discourse maintain or create the forms of unequality, domination, hegemony and authority. As a result, the Faircloughian model remains an ethical tool thanks to which deconstructing structures of power and hegemony could occur while analysing textual contents.

5. Critiques of Critical Discourse Analysis

Since the first day it was introduced, Critical Discourse Analysis has been criticized by several theorists and practitioners. First, Critical Discourse Analysis is interpretive and subjective in its analysis as Scheglfoff argued in 1997, Wetherell in 2001, and Widdowson in many of his writings.[124][125][126][127][128] Second, Critical Discourse Analysis was criticized by Widdowson who believes that it disregards context and tends to seperates it from text. Third, Critical Discourse Analysis fails to discuss the consequences of discourse in the globalized context of language use. Here, Blommaert

[123] Ibid., p. 58.

[124] Emanuel Schegloff, "Whose Text? Whose Context?," *Discourse and Society*, 8:2 (1997), p. 169.

[125] Margaret Wetherell, "Debate in Discourse Research," *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader*, eds. Margaret Wetherell, S. Taylor and S.J. Yates (London: Sage Publications, 2001), p. 386

[126] Henry Widdowson, "Discourse Analysis, a Critical View," *Language and Literature*, 4:3 (1995), p. 187.

[127] Henry Widdowson, "Reply to Fairclough Discourse and Interpretation: Conjectures and Refutations," *Language and Literature*, 5: 1 (1996), p. 62.

[128] Henry Widdowson, "The Theory and Practice of Critical Discourse Analysis," *Applied Linguistics*, 19:1 (1998), p. 139.

contends that a critical analysis of discourse "necessarily needs to provide insights in the dynamics of societies- in-the-world".[129] Fourth, Pennycook, among other theorists, argues that Critical Discourse Analysis is a methodology that lacks the essentials to become a theory for it has "a strange mixture of theoretical eclecticism and unreflexive modernism".[130] Widdowson said exactly the same thing criticizing Critical Discourse Analysis practitioners and describing the work they do as "a kind of ad hoc bricolage which takes from theory whatever concept comes usefully to hand."[131] Fifth, Pennycook believes that Critical Discourse Analysis remains in the end a simple theory used to interpret texts as long as the textual analysis is not combined with the production and consumption practices.[132] Sixth, Barkho contends that Critical Discourse Analysis practitioners focus too much on the various parts of textual material while approaching news discourse based on the grammatical features, themes and topics.[133]

As a response to some of these critiques, it is important to point out that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to avoid the issue of subjectivity and multiplicity of truths in qualitative analysis in social sciences. Even Fairclough recognized that his social-discoursal approach remains a set of guidelines that can be used with lucidity, and that it is never possible to be objective while adopting Critical Discourse Analysis. it always has particular interests, always comes from a particular perspective, and renders analyses that are partial and incomplete. Discussing the same issue, Fairclough made his position crystal clear in 2001 when he said that he is "a socialist with a generally low opinion of the social relationships in society and a commitment to the emancipation of the people who are oppressed by them."[134] As far as Blommaert's criticism of the lack of historicity is concerned, it would be fair to Critical Discourse

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[129] Jan Blommaert, *Discourse: A Critical Introduction* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 2.

[130] Alastair Pennycook, *Critical Applied Linguistics: A Critical Introduction* (London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001), p. 87.

[131] Henry Widdowson, "The Theory and Practice of Critical Discourse Analysis," *Applied Linguistics*, 19: 1 (1998), p.145.

[132] Alastair Pennycook, *Critical Applied Linguistics: A Critical Introduction* (London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001), p. 89.

[133]See Leon, "The Discursive and Social Power of News Discourse: The case of Aljazeera in comparison and parallel with the BBC and CNN," *Studies in Langage and Capitalism*, (2008). http://www.languageandcapitalism.info/wp-content/uploads/2008/11/slc3-4-barkho.pdf. Accessed in July 2019.

[134] Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power* (London: Longman, 2001), p. 4.

Analysis does not seek to disregard the historical background while analyzing texts. On the contrary, Wodak's historical approach of Critical Discourse Analysis that has been previously discussed is an evidence that this theory does also look at the historical background of texts. Fairclough and Wodak clearly insist that "discourse is historical" in the sense that texts could only be understood if their historical background is studied first. As for the methodological criticisms, for Weiss and Wodak, it is useful to think of CDA as "a theoretical synthesis of conceptual tools." Weiss andWodak argue that a plurality of theory and method should not be considered unsystematic or eclectic. They suggest that Critical Discourse Analysis be considered both a theory and method and that the fact it provides opportunities for "innovative and productive theory formation" should be regarded as a source of strength.[135]

6. Concluding Notes

Critical Discourse Analysis remains quite controversial and very difficult to define. While many should find it a flawed method of analysis because of the subjective analyses its users should come up with, it definitely remains a useful method for practitioners who believe objectivity in social sciences is never unavoidable. In the end, practitioners seek to interpret the data collected as less subjectively as possible. Along with that, the fact that Critical Discourse Analysis allows practitioners to use a variety of approaches and theories in order to finally come up with a useful eclectic approach that helps practitioners fulfill their goals and stimulate researchers to dig further.

Critical Discourse Analysis proves useful in this dissertation as it allows the combination of qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis to take place. This combination helps examine in detail how religious and political discourses/frames are represented in Moroccan print newspapers. CDA will be useful in the examination of both manifest and latent information/meanings in news articles, which should provide insights into the meaning and discourses associated with religion and politics. Thus, CDA, which is a qualitative method used to study the function of language, will be indispensable in this dissertation since it should help unveil the structured way in which meaning and produced, examine the choice of topics, themes and framing techniques

[135] Gilbert Weiss and Ruth Wodak (eds), *Critical Discourse Analysis: Theory and Interdisciplinarity in Critical Discourse Analysis* (London: Palgrave, 2003), p. 7.

used in a news story, and also explore hidden power relations and ideologies embedded in discourse. Besides, CDA proves useful in this dissertation because not only will it help describe and analyze the discourse produced by newspapers, but it will also allow to discuss the socio-cultural, economic, and political contexts within which the news is produced and dissiminated. As it is an indispensable method used to analyze data from a decidedly critical stance, CDA is adopted in this dissertation in order to examine discourses, investigate news stories, and to examine the dominant and subordinate discourses. In this respect, CDA is not only adopted to examine the discourse of Moroccan newspapers, but to also show how the current status quo is, how it is discursively constituted, and how popular consent is usually manufactured, which remains the ethical role of this method.

CHAPTER II: PRINT MEDIA, THE PUBLIC SPHERE, AND THE POWER OF NEWS PRODUCTION IN DOMOCRACY BUILDING

1. The Print and the Trajectories of Media Development: A Brief Overview

A quick glance at the evolution as well as the trajectories of mass media not only allows us to understand the multiple forms of mass communication that have been invented, including the telegram, the telephone, the radio, the television, and the internet, but it also provides us with an insight on how information is disseminated to the public. The industrial revolution the world witnessed in the 18th and early 19th centuries brought about the birth of machines and paper culture, hence allowing new forms of mass media to emerge. In this sense, mass media could be defined as the "various technological means of producing and disseminating messages and cultural forms (notably news, information, entertainment, and advertising to large, widely dispersed, heterogeneous, audiences)."[136] In the 21st Century, mass media include newspapers, magazines, books, telegram, radio, television, cinema, audio CDs, DVDs, and the internet.

It is commonly recognized that Johannes Gutenberg[137] invented the printing press in the 1450's and developed a printing method involving movable metal type. This was known as a "movable type machine" as the metal block letters could be moved around to create new words and sentences. With this machine, Gutenberg managed to make the very first printed book which was actually a reproduction of the Bible. Gutenberg's printing press was not actually the revolutionary technology that it would later become, but it started impacting society by facilitating the spread of the Bible. Today, the Gutenberg Bible (1455) is an incredibly invaluable item for its historical legacy. Gutenberg, in mid-fifteenth Century, found it necessary to invent a printing method

[136] Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication* (New York, Oxford University Press: 2011), p. 257.

[137] Johannes Gensfleisch zur Laden zum Gutenberg (1398–February 3, 1468) was a German blacksmith, goldsmith, printer, and publisher who introduced printing to Europe. His introduction of mechanical movable type printing to Europe started the Printing Revolution and is widely regarded as the most important invention of the second millennium, the seminal event which ushered in the modern period of human history. It, according to McLuhan (1962), Eisenstein (1980), Febre & Martin (1997), and Man (2002), played a key role in the development of the Renaissance, Reformation, the Age of Enlightenment, and the scientific revolution and laid the material basis for the modern knowledge-based economy and the spread of learning to the masses.

with the aim to increase and speed up the mass production of literature. Indeed, his invention was considered the first mass communication vehicle through which the dissemination of information to a mass-audience was accomplished. This invention was extremely useful during enlightenment era since it facilitated the spread of knowledge and brought about significant changes in various aspects in society, including science, religion, politics, culture, and economics. Eisenstein states here that despite the fact that society did not witness a very significant impact of the printing press until a century later, exactly in the Protestant Reformation, and that the Renaissance and the Scientific Revolution were both brought about by its birth and development.[138] Gutenberg's invention made a dramatic impact when it reached the public and the noble classes looked down on it.[139] To them, "hand-inked books were a sign of luxury and grandeur, and it was no match for the cheaper, mass-produced books."[140] Nowadays, the printing machines and techniques, along with the technological revolution that the world has known, have radically affected the printing industry in multiple ways. This effect has been manifested in the increased growth and speed in production as well as in the refinement and quality of the print resolution. Thanks to Gutenberg and to the technological revolution, the printed material has rapidly gone up over the last five centuries. In our contemporary context, the prominent role the computer plays and the rapidly growing digital print techniques have paved the way to the overall growth and refinement of graphic design and printing. While it is true that Gutenberg's invention was remarkably successful, various major societal conditions hampered its progress. The first major challenge was the trade market that was too weak to distribute presses or books to potential customers. The second challenge was the high rate of illiteracy that marked the 15th century European context. The high rate of illiteracy among the majority of Europeans could explain why Gutenberg's invention and the subsequent publications were read by and circulated only among the bourgeoisie. Nonetheless, the birth of centers for printing and book fairs, like the Frankfurt Book Faire, were the centers of attraction for publishers, collectors, booksellers, and, most importantly, scholars. Not only did this very progressive situation help the coordination of supply

[138] Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. XX.

[139] "The Invention of the Printing Press," < https://www.psprint.com/resources/printing-press/>. Retrieved on October 8th, 2016.

[140] Ibid.

and demand, but it also provided people with a variety of books, posters and catalogs, which played a very crucial role in encouraging people to fight their illiteracy. This revolutionary development of Gutenberg's printing press allowed Europe to be open to progress and civilization. Here, Steinberg stresses that "the history of printing is an integral part of the general history of civilization."[141]

Gutenberg's printing press amazingly contributed to the enlargement of public debate in European societies, especially about issues related to religion. In Germany for instance, the Catholic Church made use of the printing press so as to promote Catholicism, and it encountered an opposition when new religious ideas and new interpretations of the Bible started being propagated. The attack on the existing mainstream Catholicism at that time first came from Martin Luther whose philosophy was that people having the ability to read the Bible themselves did not necessarily need a priest. Indeed, the printing press made it very possible to spread Luther's ideas to the public. In this regard, Eisenstein states that "Luther's ideas would probably have never been spread had it not been for the invention of the printing press, he even felt that the printing press was a gift from God."[142] Interestingly, the printing played a very key role in shaking off the Church's monopoly on learning and the Protest Reformation was in full motion. This independence in thinking about religion and faith lead to independent thinking about science, art, and politics. Scientifically speaking, Gutenberg's printing press revolutionized the belief of a significant number of historical scientists, the fact that helped the evolvement of a scientific revolutionary ideas to take place. Moreover, the printing press emerged as a new permanent way to record data and information, guaranteeing insurance and preservation. Needless to point out again that the published and well documented information helped ideas be quickly reached out by the masses and a new territory be explored by scientists. This new wave of scientists, with the support of the permanently documents information and data, were able to rethink or to even revolt against the old scientific theories. One famous example of these theorists is Copernicus who had the guts to challenge that earth is the center of the universe and was the first to propose a sun-centered model. Such ideas were apparently radical and

[141] Sigfird H. Steinberg, *Five Hundred Years of Printing*, (London: The British Library and Oak Knoll Press, 1996), p. 11.

[142] Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 37.

people's reconciliation with them took much time. This Renaissance was exported to other European countries in the fifteen centuries, and France benefited a great deal from the printing press, which will pave the way for "the golden age of French typography" the marked the sixteenth century. Because of the religious and political context that prevailed France in the 16th century, various formidable obstacles were faced by the awakening of scholars and scientists. Here, Samuelson notes that

> Censorship became an increasingly difficult problem during the 1500s, as church and state sought to maintain their authority and control. Propagating ideas, not pressing inked type onto paper, was the main purpose of the scholar-printers, who often found their quest for knowledge and critical study in conflict with the religious leaders and royalty.[143]

Indeed, the print press helped a large portion of European societies question the mainstream knowledge and spread information to vast audiences swiftly and cheaply, especially with the development of print culture as well as the wide opening of print shops in Europe. In brief, scholars benefited from the dissemination of scholarly ideas in the sense that they were able to enlighten the uneducated as illiteracy was a commonality between European nations at that time. This socio-cultural, economic and technological awakening enlarged the expectations of European nations. Gutenberg's printing press, along with having been "largely responsible for Latin's decline as other regional languages became the norm in locally printed materials"[144], significantly helped an unprecedented form of literary public sphere to arise, to use Habermas's terminology.

The public sphere, a concept that was initiated by Jurgen Habermas in his famous *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category*

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[143] Robert J. Samuelson, "The Internet and Gutenberg," *Newsweek*, January 23, 2000, < http://www.newsweek.com/internet-and-gutenberg-158401>. Accessed on November 1, 2016.

[144] "The Invention of the Printing Press," < https://www.psprint.com/resources/printing-press/>. Accessed on November 3, 2016.

of Bourgois Society, could briefly refer to an area in social life where individuals can come together to openly and freely bring to the fore their social problems with the aim to impact political action. It is crystal clear today that this term appears in daily conversations and in every scholarly debate about society and popular media. In each debate or study, one or various definitions of the term are suggested, meaning that it is still a very controversial and debated concept especially when it is interrelated with liberty, freedom of expression, and religion. As defined in the work of German philosopher Habermas, the public sphere is "a domain of our social life where such a thing as public opinion can be formed [where] citizens . . . deal with matters of general interest without being subject to coercion . . . [to] express and publicize their views."[145] Habermas, a central theorist in any discussion on the public sphere, understands the public sphere as a virtual space "where citizens of a country exchange ideas and discuss issues, in order to reach agreement about 'matters of general interest'."[146] It is simply, as Hauser defines, "a discursive space in which individuals and groups congregate to discuss matters of mutual interest and, where possible, to reach a common judgement about them."[147] It is an arena where meanings are constructed, distributed, and negotiated.[148] It is where the formation of public opinion could take place. The importance of Habermas's book, which will be thoroughly discussed later in this theoretical chapter, lies in the fact that the current conceptualizations of the public sphere are based on it. Additionally, the book is still cited by any theorist discussing the foundations of the public sphere. The preliminary definitions of the public sphere make it legitimate to argue that Gutenberg's printing press was behind the emergence of a special arena where scholarly meanings were invented, spread, and negotiated. This bourgeois public sphere, as Habermas calls it, allowed people to defy the mainstream conceptualizations, scientific theories, and religious understandings, hence creating a public authority in 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries Europe, while not being part

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[145] Jurgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere," *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology*, eds. Robert E. Goodin and Philip Pettit (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), p. 105.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Gerard Hauser, *Vernacular Voices: The Rhetoric of Publics and Public Spheres* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), p. 61.

[148] Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. xii.

of the 'spheres of consensus'[149]. Briefly attemting to define it, Habermas explains that the bourgeois public sphere

> could be understand as the sphere of private individuals assembled into a public body, which almost immediately laid claim to the officially regulated 'intellectual newspapers' for use against the public authority itself… To the principle of the existing power, the bourgeois public opposed the principle of supervision- that very principle which demands that proceedings be made public.[150]

Thompson, trying to explain Habermas's notion of the public sphere, stresses that during the 17th and 18th centuries, there emerged a 'bourgeois public sphere' that "created a forum in which the authority of the state was criticized and called upon to justify itself before an informed and reasoning public."[151] This forum, based on the principle of 'publicness' as Thompson states, allowed personal opinions of private intellectuals to evolve into a public opinion "through the rational-critical debate of a public of citizens which was open to all and free from domination".[152] Generally, Gutenberg's revolutionary invention lead to the emergence of the bourgeois public sphere which played a very significant role in debating public issues and building an infrastructure for the building of democracy. This bourgeois public sphere that Gutenberg's print culture marked the beginning of the erosion of the separation between the private life and the public authority. Indeed, the rise of the periodical press facilitated and brought into existence this bourgeois public sphere in some European countries in the late 17th and 18th centuries. This importance new print culture lead to the rise of various new cultural hubs in urban European cities such as coffeehouses,

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[149] A concept first proposed in 1986 by Daniel Hallin, an American communication theorist, in his analysis of the US reporting of the Vietnam War, and which refers to the province of implicit agreement wherein journalists present the 'official line' as the only correct point of view.

[150] Jurgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article," *New German Critique*, N.3 (Autumn 1974), p. 52.

[151] John B. Thomson, *Ideology and Modern Culture: Critical Social Theory in the Era of Mass Communication* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), p. 109.

[152] Ibid., p. 112.

reading and language societies, and also salons which became new institutions where private individuals had the chance to gather together to engage in serious and intellectual discussion about politics and other various issues of public concern.[153] These new cultural hubs gave birth to the "Age of Conversation" or to an ideal of free communication that transformed several European settings, making them no longer dependent on the court as a site of publicity but rather on the press. The newspapers that emerged in this context were, as Peters notes, very essential in bringing to the fore critical discussions in which persuasion and equality were favored.[154] In his discussion of the important role the press played in 17th and 18th centuries Europe, Habermas argues that the politically critical press, particularly newspapers, contributed to the emergence of the bourgeois public sphere and that it, along with disseminating news, was essential in intensifying public discussion and in shaping public opinion.[155]

The print culture not only marked European settings in the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries, but it also swept to America. The first American newspaper, *Publick Occurrences*, both Foreign and Domestick, was published by the famous Bostonian Benjamin Harris in September 1690, which means in the heyday of industrial revolution. In fact, Benjamin Harris managed to publish only one issue for the British colonial government immediately obliged him to cease publication.[156] Because of the very significant influence of newspapers and pamphlets, especially in Europe for instance in the 17th and 18th centuries, the new emerging modern states, as Harry Henderson notes, regarded the print industry as a threatening technology that had to be tightly controlled and managed in order to hamper it from getting into the hands of those disagreeing with the established political systems.[157] At that time, this situation pushed forward the birth of resistant voices, like John Milton, calling for press liberty and freedom. In this sense, the early conflictual relationship between newspapers and

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[153] John Thompson, "The Theory of the Public Sphere," *Theory, Culture & Society*, N. 10 (1993), pp. 176-177.

[154] John Durham Peters, "Distrust of Representation: Habermas on the Public Sphere," *Media, Culture and Society*, Vol. 15, N. 4 (1993), p. 552.

[155] Jurgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere," in *Rethinking Popular Culture: Contemporary Perspectives in Cultural Studies*, eds. Chandra Mukerji and Micheal Schudson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 402.

[156] Peyton Paxson, *Mass Communications and Media Studies: An Introduction* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd, 2010), p. 92.

[157] Harry Henderson, *Power of the News Media* (New York: Library in a Book, 2004), p. 3.

governments could explain the reasons why journalists are, paradoxically enough, still facing persecution and random trials in the Middle East and North Africa, a region that witnessed unprecedented popular uprisings in 2011 and 2012 demanding democracy, dignity, social justice, and freedoms, including the freedom of expression.

Print media were extremely influential in the 19th and early 20th century, but other forms of mass media, like the telegraph, remarkably contributed to the daily circulation of news between people as well as states. As Brian Winston, a specialist in media studies, attempts to show in his *Media Technology and Society a History: From the Telegraph to the Internet*, a constant play-off between suppression and social necessity steered a remarkable development of new forms of communications technologies, from the telegraph to the CD-ROM. Indeed, Gutenberg's invention, especially after its fruitful results in the United States as well as in various European settings in late 19th and 20th centuries, enticed inventers to seek new forms of mass communication, and a quick glance at the chronological history of communications technologies allows us to understand why some prototypes were abandoned, and why others were simultaneously created by inventers who, as Winston stresses, were even unaware of each other's existence.[158] Winston, through challenging the concept of "information revolution", revisits the history of communications technologies with an attempt to show that the information revolution is not a recent phenomenon but its birth was rather witnessed centuries ago. In this context, he states that "the view that we are living in the midst of an 'Information Revolution' or at the start of an 'Information Age', can be seen rather differently if the histories of the technologies involved are considered."[159] He contends that the storm of progress blows so hard in our contemporary context that it obscures our vision of what is taking place.[160] He finds the word 'Information Revolution' an "illusion, a rhetorical gambit and an expression of technological ignorance"[161] in the sense that it disallows us to go back to history to understand the remarkable historical progress that characterized the development of communications technologies.

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[158] Brian Winston, *Media Technology and Society A Brief History: From the Telegraph to the Internet* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 1

[159] Ibid.

[160] Ibid.

[161] Ibid., p. 2.

Interestingly, each new communication technology, without exception, played major roles in different settings and in important periods, providing media products for a mass audience. Indeed, every newly introduced form of communications technologies was meant to fulfill essentially the same function of the previous invention. The telegraphy, first introduced in 1844 by Samuel Morse through the use of electronic impulses[162], allowed messages to be sent over great distances using a device called a telegraph, causing "first break between information movement and physical movement."[163] However, the states' monopoly of the telegraphy system in mid-19th century Europe pushed forward timely questions regarding the public versus private ownership, questions that, according to Winston, were repeatedly "heard again and again in the debates about subsequent communication technologies."[164] As inventions got widely spread, the telegraph in particular had a very significant impact upon Iran, exactly between 1858 and 1909 when both the Iranian and British governments decided to initiate the building of telegraphs in the country with the aim to help fixing Iran's borders and to empower Shah's centrality and the power of his government throughout the nation.[165] The telegraph system, as Rubin mentions, brought about a clear change in the nature of the Anglo-Russian competition in the region, contributed to the reinvigoration of intelligence gathering in the country, and also "allowed London and St. Petersburg more sustained control over daily diplomacy."[166] While it is true that the telegraph spurred rapid economic development as well as social changes across the country, it also made it easier for a developing domestic opposition to organize their protests and transform them into powerful national movements, playing a key role in the Régie tobacoo protests and the Constitutional Revolution.[167] Hence, the story of the Iranian telegraph is, as Rubin states, "one of many men, motives, and governments"[168]

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[162] For a detailed chronological development of communications technologies, see https://sites.google.com/a/politicalscience.com.au/home/Home/chronologies/technology-chronology. Retrieved on October 19, 2016.

[163] Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication*, p. 424.

[164] Brian Winston, *Media, Technology and Society: A Brief History from the Telegraph to the Internet*, p. 29.

[165] Michael Allan Rubin, "The Formation of Modern Iran, 1858-1909: Communications, Telegraph and Society," diss., Yale University, 1999, p. 1.

[166] Ibid.

[167] Ibid.

[168] Ibid.

because it was seen by Nasir Al-Din Shah as part of a development program for the country, and also because many powerful countries, especially Britain, looked at it as a vital communication link seriously needed for the defense of India.[169] Nasir Al-Din Shah, thanks to the telegraph, was given unprecedented daily monopoly over his ministers, the fact that allowed him to travel internationally while controlling the remote provinces of the country. He, accordingly, managed to attain a victory of his central government over the centripetal forces of the periphery thanks to the new form of news dissemination. The Telegraph also enabled Shah to protect the borders of the country from any foreign interventions, and "when threats approached his border, the Shah would telegraph to his ambassadors or consuls to intercede with the Ottoman or European governments."[170] Even during the regime's weakened state, Rubin argues, the telegraph allowed the Shah "to play foreign powers and domestic competitors off each other and preserve and preserve Iranian independence".[171] Contributing to the formation of political culture and a modern nation-state in Iran, the telegraph undoubtedly paved the way to a fast and accurate communication throughout the nation. The news culture that the telegraph built in 17th and 18th centuries Iran catalyzed print culture, leading to the emergence of newspapers and journals throughout the country. Toward the end of his 50-year reign, Nasir Al- Din Shah found out that the telegraph's rapid communication was not only fruitful for his central government, but also extremely helpful for bringing the oppositional forces together.[172] The 1891-1892 tobacco protests were very important for the opposition to display how telegraphically coordinated they were, even from outside Iran.[173] The role of the telegraph in particular, and of technology in general, became more important during the 20th century, exactly during Reza Shah's reign (1925-1941). The latter's government had a total control over the radio while his successor's controlled television but failing to control audio tapes smuggled across the border from Iraq.[174] Generally, the telegraph played a key role in

[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid., p. 537.
[171] See Michael Rubin, "Iran, Technology, and Revolution," *Middle East Forum: Promoting American Interests*, http://www.meforum.org/2169/iran-technology-revolution. Retrieved on October 15, 2016.
[172] Michael Allan Rubin, "The Formation of Modern Iran, 1858-1909: Communications, Telegraph and Society," p. 35.
[173] Ibid., p. 36.
[174] See Michael Rubin, "Iran, Technology, and Revolution".

modernizing the Iranian economic infrastructure through the introduction of new banking system and also in enabling the central government to protect both the ruling family and the borders from any external interventions. However, the more helpful the telegraph was for the state, the more useful it also was for the oppositional forces that became quite efficiently connected. Hence, the telegraph, that was a double-edged arm in fact, was behind the Shahs' fear of technology, a situation that has been the same even since the Islamic Revolution.

The radio, "the first electronic mass medium of communication involving an audio signal broadcast wirelessly in the form of radio waves from a high-power transmitter to a low-power receiver (radio set)"[175], was the primary medium of communication in most countries in the 1940s, including the United States. During the World War II, the radio was the only means of mass communication through which people were updated about the diplomatic negotiations and also about the heavy fees of the war. The uniqueness of the radio lies in its wonderful ability to combine entertainment and advertising and, during the War, was able to smoothly fuse politics and political talks with the daily entertainment programs, hence ending up with a very creative mixture. Paradoxically enough, little attention has been given to the radio and this could be explained, as Horten notes, by the fact that it has been quickly swallowed by television in the 1950s.[176] while it is true that 60 percent of Americans in the 1920s and 1930s, as Horten's study reveals, used to rely primarily on newspapers as their major sources of information, 25 percent of them greatly depended on the radio.[177] After 1945, Horten's study shows, a reverse happened and 60 percent of Americans adopted the radio as their first major source of information.[178] It is fair to argue that this was the case in all countries in which radio sets were available in the sense that radio was able to be more impressive than any other means of communication as it amply fulfilled more tasks than any other medium. The radio succeeded in entertaining large audiences while promoting commercial sponsors. It is true that television conquered the media landscape in Europe and the United States in the 1945, enabling audiences to watch the

[175] Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication*, p. 350.

[176] Gern Horten, *Radio Goes to War: The Cultural Politics of Propaganda during World War II* (Berkley and Los Angeles: California University Press, 2002), p. 2.

[177] Ibid., p. 14.

[178] Ibid.

screen instead of listening to radio waves, but this did not significantly affect the importance of the radio. The latter has always been characterized by its easy access and ubiquity, and it is, unlike its previous communications technologies like the telegraph, still important nowadays because of the possibility to get it turned on through an internet-networked device.

In Morocco, the radio was, according to Bouziane, first introduced by the French colonial rulers in February 1928 when "radio signals were sent from the city of Rabat with a two-kilowatt medium-wave transmitter."[179] Although the director radio station was directly appointed by the French Resident General to supervise the news programs contents, clandestine radio stations based in Spain for instance were used by nationalist leaders with the aim to articulate and spread their voice for liberation and independence.[180] The year of 1962 was inaugurated by the Moroccan state's establishment of the country's broadcasting system offering radio and television services in the city of Rabat by the name *Al Idaa Watalfaza Al-Maghribya* (Moroccan Radio-diffusion and Television).[181] The total control of the Moroccan government on this sector marked the period from 1962 until 1980 when the first private Radio station Medi 1, a bilingual radio station (French and Arabic) of international news and entertainment, saw light. However, the state's total dominance over broadcasting remarkably decreased when the Moroccan parliament adopted the media reform law on the audio-visual communication on November 25, 2004, a law that played a very significant role in the liberalization process of the sector and that was behind the noticeable increase of radio stations in Morocco: from six radio stations in 2005 to seventeen in 2007).[182] Because it was both affordable and entertaining, the state relied a great deal on the radio in the 1960s, and its potential "as a national propaganda tool appeared obvious".[183] This important form of communications technologies, as Ibahrin notes, proved important within the Moroccan society until the creation of the second TV channel 2M.[184]

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[179] Zaid Bouziane, "Moroccan Media in a Democratic Transition," *Conference Papers-International Communication Association* (2009), p. 8.

[180] Ibid.

[181] Ibid.

[182] Ibid.

[183] Ibid.

[184] Mohammed Ibahrin, *The Internet and Politics in Morocco: The Political Use of the Internet by Islam Oriented Political Movements* (Berlin: VDM Verlag, 2007), p. 62.

Generally, the radio and the telegraph played very major roles in establishing modern societies regardless of the control the states had on them, but this was never able to affect the usefulness of print media, particularly newspapers and magazines. Print media accelerated the dissemination of information. Indeed, the print media industry owes a great deal to technology without which we would not have been able to print millions of newspapers, books, journals, magazines, and periodicals, and therefore have a daily tremendous amount of news easily spread among the public. As a preliminary definition of print media, Chandler and Munday state that it broadly refers to "any written or pictorial form of communication produced mechanically or electronically" and that it could narrowly be defined as "any form of 'ink and paper' communication that is not hand-written or hand-typed".[185] The print-based media industry has made it possible for print journalism to emerge as an alternative platform that contributes in the process of creating a public, a public that is brought into a synchronized conversation with itself. Here, print journalism refers to any "published writing on current news and current affairs that, along with photographs and advertising, make up the content of newspapers, magazines, and other 'paper and ink' periodicals and journals."[186] As a preliminary insight into the function of newspapers in particular, and journalism in general, it is important to point out that a newspaper's role is, as Randall stresses, to discover "fresh information" regarding issues of public interest and most importantly "to relay it as quickly and as accurately as possible to readers in an honest and balanced way.[187] In his very interesting *The Universal Journalist*, a book that celebrates as well as displays his love and passion for honest journalism, Randall contends that a newspaper, along with informing the public, "may do lots of other things, like telling them [readers] what it thinks about the latest movies, how to plant potatoes, what kind of day Taureans might have or why the government should resign."[188] In the absence of fresh information, Randall continues, the newspaper will be only a commentary on things already known; that is, "comment is not news, information is."[189]

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[185] Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication*, p. 337.
[186] Ibid.
[187] David Randall, *The Universal Journalist* (London: Pluto, 2007), p. 25.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Ibid.

Print media in the form of magazines play crucial roles in the democratic process, particularly when democracies are emerging or being formed. In this regard, a healthy print media landscape depends on the extent to which states attempt to regulate or control newspapers and magazines. As previously mentioned, print media culture, in its earliest forms, "incorporated a struggle between those who wanted to control the flow of public information and those who wanted to disseminate it, whether for political or commercial purposes."[190] Due to the inevitable interconnectedness of the condition of mass media in general and the political culture where they function, William Rugh argues that media systems, especially in the Middle East and North Africa, cannot be understood or analyzed without taking into consideration the specific political conditions prevailing the country.[191] Nevertheless, journalism in general, whether controlled or uncontrolled, has, as Siebert argues, "become a permanent social and political phenomenon."[192] There are certainly other complex factors that affect the content of newspapers and magazines, and their partisanship or persons owning them could determine their commercial and editorial policies. Equally important, advertising plays an important role in the growth of newspapers and magazines and to the importance they want to hold within the contexts where they function. Indeed, advertising is as old as the desire to the disseminate news through pamphlets. Here, Martin Conboy stresses that

> Advertising had started as a strategy by printers to use up empty space by placing announcements in their news books for other publications of theirs, from books to pamphlets. But the practice soon developed a lucrative momentum of its own, enough for the publishers to be able to canvass for external advertisements to boost their revenue. It would not be long before the interdependence of advertising and news became a characteristic

[190] Martin Conboy, "The Print Industry – Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow: An Overview," *Print Journalism: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Richard Keeble (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 4.

[191] William A. Rugh, *Arab Mass Media: Newspapers, Radio, and Television in Arab Politics* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), p. X.

[192] Fred Seaton Siebert, *Freedom of the Press in England 1476- 1776: The Rise and Fall of Government Control* (Urbana, Ill: Urbana University Press, 1965), p. 220.

> combination of print journalism with all the benefits and compromises this brought.[193]

These aforementioned factors spark academic and scholarly debates regarding newsworthiness, agenda-setting, and professionalism, especially with the partial decline of print journalism and with the rise of digital media in the Middle East and North Africa but also in Western settings.

There are other various features that have characterized print media, especially newspapers and magazines, since its appearance. One of the main features of print journalism has been its interest in entertainment while nevertheless disseminating news and information among the public. Too often, much ink has been shed on the historical development of print journalism as its primary political function, which is to inform the public. However, Conboy notices that the print media's secondary and complimentary function is to engage people with the broader lifestyle and entertainment requirements of the readership. This aspect of print journalism has not been adequately discussed.[194] Here, he clearly defines journalism, in both printed formats, as "the continuous recombination of novelty, information, opinion and entertainment."[195] This means that entertainment has always provided newspapers and magazines with very significant revenues, hence substantially contributing to their survival. Another key feature that has distinguished newspapers and magazines from books and that has granted them the susceptibility to survive and flourish is, as Sommerville put it, their 'periodicity' without which no journalism industry would have been able to develop.[196] In other words, the commercial imperative has always been the encouraging driving force behind innovation and creativity in print journalism, making it potentially profitable. Today, print journalism is widely criticized, especially by Marxists, for its betrayal of its political function, that is informing the public and raising awareness, and for its reproduction of the status quo, a key concept in media and cultural studies and which

[193] Martin Conboy, "The Print Industry – Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow: An Overview," p. 5.

[194] Ibid., p. 4.

[195] Ibid.

[196] John Sommerville, *The News Revolution in England: Cultural Dynamics of Daily Information* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 4.

refers to the existing social, economic, and political system or to the current power relations. From this very perspective, newspapers and magazines, along with the other forms of media culture may no longer be in the service of liberal values but they rather form an arena in which a multiplicity of ideological battles may be contested, but in which the hegemonic capitalist class has the ultimate control. Following this perspective, any space given to entertainment in newspapers and magazines is not necessarily always seen as a harbinger of financial revenues but rather as a means through which the de-politicization of the masses and the trivialization of news content could be accomplished and maintained. Still, it also remains legitimate to argue that the remarkable shift from print to broadcast media, especially with the arrival of TV sets in 19th century and also with the contemporary internet culture, has undoubtedly bought about the decline of print media industry. Due to these complex interrelated influences between print media, society, politics, and innovation, one could hardly give just one or two reasons to explain this decline. This is the reason why it is not easy to claim if newspapers and magazines are now coping with declining sales by 'dumbing down', trivializing, or simply by responding to changes in society and in people's interests.

Newspapers, like various other form of media culture, are nowadays accused of having dramatically abandoned their hard news rationale, placing more emphasis on entertainment and sensationalism, due to the pressures of the market. Accordingly, newspapers aim today at maximizing drops in circulation without considering the ethical standards recognized worldwide. In this sense, it is note arguing that newspapers first appeared to critically tackle the serious socio-economic and political issues of society and to be the mirror of society. History archives the important roles newspapers played in various cultural settings, especially in the promotion of justice and liberation. Newspapers were a very useful platform for minorities who boldly struggled to voice themselves and design their agency. For example, in the 19th century black-American press emerged, and the *Freedom's Journal* saw light for the first time exactly in 1827.[197] Ronald Jacobs points out the reasons behind the emergence of such newspapers, arguing that the "historical need for a strong black press was threefold: (1) to provide a

[197] Ronald N. Jacobs, "Media Culture (s) and Public Life," in *The Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Culture*, eds. Mark Jacobs and Nancy Weiss (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006), p. 88.

forum for debate and self-improvement, (2) to monitor the mainstream press, and (3) to increase black visibility in white society."[198] These voices were not given any space at that time to be publicized in the mainstream press. In fact, a space of self-representation was secured thanks to the establishment of an independent black press which "was designed to encourage continuous discussion about matters of common concern, […], and to correct the prejudices and misrepresentations" against the African-Americans in general.[199] This black press, as Jacobs believes, paved the way to different kinds of discussions, for the inclusion of new participants and narratives of heroic black characters or leaders.[200] This example is meant to show how newspapers basically emerged to be the voice of the people as well as to critically discuss the most societal matters. It shows how influential the American print media were in the formation of identities. White it is true that a huge number of journalists and reporters who are betraying the universal ethical standards and values of journalism, such as honesty, fairness, and accuracy, a very important number of others are not only proving their moral commitment to these standards but also endeavoring to bring about more progressive social changes within the settings they work. Keeble, asking us to look at Index on Censorship for reports on journalists around the world oppressed for speaking out, argues in this regards that

> For me, they are thousands all around the world (and across the ages) who display a profound commitment for progressive social change, working in many small ways (often for appalling salaries and in the face of serious dangers) to improve media standards against pressures from proprietors, advertisers, politicians and, in many countries, gangsters and the military.[201]

[198] Ibid., p. 88.
[199] Ibid.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Richard Keeble, "Is Virtuous Journalism Possible? A Critical Overview of Ethical Dilemmas," in *Print Journalism: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Richard Keeble (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 275.

Despite the fact that television has, as Gross stresses, become a significant "source of information about the world" and a very central agent of enculturation[202], print media have always occupied a very special place in each country's media climate because of their power to take part in shaping contemporary culture. However, any discussion of the power of media, including the print ones, could be highlighted from a totally different perspective once the concept of 'power' here is approached from a Foucauldian or a Gramscian sense. Following the Foucauldian sense, print media, instead of being the harbinger of socio-cultural, economic and political changes within the contexts where it is functioning, becomes bounds to the constraints of social dominance. Here, power, as Foucault explains, is inherently associated with the production of knowledge in a symbiotic relationship. In this very sense, power is exercised through visibility which, as Foucault argues, "is a trap".[203] Following Foucault, power represents "a ubiquitous feature of institutionalized discourses which both constitute and control subjects (rather than something possessed by groups or individuals)."[204] While many may argue that media visibility empowers certain groups or identities, Foucault stresses that it is visibility that enables those in power to maintain their marginalization of certain social groups. This very idea confirms Hall's argument regarding the model of communication. For him, media texts are produced by those in power, or by the hegemons to put it in Gramsci's terms. Accordingly, print media industry produces biased and ideological messages that necessarily meets the needs of the hegemonic power rather than those of ordinary people. *The Dictionary of Media and Communication Studies* defines 'ideology' as "a system of ideas and beliefs about human conduct which has normally been simplified and manipulated in order to obtain popular support for certain actions, and which is usually emotive in its reference to social action."[205] Here, Hall discusses the rule of a common language that guide the interactions between three important aspects, namely the modes of production,

[202] Larry Gross, *Up From Invisibility: Lesbians, Gay Men, and the Media in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p. 6.

[203] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), p. 200.

[204] Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication*, p. 332.

[205] James Watson and Ann Hill, *Dictionary of Media and Communication Studies* (London: Arnold, 2000), p. 144.

circulation, and distribution or consumption.[206] Media messages, Hall contends, will not be understood or "consumed" if they do not comply with these guidelines.[207] Hence, media messages are, according to Hall, produced through the social actions of the dominant class, thus playing a key role in the reproduction of the dominant "language" or code.[208] "Preferred readings", as Hall puts it, are embedded within the dominant code, and they are imprinted with politically ideological and institutional orders.[209] As Gans asserts, journalists usually express the political ideology.[210] This very complex situation of the media does, according to Adorno, "impedes the development of autonomous, independent individuals who judge and decide consciously for themselves".[211] The role of agency in media reception primarily depends on the social actor's ability to negotiate, or decode as Hall says, the forms of media and to select their content that should be accepted and the one that should be rejected or sent back to its receiver.

While it is true that the Marxist theory proves useful in any critical analysis of the mainstream media texts, one should not disregard the importance alternative media, or independent platforms, play nowadays. Being supported by the technological development, new public spheres have emerged. The internet, which started getting diffused throughout the Middle East and North Africa by the 1990s, has remarkably led to changes in media coverage of political affairs. The result of the internet boom has been speeded decline of the state-controlled mainstream media that are nowadays no more than player on the block. As it provides a major forum for marginalized voices and for the visibility of subaltern groups and movements, the online journalism, as Dahlgren contends, has enabled a "plurality of alternative public spheres" to see light.[212] In fact, the MENA region has particularly been characterized by the

[206] Stuart Hall, Culture, the Media and the "Ideological Effect," in *Mass Communication and Society*, eds. J. Curran, M. Gurevitch, and J. Woollacott (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), p. 128.

[207] Ibid.

[208] Ibid.

[209] Ibid., p. 134.

[210] Herbert J. Gans, *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS, Evening News, NBC Nightly News, News Week, and Time* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), p. 80.

[211] Theodore Adorno, "Culture Industry Reconsidered," in *Media Studies: A Reader*, eds. P. Marris and S. Thornham (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 1997), p. 29.

[212] Peter Dahlgren, "Introduction," in *Communication and the Public Sphere in the Media Age*, eds. Peter Dahlgren and Colin Sparks (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 14.

predomination of authoritarian regimes and the control of the traditional broadcast media that devote a large space to the coverage of the political leaders' decisions and actions, thus suffering from both the state censorship and the self-censorship exerted by editors and publishers alike.[213] As mentioned earlier, the Marxist theory has provided very useful analytical tools to understand the mechanisms used in the production of news or of media texts in general; nevertheless, the New Information and Communication Technologies, facilitated by the internet, have, according to McNair, helped oppositional groups in different settings, especially in the Arab world where authoritarianism prevails, sever totalitarian political cultures, thus pushing forward the emergence of different Arab public spheres.[214] In fact, oppositional media texts had appeared even before the arrival of internet. Notwithstanding the very strict censorship legal regulations, the Arab elite, through a "migrating Arab press" as Miladi argues, has since the 1980s succeeded in giving birth to an Arab transnational public sphere.[215] As mainstream media outlets started waning after the internet boom, various dictatorial regimes have reconsidered their decisions and regulations that constrain some critical newspapers or magazines as long as the latter could be read online. This "defeudalization" of the public sphere, as Habermas put it, has allowed citizens to become key participants in the democratic process of their countries instead of remaining spectators of powers.[216]

2. Towards a Working Definition of News

This very complex interrelated relationship between media texts and hegemony and resistance shows the power of news and its ability to influence both the state and society. It is simply defined by Niblock as a "record of the latest events, incidents and

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[213] Edmund Ghareeb, "New Media and the Information Revolution in the Arab World: An Assessment," *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 54, N. 3 (2000), p. 397. Muhammad Ayish, "Political Communication on Arab World Television: Evolving Patterns," *Political Communication*, Vol. 19, Iss. 2 (2002), pp. 137-154. See also Hussein Amin, "Freedom as a Value in Arab Media: Perceptions and Attitudes Among Journalists," *Political Communication*, Vol. 19, N. 2 (2002), pp. 125-135.

[214] Brian McNair, *Cultural Chaos: Journalism, News, and Power in a Globalized World* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 162.

[215] Noureddine Miladi, "Mapping the Al-Jazeera Phenomenon," in *War and the Media*, eds. D.K. Thussu and D. Freedman (London, Thousand Oaks, and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2003), p. 153.

[216] Brian McNair, *Cultural Chaos: Journalism, News, and Power in a Globalized World,* p. 67.

developments that in some way touch on the lives of a newspaper's or magazine's readers."[217] Indeed, all definitions remain very complex and inadequate because of lack of consensus among researchers and scholars on the meaning of the word 'news'. Lipmann briefly defines it as a social product of journalistic routines[218] while Gieber suggests that news is "what newspaper men make it."[219] Gieber's definition is quite similar to the one proposed by Cohen and Young who argue that news is "manufactured by journalists".[220] In fact, the meaning of 'news' could differ from one researcher to another, depending also on his/her cultural background. Western researchers define news as a product to sell[221]; whereas, Eastern scholars cannot provide a definition of 'news' without associating it with the socio-cultural and political development.[222] Yet, news, which is expected to be referential and informational as Chandler and Munday note, is supposed be "reported accurately and without bias."[223] Bias news could be easily detected during the coverage of the elections or when newspapers and magazines adopt a nationalistic stance during moments of wars and international conflicts. Here, Chandler and Munday state that news "'manufactures' particular versions of reality rather than being a 'window on the world'."[224] As Kovach and Rosenstiel interestingly put it, 'journalism's first obligation is to the truth'.[225] Giving more prominence, more space, and more time to particular news items is "related to inherent newsworthiness"

[217] Sarah Niblock, "Practice and Theory: What is News?," in *Print Journalism: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Richard Keeble, p. 75.

[218] See Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion* (Macmillan: New York, 1922).

[219] Walter Gieber, "News is What Newspapermen Make it," in *People, Society and Mass Communication*, eds. L.A. Dexter and D.M. White (London: Collien-Macmillan, 1964), p. 218.

[220] Stanley Cohen and Jock Young, *The Manufacture of News* (London: Constable, 1973), p. 97.

[221] John L. Martin and Anju Grover Chaudhary, "Goals and Roles of Media Systems," in *Comparative Media Systems*, eds. John L. Martin and Anju Grover Chaudhary (Broad Way and New York: Longman, 1983), p. 3. & Munir Karim Nasser, "News Values Versus Ideology: A Third World Perspective," in *Comparative Media Systems*, eds. John L. Martin and Anju Grover Chaudhary (Broad Way and New York: Longman, 1983), p. 34. & Lawrence Grossberg, *Media Making: Mass Media in Popular Cultures* (Thousand Oakes: London and New Delhi: Sage, 1998), p. 14. & Micheal Schudson, *The Power of News* (Cambridge, Massachussetts, and London: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 29

[222] Soulayman Saleh, *Snaat AlAkhbar fi Alaalm AlArabi AlMuaser* (*News Production in the Recent Arab World*), (in Arabic), (Egypt: University Publication House, 1998), p. 19.

[224] Ibid.

[225] Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel, *The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect* (London: Guardian Books, 2001), p. 36.

and determined by news values.[226] In fact, there is another word that is quite essential in any discussion of news and its production, which is 'story'. Not all stories are newsworthy, the reason why Knightley strongly argues that "the most elementary qualification of a good reporter: the ability to recognize what is news."[227] In this respect, the journalist is thus a story-teller who is expected to re-present the facts and prioritize what Niblock calls "the most recent and attention-grabbing elements".[228] This means that news are filtered and always in 'a gate-keeping process'. The mainstream news generally tends to favor the status quo, leading to the creation of the consensus knowledge. Some news could be regarded as "hard news" by some newspapers and magazines while others may find them "soft news". This particularly depends on the news values that are "the informal journalistic criteria adopted in the editorial selection, prioritization, and presentation of events" and that are "the implicit principles underlying the assessment of newsworthiness."[229] However, a tabloid may apply much greater weight to a celebrities and crimes than a broadsheet due to the extrinsic values adopted by each newspaper.[230] Although the journalistic standards and news values that journalists and reporters, be affiliated with independent or private businesses, choose to comply with and adopt, they "are united by their keen sense of what makes news and what their editor-in-chief is looking for."[231] In our contemporary time, millions of news and stories are being published and printed, but one could easily claim that the number of news that are well grounded, factual and informational remain comparatively rare. Because of this, the reader is necessarily expected to be equipped with the media literacy tools whereby he or she can grasp the context in which news are selected. Here, Bell asserts that we need to be perfectly aware of the context in which news and stories are selected in order that we can adequately understand the production and branding processes that help determine the overall feel of the magazine or newspaper.[232]

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[226] Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication*, p. 294.

[227] Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth Maker from the Crimea to Kosovo* (London: Prion Books, 2000), p. 38.

[228] Sarah Niblock, "Practice and Theory: What is News?," p. 75.

[229] Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication*, p. 295.

[230] Sarah Niblock, "Practice and Theory: What is News?," p. 75.

[231] Ibid.

[232] See Allan Bell, *The Language of News Media* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

Hence, does media news reflect reality? This question is very important that it makes it necessary to discuss briefly five major media approaches that could be applied to analyze news in particular and media content in general. The first is the 'mirror approach' which assumes that the news and messages produced and disseminated by mass media provide audiences with accurate reflections of their social reality. In this sense, media platforms are 'neutral' and they represent the world without distorting reality. Indeed, this approach has been fiercely criticized and rejected by several theorists and researchers like Lippmann, Fishman, and Watson and Hill, to mention but a few, who strongly believe that news is not neutral but rather selected and produced in news organizations.[233] As a critical response to this 'mirror approach', Shoemaker and Reese argue that

> The mass media do not simply mirror the world around them. If you were an eyewitness to an event and you then read or viewed a story about it in the news media, any similarity between what you saw and the news media reported would hardly be the result of a simple process. Mass media content—both news and entertainment—is shaped, pounded, constrained, encouraged by multitude of forces. Sometimes the reality presented by the media matches the world as you know it, and sometimes it is very different. Sometimes two media present similar versions of the same event, and sometimes the result is very different.[234]

In fact, news should not be taken for granted because it does not necessarily reflect the social reality without distorting it, and this dissertation will not depend on the "mirror approach" in the analysis of Moroccan newspapers coverage of a variety of issues

[233] Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion*. & Mark Fishman, *Manufacturing the News* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1980). & See also James Watson and Ann Hill, *Dictionary of Media and Communication Studies*.

[234] Pamela J. Shoemaker and Stephen Reese, *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content* (London: Longman, 1996), p. ix.

related to religion, sexuality and politics. The second approach is the "communicator-centered approach" which is applied to examine the journalists' personal political attitudes, the professional ethics they comply with, and, most importantly, the sort of professional trainings they have received. The third approach is the "media routines approach". This approach sheds light on the journalists' daily routines within the organizations they are affiliated with and assumes that these routines have a significant influence on the media content. The fourth important approach is the "extra-media approach" which assumes that the socio-economic and political institutions, the prevailing cultural forces, and the audiences outside the organization influence the media content and its production. The fifth approach, which could be associated with the previous discussion about the Marxist media theory, is the "hegemony approach". This approach assumes that the ideology of those in power influences media content. The latter, following this approach, depends a great deal on the economic and political systems that control media industry in society.

The five aforementioned approaches, regardless of their differences, all assume that the production of news is not as simple as it seems to be, but it is influenced by very complex determinants. Following the "propaganda model", a model first introduced by Herman and Chomsky and that is meant to understand media in capitalist Western settings, assumes that media products are propaganda tools for the interests of the elites that hold power in the liberal democratic countries.[235] The term 'propaganda', which is of Latin origin and which was first used by the Catholic church with the aim to denominate its mission, means "spreading, extending, or propagating with the help of the laity."[236] Nevertheless, the term, as Wilke notes, lost its ecclesiastic meaning in favor of a political one during the French Revolution.[237] Since then, the term "stood for the proclamation of an ideological expansion program hitherto unknown."[238] Lasswell,

[235] See Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (London: Vintage, 1994). & Edward Herman, "The Propaganda Model: A Retrospective," *Journalism Studies*, Vol. 1, N. 1 (2000), pp. 101-112. & See also Noam Chomsky, *Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1997). & Noam Chomsky, *Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies* (London: Pluto Press, 1989).

[236] Jürgen Wilke, "Propaganda," in *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*, ed. Wolfgang Donsbach (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), Vol. 7, p. 3915.

[237] Ibid.

[238] Ibid.

whose *Propaganda Technique in the World War* marked the beginning of scientific inquiry about propaganda, defines it as "the management of collective attitudes by the manipulation of significant symbols"[239] while Bernays, the fathers of public relations, argues that "modern propaganda is a consistent, enduring effort to create or shape events to influence the relations of the public to the enterprise, idea or group".[240] For Lasswell, propaganda played four major roles during World War, the first of which was to mobilize hatred against the enemy. The second role was to maintain the friendship of allies, and the third major role it played was to safeguard the friendship and the co-operation of the neutrals. The fourth major role that propaganda played during World War was to demoralize the enemy.[241] Indeed, the post-World War period was characterized by a shortage of scientific studies on propaganda, and it is, according to Wilke, mass media that regained scholarly attention to it, reviving the interest in the historical propaganda research.[242] In their interesting *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media,* a book means to problematize mass media in association with propaganda, Herman and Chomsky state that

> A propaganda model focuses on this inequality of wealth and power and its multilevel effects on mass-media interests and choices. It traces the routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public.[243]

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[239] Harold D. Lasswell, "The Theory of Political Propaganda," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 21 (1927), p. 627.

[240] Edward L. Bernays, *Propaganda* (New York: Horace Liverigh, 1928), p. 25.

[241] Harold D. Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (London: Kegan Paul, 1927), p. 195.

[242] Jürgen Wilke, "Propaganda," in *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*, ed. Wolfgang Donsbach, p. 3918.

[243] Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, p. 2.

Following Herman's and Chomsky's propaganda model, there are five major elements or, as they call it, 'news filters' that "interact with and reinforce one another […] leaving only the cleansed residue fit to print."[244] These five 'news filters' are

> (1) The size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation of the dominant mass-media firms; (2) advertising as the primary income source of the mass media; (3) the reliance of the media on information provided by the government, business, and "experts" funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power; (4) "flak" as a means of disciplining the media; and (5) "anticommunism" as a national religion and control mechanism.[245]

If Herman and Chomsky are dissatisfied with mass media and their news production with liberal and democratic Western settings, it means that the case in the Middle East and North Africa, a region whose nations are still demanding a liberal climate as well as political institutions functioning within a meaningful framework of checks and balances, would certainly be worse and worse. There are actually many researchers who have criticized Herman's and Chomsky's 'propaganda model'. Golding and Murdock contend that despite the fact that the dominant elites, represented by governments, businessmen, and advertisers, enjoy a 'privileged access' to mass media or have the chance to get their messages conveyed through some powerful news organizations, the media does not necessarily always do what fully meet their expectations.[246] Schlesinger also criticized this model, arguing that it is "a highly deterministic vision of how the media operate coupled with a straightforward functionalist conception of ideology."[247]

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[244] Ibid.

[245] Ibid.

[246] See Peter Golding and Graham Murdock, "Culture, Communication and Political Economy," in *Mass Media and Society* (Second Edition), eds. James Curran and Micheal Gurevitch (London and New York: St. Martin's P1996), pp. 11-30.

[247] Phillip Schlesinger, "From Production to Propaganda," *Media, Culture and Society*, 11, N. 3 (1989), p. 297.

This discussion of the 'propaganda model' clearly shows how the political economy approach views the economic power as a decisive and central element having a profound influence on media within Western capitalist settings. In fact, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to bring about a split between media and the politicians who tend to control the economic and political landscape in their countries. As Hamada describes, the relationship between news workers and politicians is 'pivotal' in the sense that the former depend on the latter as their main sources of news stories while the latter count on the former to disseminate their policies, blueprints, and ideas.[248] Although he is known as the father of public relations, Bernays paradoxically supports certain kinds of propaganda and calls for the 'engineering of consent', which seems to be a spin from Lippman's term 'the manufacture of consent', in the belief that 'good propaganda' could ameliorate people socio-economically.[249] According to Bernays, 'engineering consent' of the masses could play a very vital role in the protection and survival of democracy.[250] Here, he states that

> The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of.[251]

In fact, there are two major shortcomings of the 'propaganda model', a model that is generally quite similar to the Marxist media theory. The first shortcoming is that it also highlights the influence political elites have on media and the processes of news

[248] Basyouni Ibrahim Hamada, *Dor Wsael AlEtsal fi Sn'a Al-Qrarat fi Al-Watan Al-Arabi (The Role of Mass Communications in Making Decisions in the Arab Nation)*, (In Arabic), (Beirut: Mrkz AlWhda Al-Arabia, 1993), p. 69.

[249] See Edward L. Bernays, *Propaganda* (New York: Liveright, 1928).

[250] Ibid., p. 11.

[251] Ibid., p.9.

production in Western capitalist settings without taking into consideration the resistant media platforms that have always been militant. The second shortcoming of Herman's and Chomsky's 'propaganda model' could be their focus on democratic and liberal settings in the analysis without attempting to see how this model could be applicable in Middle Eastern and North African countries where democracy is still far off despite the 2011 uprisings that called for freedoms, liberation, and democratic institutions. My argument is that the 'propaganda model' is also very relevant in the understanding and analysis of any Arab country's media landscape due to the fact media systems, which are still under the control of their governments, extensively use the propaganda model.

It is also believed that the medium itself is much more important and powerful than the news/content or the medium it delivers. This is the argument of McLuhan[252] who argues that the preprocessed information is, in unique ways, always transformed by each different medium. McLuhan's famous statement "the Medium is the Message" assumes that the manner in which the news/information is communicated is what profoundly affects the audience receiving the information and not the information itself.[253] Giving more importance to the context at the expense of the content itself, McLuhan asserts that each new medium that is transforming the information is actually more important and striking than the information itself. That is, each new medium, despite the information it mediates, has its own intrinsic effects which are its unique message.[254] When proposing that the content of each new medium is another, older medium, McLuhan points out that "the content of writing is speech, just as the written word is the content of print, and print is the content of the telegraph".[255] Thus, the medium through which the message is conveyed, creating a symbiotic relationship, shapes the receiver's perceptions of the message. This idea could explain McLuhan's career that was occupied by the task of understanding effects of technology when is related to popular culture. In his famous 1969 interview with *Playboy Magazine,* McLuhan explains that

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[252] Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980) is a Canadian literary critic and media theorist. His famous phrase "the medium is the message" asserted that form/properties of any given communication technology determine their impact on society, not their content (i.e. message).

[253] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: The MIT Press, 1994), p. 23.

[254] Ibid.

[255] Ibid., p. 23-4.

> by stressing that the medium is the message rather than the content, I'm not suggesting that content plays no role—merely that it plays a distinctly subordinate role. Even if Hitler had delivered botany lectures, some other demagogue would have used the radio to retribalize the Germans and rekindle the dark atavistic side of the tribal nature that created European fascism in the Twenties and Thirties. […] But most people, from truck drivers to the literary Brahmins, are still blissfully ignorant of what the media do to them; unaware that because of their pervasive effects on man, it is the medium itself that is the message, not the content, and unaware that the medium is also the message—that, all puns aside, it literally works over and saturates and molds and transforms every sense ratio.[256]

The major idea of McLuhan is that societies have always been shaped by the nature the characteristics of the medium by which people communicate and not by the content the medium delivers. For him, the content, which is consumed by society, is directly related to and defined by various media platforms.[257] Regarding technology as an extension of the human nervous system, McLuhan stresses that technological changes help create new environments of sense and feeling that gradually change patterns of perception. Hence, the medium, following McLuhan's theory, is any extension of our minds, bodies, or being even if it may often be a new technology. Though it is quite important in the understanding of the extensions of man and the power of the medium, McLuhan's theory of the medium could be criticized of numbing man's capacity to recognize the message as a powerful, but always separate, entity. But generally, his theory could still be quite important in the analysis of our contemporary media technology development. With the advent of the internet, especially with social media like Facebook and Twitter, the gathering of information along with the unprecedented proximity between far-reaching communities are the main characteristics of our era. Not only is the medium

[256] The whole interview is available at https://www.nextnature.net/2009/12/the-playboy-interview-marshall-mcluhan/. Accessed on January 11, 2017.

[257] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man,* p. 23.

beginning to dominate information exchange, but it "has also spawned reliance on virtual forms for social interaction."[258]

Before thoroughly discussing the theory of the public sphere, it is note pointing out that news organizations, especially print newspapers and magazines, are, along with political economy and social organization, influenced also with the culture of the setting within which they function. Following Schudson, the cultural approach plays an essential role in the understanding of the relationship between news organizations and the 'cultural air' of the society within which they function, and the dominant 'cultural air' is what tell media what should and what should not be published.[259] This approach been used in several studies in order to find out how culture influences the journalistic practices.[260] In this particular context, culture could be briefly defined as sets of values, traditions, rituals, and customs that people identify themselves and their way of life. Following the cultural media approach, news is, accordingly, a cultural product produced by journalists who either believe in particular cultural values or just comply with them. Highlighting the importance of the cultural approach, Peterson argues that the cultural background of reporters and journalists plays a key role in the selection and gathering of news.[261] Ettema, Whitney, and Wackman, along with discussing the organizational routines and economic determinants that affect the production of news, argues that despite the fact that news production is the job of individuals such as journalists and correspondents, journalism remains a work practiced by a group of individual who share one similar culture, which explains why they similarly interpret

[258] Caren August and James H. Liu, "The Medium Shapes the Message: McLuhan and Grice Revisited in Race Talk Online," *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 25, N.3 (May 2015), p. 233.

[259] Micheal Schudson, "The Sociology of News Production," *Media, Culture and Sociology*, Vol. 11 (1989), p. 278.

[260] As examples of these studies, see Sophia Peterson, "Foreign News Gatekeepers and Criteria of News Worthiness," *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 56: N. 1 (1979), pp. 116-125. See also James Ettema, Charles Whitney, and Daniel Wackman, "Professional Mass Communicators," *Social Meanings of News: A Text Reader*, ed. Dan Berkowitz (Thousand Oaks: London, and New Delhi: Sage), pp. 31-50. See also Halimahton Shaari, *Influences on Ethics in News Production: The Socio-Cultural and Political Influences on the Mass Media in Malaysia*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, (Leicester: University of Leicester, 1997).

[261] Sophia Peterson, Foreign News Gatekeepers and Criteria of News Worthiness, pp. 118-119.

events.[262] This makes it very necessary to study the cultural background of journalists as well as the cultural air of the country where they work in order to examine and analyze the latter's effects on media news produced. This idea will be quite useful in the analysis of Moroccan newspapers as it will make it easier to see the influence of Moroccan culture, a culture which is generally conservative, and the journalists' cultural background (e.g. religious, secular, leftist, nationalistic…) on the news they produce.

3. Print Media and the Formation of Public Opinion: Agenda-Setting, Priming and Framing

'Public opinion' is among the oldest terms, the most difficult ones to define, and one of the most controversial terms that is still inspiring and perplexing scholars from social sciences and communication studies.[263] "Public opinion", as an English term, dates back to the 17th century when John Locke introduced it in his famous An *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. The term, derived from the French word *l'opinion*, was first used by Michel de Montaigne in 1588, and "*l'opinion publique*" was generally essential in European thinking during enlightenment, a historical context that was marked by the shift of political power and decision-making away from the authoritarian Monarchy toward the citizenry.[264] Glynn and Huge defined it as "a general measure of the directionality and strength of issue-specific views and sentiments held by a relevant group."[265] Chundler and Munday attempt to suggest a brief definition of the term 'public opinion' regarding it as the "views about issues or events of social concern that are expressed openly at a particular time by a significant percentage of the population, as distinct from the private opinions of individuals or those expresses within small circles."[266] After the advent of 'opinion polls', Chundler and Munday continue, the term may also refer to the results of surveys.[267] While it is believed to be an aggregation of

[262] James Ettema, Charles Whitney, and Daniel Wackman, "Professional Mass Communicators," *Social Meanings of News: A Text Reader*, ed. Dan Berkowitz (Thousand Oaks: London, and New Delhi: Sage), p. 27.

[263] Carroll J. Glynn and Micheal E. Huge, "Public Opinion," p. 3971.

[264] Ibid.

[265] Ibid.

[266] Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication*, p. 344.

[267] Ibid.

survey responses by some, others considers the public opinion as a socially constructed force that developed through interpersonal conversations and the extensive use of media.[268] Blumer does not accept to consider polling and surveys as effective means of measuring public opinion. According to him, the role of public opinion is its power to represent the voice and views of a significant number of citizens and, accordingly, to influence those in positions of power and accountability.[269] Still, there is no consensus neither on the meaning of the term 'public opinion' nor on role it plays in the consolidation of democracy. While many believe that public homogenizes society and people's viewpoints, Neumann, in her endeavor to unveil the manifest and latent functions of public opinion, asserts that public opinion is rather a form of social control in which some individuals, through shaping their behaviors to dominant attitudes, manage to determine what is acceptable and what is not.[270] This could possibly cause an absence of social cohesion, especially when majority opinions are more likely to be overrepresented while the minority opinions could remain utterly underrepresented and isolated.

Generally, news organizations play a very major role in the dissemination and filtering of views, the reason why it is a commonly recognized that they "are central in generating a consensus."[271] Because mass media widely distribute information, they are more able to shape public opinion than anything else within society. Mass media's enormous power to influence society and public opinion explains why the majority of educators, politicians, philosophers, and researchers have recognized the vital role they play in informing the public and educate them on important issues.[272] However, filtering views with the aim to generate a consensus within society tends to homogenize media content.[273] Indeed, media, mainly newspapers and television, have clearly played

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[268] Carroll J. Glynn and Micheal E. Huge, "Public Opinion," in *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*, ed. Wolfgang Donsbach, p. 3972.

[269] See Herbet Blumer, "Public Opinion and Public Opinion Polling," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 13 (1948), pp. 542-549.

[270] See Elisabeth Noelle Neumann, *The Spiral of Silence* (Chicago University Press, 1993).

[271] Carroll J. Glynn and Micheal E. Huge, "Public Opinion," in *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*, ed. Wolfgang Donsbach, p. 3972.

[272] Dell P. Champlin and Janet T. Knoaedler, "American Prosperity and the "Race to the Bottom": Why Won't the Media Ask Right Questions?," *Journal of Economic Issues*, Vol. 42, N. 1 (2008), p. 133.

[273] Carroll J. Glynn and Micheal E. Huge, "Public Opinion," in *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*, ed. Wolfgang Donsbach, p. 3972.

a fundamental role in disseminating new ideas, thus largely succeeding in having the power to superimpose a kind of "public opinion" upon citizens. It is eventually the power of the news media that sets a nation's agenda and directs the public attentions to particular issues. In this respect, news media not only provide information, but also determine the daily news that require more emphasis, the ones that require less emphasis, and the ones that should be disregarded; that is "the news media can set the agenda for the public's attention to that small group of issues around which public opinion forms."[274] Lippmann, in his classic *Public Opinion*, stresses that news media are a fundamental source of the pictures in our heads about the world of public affairs, a world that for the majority of citizens is "out of reach, out of sight, out of mind."[275] McCombs briefly explains this news media influence on the agenda they arguing that

> What we know about the world is largely based on what the media decide to tell us. More specifically, the result of this mediated view of the world is that the majorities of the media strongly influence the priorities of the public. Elements prominent on the media agenda become prominent in the public mind. […] The media agenda presented to the public results from countless day-to-day decisions by many different journalists and their supervisors about the news of the moment.[276]

In fact, mass media, like newspapers and magazines, are also used by political actors to transmit political information to the public. This explains the reason why mass media usually devote their coverage to particular issues, leading to higher levels of public knowledge about them. However, in democratic settings mass media are also able to shape the government's policies. In developing countries where political regimes do not function within a meaning framework of checks and balances, media is used to

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[274] Maxwell McCombs, "The Agenda-Setting Role of the Mass Media in the Shaping of Public Opinion," file:///Users/hamzatayebi/Desktop/The_Agenda-Setting_Role_of_the_Mass_Media_in_the_S.pdf. Accessed on January 2, 2017.

[275] Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, p. 29.

[276] Maxwell McCombs, "The Agenda-Setting Role of the Mass Media in the Shaping of Public Opinion," p. 2.

construct and control public opinion. Because of this function, media could play a powerful role in agenda-setting as well as in how to frame stories. Media outlets emphasize some events, lightly cover others or never mention them. Here, our worldviews are usually what media platforms decide to tell us about. Therefore, media's priorities often succeed in becoming the public's ones. They are sources of information, and their analytical perspectives shape people's daily choices, the way they think, and how they perceive things. Usually does the role of news organizations in forming the public opinion become abundantly clear during elections. Electoral candidates whose images and blueprints are promoted and heavily covered by news organizations manage to win elections. Media, particularly news organizations, provide audiences with ideas, thus constructing meanings of the world around them. This power of news, as Mellor clarifies while echoing Edward Said, could be defined as knowledge and "since knowledge is power, then news is power".[277]

The major role media play in communicating with the public what is taking place in the world baffles any description, which seems to be good while it is not always the case. In fact, audiences, when they are not equipped with the required critical skills to understand and analyze what is occurring, they become entirely reliant upon the media to inform them.[278] Not only do media platforms tell us what to think, but are also "key to the setting of agendas and focusing the public interest on particular subjects, which operates to limit the range of arguments and perspectives that inform the public debate."[279] Constructing a public belief and attitudes, news organizations, both print and digital, take part in both encouraging, or discouraging, people to call for social changes. While some media platforms lead to attitudinal shifts for the promotion of liberal and democratic values, others may also bring about the circulation of illiberal, undemocratic, or even extremist values within the setting they function. Hence, mass media, as Happer and Philo stress, make some sense of the world for audiences, promoting particular knowledges over others.[280] Nevertheless, media, whether partisan

[277] Noha Mellor, *The Making of Arab News* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), p. 81.

[278] Catherine Happer and Greg Philo, "The Role of the Media in the Construction of Public Belief and Social Change," *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, Vol. 1, N. 1 (2013), p. 321.

[279] Ibid.

[280] Ibid., 322.

or independent, do not influence without being already influenced themselves. According to Happer and Philo, "a number of privileged groups contribute to the production of media accounts, including social and political institutions and other interest groups such as lobbyists and the public relations industry."[281] These various powerful groups, Happer and Philo add, intersect in order to determine the issues that should be open for discussion and the ones to be uncovered. This eventually severely limits the scope of the information that is supposed to be accessible.[282] Even though media organizations may decide to cover certain issues instead of removing them from their coverage, they do so in the manner that carry out their policies. Here, they conclude that

> The information that people are given in media accounts can both legitimize the actions of the powerful, and facilitate change at the collective level, but can also limit and shape the behaviors of individuals which are central to the wider social change. […] The media are in essence a contested space in which the most powerful groups can establish the dominance of specific messages.[283]

This situation affects transparency and accountability in various settings, including the democratic ones, but the case seems dramatically worse in countries where democracy is still absent or in its embryonic stage. However, the audience remains quite important regardless of the fact that the media are a contested space in which the powerful groups can establish and maintain their dominance. The importance of the audience lies in the reception process which "creates the possibility of variations in attitudinal and behavioral response."[284]

[281] Ibid.
[282] Ibid.
[283] Ibid., p. 333.
[284] Ibid.

Today, the consensus among researchers is that media, possessing an almost sinister power, manage to have an influence over the public through setting the agenda, priming the audience, and framing issues. First, agenda-setting theory "stresses the ability of the media to influence the significance of events in the public's mind."[285] Here, not only does the audience get informed about public issues through media outlets, but they also learn the degree of importance to attach to these issues from the emphasis laid on them. In their *Dictionary of Media and Communication*, Chandler and Munday define 'agenda setting' as

> A situation where critics perceive inexplicit political motives (or an institutional tendency to overlook underprivileged perspectives) to lie behind the choice of topics covered (e.g. in news, current affairs, and documentaries), their relative importance (inferred from sequence and/ or the relative amounts of space or time devoted to them), how they are presented, and what issues are backgrounded or excluded.[286]

Following Nwabueze, "agenda-setting theory posits that by frequently covering and giving prominence to issues in the media, the audience attaches importance to those issues more than others. By so doing, the mass media set agenda for public discussion."[287] The agenda-setting role of the media asserts that news organizations not only inform the public, but also tell them the issues that are important and issues that are not worth attention. Cohen contends that the press "may not be successful in telling its readers what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to

[285] Chilenye Nwabueze, Nnaemeka, Umeora, and Okika, "Nigerian Newspapers' Coverage of Climate Change Issues," *European Scientific Journal*, Vol. 11, N. 17 (June 2015), p. 174..

[286] Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication*, pp. 10-11.

[287] James C. Nwabueze, "Re-appraising the Vulture Reporting Hypothesis: A Study of Mass Media Coverage of Okija Shrine Crises in Anambra State," *The Nigerian Journal of Communication*, Vol. 4, N. 1 (2006), p. 176.

think about."[288] Similarly, Lang and Lang state that "the mass media force attention to certain issues. They build up public images of political figures. They are constantly presenting objects suggesting what individuals in the mass should think about, know about, have feelings about".[289] In this respect, Chandler and Munday argue that "media agendas are often set by 'authoritative sources' in government and industry upon which news organizations rely."[290] They add that those in power, in order that the terms and scope of public debate will be determine, "call attention to issues that suit their agendas and distract attention from those that undermine them."[291] In their empirical study, McCombs and Shaw adopts contact analysis to examine four newspapers, the *New York Times*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the NBC and CBS evening news broadcasts and to compare how the ranking of the key issues in order to find out how the respondents' answers to a survey correlate with that ranking. McCombs and Shaw found out that some very strong correlations between the public and the rankings of issues by media, concluding that not only does the public learn about a given issue from, but they also learn, from the amount of information in news reports, the degree of importance that needs to be attached to that issue.[292] This means that when media disregard certain issues, the latter are less likely to be deemed important by the audience. On the contrary, when certain issues are given a significant attention by news organizations, these issues are most likely to regarded as highly important by the general public. The problem here is when the audience is not equipped with the necessary scientific knowledge to evaluate specific issues such as global warming or nuclear disarmament. In this case, the audience will depend a great deal on the information conveyed by news media and, accordingly, remain mere consumers of the news and messages produced and

[288] Bernard Cohen, *The Press and Foreign Policy* (Princeton: NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 13.

[289] Voting Kurt Lang and Gladys Engel Lang, "The Mass Media and Voting," in *Reader in Public Opinion and Communication*, eds. Bernard Berelson and Morris Janowitz, 2nd edition (New York: Free Press, 1966), p. 468.

[290] [290] Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication*, p. 11.

[291] Ibid.

[292] See Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 36, N. 2 (1972), p. 185.

disseminated by media organizations. Other studies revealed that agenda setting, along with affecting the audiences' opinion, also probe the opinions of policy makers.[293]

Secondly, priming enables media to have an influence over the public. Priming, as Iyengar asserts, is an extension of agenda-setting.[294] It specifically refers to how the media affect the way the public evaluates political actors. Ansolabehere, Behr, and Iyengar conclude that media platforms "prime" their audience, raising specific issues or events to a high level so that they will be used as criteria to judge politicians and their policies.[295] Generally, priming refers to the way news coverage affects how individuals evaluate particular issues. Since individuals form their political opinions, they gather clues from news organizations regarding the relative prominence of different issues. According to Iyengar and Kinder, the importance of priming is manifest when news organizations directly attach credit or blame for a national issue to a particular politician.[296] Iyengar states that priming, as a simple extension of agenda setting, "describes a process by which individuals assign weights to their opinions on particular issues when they make summary political evaluations", and this takes place especially during elections.[297] For Iyengar, the media's ability to prime political evaluations depends on their content and the predispositions of the audience.[298] A very interesting case of priming, Iyengar argues, was noticed in post 9/11. Before 9/11, Geoge W. Bush's popularity was tied to his performance on economic issues, but after 9/11 this popularity was tied to his performance on the fight against terrorism. This means, according to Iyengar, that following the terrorist attacks of 9/11 "the news coverage of terrorism became the single most important determinant of Bush's public approval."[299] Having noted that, it is arguable that the audience perception of events is

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[293] See Fay Lomax Cook, Tom R. Tyler, Edward G. Goetz, Margaret T. Gordon, David Protess, Donna R. Leff, and Harvey L. Molotch, "Media and Agenda Setting: Effects on the Public, Interest Group Leaders, Policy Makers, and Policy," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 47, N. 1 (1983), pp. 16-35.

[294] Shanto Iyengar, "Priming Theory," in *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*, ed. Wolfgang, p. 3883.

[295] See Stephen Ansolabehere, Roy Behr, and Shanto Iyengar, *The Media Game: American Politics in the Television Age* (New York: Macmillan, 1993).

[296] See Shanto Iyengar and Donald Kinder, *News that Matters: Television and American Opinion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

[297] Shanto Iyengar, "Priming Theory," in *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*, ed. Wolfgang Donsbach, p. 3883.

[298] Ibid., p. 3885.

[299] Ibid., p. 3884.

influenced by historical context which they are familiar with. While agenda setting emphasizes only the importance of the issue, priming provides explanation on how the information transmitted by media are stored in the human mind and how it influences in making decisions.

Thirdly, framing is also used by mass media to have a very significant influence on the public. In recent years, framing has become a very important interdisciplinary area of research.[300] It is acknowledged that framing is often uneasy to define and that "the specifics of measurement will differ for each topic of discourse".[301] Framing refers to the way in which media allocate responsibility for issues to certain societal or political actors. Following Scheufele, many scholars, like McCombs, find framing a conceptual extension of agenda-setting in the sense that it "increases the salience of certain aspects of an issue and therefore can be labeled "second-level agenda setting"."[302] They recognize that framing and priming should be both incorporated under the umbrella of agenda setting in the sense that they all examine how media draws the public's attention to particular topics and issues with the purpose of setting the agenda. Other scholars, like Durham and Entman, treat framing as separate from agenda-setting model.[303] Generally, the gist of framing theory is that the media devotes due to attention to particular events, placing then within a field of meaning. According to Entman, to frame is to "*select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/ or treatment recommendation* for the item described. Typically frames diagnose, evaluate, and prescribe."[304] Framing, for Entman, refers to a process of packaging communication messages through highlighting some aspects of situations and events and suppressing others.[305] Being an

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[300] Zhongdang Pan, "Framing of the News," "Framing Effects," in *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*, p. 1869.

[301] James W. Tankard, "The Empirical Approach to the Study of Media Framing," In *Framing Public Life: Perspectives on Media and our Understanding of the Social World*, eds. Stephen D. Reese and Oscar Gandy (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2001), p. 96.

[302] Dietram A. Scheufele, "Framing Effects," in *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*, ed. Wolfgang Donsbach, (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), p. 1862.

[303] See Frank D. Durham, "News Frames as Social Narratives: TWA Flight 800," *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 48, N. 4 (1998), pp. 100-117.

[304] Robert M. Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication*, Vol.43, N. 4 (1993), p. 52.

[305] Ibid., p. 52.

indispensable aspect of communication, framing is facilitated by information selection and placement, word selection, and the use of images and symbols.[306] For Entman, the individuals' contact with new frames shape their mental representations, or "event specific schema", that guide their interpretations of initial information as well as their processing of all succeeding information about it.[307] Goffman, one of the earliest contributors to the development of framing analysis, regarded frames as "schemata of interpretation" that allow individuals "to locate, perceive, identify, and label".[308] Gitlin, on the other hand, defines frames as "devices that facilitate how journalists organize enormous amounts of information and package them effectively for their audiences."[309] Being signified by various elements such as catch-phrases, metaphors, and images, media frames are templates that are principles and ideas embedded in news texts.[310] Because of this, framing news analysis looks at reality as socially constructed. Here, Cartee believes that news creation is "truly a social construction, involving a multitude of present, past, and anticipated distant or future forces influencing the newsperson."[311] Framing of news is, as Gitlin points out, also an ideological process, which in fact makes it quite similar to agenda-setting. It involves the shaping of discursive representation "about what exists, what happens, and what matters" along with making "the world beyond direct experience look natural."[312] Similarly, Snow and Benford, who assert that ideology represents a cultural resource for framing, strongly emphasize that "the framing process involves, among other things, the articulation and accenting

[306] Ibid.

[307] Robert M. Entman, "Framing U.S. Coverage of International News: Contrasts in Narratives of the KAL and Iran Air Incidents," Journal of Communication, Vol. 41 (1991), p. 7.

[308] Erving Goffman*, Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 21.

[309] Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 248.

[310] William A. Gamson, "A Constructionist Approach to Mass Media and Public Opinion," *Symbolic Interaction*, Vol. 11, N. 2 (Fall 1988), p. 165.

[311] Karen Johsnon-Cartee, *News Narratives and News Framing: Constructing Political Reality* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, INC., 2005), pp. 108-09.

[312] Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left*, pp. 6-7.

of amplification of elements of events, experiences, and existing beliefs and values, most of which are associated with existing ideologies".[313]

To sum up, mass media play a major role in the dissemination of news as well as in the shaping of public opinion. They shape ideas that are consumed by audiences and spread among people. In this sense, journalists, who are mediators between news organizations and the audience, construct a reality that based on the orientation of the organizations they are affiliated with. In order to do so, they resort to agenda setting, priming, and framing to disseminate messages and also shape public opinion. In fact, this situation, which calls the meaning of news into question, could be tolerated in pluralistic and democratic settings where other resistant news organizations enjoy the freedom to function and circulate alternative voices. In developing countries, especially in the Middle East and North Africa, analyzing media content is not possible without also examining the political culture prevailing in those countries. For this reason, Rugh stresses that the media systems in the Arab world in general, and in Morocco in particular, cannot be understood without taking into consideration the specific political conditions prevailing the country.[314] This situation of media makes it very challenging to provide a very thorough definition of the public sphere, a concept that is very essential in any discussion of media and democracy building.

4. Media, Public Sphere and Democracy Building

The concept of the public sphere has been very essential in any theoretical discussion about media and its changing roles in the public life since it was first introduced by Habermas in his 1989 seminal work *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Nevertheless, the concept has been reinvigorated owing to the emergence of new media technologies as well as a multiplicity of applications of these technologies. Habermas's theory of the public sphere, as explained by Poster, is a domain marked by the centrality of a critical reason that represents the essence of

[313] David A Snow and Robert D. Benford, "Clarifying Frames and Ideology," in *Frames of Protest: Social Movements and the Framing Perspective*, eds. Hank Johnston and John A. Noakes (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), p. 209.

[314] Ibid., p. X.

democracy.[315] In fact, the public sphere provided people with the possibility to bring matters of common interest to serious discussions and debates based on reason and rationality. This explains why Habermas argues that the public sphere is "made up of private people gathered together as a public and articulating the needs of society with the state".[316] Following the notion of the public sphere suggested by Habermas, the public is able to assemble, unite, and express their opinions openly and freely with the purpose of pushing forward the formation of public opinion. Here, the public sphere, which is supposed to be opened to all citizens, is defined by Habermas as "a domain of our social life in which such a thing as public opinion can be formed."[317] Within this domain, Habermas adds, "citizens act as a public when they deal with matters of general interest without being subject to coercion."[318] It is "a network of all communicative spaces within which public affairs are debated and a public opinion is formed."[319] It is "an indispensable element of a democratic society and the institutional core of democratic decision-making."[320] Democratic societies are built upon the idea that citizens are free to debate while benefiting from the major role mass media plays in political participation. Indeed, mass media provide a democratic public sphere in which people are able to debate and in which people exercising power may be held accountable for the actions and policies they initiate.[321] For Livingstone and Lunt, mass media nowadays represent a major forum for political communication.[322] Freedom of expression, whose important role is recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, is very important in the existence of a powerful public sphere in which citizenry is developed and empowered. In fact, this argument nowadays remains very controversial because of the passive spectatorship some media outlets, if not the majority of them, provide. It is also

[315] Mark Poster, "Cyberdemocracy: Internet and the Public Sphere," in *Internet Culture*, ed. David Porter (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 207.

[316] Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeoise Society*, Trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge and Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1989), p. 176.

[317] Ibid., p. 398.

[318] Ibid.

[319] Frank Marcinkowski, "Fragmentation of Public Sphere," in *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*, p. 4046.

[320] Ibid., p. 4041.

[321] Sonia Livingstone and Peter Lunt, *Talk on Television: Audience Participation and Public Debate* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 9.

[322] Ibid., p. 10.

debatable due to the fact several settings, especially in the Middle East and North Africa, still strive to have a democracy in order to be allowed be involved in democratic debates and in deterring corruption in public service. This explains why freedom of expression, especially within the public sphere, represents a handmaiden of democracy and why it has been celebrated as a "means to attaining truth or individual self-realization, a necessary element in a democratic society, a precondition of personal autonomy, a watchdog of government."[323] Here, citizens are disempowered if media does not provide them with a public sphere for an informed debate regarding the issues of their societies and communities. Nevertheless, citizens, even in some democratic settings, are involved in media public sphere as consumers and not as participants in serious debates about issues of public concern. In this respect, Elliot stresses that we nowadays encounter "a continuation of the shift away from involving people in society as political citizens of nation states towards involving them as consumption units in a corporate world."[324]

As discussed earlier, the emergence of a new sphere of the public, which Habermas calls the bourgeois public sphere, characterized particularly the 17th and 18th centuries Europe, and it was constituted by private individuals who gathered together to create a public and initiate a serious debate of matters of general interest.[325][326] For Curran, a one of the famous classical liberal theorists, the public sphere represents a space between government and society "in which private individuals exercise formal and informal control over the state."[327] In her attempt to explain Habermas's concept of the public sphere, Fraser asserts that

[323] Judith Lichtenberg, "Introduction," in *Democracy and the Mass Media*, ed. Judith Lichtenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 15.

[324] Philip Elliott, "Intellectuals, the 'Information Society' and the Disappearance of the Public Sphere," in *Media, Culture and Society: A Critical Reader*, eds. Richard Collins, James Curran, Nicholas Garnham, Paddy Scannell, Philip Schlesinger, and Colin Sparks (London: Sage, 1986), p. 106.

[325] John Thompson, "The Theory of the Public Sphere," p. 176.

[326] Jurgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere," p. 401.

[327] James Curran, "Rethinking Media as a Public Sphere," in *Communication and Citizenship: Journalism and the Public Sphere in the New Media Age*, eds. Peter Dahlgren and Colin Sparks (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 29.

> The idea of 'the public sphere' … designates a theatre in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk. It is the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, and hence an institutionalized arena of discursive interaction. This arena is conceptually distinct from the state; it is a site for the production and circulation of discourses that can in principle be critical of the state. The public sphere in Habermas's sense is also conceptually distinct from the official economy; it is not an arena of market relations but rather one of discursive relations, a theatre for debating and deliberating rather than for buying and selling. Thus this concept of the public sphere permits us to keep in view the distinctions among state apparatuses, economic markets, and democratic association, distinctions that are essential to democratic theory.[328]

When the bourgeois public sphere had played very prominent roles during the 17th and 18th centuries, the foundations on which it was built underwent critical transformations that brought about its decline. The frontiers between the public and private sphere started looking vague, paving the way for the state to manage the welfare of its citizenry.[329] Along with the decline of the significance of salons and coffee houses, the importance of journalism started waning due to the rise of commercialism and the heavy focus on entertainment.[330] This means that the public sphere has been affected by the rise of consumerism, the concern of maximizing sales, and the depoliticization of content. For Habermas, media messages have started being transmitted to the audience, regarding them as mere consumers and as the public. Instead of shaping a public opinion based on reason and rationality, Habermas stresses that the public sphere now tends to be an "opinion management" and an "engineering of consent" meant to create

[328] Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contributions to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambrige: The MIT Press, 1992), pp. 110-11.

[329] John Thompson, "The Theory of the Public Sphere," p. 177.

[330] Ibid.

a false consciousness among people.[331] Here, Marcinkowski argues that the public sphere, being manufactured by mass media in collaboration with powerful contributors, "stands open mainly to powerful and resource-strong actors in the state and economy."[332] In this case, he argues that citizens are "forced back, as in absolutist states, into the role of spectators."[333] This is exactly what Habermas call the 're-feudalization' of the public sphere. He claims that the "public management" exploits the news events and attracts attention and that the major task here remains the "reorientation of the public opinion" and the construction of a false consciousness among people.[334] Media has been invaded with a consumer culture and this has negatively affected the healthiness of the public sphere that has been transformed into a "managed show", as Habermas argues. This transformation brought about the disempowerment of the public sphere that is no more acting as a public of private persons acting as citizens, but rather it has been replaced by "a public of organized private people".[335][336]

Habermas is also criticized by several scholars for not recognizing tabloidization tendencies that marked the bourgeois public sphere in the 17th and 18th centuries, for underestimating the role science and religion played in favor of literature, and also for "providing a one-sided picture of entertainment-oriented television consumers in modern times."[337] Taylor argues that Habermas's public sphere exists only in imagination, meaning that it is purely fictive.[338] Another insightful criticism of Habermas's account of the emergence of the public sphere comes also from feminist scholars who argue that Habermas limited the bourgeois public sphere to educated men, and sometimes to educated women who were wives of the educated men dominating the sphere, while in reality, McLaughlin stresses, women played a very active role in

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[331] Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 194.

[332] Frank Marcinkowski, "Public Sphere," p. 4043.

[333] Ibid.

[334] Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeoise Society*, 194.

[335] Ibid., 232.

[336] Jurgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere," in *Rethinking Popular Culture: Contemporary Perspectives in Cultural Studies*, eds. Chandra Mukerji and Micheal Schudson, pp. 403-404.

[337] Frank Marcinkowski, "Public Sphere," p. 4044.

[338] Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), p. 85.

literary public sphere.[339] Calhoun also criticized Habermas for his extensive focus on, and idealization of, the bourgeois public sphere without paying attention to his exclusion of the proletarian public sphere.[340] Following this view, Habermas could be criticized for idealizing the rationality of the bourgeois public sphere without paying attention to how his conception of the public sphere is, as Eley contends, found on exclusiveness, sectionalism, and repression.[341] These are some critics of Habermas's notion of public sphere. Following Thompson, Habermas recognized the relevance of these critical arguments and acknowledged the need for a broader and more flexible conceptualization of the public sphere that will allow popular social movements to have a dynamic and shape of their own.[342]

Today, the internet has provided scholars with the chance to redefine the public sphere. Since we have witnessed the birth of various digital public spheres, scholars and researchers have also started rethinking the old theories of the public sphere, trying to provide new theoretical reflections regarding the participatory involvement in the public debate that digital public spheres provide people with. The digital media have made is possible to argue that the future of Habermas's theory of the public sphere is quite promising with the digital media. Nowadays, digital media play a significant role in broadening the public debate as well as in providing a platform that is difficult to censor or control as is the case with traditional media. The internet has been quite useful in the formation of virtual public spheres and in the consolidation of democracy. In our contemporary context, social media like Facebook and Twitter enable people to be updated and, most importantly, to be creative in the ways they debate on and criticize the status quo in their settings. While this communication is, as Marcinkowski argues, very essential for democratic self-government and the social integration of modern society, "both functions seem to be threatened if the public sphere decays into a multitude of arenas that are just loosely connected (if at all) and do not form a coherent

[339] Sean McLaughlin, "The Use of the Internet for Political Action by Non-State Dissident Actors in the Middle East," *First Monday*, Vol. 8, N. 11 (2003), p. 602.

[340] Craig Calhoun, "Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge and Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1992), p. 5.

[341] Geoff Eley, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteeth Century," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), p. 321.

[342] John Thompson, "The Theory of the Public Sphere," p. 181.

space for deliberation."[343] According to him, this situation may take to the fragmentation of media channels, content, and of the audiences.[344] What we have now is a significant number of channels trying to compete each other. Here, Marcinkowski stresses that the internet, following a democratic point of view, "expands the possibilities of political groups and interests that have, up to now, been restrained by the high access barriers of the mainstream media" but "this could also lead to a shocking out of social groups into secluded 'cyber ghettos'."[345] This heterogeneity that characterizes the digital public sphere may lead to the fragmentation and diversification of content and to an extreme rise of competition, thus splitting up the audience's attention and their segmentation.

Generally, Habermas's theory of the public sphere still proves useful in any discussion of media and democracy building. This chapter was meant to provide theoretical insights into the history of print, the diverse definitions of news and their applicability in various contexts, the importance of media in the formation of public opinion, and also into the prospects of the public sphere in a global media landscape that is remarkably going digital. This theoretical discussion will make it easier to discuss the rise of digital media and the importance they play nowadays in the dissemination of news, in the formation of public, and also in the empowerment of citizen journalists and minority groups whose stories and frustrations are seldom addressed by the print press in Morocco. This first chapter was also meant to provide theoretical understandings of media and how they function in order to pave the way for the examination of Moroccan newspapers coverage of a variety of issues related to religion and politics.

[343] Frank Marcinkowski, "Fragmentation of Public Sphere," p. 4046.
[344] Ibid.
[345] Ibid.

CHAPTER III: MEDIA LANDSCAPE: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PRESS REGULATIONS IN THE SHERIFIAN KINGDOM OF MOROCCO

1. Moroccan Press before and during the Colonial Period

Before the colonial experience in Morocco (1912-1956), many newspapers appeared in various languages. Still, there was not a well-established culture of journalism in Morocco due to the fact that the material and technical infrastructure was very weak in the country in comparison with Europe. What is important, if not natural, is that a lot of efforts were made hopefully to make the people aware of the latest news. There was a use of traditional means in order to circulate news among the public, and such means were, and some of them are still, deeply rooted in the Moroccan culture. In his *La Presse Marocaine D'Expression Française: Des Origines A 1956*, Jamaà Baida points out some of these means. He starts with Les *barrah* s (public criers) who were people working with the Makhzenean[346] or with the tribal authorities, and who were entrusted with walking in the neighborhoods or in *souks*[347] and saying loudly the latest news.[348] The religious sermon that still takes place in mosques and *zawias*[349] was another means used, especially on special occasions, so as to either comment on social, economic, or political events or send a particular message.[350] Here, the religious sermon becomes a mediator between the state and the community. However, thanks to Morocco's geographic proximity to Europe, especially to Spain, and also thanks to the heterogeneity of its population, newspapers appeared quite early.

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[346] The ***Makhzen*** was consolidated at the 17th century and was initially used to collect taxes and to wage wars before becoming a synonym of the Moroccan bureaucratic and security apparatus.

[347] A ***souq*** or ***souk*** (Arabic: سوق *sūq*, also spelled soq, souk, esouk, suk, sooq, souq, or suq) is an open-air marketplace or commercial quarter in anArab or Berber city. The term is often used to designate the market in any Arabized or Muslim city, but in modern times it appears in Western cities too.

[348] Jamaà Baida, *La Presse Marocaine D'Expression Française: Des Origines A 1956*, (Rabat : FLSH, 1996) p. 31.

[349] ***A zaouia*** or ***zawiya***, as defined in *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*, is an Islamic religious school or monastery. The term is Maghrebi and West African, roughly corresponding to the Eastern term *madrassa*. A zawiya often contains a pool, and sometimes a fountain.

[350] Jamaà Baida, *La Presse Marocaine D'Expression Française: Des Origines A 1956*, p. 31.

Tangiers, the Northern Moroccan city that is very close to Europe and that lies at the entrance of Gibraltar, played a significant role in the history of the press in Morocco. This proximity, along with having made Morocco a center of attraction for different European newspapers, enabled some European ideas such as the freedom of expression to be easily imported to the country. Along with that, the proximity to Europe helped most importantly in the introduction of the first printing press in Tangier in the 1880's by a Gibraltarian, under the name of Gregory T. Abrines.[351] The Spanish newspaper *El Eco de Tétuàn* is said to be the first newspaper to be published in Morocco, and the first issue was published in May 1st, 1860.[352] *El Eco de Tétuàn* was edited in Tetouan and its editor, Pedro Antonio de Alarcon, was Spanish, and he was very proud of having brought the invention of Gutenberg to an African country.[353]

Other references claim that *Al-Mughrib Al-aksa*, a Spanish weekly, was the first newspaper to see light in Morocco, and that it was Gregory T. Abrines himself who first directed the newspaper in January 1883.[354] All these newspapers were "the mouthpiece of their respective Legations."[355] The case of the *Times of Morocco*, an English newspaper that first appeared in July 1884 and that was edited by Edward E. Meakin[356], was different in the sense that it "adopted a line contrary to that of British policy in Morocco."[357] In the beginning, the *Times of Morocco* had been monthly, but from 1886 its editor was able to turn it to a weekly newspaper, especially because he, as noted in Meakin's insightful book *The Moorish Empire*, managed to import his press so as "to express himself with sufficient freedom".[358] Its editors were very critical of British official policy followed by Sir John Drummond Hay, the British minister in Tangier.[359] Because of financial problems, this newspaper was "taken over by *Al-*

[351] To know more about the introduction of the first printing press in Morocco, See Redouan El Ayadi, "Evaluative Utterances in Colonial News-discourse: A Case Study in the *Times of Morocco*," Diss. FLHS Abdelmalek Essaadi 2007, p. 5.

[352] Jamaà Baida, *La Presse Marocaine D'Expression Française: Des Origines A 1956*, p. 33.

[353] Ibid., p. 33.

[354] Redouan El Ayadi, "Evaluative Utterances in Colonial News-discourse: A Case Study in the Times of Morocco," p. 5.

[355] Ibid., p. 5.

[356] Ibid., p. 6.

[357] Ibid.

[358] Budget Meakin, *The Moorish Empire* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1899), p. 534.

[359] Redouan El Ayadi, "Evaluative Utterances in Colonial News-discourse: A Case Study in the Times of Morocco," p. 7.

Mughrib Al-aksa in 1893, which from then on was published in English."[360] It is worth noting that the Sultan Sidi Mohammed Ben Abderrahmane[361] , who was known by his openness to the occidental inventions, did paradoxically put the printing machine under the power of the Makhzen so as to censor the publications.[362]

Many other newspapers in other languages appeared after *El Eco de Tétuàn* and the other aforementioned newspapers. In July of 1883, *Le Reveil du Maroc*, a French weekly newspaper, appeared in Morocco, and it was under the ownership and the direction of Levi A. Cohen, a Jew born in Morocco, and who had a British nationality.[363] It appeared in Tangier and it was presented as the first newspaper edited in French, ignoring Jean Louis Miege's *La Gazette de Tanger*[364] which was first published in 1870.[365] Cohen's *Le Réveil du Maroc* showed interest in politics and commerce, and it clearly supported Moroccan Israelite's interests.[366] This newspaper, edited in French, appeared three years after the international conference of Madrid (1880) when Europe started showing interest in Morocco.[367] *Le Réveil du Maroc* was circulated in Tangier, mostly in the European colony as well as among the Israeli bourgeoisie[368], and it contributed a great deal not only to the spread of the French language but also to the French ideals in Morocco.[369] The editor of this newspaper encountered serious financial difficulties, and this, accordingly, badly weakened its circulation.

[360] Ibid., p. 6.
[361] The Moroccan Sultan who reigned between 1859 and 1873.
[362] Jamaà Baida, *La Presse Marocaine D'Expression Française: Des Origines A 1956*, p. 34.
[363] Redouan El Ayadi, "Evaluative Utterances in Colonial News-discourse: A Case Study in the Times of Morocco," p. 6.
[364] Pierre Cohen, *La Presse Juive Editée au Maroc: 1870- 1963* (*The Jewish Press Edited in Morocco: 1870- 1963)* (Rabat: Bouregrag, 2007), p. 42.
[365] Ibid., p. 44.
[366] Ibid., p. 65.
[367] Ibid., p. 66.
[368] Ibid., p. 72.
[369] Ibid., p. 64.

Figure 2: *Le Réveil du Maroc*



LE RÉVEIL DU MAROC

POLITIQUE ET COMMERCIAL, PARAISSANT TOUS LES JEUDIS.

SOMMAIRE.

Une Situation Grave

Les Impôts au Maroc.

The *Makhzen* did not put obstacles in the way of foreign newspapers in Morocco. Instead, it did highly welcome them, allowing even some good articles to be translated into Arabic and circulated among Moroccans, especially in Tangier, as long as these newspapers did not tackle the religious and political taboos.[370]

The diversity that characterized the Moroccan society played a significant role in the emergence of various newspapers that used to represent different communities in different languages. In his insightful *La Presse Juive Editée au Maroc: 1870- 1963*, Pierre Cohen interestingly gives us a picture of the Jewish press in Morocco from 1870 till 1963. Through his archival footages of Jewish newspapers, either in French or in Hebrew, Cohen shows the richness of the history of the press in Morocco. *Mebasser Tob* and *Moghrabi* are for example two Jewish newspapers published in Morocco, exactly in Tangier. *Mebasser Tob*, a weekly newspaper, first appeared in 1893, and it was founded by Salomom Benaioun.[371] This Jewish newspaper was published in Arabic Hebrew (Hudéo Arabe) and it focused primarily on information regarding the Jews and

[370] Jamaà Baida, *La Presse Marocaine D'Expression Française: Des Origines A 1956*, pp. 52-3.

[371] Pierre Cohen, *La Presse Juive Editée au Maroc: 1870- 1963* (*The Jewish Press Edited in Morocco: 1870- 1963)*, p. 81.

the Jewish communities worldwide.[372] Salomom Benainoun was himself the same editor of *Le Moghrabi* which was a weekly Jewish newspaper founded in 1903 and suddenly disappeared in 1904[373] without any clear and known reason.[374] It was published in French and also in Arabic Hebrew.[375] *Le Moghrabi* marked the end of the Jewish press of the pre-colonial period.[376] For the sake of brevity, the chart below gives an idea about the most well-known newspapers that were edited in French between 1870 and 1911.[377]

Chart 1: Newspapers edited in French between 1870 and 1911

Title	Periodicity	Language	Date of Appearance
La Gazette de Tanger	Weekly	French	1870
Le Réveil du Maroc	Weekly	French	1883
Al Moghreb Al-Aksa	Weekly	Spanish	1883
The Times of Morocco	Weekly	English	1884
El Eco Mauritano	Weekly	Spanish	1886
Le Commerce au Maroc	Weekly	French	1886
El Diario de Tanger	Weekly	Spanish	1889
Kol Israel	Weekly	Hebrew	1891
Mebasser Tob	Weekly	Hebrew	1893
La Cronica	Weekly	Spanish	1893
Le Maroc Commerical	Monthly	French	1895

[372] Ibid., p. 81.
[373] Ibid., p. 84.
[374] Ibid., p. 85.
[375] Ibid., p. 84.
[376] Ibid., p. 87.
[377] Ibid., p. 44.

El Porvenir	Daily	Spanish	1900
Le Maroc	Weekly	French	1903
Le Journal du Maroc	Weekly	French	1903
Le Moghrabi	Weekly	French and Hebrew	1903
Es-Saada	Weekly	Arabic	1904
La Dépêche Marocaine	Daily	French	1905
Es- Sabah	Weekly	Arabic	1906
Lissan Al Maghrib	Weekly	Arabic	1907
Le Courrier du Maroc	Weekly	French	1907
L'Indépendence Marocaine	Weekly	French	1907
Al Fajr	Weekly	Arabic	1908
Le Petit Marocain	Weekly	French	1911

It would go without saying that the linguistic and cultural diversity of Morocco along with its geographical proximity to Europe, especially to Spain and France, contributed tremendously to the rise and circulation of newspapers in Morocco as well as to their linguistic richness, as the chart above clearly shows. It is worth noting that the Moroccan Israelis, particularly the ones of Tangiers, were the pioneers in the domain of the press in Morocco.[378] As Jamaà Baida notes, the Jewish press in French brought valuable contribution towards the attainment of the French colonial project in Morocco, seeing that the Jewish elite was gradually inclined to French.[379] In general, the

[378] Jamaà Baida, *La Presse Marocaine D'Expression Française: Des Origines A 1956*, p. 86.

[379] Ibid., pp. 86-7.

development of the Moroccan press started with the protectorate system, especially with Lyautey[380], the first Resident General in Morocco.[381]

The decree of April 27th, 1914 appeared as the first law aiming at the codification of the press in Morocco.[382] This decree gave privilege to the French press during the "protectorate".[383] The protectorate regime in Morocco (March 1912) aimed at establishing the necessary infrastructure of journalism as a form of "modernizing" the country. It would be interesting to note here that Jean-Claude Allain argues that the press in general is among the manifestations of modernity.[384] January 1914 marked a very starting point of the establishment of a press culture in Morocco owing to the fact that the country witnessed the appearance of Havas, a famous Parisian printing house at that time.[385] Accordingly, many new newspapers saw light and many other existing ones joined Havas such as *La Presse Marocaine*, *Le Progrès Marocain*, and *L' Echo du Maroc*. Nevertheless, the protectorate regime, as I see it, did not make efforts to help increase the number of newspapers in Morocco or to contribute to the modernization of the country. Rather, it aimed primarily at instilling the French language and culture in Morocco in order to easily exert a form of cultural hegemony, to put it in Gramscian terms.

The French authorities, as Baida notes, tightly controlled Havas, and this immeasurably helped them determine what could be published;[386] that is, the French authorities could easily interfere in Havas in order to select the "suitable" articles and information for publication. Still, there were many newspapers edited in French that were against the protectorate regime. *L'Echo du Maroc* is one of these newspapers, and in 1919 it published articles that toughly criticized the protectorate regime in general and Lyauté's administration in particular.[387] Ou allons- nous?", published on February

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[380] **Louis Hubert Gonzalve Lyautey** (17 November 1854 – 21 July 1934) was a French Army general, the first Resident-General in Morocco from 1912 to 1925. (From *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*.)

[381] Jamaà Baida, *La Presse Marocaine D'Expression Française: Des Origines A 1956*, p. 87.

[382] Ibid., p. 94.

[383] Ibid.

[384] Jean-Claude Allain, "Preface". Jamaà Baida, *La Presse Marocaine D'Expression Française: Des Origines A 1956*, p. 11.

[385] Jamaà Baida, *La Presse Marocaine D'Expression Française: Des Origines A 1956*, p. 96.

[386] Ibid.

[387] Ibid., pp. 99- 101.

9th, 1919, and "La politique d'association: Leur point de vue", published on February 11th, 1919, are good examples of these articles. On the whole, the number of newspapers unprecedentedly increased, especially in 1923 and chiefly in Casablanca, the economic capital of Morocco. Some of the editors at that time could not continue publishing for two main reasons: in the first place for financial reasons and secondly for the dearth of papers at that time.[388]

Interestingly, the number of newspapers, especially the ones edited in French, will substantially increase with the departure of Lyautey in 1925 and the appointment of Théodore Steeg as a new General Resident in Rabat. Theodore Steeg, unlike the military Lyautey, was a civil protestant and a member of the radical socialist party.[389] His personality in fact was reflected in his actions, and little by little many press agencies were set up in Morocco and many new newspapers appeared. Some of these newspapers were interested in information while some others stridently repeatedly criticize the policies of the protectorate regime. What characterized the period of Steeg is the proliferation of weekly newspapers, and exactly seventeen new weeklies appeared during his reign.[390] On top of that, Steeg's period was also marked by the politicization of the press in Morocco. Indeed, each new newspaper, especially the ones edited in French, and had its own specific political color. For instance, *L'Etre Française* and *Redd-Balek* were socialist while *Le Potins du Maroc* and *Casa qui Rit* were very humorous. The chart below gives an idea about the newspapers edited in French that appeared under the reign of Théodore Steeg.[391]

Chart 2: Newspapers edited in French under the reign of Théodore Steeg

Title	Place of Appearance	Date of Appearance
L'Echo du Bled	Casablanca	March 1926
L'Etre Française	Casablanca	May 1926

[388] Ibid., pp. 96-8.
[389] Ibid., p. 143.
[390] Ibid., p. 158.
[391] Ibid., p. 163.

Le Travail	Oujda	Juin 1926
La Bougie de Fez	Fez	September 1926
L'Echo de France	Casablanca	October 1926
Les Annales Marocaines	Casablanca	1926
Le Cri de Maàrif	Casablanca	1926
La Voix du Sud	Marrakech	1926
Le Réveil du Moghreb	Marrakech	1926
La Vie Casablancaise	Casablanca	January 1927
Les Potins du Maroc	Rabat	March 1927
Redd-Balek	Casablanca	July 1927
L'Antenne Marocaine	Casablanca	November 1927
La Vérité Marocaine	Rabat	1927
L'Avenir de Fez	Fez	January 1928
Casa qui Rit	Casablanca	September 1928
Radio Phare	Casablanca	October 1928

As mentioned before, this increase in newspapers edited in French aimed at marginalizing the Arabic language as well at instilling a French culture and identity in Morocco. Some promising Moroccan newspapers edited in Arabic were harassed by the colonial authorities, and "*Idhar Lhaq*" is a case in point.[392] Besides, the colonial authorities did not allow also other Syrian, Egyptian, Tunisian, and Algerian newspapers edited in Arabic to have access to Morocco in order that there would be no influence on the Moroccans by the revolutionary and nationalistic attitudes of these

[392] See <http://www.habous.net/daouat-alhaq/item/4692>. Accessed on February 10th, 2014.

newspapers. Unfortunately, the number of newspapers edited in Arabic was comparatively limited, while some particular areas like the southern region, without including Ifni region, seriously lacked newspapers.[393] This was noticed especially in the beginning of colonialism in Morocco in the sense that the country was obliged to have for ten years only one Arabic newspaper, which is "*Assaada*", and which was the official voice of the protectorate regime![394]

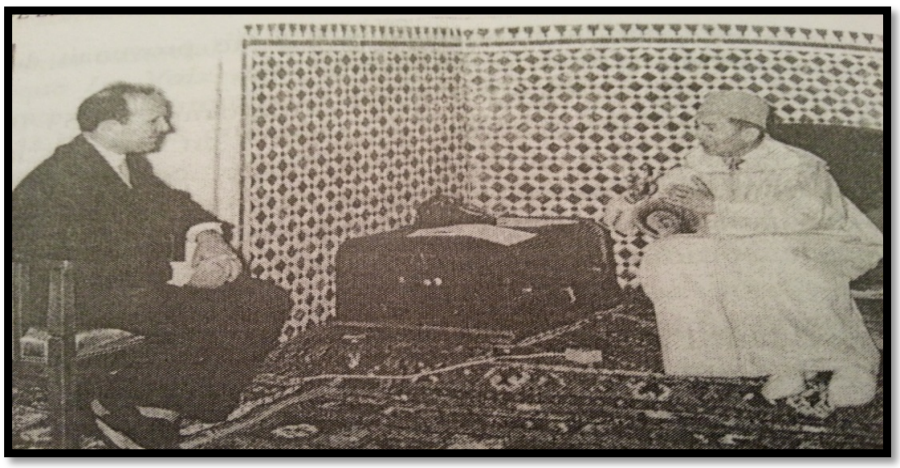
It is interesting to point out that newspapers edited in Arabic during the colonial period mushroomed thanks to the efforts of the nationalists who normally looked for effective platforms whereby to transmit their nationalistic ideas, to express their complete and steadfast refusal of colonialism in Morocco, and to express also their attachment to the Sultan.[395] Very often were such newspapers shut down by the French colonial authorities, and because of this policy some Moroccan nationalists, especially students from Fez, started publishing in secret newspapers like "*Al Islah*" newspaper, and this immensely affected significant portions of Moroccans.[396] Since 1930, nationalistic newspapers edited in Arabic knew an unprecedented circulation, and they severely criticized the violations of the protectorate regime in Morocco, trying also to set up new foundations of the Moroccan press in Morocco. Interestingly, some nationalists, who received a French education like Abdellatif Sbihi[397] and many others, found it important to give rise to a nationalistic press edited in French and published outside, mainly in France.[398] Mohammed Hassan El-Ouazzani, who resided in Paris and Geneva, contributed also in this particular type of newspapers, and he specifically was among the principal Moroccan collaborators of *Maghreb* and of *L'Action du Peuple.*[399] This was very important in the sense that such newspapers and such journalists managed to criticize colonialism through the language of the colonizer. Needless to mention that thanks to their residence in France, they were able also to criticize France from within.

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[393] Ibid.
[394] Ibid.
[395] Ibid.
[396] Ibid.
[397] Abdellatif Sbihi was a young nationalist, and he was the father of Pacha Sbihi of Salé. He graduated from L' Ecole des Langues Orientales de Paris.
[398] Jamaà Baida, *La Presse Marocaine D'Expression Française: Des Origines A 1956*, p. 197.
[399] Ibid., pp. 199- 211.

The year of 1952 marked the birth of the national press, especially with the return of the Moroccan Sultan, Mohammed Ben Youssef, from exile, and also especially after the emergence of political parties like the *Istiqlal* party (the Independence Party).[400] The Sultan Mohammed V, after his return from exile, showed interest in the press in general and started meeting with Moroccan, French, and Jewish newspaper editors. The Sultan's meeting with Jaques Dahan, the editor of *Voix des Communautés*, in December 1955 is an example.

Figure 3: Mohammed V's meeting with J. Dahan, the editor of *Voix des Communautés*[401]



A general idea one could deduce is that during colonialism, there were no institutions or laws that effectively organized the press in Morocco, but after independence Morocco issued a press code in November 1958 which was published on *Bulletin Officiel* on November 27th, 1958. Since then, numerous newspapers saw light, and some of them, if not the majority, faced difficulties because of which they disappeared.

This is a brief overview of the Moroccan press before and during colonialism. This gradual development of the press during this period promised for a well-established culture of print journalism in Morocco as is the case today.

[400] Ibid., p. 389.

[401] See Pierre Cohen, *La Presse Juive Editée au Maroc: 1870- 1963* (*The Jewish Press Edited in Morocco: 1870- 1963)*, p. 258.

Figure 4: Press Code of 1958 published in *Bulletin Officiel*[402]



Quarante-septième année - Año XLVII. — N° 3404 bis — 27 novembre 1958 - 27 de noviembre de 1958.

ROYAUME DU MAROC — REINO DE MARRUECOS

Bulletin Officiel - Boletin Oficial

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1° Une première partie ou *édition partielle : dahirs, décrets, arrêtés, ordres, décisions, circulaires, avis, informations, statistiques, etc. ;*

2° Une deuxième partie : *publicité réglementaire, légale et judiciaire* (immatriculation des immeubles, délimitation des terres domaniales et collectives, avis d'adjudication, d'enquête, etc.).

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2.° Una segunda parte en la que viene : *publicidad reglamentaria, legal y judicial* (registro de inmuebles, deslindes de terrenos patrimoniales y colectivos, avisos de subastas, de informaciones, etc.).

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Los anuncios judiciales y legales prescritos por la publicidad y la validez de los actos, procedimientos y contratos deben ser obligatoriamente publicados en el «Boletin Oficial».

2. The Press in Morocco Today

Nowadays, newspapers are among the primary means whereby the information is conveyed in Morocco. It is undeniably the right of every individual to have access to the information. For instance, there are many associations in Morocco that have called for this right, and Transparency Maroc, a Moroccan association fighting against corruption, is illustrative of the case. Today, Morocco enjoys a solid infrastructure of print journalism and there is actually a considerable number of newspaper publications, including daily and weekly ones. These newspapers have allowed the country to know an important evolution of the press in terms of its content and its linguistic diversity. Newspapers edited in Arabic and in French are the most circulated, while there is no single newspaper edited in English! This is partly because the English readership in Morocco is still embryonic. In the second place, some British and American newspaper like the *New York Times* and the *Independent* appear from time to time in Moroccan big cities, especially Casablanca, but the problem is that they are very expansive and

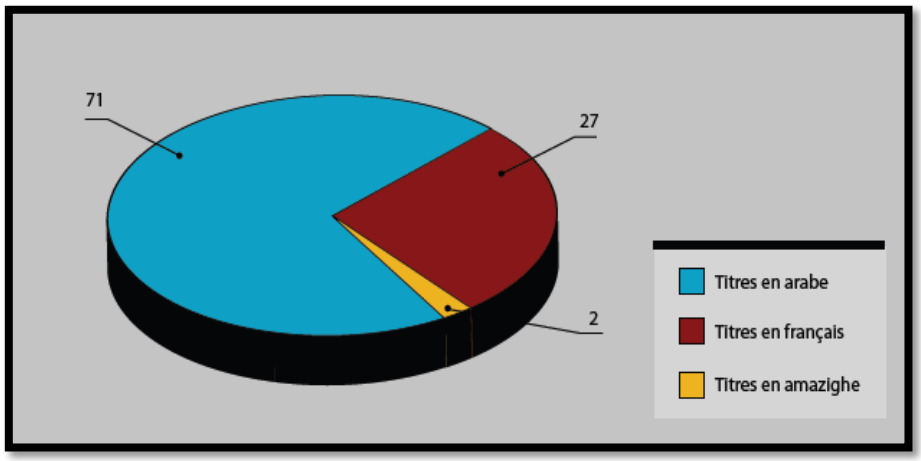
[402] To see the Press Code of 1958, visit < http://www.ccisfes.org/images/telechargement/juridique/associations/dahir158376droitdassociation.pdf>. Accessed on February 17th, 2014.

because of this Moroccans cannot afford them. The following statistics show the classification of Moroccan newspapers in terms of publication language.[403]

Figure 5: Classification in terms of publication language

Language	Titles	Percentage
Arabic	282	70,86%
French	107	26,88%
Amazigh	09	2,26%
Total	398	100%

Figure 6: Newspapers and publication language in percentage terms



A general idea one could easily get from the above statistics is that the majority of newspapers in Morocco are published in Arabic, while also a significant number of others are published in French. Moha Ennaji mentions that "there exist a multitude of Moroccan newspapers published in French" and that "the Moroccan press of French expression continued to exist and to develop even after the colonial press had vanished."[404] *Le Matin*, *l'Opinion*, *L'Economiste*, and *Libération* are some of the well-

[403] See *Rapport Annuel sur L'état de la Presse Ecrite et la Communication Audiovisuelle Publique 2006*, p. 9. To see the e-version of the report, visit http://www.maroc.ma/NR/rdonlyres/F03EAFB9-2E86-4AA7-AEFE-374B31900FEA/0/RapportdelapresseVF2006.pdf. Accessed on February 18th, 2013.

[404] Moha Ennaji, *Multilingualism, Cultural Identity, and Education in Morocco* (New York: Springer, 2005), p. 103.

known Moroccan newspapers of French expression. The annual report of 2004 mentions one single newspaper published in Spanish. The report of 2006 did not mention it because it had disappeared. The problem, as the statistics show, is with the newspapers published in Amazigh as the number is shockingly very low. Today, and with the new constitution, Amazigh has been institutionalized as an official language besides Arabic. Therefore, efforts should be made to achieve equilibrium between Arabic and Amazigh in the domain of journalism in particular, and in all media outlets in general.

Some newspapers in Morocco are partisan like *Al- Alam* and *Al- Ittihad Al-Ichtiraki*. According to the Moroccan Ministry of Communication's annual report of 2006, there are only 21 party-affiliated newspapers.[405] Almost each political party in the country has its own official newspaper through which it circulates its ideology and its political program. In general, such newspapers are officially affiliated to political parties, and they pay tribute to their political roots. It is worth noting that "partisan newspapers in Morocco are losing ground and therefore no longer prevailing."[406] Aziz Bakouch, in one of his articles, argues that Moroccans no more find trustworthiness in political parties in general, and in partisan papers in particular, claiming that it is the independent press that has immeasurably grown in readership in Morocco.[407] This is very clear today in Morocco seeing that the majority of people shun politics and political parties, let alone partisan newspapers. What is very astonishingly paradoxical, Bakouch says, is that even the most prominent political figures in Morocco do not buy the newspapers of the political parties to which they belong.[408]

Unlike the independent newspapers, the partisan ones in Morocco are financially dependent on the government's sponsorship, and this makes them state-regulated and with censorship hanging over them as the Sword of Damocles. This is actually very obvious because the partisan papers in Morocco never criticize certain

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[405] See *Rapport Annuel sur L'état de la Presse Ecrite et la Communication Audiovisuelle Publique 2006*, p. 9.

[406] Hamza Tayebi, *Discourse Analysis of Moroccan Partisan Press: "Al Alam", "Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki", and "Attajdid" as Case Studies* (Germany: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2012), p. 23.

[407] Aziz Bakouch, "*Ikhtifae Aljaraid Alhizbiya Mina Almaqahi Almaghribya: Assbab Wal Mouaawiqat*," ["The Disappearance of Partisan Newspapers in Moroccan cafés: Causes and Impedements"]," Al- Hiwar Al- Moutamaddin, June 30th, 2008. < http://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=139391>. Accessed on February 17th, 2014.

[408] Ibid.

sensitive issues. What is worse and more shocking is that many ministers worked as directors of many party papers. Mohammed Ibahrine, in one of his interesting articles, refers to this phenomenon arguing that "a significantly marked phenomenon in the Moroccan print press is that many ministers function as directors of newspapers. The Prime Minister directs *Al Ittihad Al Ishtiraki*, the Minister for Human Rights is responsible for *Al Mitaq Al Watani* and the former Minister of Education is the director of *Bayan Al Youm*."[409] For the sake of clarification, Ibahrine wrote his article in 2002 and he talks here about a particular period when ministers were the directors of the newspaper of the political party they belonged to. Very ironically does Ibahrine show the extent to which these papers "are destined to play a propagandist role and thus defend certain policies rather than practicing journalism, which informs the public."[410] These problems, especially the problem of censorship on the press have worries various international organizations like "Article 19", "Freedom Forum", and "*Reporters sans Frontiers*", "which expressed their concerns about the deterioration of the freedom of the press in Morocco."[411]

It would be a sort of truism to mention that the efforts that were made in the 1990s to politically liberalize Morocco have allowed the country to witness dramatic changes, and the emergence of the independent press is absolutely a very case in point. This was noticed above all with the socialists rise to power in the alternation government in 1997. Indeed, the government of 1997 contributed a good deal in the emergence of a free independent press in Morocco, the aim of which was the promotion and consolidation of democracy.[412] The appearance of *Le Journal Hebdomadaire*, a weekly independent magazine edited in French, in 1997 embodied a turning point in the realm of journalism in the country. *Le Journal* played a very crucial role as it paved the way for other newspapers and magazines, like *Assahifa*, *Al-Mustaqil*, *Al Ayyam*, *Al-Massae*, and *Al Mich'al* to see light. It is commonly known that "most of the independent newspapers emerged in the final years of the autocratic rule of King

[409] Mohammed Ibahrine, "Democratisation and the Press: the Case of Morocoo," *North-Sud Aktuell*, 4 (2002), p. 637. To see the online version of the Ibahrine's article, visit <http://www.giga-hamburg.de/openaccess/nordsuedaktuell/2002_4/giga_nsa_2002_4_ibahrine.pdf>. Accessed on February 21st, 2014.

[410] Ibid.

[411] Ibid.

[412] Ibid., p. 632.

Hassan II at the end of the 1990s, when a new and relatively liberal press legislation was passed."[413]

It would be important to refer to what normally determines the independent press. According to Houssin Mejdoubi, there are three basic things that characterize the independent press in general: ownership, content, and the sociology of reception.[414] As long as ownership is concerned, we can claim that the first thing that characterizes this particular press is the fact that it is not owned by the state or by political parties. It is rather owned by new industries and by new people.[415] For example, *Le Journal* was owned by two journalists and one businessman, while *Al-Ayyam* is owned by the journalists who work within it. The second main new feature is in terms of the content. The content of the independent press is new so far that it sometimes deals with cultural taboos, and sometimes with the King, but without transcending the limits. Some broadsheets and magazines for example like *Le Journal* used to publish articles that tackle sensitive issues like the monarchy. As a result, this independent magazine was censored, and many other broadsheets are now and then harassed by the state. The last point Mejdoubi suggests is the sociology of reception and by this he means that that the independent press has been influential today as any other political institution. That is to say, it influences the political sphere, and it shapes the public opinion.[416] Another interesting idea he adds is that there is always an alternative, meaning that new newspapers always show as alternatives for the current ones. These are the main specificities of the independent press which is crucial for any project towards democracy.

No one can deny the importance of the free independent press which is, as Azzedine Layachi notes in his *State, Society, and Democracy in Morocco*: *The Limits of Associative Life*, "an absolute necessity for a democratic environment in which an effective civil society can exist."[417] In this respect, Layachi adds that "an independent

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[413] See <http://www.arabpressnetwork.org/newspaysv2.php?id=117>. Accessed on February 21st, 2014.

[414] Houssin Mejdoubi, "Assahafa Almoustaqilla Filmaghrib: Annachaa- Alkhitab Wa Mouiiqat Attatawer (2000-2004)," ["The Independent Press in Morocco: The Emergence-Discourse and Impedements," *Wijhat Nadar*, Spring and Summer Issue. 2010, p. 31.

[415] Ibid.

[416] Ibid., p. 32.

[417] Azzedine Layachi, *State, Society, and Democracy in Morocco: The Limits of Associative Life* (Georgetown: Georgetown Univ. Press, 1998), p. 68.

press serves not only as a medium for civic associations to express their demands and objections, but also as a tool to publicly question and evaluate public policy and to hold office holders accountable."[418] When looking at the literature about journalism, we come to know that that the concept that is used during the process to democracy is the "free press", but in Morocco the "independent press" is the most commonly used. Today in Morocco, the independent newspapers are the most circulated, representing the majority in the market. There are more than 400 independent newspapers in Morocco, and some of them are not published on a regular basis. All of these newspapers, including the partisan papers, are different in terms of the topics they cover and in terms of periodicity.

Morocco has already started the process of democratization, but the problem actually is that "studies in democratization routinely cover topics such as constitutional reforms and political parties, but, in some cases, give little space to mass media."[419] In fact, democratizing the press and mass media in general is the key to any shift to democracy. As Driss Maghraoui argues, the case of Morocco is very complex in the sense that all the reforms that have taken place could be seen as contradictory because they do not refer to a democratic transition paradigm and, thus, preserve continuity and change at the same time.[420] Since the 1990s, and with the arrival of King Mohamed VI in 1999, "more space is open for debates in the media."[421] It is actually the case of the independent press which, despite of the "self-censorship"[422] phenomenon, "which includes avoiding attacks against or criticism of, the King, Islam, and Morocco's claim to the Sahara, has experienced in recent years a slight broadening of its range of action."[423] Accordingly, the democratization of the free press has allowed the latter to only question and criticize state actions, the political leaders' behavior (except the King

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[418] Ibid.

[419] Mohammed Ibahrine, "Democratisation and the Press: the Case of Morocoo," p. 632.

[420] Driss Maghraoui, "Introduction: Interpreting Reform in Morocco," *Mediterranean Politics*, 14: 2 (July 2009), p. 144.

[421] Ibid., p. 143.

[422] **Self-censorship** is "self regulation by an individual author or publisher, or by the 'industry'. Media industries frequently remind their members that if they do not regulate themselves, they will be regulated by the state. Self-censorship on the individual level includes the internal regulation of what one decides to express publically, often attributable to conformism." This definition is taken from Chandler's and Munday's *Dictionary of Media and Communication* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011), p. 44.

[423] Azzedine Layachi, *State, Society, and Democracy in Morocco: The Limits of Associative Life,* p. 69.

and the royal family in general), as well as to analyze social, economic, and cultural issues.

Reforms in Morocco have bettered the conditions of human rights without broadening enough the space of freedom of expression; that is, journalists do not have the right to shed light on sensitive issues, or on what is referred to as the red lines, such as the King, the royal family, the Moroccan's claim of the Sahara, to mention only a few. If these red lines are trespassed, newspapers get shut down and journalists fined. The Human Rights Watch's 2011 report concludes in this regard that

> Moroccan independent print and online media investigate and criticize government officials and policies but face prosecution and harassment when they cross certain lines. The law includes prison terms for "maliciously" spreading "false information" likely to disturb the public order or for speech that is defamatory, offensive to members of the royal family, or that undermines "Islam, the institution of the monarchy, or the territorial integrity," that is, Morocco's claim on Western Sahara.[424]

Hence, claiming that the reforms that have been introduced since the beginning of the so-called "New Era" represent a radical departure from the past would be utterly incorrect. What is worse, according to Ibahrine, is that the ministry of interior is also behind the restrictions of the freedom of the press, and that this impedes the *"demakhzenization"* of the Moroccan national information system from taking place, hence making "the emancipation of the national information system from political control […] still far away."[425] To put it simply, Morocco has embarked on the process of democratization, but the absence of freedom of expression, especially when it comes to the independent press, puts this process at stake and the so far introduced reforms under question.

[424] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2011: Events of 2010* (USA: Human Rights Watch, 2011), p. 573.

[425] Mohammed Ibahrine, "Democratisation and the Press: the Case of Morocoo," p. 639.

The general idea of this discussion is to show the extent to which democratization and the press are immensely interrelated, and that, as Layachi notes, the "development of a truly free press is […] one of the most important prerequisites of civil society and must be part of any process of genuine democratization."[426] The independent press, as noted before, faces many challenges especially the problem of censorship, red lines, and self-censorship. While many believed that the post-2011 media landscape in Morocco would healthy enough for a smooth transition to democracy, especially with the new constitution that recognizes freedom of opinion and the right to have access to information, reality does unfortunately refute the claim.

3. The Independent Press after the "Moroccan Spring"

The year of 2011, or more precisely the year of the Arab Spring, could be described as the tumultuous period in the modern history of the MENA region as it witnessed unprecedented and unexpected revolutionary protests that toppled many dictatorial and autocratic regimes like the Ben Ali regime in Tunisia and the Hussni Mubarak regime in Egypt. Television, cell phones, and internet-based social media did play a key role in spreading the mass-protests and in mobilizing new movements of social resistance in many countries, including Morocco.

In Morocco, the 20 February Movement[427], being driven by uprisings and revolutions in other North African countries, not only protested against corruption, the absence of transparent elections, the high centralization of powers in the hand of the King, and the huge gap between the rich and the poor, but it also raised slogans calling for free and independent media outlets, especially the press, such as "Don't touch the liberty of press and opinion". Indeed, since Mohammed VI's succession to the throne, Morocco has neither been officially described as a dictatorship nor as a democracy, but it has been claimed that the country is adopting the gradual shift towards democracy. While it is true that Morocco has already started the process of democratization, the

[426] Azzedine Layachi, *State, Society, and Democracy in Morocco: The Limits of Associative Life,* p. 70.

[427] On February 20, 2011 this social movement started taking to the streets on a weekly basis asking for genuine and radical socio-economic and constitutional reforms in Morocco. The movement relied on the support of various organizations, unions, political parties and associations of different political colors (leftist, Islamist, Amazigh, student, and non-partisan people).

actual problem is that almost all discussions or studies on democratization seldom give space to mass media. Rather, they routinely cover topics related to constitutional reforms and political parties. No one can deny the importance of the free independent press which is, as Azzedine Layachi notes in his *State, Society, and Democracy in Morocco: The Limits of Associative Life*, "an absolute necessity for a democratic environment in which an effective civil society can exist."[428] Milton, Locke, Madison, John Stuart Mill, and many other Classical liberal theorists strongly argue that free and independent media outlets can play a crucial and critical role in the democratization process. Edmund Burke's concept of the `fourth estate' has traditionally been regarded as one of the most efficient mechanisms of checks and balances. Indeed, not only does the independent press serve as a medium for civic associations to express their demands and objections, but it also serves as a tool in which to publicly question and evaluate the office holders and analyze their accountability.

Liberalizing the press and mass media in general is the key to any shift to democracy. However, analyzing the liberalization of the press in Morocco, as Driss Maghraoui argues, is very complex because all the reforms that have taken place are contradictory. He argues here that the reforms do not follow a democratic transition paradigm and, thus, seek change while at the same time continue to preserve continuity.[429] It is also true that since the 1990s, and with the arrival of King Mohammed VI in 1999, more space has been open for debates in media. The independent press, in spite of the censorship and self-censorship phenomena, has recently experienced a slight broadening of its range of action. Nevertheless, even with the limited democratization of the press, journalists are only allowed to evaluate "and criticize state actions, the political leaders' behavior (except the King and the royal family in general), as well as to analyze social, economic, and cultural issues."[430] Driss Maghraoui argues in this regard that

[428]Azzedine Layachi, *State, Society, and Democracy in Morocco: The Limits of Associative Life* (Georgetown: Georgetown University press, 1998), p. 68.

[429]Driss Maghraoui, "Introduction: Interpreting Reform in Morocco," *Mediterranean Politics*, 12: 2 (July 2009), p. 144.

[430]Hamza Tayebi, "Print Journalism in Morocco: from the Pre-colonial Period to the Present Day," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences,* 4: 6 (July 2013), p. 504.

> Reforms have contributed to the enlargement of the space of political participation and provided better conditions for human rights, but they do not necessarily guarantee the rights of citizens to freely express their views. In Morocco, these rights stop when they reach […] what is popularly known as the 'lignes rouges' or red lines. So the discourse about liberalization might be useful but the process is regularly faced by setbacks associated with the practice of fines against newspapers and occasional imprisonment of journalists.[431]

Following Maghraoui's statement, reforms in Morocco have improved the conditions of human rights without broadening enough the space of freedom of expression; that is, journalists are still unable to freely shed light on sensitive issues, or on what is referred to as the red lines. If these red lines are transgressed, newspapers are shut down and journalists are fined. In fact, the setbacks in Morocco's shift to liberalization and freedom that Driss Maghraoui talks about were noticed when interdictions and repressive measures started approximately one year after Mohammed VI's succession to the throne. After his promise of tolerance and his emphasis on the phrase "the rule of law", King Mohammed VI then "punctuated the subsequent debate in 2001 by stating that "journalists are not angels either" and that "Moroccan culture will triumph over imported models of free expression and opinion."[432] Andrew R. Smith and Fadoua Loudiy say here that "one of the first and most notable interdictions under Mohammed VI was the censorship of *Le Journal* when it attempted to publish a photograph of and interview with Mohammed Abdelaziz, the leader of the Polisario Front, which is seeking independence for Western Sahara."[433] Reporters Without Borders also "indicated that in 2001 the managing editor of *Le Journal Hebdomadaire* was sentenced to three months in jail and ordered to pay a fine of $200,000 for investigating allegations that the foreign minister misused public funds while serving

[431]Driss Maghraoui, "Introduction: Interpreting Reform in Morocco," p. 145.

[432]Andrew R. Smith and Fadoua Loudiy, "Testing the Red Lines: On the Liberalization of Speech in Morocco," *Human Rights Quarterly*, 27 (2005), p. 1083.

[433]Andrew R. Smith and Fadoua Loudiy, "Testing the Red Lines: On the Liberalization of Speech in Morocco," *Human Rights Quarterly*, 27 (2005), p. 1083.

as ambassador to the United States."[434] In fact, the political regime in Morocco seemed ready to reconcile with freedom of expression and with independence of media outlets when the opposition and socialist led government was elected to power in 1997. The new government, as Zaid Bouziame mentions in his "Moroccan Media in a Democratic Transition", did lead a campaign with the aim to formulate a new press law that promised to enhance press freedom, but "since Mohammed VI's accession to the throne in 1999, and following the reform of the press code in 2002, there was hope that radical reforms of Moroccan press laws would take place, but such aspirations have not been fully realized."[435]

Partisan newspapers do give a clear image about the lack of political perspective political parties suffer from in contemporary Morocco. Historically, exactly after independence from the French colonialism in 1956, the print press was mostly owned by political parties which were very critical and oppositional of the monarchy.[436] Opposition leaders resorted to newspapers as the only weapons through which they articulated their challenges against the regime. Because of the regime's tactics to coopt political parties of the opposition, especially the inclusion of the left-wing Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) in 1998 and of the Islamist Justice and Development Party (PJD) in 2011, all political parties are now, according to Mohamed Daadaoui, unable, if not impotent, to mobilize society; accordingly, this "sets the monarchy above any political contests."[437] It is worth noting that the power political parties have lost is owing to the series of unexplainable splits that are, according to Mohammad Al-Tuzi, three kinds: splits arising from divisions, splits arising from separatist motivations, and arranged splits.[438] Moroccans no more find trustworthiness in political parties in general, and in partisan papers in particular, and it is the independent press that has immeasurably grown in readership in Morocco. This is very clear today in Morocco seeing that the majority of people shun politics and political parties, let alone partisan

[434]Zaid Bouzine, "Moroccan Media In A Democratic Transition," *Conference Papers: International Communication Association*, (2009), p. 24.

[435]Ibid., p. 12.

[436]See Ahmed Ben Ashour's *Mass Media in Morocco*, an unpublished Master's thesis in the Institut Supérieur de Journalism defended in 1992, Rabat, Morocco.

[437]Mohamed Daadaoui, "Rituals of Power and Political Parties in Morocco: Limited Elections as Positional Strategies," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 46: 2, (2010), p. 196.

[438]Mohammad al-Tuzi, "Reformers: Between Unity and Schism," translated by Mohammed Bin Sheikh, *Wijhat Nazar*, 2 (1999), pp. 4-5.

newspapers. Following K. Kausch, many Moroccans are now very disappointed to see how former opposition parties have been all coopted by the political regime in the country.[439] What is very astonishingly paradoxical is that "even the most prominent political figures in Morocco do not buy the newspapers of the political parties to which they belong."[440] Unlike independent newspapers, partisan ones are dependent on the financial assistantship from the government, and "this makes them state-regulated and with censorship hanging over them as the Sword of Damocles."[441] This censorship on the public sphere hampers any political party from discussing freely political issues and societal ills. In this regard, Daadaoui strongly contends that

> The hegemony of the regime over the public sphere hinders the political parties' ability to represent society and challenge the regime in a meaningful way, especially in policy making. Despite their lack of mobilizational capabilities and ideological clarity, political parties still regularly take part in limited elections and register their presence at a national level. The puzzle is why they participate when they know the rules of the game are set in advance to prevent any one party from dominating the political system, a system in which the regime enjoys strong religious legitimacy.[442]

Naturally, political parties appeared to mobilize society and function freely in it in order to have an actual voice in any socio-cultural, economic, and political-making processes. Indeed, this would take place only if the Moroccan regime allowed these political parties to enjoy significant legislative and executive authorities. In the absence of this, political parties, along with their newspapers of course, "will remain nothing

[439]Kristina Kausch, "Elections 2007: The Most Transparent Status Quo in Moroccan History," *Mediterranean Politics*, 13: 1 (March 2008), p. 82.

[440]Hamza Tayebi, "Print Journalism in Morocco: from the Pre-colonial Period to the Present Day," p. 503.

[441]Ibid.

[442]Mohamed Daadaoui, "Rituals of Power and Political Parties in Morocco: Limited Elections as Positional Strategies," *Middle Eastern Studies*, p. 207.

but useless shells."[443] What is needed now in fact is the *demakhzenisation* of political parties in Morocco so that their newspapers in particular would be able to have a clear political perspective and, therefore, regain the trust of the population that has unfortunately been left with a big plume of disappointment and sadness lurking just beneath the surface. In the absence of a true independence of political parties that are intended to mobilize citizens, it is more likely that the radical religious and ethnic groups will find it quite easy, especially with their ability to invest huge sums of money on mobilization, to fill the void. What is crystal clear now is that neither the state nor oppositional civil society activists wish to see this likely dramatic scenario occurring.

The Human Rights Watch's 2011 report concludes that the Media outlets in Morocco, both print and online ones, criticize and investigate the government and its officials, but they still face harassment when they trespass certain lines which include criticism of the royal family in general, Islam, or Morocco's claim on the Sahara.[444] What is very contradictory here is that the new Moroccan constitution, which was held on July 1, 2011 as a response to the periodic protests of 20 February Movement, guarantees freedom of expression, but the press law prohibits any criticism of the monarchy or any member of the royal family, Islam, and of the state's position on status of the Sahara. This sort of contradictions makes the political landscape in Morocco very contradictory and characterized by a culture of passivity and followership that 20 February Movement protesters boldly revolted against. In this legal context, it is very difficult to envisage genuine democratization taking place in the country as long as the new constitution guarantees freedom of expression and the four board members of the High Authority for Audio-Visual Communication are still monitoring content to ensure compliance with licensing requirements. Agatha Koprowski clearly concludes that "while the Constitution and other major laws officially support free speech and a free press, the system is easily manipulated so that its actual exercise becomes practically impossible."[445]

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[443]Drisse Jandari, "The Political Party Experience in Morocco: Obscurity and Policy Studies," Case Studies of Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, Doha, Qatar, (March 2012), p. 21. See the article online on http://english.dohainstitute.org/file/get/b723ee20-2e1a-499e-b3ec-e1fc85809bb3.pdf. Accessed on May 24, 2015.

[444]The Human Rights Watch's 2011 report, p. 87.

[445]Agatha Koprowski, "Restrictions on the Press under King Mohammed VI and Morocco's Obligations under International and Domestic Laws on Freedom of Expression,"

The question that is worth asking now in this regard is whether or not freedom of expression has been enlarged for independent journalists after the 'Moroccan Spring'. The cases of imprisonment of journalists along with the international non-governmental organizations' reports on the press freedom in Morocco confirm that the status of the Moroccan independent press is unfortunately worse than it used to be during the two last years of King Hassan II's reign. In fact, there are a multiplicity of cases and remarks through which this stance could be defended.

First, many observers of the constitutional reforms that the Moroccan regime introduced in 2011 to calm down the protests concluded that this reform was not convincing due to the fact that Rachid Nini, the editor-in-chief of the first daily Moroccan newspaper in terms of circulation, *Al Massae*, was arrested in April 28th, 2011 after the publication of several articles criticizing the Moroccan security services' abuses in the context of countering terrorism, including prison sentences handed down after unfair trials against Islamists.[446] Rachid Nini called also for increased political freedom and wrote several articles about corruption among government officials as well as about the involvement in corruption of weighty people close to the King. Here, the determination to continue delimiting public discourse clearly means, according to Moshe Gershovich, that the "attentiveness of the King to the public sentiment for change does not seem to have extended towards greater toleration of the media's freedom to criticize sensitive issues."[447] In fact, many Moroccan independent newspapers like *Al Massae*, *Akhbar Al Yawm*, and *Al Ayyam*, to name but a few, attempt to sporadically transcend taboos and adopt an editorial line which is at least totally different for that of partisan newspapers whose chief editors and staff members are described now as "the Ultra-royalists"[448] of the country (more royalist than the King).

Muslim World Journal of Human Rights, 7: 2, (2011), p. 31.

[446] For more information on the case of Rachid Nini, see the 2012 report of Freedom House that is published on https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2012/morocco#.VPuX09KG9i0. Accessed on March 8, 2015.

[447] Moshe Gershovich, "The "New Press" and Free Speech under Mohammed VI," *Contemporary Morocco: State, Politics and Civil Society under Mohammed VI*, by Bruce Maddy-Weitzman and Daniel Zisenwine (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 105.

[448] The **Ultra-royalists** (*Ultraroyalistes* in French, also called as **Ultras**) were a French political group active from 1815 to 1830 under the Bourbon Restoration. The Legitimists, another of the main right-wing families identified in René Rémond's classic opus *Les Droites en France*, were disparagingly classified with the Ultras after the 1830 July

In other words, the strength of independent newspapers' appeal to the reader does not solely lie, according to Aziz Douai, "in providing an alternative to the traditional partisan press, but actually lies in them assuming the role of a vibrant political opposition that the country currently lacks."[449]

Many other Moroccan journalists, like Mohammed Sokrat and Mustapha El Hassnaoui, have been imprisoned and badly treated in prison according to Amnesty International and many other international organizations. Sokrate, a prominent blogger, was arrested by security forces while leaving an Internet café in Marrakech. In June 2012, a local court sentenced him to two years in prison on charges of drug possession and trafficking, according to news reports; on the other hand, Mustapha El Hassnaoui was charged with terrorism on July 11, 2013 as he had had interviews with Jihadi groups in Syria.[450] In fact, these two journalists' criticism of the Monarchy and its interpretations of Islam to gain legitimacy is widely believed to be the reason for their imprisonment. They also were both members of the February 20 Movement youth group, which had organized protests in 2011 calling for genuine reforms in Morocco and speaking against the centralization of power in the hand of the King. In his interesting *Politics in Morocco: Executive Monarchy and Enlightened Authoritarianism*, Anouar Boukhars clearly concludes that the interior ministry will "actively seize any issue of any newspaper it reasonably deems as constituting an offense or a threat to the monarchy, Islam, territorial integrity, or the public order".[451] Another interesting case is that of the famous Moroccan brave journalist Fatima Ifriqui who has been best-known for her support to the demands of the February 20 Movement and who was harassed by a private phone call on March 28, 2013 threatening her to put her children in danger. Fatima Ifriqui joined the rallies organized by the February 20 Movement on a regular basis and wrote many articles on *Akhbar Alyawm* and on

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Revolution by the victors, the Orleanists, who deposed theBourbon dynasty for the more liberal king Louis-Philippe. Ultraroyalist also refers to "someone who is a very strong supporter of royalism."

[449] Aziz Douai, "In Democracy's Shadow: The 'New' Independent Press and the Limits of Media Reform in Morocco," *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, 6:1 (2009), p. 21.

[450] For more information on the case of Mustapha El Hassnaoui, see http://www.yabiladi.com/articles/details/18417/maroc-justice-condamne-journaliste-quatre. Accessed on March 8, 2015.

[451] Anouar Boukhares, *Politics in Morocco: Executive Monarchy and Enlightened Authoritarianism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 23.

Lakome.com severely criticizing the *Makhzen* and putting monarchical powers and actions into question. In order to protect her children, Fatima Ifriqui wrote an article in Arabic on *Lakome.com* and other websites and in which she bitterly apologizes for her decision to stop writing.[452]

What makes matters worse in the contemporary Moroccan media landscape is that journalists are sometimes fined and being accused of contriving stories against ministers in the government, and Youssef Jajilli, the editor in chief of the investigative weekly *Alaan* Magazine, is a very good case in point. Jajilli published on a June 2012 issue an article in which he reports that Abdelkader Amara, minister of Manufacture and Trade in the "Islamist" government, ordered champagne to his hotel room while on a taxpayer-funded trip outside Morocco. This was undoubtedly too embarrassing to the ministry especially because the Islamist law does forbid Muslims from drinking alcohol. Freedom House reported on the imprisonment of Jajilli pointing out that Amara accused the journalist of inventing the story despite the fact that the latter published later "the hotel bill showing the charges for alcoholic beverages under the official's name."[453] In his interview with Amnesty International, Youssef Jajilli, who won Morocco's prestigious National Press Award in 2011, says: "The current charges against me are politicized and are being used to try to silence my journalism and my magazine, I am not a criminal. I am a journalist who has done nothing but fulfill my ultimate duty which is to serve as a watchdog on the government and expose corruption, truth."[454] Youssef Jajilli was accused according to Article 52 of the Moroccan Press Law that clearly states that journalists can face up to one year in jail and fines of up to 100,000 dirhams (US$11,955) if convicted on defamation charges. Indeed, Jajilli was accused because he had published an article reporting on a Moroccan minister's order of Champagne in a hotel room abroad, and this violation of freedom of speech clearly gives an idea of what may have happened to Jajilli if he had reported on the King or on any other member of the royal circle.

Another topical case is that of Ali Anouzla, the editor-in-chief of the famous

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[452]See Fatima Ifriqui's last article on http://pnnpress.com/?p=6053. Accessed on February 22, 2015.

[453] See https://freedomhouse.org/article/moroccan-government-charges-editor-criminal-defamation#.VVKShtNViko. Accessed on May 12, 2015.

[454] See https://www.change.org/p/his-majesty-king-mohammad-vi-drop-the-criminal-defamation-charges-against-youssef-jajili-2. Accessed on May 12, 2015.

online newspaper *Lakome,* and who was arrested in April 2013 "after posting an article on the terrorist threat in Morocco which included a link to an al-Qaida video criticizing the wealth of King Mohammed VI and calling for an uprising."[455] Ali Anouzla is charged with providing material support to, and apologizing for, terrorism, but colleague, and long-term campaigner for freedom of speech, Aboubakr Jamaï, says that "The state is using all its resources to put an independent journalist in prison on horrific charges in order to destroy his reputation and that of Lakome." Anouzla, along with the staff of Lakome, are known for their criticism of the King and of corruption within the royal entourage. The Guardian newspaper says in this respect that "Lakome is at the forefront of an expansion of online news media in Morocco, regularly falling foul of the authorities for its investigative journalism, which has covered the King's botched handling of the release of a Spanish pedophile from prison, his lavish holidays to France, and corruption among his inner circle."[456] What is very paradoxical is that Anouzla was arrested and charged with supporting terrorism despite the fact that he had clearly criticized the video of Al Qaeda, calling it propaganda. Indeed, all the international NGOs confirm that Anouzla was arrested because of his severe and open criticism of the monarchical actions and policies. He has recently been released on bail but continues to be investigated while *Lakome.com* remains censored by the authorities. Aboubakr Jamai says in this context that the harassment of Anouzla is but an attempt to "destroy an emerging business model" which is difficult to be controlled as is the case with traditional print media. In addition to that, Moroccan authorities "have also recently obstructed the registration of Freedom Now, a new press freedom NGO created by Moroccan human rights defenders and journalists, including Ali Anouzla."[457] There are many other serious cases like that of the Moroccan journalist Hamid El Mehdaoui, the chief-editor of the online newspaper *badil*, who has been harassed and summoned to court regularly under the pretext that he published false information about the death

[455] See http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/27/morocco-amnesty-crackdown-freedom-of-speech.

[456] Ibid., Accessed on June 1, 2014.

[457] See http://www.amnesty.ca/news/news-releases/morocco-stop-using-%E2%80%98terrorism%E2%80%99-as-a- pretext-to-imprison-journalists#.U3uzP86-q6g.twitter. Accessed on June 1, 2014.

of a 20 February Movement activist in prison.[458] *Badil* is known of its criticism of the violations of human rights as well as the king's actions and policies. Therefore, claiming that the status of the independent press has improved and that the reforms and promises initiated in 2011 represent a radical departure from the past would be utterly incorrect.

The cases of harassment against independent journalists oblige us to discuss the political landscape in Morocco because media systems in the Arab world, as William Rugh stresses, cannot be understood without taking into consideration the specific political conditions prevailing the country[459]. Being the highest authority and the Commander of the Faithful in Morocco, the King does still reign and rule even after a referendum on constitutional reforms held in Morocco on July 1st, 2011 and that were reportedly approved by 98.49 % of voters, a notorious and predictable result in the Arab world. In spite of Mohammed VI's rhetorical calls for embracing democracy, the reforms he has so far initiated do not display any genuine or decent end to democratize the political system, a system which seriously lacks any meaningful framework of checks and balances. Unfortunately, the major powers, constitutionally speaking, are still in the hand of the King while the government still remains passive. Thierry Desrues argues here that the Moroccan Monarchy "has been afforded a monopoly over constituent power, supremacy over the representation of the nation, headship over the faithful and the role of protector of freedoms."[460] The Monarchy's clear monopoly in the Moroccan political landscape stands in the way of any genuine democratization in the country, hence making the King and any other member of the royal family not subject to criticism or critical discussion on independent media outlets. Islam has been discussed on media outlets, especially on print and online newspapers, and many scriptures related to polygamy and inheritance are regularly brought to the surface by leftist and Islamist newspapers and magazines like *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, *Assabil*, *Tel Quel* and many others. However, the official interpretations of Islam are still taboos

[458] For more information about the case of Hamid El Mehdaoui, see the recent report of Freedom Now NGO, p. 38. See the report online on http://www.fichier-pdf.fr/2015/02/11/rapport/rapport.pdf. Accessed on March 8, 2015.

[459] William A. Rugh, *Arab Mass Media: Newspapers, Radio, and Television in Arab Politics* (USA: Greenwood Press, 2004), p. X.

[460] Thierry Desrues, "Mobilizations in a Hybrid Regime: The 20th February Movement and the Moroccan Regime," *Current Sociology Monograoh*, 61: 4(2013), p. 414.

that independent journalists rarely cross due to the fact that Islam, as Mohamed Daadaoui points out, is "the supreme reference for a hierarchy of legitimation that has enabled *makhzen* to extend its hegemony over civil society and the political system in general."[461] Therefore, questioning the official interpretations of Islam, one of the mechanisms of regime survival in Morocco, is still prohibited. Journalists cannot question the state's legitimacy in relation to Islam especially because the Moroccan press, as Aouar Boukhars stresses, is "still regulated by the main provisions of a Royal *Dahir*[462], issued on 21 November 1958" and "which was slightly amended in 1973 and 2002, but the changes have done nothing to reduce the vulnerability of the press to intentionally vague admonitions and ambiguous statutes."[463] While the Moroccan media landscape is much better than in its neighboring countries, the incidents of harassment against independent journalists demonstrate its failure and lack of strategy in achieving a truly independent media.

Another argument that I would attempt to hastily highlight here is that lack of freedom of expression might have been the reason behind the going tabloid attitude the majority of independent broadsheets in Morocco have adopted. Here, the independent newspapers' shift towards tabloidization[464] is, in the first place, unethical because it erodes the conventional journalistic standards, and then ideological as it disengages people from the real social, political, economic, and cultural matters of society. Hence, the argument I am trying to problematize here is that the absence of freedom of expression in Morocco leaves newspapers' chief editors with no possibility to freely discuss politics in depth or to circulate all information. To sell well, independent broadsheets have instead resorted to tabloidization, unethically superseding hard news with soft news.

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[461] Mohamed Daadaoui, *Moroccan Monarchy and the Islamist Challenge: Maintaining Makhzen Power* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 51.

[462] *Dahir* means in English a decree-law. In Moroccan politics, a *Dahir* means a decree by the King of Morocco.

[463] Anouar Boukhares, *Politics in Morocco: Executive Monarchy and Enlightened Authoritarianism*, p. 23.

[464] ***Tabloidization*** could be briefly defined as a contemporary shift of focus in journalism away from hard news and serious factual information and toward soft news and entertainment. In other terms, it first means an increase of less newsworthy elements in the news; second, it means that popular and tabloid elements of secondary importance in the news are consciously or unconsciously placed in the foreground and the news content increasingly deviates from its real source.

4. Assessing Media Regulations and Legislations in Morocco: Form the Royal Decree of 1958 to the Press Code of 2016

Legal codes and laws regulating the free expression of opinion through media, specifically the newspaper press, takes different forms. Certain codes, for example, limit freedom of expression to protect public interest or other rights from abuses of press power. ther rules limit freedom of expression to secure national security and unity. These measures are generally supposed to regulate the press freedom; nevertheless, they instead reduce and restrict it. This explains why the regulations of the print press are still problematic and debatable, especially in the post -2011 environment. The purpose of the current section is to contribute to the developing debate on the Moroccan press regulations and freedom of expression through the assessment of the system of press regulations and legislations that date from the royal decree of 1958 to the press code of 2016.

The contemporary development of the Moroccan national press sector reflects the historical, political, and social changes that create a legal framework. The latter allows or regulates the opening or closing the window of expression in the country. If one goes back to the state-building phase (1958-1970s), freedom of expression was articulated in King Mohammed V's Charter of Public Liberties of November 1958 through which the first basic press code was incorporated. Known as the *Dahir (*decree) of 15 November 1958, it was set up with the object of empowering the government strict measures to limit press freedom, such as confiscating of any newspaper that appeared to threaten public order and national security. The code was later reinforced under his successor, King Hassan II. Under the latter's reign, people's freedom was highly restricted. People were being watched, controlled and observed by the state's security apparatuses, particularly during what Moroccans have termed "the years of Lead".

The 1990s, nevertheless, witnessed considerable changes regarding the Moroccan press freedom, marking the beginning of liberalization phase that was characterized by sporadic openings and toleration of "free" and oppositional opinion. This was also clearly noticed with Mohammed VI coming to power, especially in the early years of his reign. Between 1999 and 2004, one could easily observe several indicators announcing the beginning of a new era. The 'New Era' was innuagurated by

the releasing of the past regime opinion prisoners and the latter's reconciliation with the government known as "Years of Lead", and basically the adoption of some liberal unprecedented reforms in press laws.

Paradoxically, the level of the aforementioned liberalization of press sector was regressed, especially in the years following 2002. On February 8th of the same year, the Parliamentary Commission for Foreign Affairs and National Defense adopted a new national press code which restricts criminal penalties for journalists. However, not only does the new press code emphasize punishment for defaming the King and the royal family with three to five years of imprisonment, but it also guarantees the government's authority to ban any publication deemed to harm or insult Islam, the Monarchy, territorial integrity, public officials and state institutions. The latter status of the press freedom is expressed in the words of Agatha Koprowski who states that

> Since the 2007, the Committee to protect Journalists has included Morocco in its list of the worst "backsliders" on press freedoms. CPJ also pinpointed 2002-2003 as the turning point for the Moroccan press, noting that "the backsliders reflect a mixture of relatively open countries that have turned increasingly repressive and traditionally restrictive nations where press conditions, remarkably, have worsened. Nations such as Thailand and Morocco have been considered press freedom leaders in their regions but have charted sharp declines over the past five years. Media freedom and freedom of expression have continued to decline through the beginning of 2010.[465]

Evidently, although the post-2011 revision of the press code approve media rights and interdicts censorship, curbs to media freedom continue to be reported especially in regard to the coverage of sensitive issues such as the Sahara, LGBT, sex trafficking,

[465] Agdatha Koprowski, "Restrictions on the Press under King Mohammed VI and Morocco's obligations under International and Domestic Laws on Freedom of Expression," *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights*, 7: 2 (2011), p. 18.

etc. In July 2016, the parliament approved a set of new press rights and the most significant ones remain the decriminalization of defamation and the protection of journalists' sources. The law remains a subject of great concern in the sense that it permits legal follow-up and prison in case of offending Islam, the Monarchy, Morocco's territorial integrity, and state institutions or public officials.

Ali Anouzla, a journalist discussed earlier, was arrested in 2013 upon sharing an online link for a Jihad advocacy in his article. Abdallah Bakkali, the editor of Al *Alam*'s newspaper, the official voice of the Independemce Party, was also detained for criticizing the Ministry of Interior and the 2016 regional as well as local elections. It is confusing enough that both cases were postponed on various occasions. In fact, the government has the ultimate power to appoint public radio and TV stations managers. Likewise, the president and four of the board members of the High Authority for Audio-visual Communication (HACA), which is responsible for regulating the audio-visual communication sector, controlling media contents, and issuing broadcasts licenses, are appointed by the King.

In 2016, the parliament conferred new powers to the HACA to strengthen restrictions on media content mainly regarding the Monarchy, religion, and the Sahara. In April 2016, the National Press Council was set up to ensure the respect of journalistic ethics. In December 2015, another new law entailed that journalists should hold university degrees and have no judicial or criminal records.

The government continues to tighten its grip on national as well as foreign media covering sensitive issues in Morocco. According to freedom house (Nov 2017)[466], two Italian journalists were arrested and deported in 2016 upon reporting a child prostitution network in Marrakech. In the same year, the government prohibited the circulation of a French magazine depicting the prophet Mohammad.[467] With the growing access to internet and media, private radio, TV stations, and news websites continue to grow along with the pressure from international institutions such as the UN to free the press. Corruption among journalists, however, is also highly pervasive "because of low salaries and lack of job security".[468]

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[466] Freedom House, *Freedom of the Press 2017 - Morocco*, 1 November 2017, available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/59fc67d3a.html [accessed 18 January 2020].

[467] Ibid.

[468] See https://www.refworld.org/docid/59fc67d3a.html, retrieved on May 3, 2017.

Given the above context, this section concludes that while the level of a country's democracy could equally be measured through the effectiveness of its laws and codes regulating the press freedom, the Moroccan Media laws, as one would assess, are inefficiently enforced in ways that emphasize the ambivalent stance of the Moroccan state with regards to press freedom. Still, it is difficult and also unethical to deny the many advances that were achieved for the liberalization of the media sector both before and after the 2011 constitutional and legal reforms, specifically the current diversity in content and operation and how the range of topics that can be covered has extended.

Generally, the Moroccan legal situation of the press faces complex restrictions and limitations in the sense that the same rules guaranteeing media freedom are used by the government, directly or implicitly. to suppress and restrict the complete exercise of free speech, a phenomenon which has been on the rise in recent years. This is particularly due to the vague wording of the legal provisions regulating press freedom, which makes the process of media reform too tardy. If one looks at how the Moroccan journalists continue to arbitrarily and regularly face arrests and criminal persecution when it comes to covering "red lines", one will need to inquire about how freedom of expression can be excised without running the risk of being perceived as abusive.

To conlclude, Morocco's media reform introduced in 2016 remains a flicker of hope for the future of journalism in Morocco regardless of the vagueness of the wording that lead to various forms of injustice. The revised press code remains positive as it abolishes prison sentences for press offenses, but much work still needs to be done as the penal code effectively allows journalists to be prosecuted and jailed for their work. For instance, Hamid Mehdaoui, Badil Info chief-editor, was arrested by the police on July 20, 2017 while he was covering the protests of Rif Movement in the city of Hucima. He was accused of inciting for participation in a banned protest and breaking the laws through speeches and public shouting. In a hearing that lasted over hours, El Mehdaoui was prosecuted for "inciting citizens to break the law" and "participation in the organization of a prohibited demonstration" and was eventually sentenced to three months in prison and a fine of 20000 Moroccan Dirhams. This example says a great deal about how the penal code is still a sword of Damocles hanging over journalists regardless of the progress the media reform of 2016 came with. While Morocco's 2011 constitution guarantees freedom of the press and disallows prior censorship, its vague

language along with the 1963 penal code still in place provide a wide latitude for interpretation and hampers the enforcement of media protections. Provisions of the penal code was introduced by Minister of Justice Mustapha Ramid in 2015, but it is being discussed and debated on. With the context of COVID-19, nothing certain and promising seems in the surface, but what remains factual is the intensity of Moroccan independent journalists to strive for a more liberalized media landscape despite the challenges the current precarious context imposes.

CHAPTER IV: RELIGION AND POLITICS IN THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO: CHANGE AND LACK OF CHANGE

1. Islam in Morocco: Introducing Moroccan Islam

While it is true that Morocco successfully escaped the popular uprisings that swept across neighboring countries namely Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and plunged them into violence and turmoil, the Moroccan street, though, expressed an unprecedented anger to force King Mohammed VI to announce a new constitution, a constitution expected to guarantee liberty, dignity, and social justice, and respond to popular aspirations and to the specific demands expressed by the people during the course of the uprisings[469]. The 2011 Moroccan Constitution, like the previous ones, was written by a commission of experts not elected but rather appointed by the king. Thus, many political parties and civil society organizations failed to engage in significant discussions about the constitution's key articles in the sense that the constitutional reform process was driven by the king's representatives. However, the majority of political parties and civil society actors urged their members to vote "yes" and make the new constitution validated in the end. Although the constitution had been seen as a top-down text, that may lack credibility and should express a popular approval. In other words, even if the constitutional reforms were not prepared by an elected constituent assembly, the new constitution was, in the long run, enacted on 29 July 2011[470]. It is the first constitution promulgated under the reign of Mohammed VI.[471]

The 2011 Moroccan constitution, despite its shortcomings, has succeeded in providing several changes in different sectors. The recent constitutional reform in Morocco enacted by the king in 2011 during the Arab Spring, claimed Islam as the official religion of the state. The principle of freedom of religion was also maintained.

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[469] Mohamed Madani, Driss Maghraoui, and Saloua Zerbouni, "the 2011 Moroccan Constitution: a Crytical Analysis," *The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance* (2012), p. III. The Article is accessible at https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/the-2011-moroccan-constitution-critical-analysis.pdf,retrieved on December 15, 2019.

[470] Ibid., p. 6.

[471] Baudouin Dupret and Jean-Noêl Ferrié, "The Moroccan Constitution of 29 July 2011," *IEMED. Mediterranean Yearbook* (2014), p.133. The article is accessible at https://www.iemed.org/observatori/arees-danalisi/arxius-adjunts/anuari/anuari-2014/Dupret_Ferrie_Morocco_Cosntitution_IEMed_yearbook_2014_EN.pdf, retrieved on December 15, 2019.

It goes without saying that this constitutional reform, which tackles the religious field, upheld the pivotal role that the Moroccan monarchy plays, and the reference to its *Sherifian* origins[472]. The Moroccan state began the process of religious reform after the 2003 bombing attacks in Casablanca. From then, remarkable efforts have been made to promote a suitable Islam for all citizens without discrimination on the one hand, and to establish a moderate Islam as a strategy to curb terrorism on the other hand. After the onset of protests calling for democracy and genuine measures to fight corruption, Mohammed VI announced the new constitution in 2011 in which he no longer considers himself "sacred", as described in Article 23 of the 1996 constitution. Yet, the monarch remains the Commander of the Faithful and the highest religious authority in the country.

In Morocco, Islam is the constitutionally established state religion[473]. Free practice of religion is also guaranteed for everyone. In addition, the constitution declares that the monarch is a descendant of the prophet of Islam as well as the head of the Superior Council of the "*Ulemas*" (religious scholars). Basically, both political and religious authorities are given to the monarch to justify legitimacy. The Moroccan total population is estimated at 34.3 million and more than 99 percent of the population is Sunni Muslim[474]. The 2003 bombing attacks of Casablanca and the frightening number[475] of young Moroccans who have joined the extremist organizations have caused a huge moral panic in Morocco. For this reason, the state has taken measures to curb terrorism, and to dismantle terrorist extremist networks including the promotion of religious strategies supporting Moroccan Islam. Because Islam is often portrayed as the source of violent extremism, Morocco hastened to reconstruct the religious field, and to modernize a new version of Islam through the ministry of religious affairs. For

[472] Ana L. Planet Contreras and Miguel Hernando De Larramendi Marinez, "Religion and Migration in Morocco: Governability and Diaspora," *New Diversities*, 17: 1 (2015), p. 111. This could be accessed at http://newdiversities.mmg.mpg.de/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/2015_17-01_08_Contreras_Larramendi.pdf. Retrieved on December 16, 2019.

[473] According to Moroccan Constitution, Islam is the religion of the State, which guarantees to all the free exercise of beliefs.

[474] According to the International Religious Freedom Report for 2018, United States Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. The report is available on https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/MOROCCO-2018-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf

[475] More than 1.600 Moroccan are fighting in Syria, according to The New York-based Soufan Group and the London-based International Centre for the Study of Radicalization.

this reason, Moroccan state went to great efforts to reform and redefine Moroccan Islam as a more moderate model of Islam in the Middle East and North Africa. The Moroccan government modified its definition of Moroccan Islam to specifically include Sufism as a moderate alternative to militant Islam[476].

2. The Commander of the Faithful and the Religious Reform after the Terrorist Bombing of 2003: Sufism as a Strategic Choice for De-Radicalization

Since 1999, when King Mohamed VI arrived to power, the Kingdom of Morocco has managed to brand Islam. The old and New Constitutions both stresses that Islam is the State's religion and the first foundation of the *Umma*/ nation. As the version of Islam adopted in the country is not similar to the one adopted in other settings such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, Morocco, under the patronage of the King who is the Commander of the Faithful (the highest religious authority in the country), stresses that the Moroccan Islam is based upon the trio of the Maliki legal school (*maddhab*) characterized by flexible interpretations, an openness to reality, and efforts of *Ijtihad*[477] the Ash'arite theological doctrine (*kalâm*), the Commandment of the Faithful (*Imarat al muminin*), as well as Sufi spirituality (*tassawûf*). Generaly, "there has been a re-organization of the religious field over the last ten years"[478] which has paved the way for a more moderate and tolerant version of Islam. Ahmed Taoufik, who has served as Minister for Islamic Affairs in the Moroccan government since 2002, has been supervising the network of Moroccan religious institutions, along with being a major member of the *Qâdiriyya Budshîshiyya*, described the Moroccan Islam as an "updated model of traditional Islam".[479] Morocco affirms that a "middle path" to Islam (*al wassatiya*), which is based on three main doctrinal and spiritual pillars, would represent the country nationally and internationally as a guiding principle, a principle that aims

[476] Khalid Bekkaoui and Ricardo R. Larémont, "Moroccan Youth Go Sufi," *Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, 2: 1, (2011), p.31.

[477] It is an Islamic legal term that refers to independent reasoning and interpretations of current problems which are not covered by the Qur'an, Hadith, and scholarly consensus (*ijmâ*) for the sake of renovation. It is contrasted with *taqlid* (imitation and conformity to legal precedent).

[478] https://www.oasiscenter.eu/en/morocco-reform-moderate-tolerant-islam

[479] Ibid.

at giving a more moderate and balanced form of Islam on the one hand, and establishing Moroccan Islam as one of the cornerstones of Morocco's religious identity, on the other hand. One of the objectives of the Moroccan Islam model is to ensure and reinforce the values of tolerance, moderation, along with societal balance. Additionally, this model is to preserve the religious identity of the state. Throughout many channels and means including government, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs discourse, official media channels, Friday sermons, and the Mohammed VI Institute for the Training of Imams, *Murshidins*, and *Murshidates*, to name but a few, has succeeded in creating and reinforcing a particular model of Islam that copes with the Moroccan environment. Nevertheless, on Wednesday, 1 April 2015, Sheikh Abdesalam Lazâar, who works as the Director of the Mohammed VI Institute, rejected the expression of "Moroccan Islam" by saying "*Islam Wahid*" (there is only one Islam): "that of the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah* through the Prophet's understanding, his companions (*Sahaba*) and their successors (*Tabi'ûn* and *Tabi'ûn at tabi 'in*)"[480]. Therefore, Sheikh Lazâar seems to reject the principle of renewal (*Tajdid*) and stick to a model of authentic Islam (*Taqlid*)[481]. Obviously, we can question point out that there is tense debates between traditionalists, represented by traditional religious apparatus and Justice and Development Party, who struggle to keep the religious status quo, and reformists, represented by modernist academics, leftists, and feminists, who are yearning for genuine reforms within the Moroccan religious paradigm. Which path the Moroccan religious policy is taking?

As he holds the position of a secular political leader, King Mohammed VI also claims his religious authority as *Amir Al-muminin*, the Commander of the Faithful. When he arrived to power in 1999, King Mohammed VI focused on claiming double legitimacy: the religious legitimacy enables him to fulfill the ruler's function as the "Commander of the Faithful", while he manages to keep, at the same time, the authority of the Alaouite dynasty. In this perspective, even though the constitution gives certain prerogatives to ministers and governors, the real power remains in the hand of the monarch. As the religious head of state, all religious leaders are subordinate to the monarch. Basically, the religious leadership of the Moroccan monarchy is linked to the

[480] Cédric Baylocq and Aziz Hlaoua, "Spreading a «Moderate Islam»? Morocco's New African Religious Diplomacy," *Afrique Contemporaine*, 257 (2016), p. 119.
[481] Ibid., p. 120.

Alaouite dynasty that "has ruled Morocco since 1666 and claims descent from the Prophet Muhammad".[482]

In a speech in four languages given to celebrate Pope Franci's first visit to Morocco, King Mohammed VI said that he is the commander of not only Muslim believers but rather the commander of all believers.[483] It is worth pointing out that King Mohammed VI has established himself as a religious leader so as to encounter religious extremism on a global scale. In order to combat Islamist extremist groups in Morocco and preventing illegal migrants them crossing into Europe, Morocco developed partnerships with the EU and the U.S. by doing so, king Mohammed VI succeeded in cultivating the image of Morocco as "a bastion of moderate Islam and of himself as a strategic partner".[484]

The 2003 bombing attacks of Casablanca and the frightening number[485] of young Moroccans who have joined the extremist organizations have caused a huge moral panic in Morocco. For this reason, the state has taken measures to curb terrorism, and to dismantle terrorist extremist networks including the promotion of religious strategies supporting Moroccan Islam. The findings have revealed that all respondents do not accept Islamist extremism. However, what is surprising is that Moroccan Islam, despite the international support it has gained, is rejected by youth who do not trust the Moroccan religious apparatus for they do not feel a part of the state's agenda. Additionally, Sufism, as a form of peaceful and spiritual religious practice and as a state-adopted de-radicalization strategy is losing ground. Within the framework of religious reforms adopted by the state, the latter is to provide critical readings of religion on the one hand, and to start depoliticizing the religious field on the other hand. The unprecedented 2003 terrorist attack in Casablanca, which is classified as the deadliest terrorist attack in the history of Morocco, was carried out by brainwashed Moroccan terrorists. The tragic bombings resulted in 45 deaths including the twelve suicide

[482] Annelle Sheline, "Royal Religious Authority: Morocco's Commander of the Faithful," *Center for the Middle East Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy*, (March 2019), p. 4. The full article is at https://www.bakerinstitute.org/files/14226/. Retrieved on Mai, 2019.

[483] https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2019/03/269353/king-mohammed-vi-pope-francis-religions-coexistence/.

[484] Annelle Sheline, "Royal Religious Authority: Morocco's Commander of the Faithful," *Center for the Middle East Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy*, (March 2019), p. 3. The full article is at https://www.bakerinstitute.org/files/14226/. Retrieved on Mai, 2019.

[485] More than 1.600 Moroccan are fighting in Syria, according to The New York-based Soufan Group and the London-based International Centre for the Study of Radicalization.

bombers. The terrorists targeted a five-star hotel, a Spanish luxury restaurant, a Jewish cemetery, and the Belgian consulate. In response to the Casablanca attacks, the Kingdom formed the Central Bureau of Judicial Investigations, a unit established as a part of Kingdom's counterterrorism push. In addition to the security policy, the Kingdom also looked for other strategies to fight extremism. Because Islam is often portrayed as the source of violent extremism, Morocco hastened to reconstruct the religious field, and to modernize a new version of Islam through the ministry of religious affairs. Morocco sees Islamism as a threat because it invokes violence on the one hand, and challenges the religious legitimacy of the palace, on the other. As a result, a more moderate Islam was promoted to control the religious field. The Moroccan state's policy to influence and control religion was an effort to prevent terrorist acts. The state went to great efforts to reform and redefine Moroccan Islam as a more moderate model of Islam in the Middle East and North Africa.

The Moroccan government modified its definition of Moroccan Islam to specifically include Sufism as a moderate alternative to militant Islam.[486] Groups of Moroccan youth have joined Sufi movements to curb extremist organizations including *Wahhabism* and *Salafi Jihadism*. It is safe to claim that Sufism is no longer a traditional form of religion practiced only by the elderly; it is attracting a larger number of young people. Sufi orders were used as support for the new constitution introduced by King Mohamed VI in 2011 as a strategic response to the initial turmoil represented by February 20 Movement. Sufi Islam has been used to maintain the regime's monopoly over national religious identity. Given the strong social weight of the Sufi orders, namely *Zawaya Tijaniya* and *Zawaya Boudshishiya*, and the large royal gifts they receive annually, they (Sufi orders) influenced disciples to vote for the 2011 constitution. By doing so, Sufi orders are being mobilized as a soft power to implement the strategic roles of Moroccan policies. Hence, those Sufi orders not only address spiritual needs, but they are used to advance the Moroccan state policy. Moroccan Sufi orders could also be seen as ideal partners for the state on the grounds that they embrace the state's cultural modernization policy as a major part of the project to reform the religious field. Recently, King Mohamed VI has engaged in furthering the process of religious reform by modernizing a new version of Islam through new religious

[486] Khalid Bekkaoui and Ricardo R. Larémont, "Moroccan Youth Go Sufi," p.31.

interpretations, policies, training of religious scholars, and the use of information technologies.[487] Basically, these religious reforms might be viewed as pragmatic and politically advantageous factors.[488] To more directly influence Moroccan youth, in 2015, King Mohammed VI inaugurated the Mohammed VI Institute for the Training of Imams, *Murshidins*, and *Murshidates*. This institute promotes a moderate religious framework for not only Moroccans but also the countries in the Sahel and sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, Radio Mohammed VI plays a pivotal role in fostering the culture of peace and co-existence among all sub-cultures and faiths within the Moroccan Kingdom.

The bureaucratization of religion in Morocco is, through the eyes of the state, an efficient counterterror strategy to fight Islamic extremism. In this regard, Morocco's strategy for fighting terrorism has clearly proven that the state views the nature of the phenomenon in the interpretation of religious texts. In other words, the initiative to bureaucratize religion reveals that Morocco perceives violence in the name of Islam as a religious problem that could be solved only by imposing greater state control over religion. The bureaucratization of religion in Morocco was also "a particularly well-funded and well-publicized strategy".[489]

3. The Secular Forces and the Islamist Challenge:

Moroccan monarchs have historically used religion as one of the major forces to legitimize their power. King Mohammed VI also maintains power over both political and religious realms. In other words, the monarch relies on the religious authority and rituals to set himself above the state's pyramid and above each branch of government which enables him to hold unlimited powers. The Arab Spring, which swept to Morocco in 2011 and brought about dozens of popular protests in many cities and villages, forced the state to schedule a snap election (early elections) to pacify the street's anger. The elections resulted, for the first time in the history of the region, in a victory of the Party of Justice and Development which represents the political Islam in Morocco along with the main Islamist movement in Morocco, al *Adl wal Ihsane* (Justice and Charity). The

[487] Driss Maghraoui, "The Strengths and Limits of Religious Reforms in Morocco," *Mediterranean Politics*, 14: 2 (July 2009), p. 196.

[488] Ibid.

[489] Ann Marie Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam: Morocco and the War on Terror* (New York: *Cambridge University Press*, 2017), p. 237.

success of political Islam in Morocco. The PJD, has been running the country since 2011, succeeded in spreading a discourse of "Moroccan exceptionalism" which depicts the Kingdom as an oasis of stability and democracy. In this regard, the idea of the Moroccan exceptionalism is, according to Maâti Monjib, merely one of the Moroccan authoritarian regime's myths to escape universal democracy.[490] Abdelilah Benkirane, the PJD secretary general who served as a Prime Minister of Morocco, also justifies the impediments inhibited his government from achieving democracy, freedom, and social justice, the three main demands during the protests. There are "crocodiles and ghosts" in the political system that blocks democratic progress[491] who work behind the scenes. However, the PJD has been blamed for not using the powers the 2011 Constitution has given to it. During the governmental coalition in which Benkirane spent more than six months to form and because of which he was fired, the monarch appointed the current Prime Minister, Saad Eddine El Othmany from the same party, to form the new government: "For political commentators, this is an image that gives the impression that without the monarchical institution, political life in the country would be paralyzed".[492]

Some believe that the *Makhzen*[493], behind the scenes, attempts to weaken the PJD's popularity[494] even though the Islamist party is still seen as an appendage thanks to which the stability of the system may continue. Not only that, despite the fact that Benkirane, in many occasions, reveals his strong support to the monarchy, King Mohammed VI avoided to intervene in the management of public affairs while allowing him to make unpopular decisions.[495] During his governmental mandate, Benkirane was aiming to maintain good relations with the monarch and was careful not to challenge the monarchical institution's supremacy. Benkirane was not only careful to maintain

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[490] See Monjib's interview with Alyaoum2 at https://m.alyaoum24.com/166354.html?fbclid=IwAR3mc5lNdQWPH4RYjB4Bf_cwxF0baHuZaiAYczk66ZGoqrA3HtKPyYvKODM.

[491] Mohammed Hashas, "Moroccan Exceptionalism Examined: Constitutional Insights pre- and post-2011," *International Affairs Institute*, (December 2013), p. 14.

[492] Ibid.

[493] The *Makhzen* or the storehouse, according to Abdellatif Hissouf, represents an alliance among the monarch, his advisers, businessmen, the security system, and loyalist tribal chiefs.

[494] Abdellatif Hissouf, "The Moroccan Monarchy and the Islam-oriented PJD: Pragmatic Cohabitation and the Need for Islamic Political Secularism," *All Azimuth,* 5: 1 (January 2016), p. 43.

[495] Anouar Boukhars, "Morocco's Islamists: Bucking the Trend?," *Fride and Hivos*, 182 (June 2014), p.4.

good relations with the monarch, he also accepted the idea that the big policies are shaped only by the monarchical institution to which he should be deferent. For instance, the Islamist leader sometimes found himself unable to publicly question the monarch's practices which undoubtedly contradict his own Islamic ideology. Notwithstanding, the way the Islam-oriented PJD governed received criticism by the king. The latter, in one of his speeches, praised the previous government and belittled the efforts made by the current one.[496] Furthermore, the *Makhzen* seemed to be blocking the PJD from initiating real change by highlighting their lack of experience in public governance because of which the PJD's electoral promises to fight corruption and unemployment have not translated into actions.[497] Despite the fact that the moderate Islam-oriented PJD appeared to support the monarchical institution while losing increasingly its popularity and credibility, the PJD leaders seemed to be ready to continue the game in order to make some change from within, as they claim. It is important to admit that political Islam has posed a challenge to the monarchy and its religious authority. It is thus a challenge to the monarch's religious supremacy, and the *Makhzen* in turn does not allow any political block to gain even more popularity which may compete with that of the monarchical institution.

In Morocco, *Al-adl wal ihsane* (Justice and Charity) movement is considered one of the largest organizations, along with the moderate Islamist party PJD and a range of *Salafi* groups that work with an Islamic orientation. AWI, the social movement but not legalized since its founding in 1987, has not engaged in formal politics in the country due to its opposition to the monarchy in its actual form.[498] Abdessalam Yassine, the founder of the movement, described the Moroccan political system as a "compulsory authority".[499] It is useful to argue that the movement has been moderate at the ideological level but radical at the political one.[500] The recognition of AWI as a legitimate organization would be a strong symbolic step forward which certainly would

[496] King Mohammed VI, "Discours à la Nation du 30 Juillet 2014 par sa Majesté le Roi," [July 30, 2014 Throne Speech] YouTube video, 30: 27, July 30, 2013,. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZbLYQQrhrDk.

[497] Abdellatif Hissouf, "The Moroccan Monarchy and the Islam-oriented PJD: Pragmatic Cohabitation and the Need for Islamic Political Secularism," p. 52.

[498] Mohammed Masbah, "Islamist and Secular Forces in Morocco: Not a Zero-Sum Game," *German Institute for International and Security Affairs*, (November 2014), p. 2.

[499] Ibid.

[500] Ibid.

allow the strongest Islamist movement to integrate into the political system.[501] As far as the commandment of the faithful is concerned, AWI refuses to recognize the monarch as *Amir al-Muminin* and criticizes the king's hegemony over the religious apparatus. The movement believes that the last religious reforms by the Moroccan regime has taken a prominent role in state-led efforts to fight the Islamic tide and more specifically AWI.[502]

Back to the mid-1970s, Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine published an open letter entitled as "Islam or the Deluge" through which he attacked King Hassan II describing him as a "corrupt Muslim ruler" and criticizing him for accumulation of wealth at the population's expense.[503] The letter caused Yassine an incarceration in a mental asylum and thereafter imprisonment in 1989. When Mohammed VI came to power in 1999, Yassine embraced liberty marking the first step of reconciliation between the regime and the Islamic movement. Nevertheless, the then AWI leader did not stop his criticisms and he blamed the monarch for the economic crisis that the country was going through, and the high-level corruption. In general, the relations between the Moroccan monarchy and the movement of AWI have, since an early time, been marked by tensions. The movement strongly refuses the king's title of *Amir al-Muminin*. For the movement, there is no king in Islam. Politically, during the Arab uprisings the AWI movements participated and took to the street with the 20 February movement to call for change. It could be understood that this entrance to the political space made AWI mobilize M20F as a vehicle to shake off the monarchy. After several months of protests, AWI withdrew from M60F because of its secular character.[504] This breakaway was seen as the biggest blow which weakened the movement. While the PJD stands for a strategic alliance with the monarchical institution believing that formal political participation is a must to achieve reform, the AWI banned movement sees that reform could not be possible

[501] Maâti Monjib, "The « Democratization » Process in Morocco: Progress, Obstacles, and the Impact of the Islamist-Secularist Divide,"*The Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution*, 5 (August 2011), p. 25.

[502] Vish Sakthivel, "Al-Adl wal-Ihsan Inside Morocco's Islamist Challenge," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, (August 2014), p. 6.

[503] Ibid., p. 7.

[504] Ibid., p.23.

without radical change in the Moroccan political system. In other words, the only difference between the PJD and AWI is the former's pragmatism.[505]

On the other hand, Moroccan secular forces could be generally defined in opposition to Islamists. They are not driven by an Islamic ideology, but they may have their own readings and interpretations of the sacred text. Secular forces base their activism on a clear position against the advances of Islamists in the political mainstream.[506] They are historically identified with the left wing. Although Morocco was considered one of the authoritarian repressive country from 1956 until the mid-1990s, the palace did never ban any political party. For this reason, some of the Moroccan secular parties in Morocco "displayed a degree of structure and organization that is unusual,"[507] and they stand out as real organization to politically impose their ideologies which are different from those of the Islamist parties. For instance, seculars saw the recent religious reforms conducted by the king as a remarkable step to promote a tolerant version of Islam to answer back the radical transformation of Morocco. Whereas, Islamists refuse the state's secularization that does not give due respect to Islam. As a result, the public space has witnessed a plethora of ideological conflicts over issues related to individual liberties and the role of religion in the politics. The PJD expressed dissatisfaction and hinted that they might not vote for the new constitution in case it contained provisions against Islam.

In Morocco, the most important secular parties are the *Istiqlal* (Independence) and the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP). Like the PJD, they both have a network of branch offices throughout different cities, and they both take a close position to the monarchy. Such position might weaken the aforementioned parties at least with people unsatisfied with the status quo. For the USFP and the *Istiqlal*, they seem to view themselves as "government" rather than "opposition" parties one of which is the PJD.[508] It could be assumed that the Istiqlal and USFP parties aligned with the monarchy and they do not dare question what the monarch imposes which was not the case at the era of King Hassan II. Now, the *Istiqlal* and USFP parties are, through the eyes of

[505] Mohammed Masbah, "Islamist and Secular Forces in Morocco: Not a Zero-Sum Game," p. 2.

[506] Ibid.

[507] Marina Ottaway and Amr Hamzawy, "Fighting on Two Fronts: Secular Parties in the Arab World," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, N. 85, (May 2007), p.5.

[508] Ibid.

Moroccans, do not represent the left wing as it was the case before. They were firmly opposing the regime and representing the "true opposition". Now, they pragmatically work with the monarchical institution seeking mutual trust and loyalty, and at the same time, they expect the monarch's protection against the rise of Islamists.[509]

In contrast, the Unified Socialist Party (PSU) which was created in 2005 and led by Nabila Mounib has different views *vis-à-vis* the political system in Morocco. The secular and socialist party actively engaged in the 2011 series of demonstrations to demand a parliamentary monarchy. During the constitutional referendum in 2011, the female activist and the party's leader called for the boycott of the new constitution for the latter does not translate people's demands into action and keeps most of the power in the hands of the monarch. Not only did she call for a boycott of the new constitution, she called for a boycott of the 2011 elections given that both the parliament and the prime minister were not given sufficient powers to rule the country. The Democratic Way (*Annahj Addimoqrati*), one of the radical leftist parties in Morocco, also called for the boycott of elections. Consequently, eleven of the party's members were arrested in Rabat.

Indeed, Mounib has been considered one of the vocal critics of the monarchy in its current form. It is clear that the PSU has, for many years, been confronting the palace in order to achieve democracy and separation of powers, but this does not mean that the leftist party does not show willingness to negotiate the national issues which touches the Moroccan territorial integrity. In 2015, a delegation of Moroccan leftist parties led by Mounib flew to Sweden to attend a meeting with Swedish secretary of state for foreign affairs. The trip's main purpose was to scrutinize the evolution of Sweden's stance on the Sahara issue. Nabila Mounib led a delegation to Sweden to negotiate one of the most sensitive issues that touches the Moroccan territorial integrity, the Sahara. The delegation, led by secretary general of the PSU Nabila Mounib, also comprises Mohammed Ben Abdelkader from the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP), Rachida Tahiri from the Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS), and Moustapha Bouziz from the Unified Socialist Party (PSU). The delegation also included the PJD, represented by Saad Eddine El Othmani the former Foreign Affairs Minister, the Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM) represented by Fatiha Layadi, the National

[509] Ibid., p.6.

Rally of Independence (RNI) represented by Chafik Rachid, and the Constitutional Union (UC) represented by its General Secretary Mohamed Sajid. In press interviews, Mounib was asked whether she had been mobilized by the state to serve its agenda, she revealed her readiness to work on the Moroccan territorial integrity issue. She argued that without the achievement of democracy and the promotion of human rights, the Moroccan territorial integrity will always be attacked and fragmented.

The Moroccan Amazigh movement could also be considered as one of the secular forces in the country. Moroccan Berber/ Amazigh activists are using secularism as they battle cry. They believe that secularism "is the right vehicle to bring about modernization, social justice and democratization".[510] The Amazigh movement has spent decades struggling for cultural recognition in Morocco. Through many Amazigh activists, the movement has been fighting against oppressive policies while trying to promote measures to preserve Amazigh identity. Thanks to non-stop fights with authorities, the Amazigh movement started to gain ground. Two years after ascending the throne, King Mohammed VI "…issued a royal mandating the formation of the Royal Institute for Amazigh Culture (IRCAM) which succeeded in standardizing the Amazigh language and integrated it into schools and the media…"[511] in order to discuss the Moroccan Amazigh movement, it is useful to shed light on secularism as an ideological goal, and a way through which the movement would carry out its social and political goals; democratization, recognition of the Berber language, the Berber history as one of the essential components of Moroccan identity, and above all social equality. Recognizing the Amazigh language in the Moroccan Constitution of 2011 as an official language in Morocco was undoubtedly a remarkable achievement for the movement. Saad Eddine El Othmani, the Morocco's newly appointed Head of Government, spoke to the press in Tamazight and it is the first time that a Moroccan head of government has talked to the press in Tamazight. His talk has been viewed as a reminder of his Berber origin as he belongs to a Soussi family in Inezgane, southeast of Agadir. However, El Othmani does not seem to agree with the secular perspectives of the Amazigh movement. For him, "the Moroccan particularity totally rejects secularism

[510] Samir Ben-Layashi, "Secularism in the Moroccan Amazigh Discourse," *The Journal of North African Studies*, 12: 2, (June 2007), p. 153.

[511] https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/fikraforum/view/the-amazigh-cultural-renaissance

because the state itself is based on the religio-historico legitimacy since the King himself rejects the separation of religion from the state".[512] Moroccan society, he adds, can neither agree to the separation of religion and state while the Moroccan intellectuals tend to import the French version of secularism which is the worst of all.[513] It is essential to point out that within the Amazigh movement, there are two main currents: the moderate current of the Berber movement and the radical one. While the former is generally viewed as having a cultural agenda, the latter seems to have political aspirations.

Secular forces work to fight the Islamization of the state, and to fluently master the international language of democracy. For this reason, the ideological conflicts between the secular and the Islamist blocks over the separation of religion from politics, individual liberties, and gender equality, to name but a few, are always manifest within society. For the Moroccan secular figures, democracy would never see light as long as the Islamist wing insists on the literary implementation of Islamic laws, *Sharia'a*.

4. Corruption and Good Governance: Elements of a Daily Climate

When we discuss corruption, it is clear that the notion is closely linked to power. Corruption could be defined as the use of power to achieve private interests or personal enrichment. Universally, corruption is a violation of human rights and democracy as it brings about nepotism and favoritism heavy repercussions to both individuals and societies. It makes individuals mistrust institutions and leaders. In short, corruption is a major hindrance to development and growth. It affects individuals' civic spirit and impedes the development of national economy. Besides, although Morocco has a favorable position as a destination for foreign investments, corruption affects negatively both domestic and foreign investors.

Recently, the notion of corruption has become part and parcel of the Moroccan debates on development. According to recent data (2018) Transparency International, Morocco is positioned 73 out of 180 countries. Morocco's ranking reveals the scope of the phenomenon. Almost all sectors suffer from corruption and corrupt leaders. The

[512] Samir Ben-Layashi, "Secularism in the Moroccan Amazigh Discourse," p. 161.
[513] Ibid.

Moroccan Criminal Code criminalizes bribery, extortion, and abuse of office.[514] The judicial system is perceived to be corrupt and to lack independence (HHR 2015) in the sense that companies have reported that bribes are given for favorable court decisions; the courts have been given irregular payments by more than two-thirds of households in Morocco (The Global Competitiveness Report 2015-2016). Additionally, businesses see that the judiciary is influenced by the executive and is not able to challenge government regulations. According to Enterprise Surveys 2013[515], companies perceive the courts as one of the major constraints to doing business in Morocco in the sense that Moroccan judges lack professionalism on general commercial matters. In other words, lack of professionalism and transparency are two main obstacles that both local and foreign businesses complain about. Consequently, "foreign companies often settle disputes through arbitration instead of local courts".[516]

The sector of police in Morocco is also rife with corruption and impunity. The limited police effectiveness and respect of the rule of law are two aspects of the sector's corruption. Households reported that they have paid bribes to the police during 2015. Along with that, foreign NGOs report that Moroccan authorities often dismissed complaints. Accordingly, Transparency International: The Global Coalition against Corruption reported that almost eight in ten citizens perceive the police to be corrupt while almost one-third of Moroccans do not trust the police.

The Moroccan public services are also characterized by corruption. Administrations are generally perceived to lack resources, low skilled employees, and pervasive corruption. In order to get public utilities, bribes are often given to officials and administrators. In this regard, Moroccan citizens reported that they have given gifts to obtain a permit or document in return (TI 2016). Besides, government bureaucracy is also seen as one of the obstacles that hinders companies from doing business in Morocco.

Health is a sensitive sector with a significant long-term impact on Morocco's economic performance. The sector includes public hospitals' activities, clinics, medical laboratories, and pharmaceutical companies, to name but a few. In 2015, a study by the

[514] https://www.ganintegrity.com/portal/country-profiles/morocco/

[515] https://www.enterprisesurveys.org/en/data/exploreeconomies/2013/morocco#corruption

[516] https://www.ganintegrity.com/portal/country-profiles/morocco/

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) revealed that the health sector in Morocco is exposed to corruption.[517] Another survey conducted in 2011 by the Central Office for Prevention of Corruption (ICPC) also emphasized that health sector is rampant in corruption; bribery, favoritism or nepotism, gratuity, improper medical treatment, over-charging for services offered, and payment for non-compliant services such as medical certificate and abortion operations.[518]

Moroccans have always been linking corruption with the exploitation of natural resources. Globally, Morocco is the world's largest exporter of phosphate, an industry highly controlled by the royal family and its close associates. The latter enjoy social, political, and economic privileges and they enjoy immunity for corrupt practices, therefore. Morocco's sand quarrying industry is also one of the resources that corruption is rampant in. The sand industry is generally controlled by well-connected people with privileged access (*Morocco News Board*, Feb. 2013).[519]

The issue of corruption has become a daily topic tackled by Moroccans, journalists, and activists. Talking about the exploitation of natural sources by the monarch and his milieu (*Makhzen*), and the failure of development in Morocco are being discussed more than ever before. At the 15th annual commemoration of ascending the throne, his majesty expressed his astonishment. In an official speech, King Mohammed VI asked "where is the health? And who is benefiting from it?!" Immediately after the speech, the question swept into social networking sites and prompted a wave of sarcastic reactions by Moroccans. It was an unprecedented speech in which the king has acknowledged, for the first time, the huge social inequalities within Morocco. Such inequalities are due to the unjust distribution of wealth. It is worth claiming that Morocco is placed 130th of 17 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI). Furthermore, the United Nation Programme for Development (UNDP) declared that "Morocco's gross per capita income has not

[517] CEOD, "Strengthening Integrity in the Energy, Transportation and Health Sectors," (June 2018), p. 55. https://www.oecd.org/mena/competitiveness/Morocco-Strengthening-Integrity-in-the-Energy-Transportation-Health-Sectors-2018-EN.pdf

[518] ICPC (2011), Study on the phenomenon of corruption in the health sector: Evaluation and Diagnostic, Mazars.

[519] Ibid.

improved much between 1999 and 2012".[520] The UNDP warns that without allocating resources to the poor, investing in the domain of health and education, encouraging job creation, protecting the environment and natural resources from overexploitation, promoting non-discrimination between the sexes, and discouraging systematic emigration, no increase in the no increase in the Index of Human Development will see light.

The new Constitution was described as a promise by King Mohammed VI to improve the socio-economic standards in Morocco, and redistribution of wealth in a transparent and democratic way. The Islamist party of Justice and Development also raised high expectations regarding the fight against corruption. Like the case of Tunisia and Egypt, the 20 February Movement took to the street to ask for freedom, democracy, social equality, and more importantly an end to corruption. The new constitution provides improvements but in reality, it has not met the expectations of the people.[521]

5. Constitutional Reforms of 2011: Change within Continuity

The historical call for constitutional reforms and constitutional or parliamentary monarchy in the 70s and the 80s along with the already-established parties have paved the way for the positive constitutional amendments of 2011. The 20 February movements played as a direct player in the modifications of the constitution. However, it was not the only player which shaped the uprising. It was the historical background embodied in the maturity of parties and the historical progress of Moroccan politics which shaped the demands as being less high and less hurting. Second, it was this historical background which made a stable environment for a democratic move. Third, it was this historical background which allowed many positive changes to take place. As a result, they have been many positive amendments in the constitution which makes Morocco, a case to be followed. The history of politics and struggle in morocco has shaped the recent amendments of the constitutions. The historical will for democracy of some political parties has prepared a milieu for the constitutional change of 2011. This historical will lead to the reform of 1996 which pushed Moroccans to seek a

[520] Claudia De Martino, ""Where is Health?" Echoing the King's 2014 Speech in Light of the Delay in the Implementation of the New Constitution," *Euspring*, (February 18, 2016), p. 2.

[521] Ibid., 3.

completion of the already-established reforms in 20011. Then, the change of 2011 did not emerge only out of the popular pressure, but it had had a long history behind it. Before independence, a consciousness of the necessity of democracy and institutions began to form. National union of popular forces along with the Moroccan federation of labor called for the necessity of constitutional reforms. With the constitution of 1962, many political agitators like NUPF refused to vote for the constitution as it is granted. In 1996, since the relation between NUPF and the palace had almost collapsed, the party turned to vote for the constitution of the time. So, there was a process of struggle of many parties which heralded the new constitution of 2011. Hence, the historical factors embodied in the historical will for democracy of the parties, the historical nature of the implied constitution along with the king historical will for reform have led to the change of 2011.

The New Constitution is said to a granted text. However, it was a result of a consensus between political parties and other political actors, and the constitutional committee considered all the Moroccan political voices.[522] Hence, it is a consensual constitution which is one of the features of democracy. The constitution formed a base for a fair distribution of authority, shared powers between the monarch, the government and the parliament. The relationship between the king and other institutions is based on partnership. The constitution also allows the parliament and the government to function independently. It is important to add that the constitution also gives significant importance to human rights and individual liberties. It guarantees rights of opposition and assures its commitment to the international law of human rights and freedoms. Morocco has shifted from a "representative democracy" as suggested by King Hassan II to a "participatory democracy" as demanded by the protests of 2011. However, protesters demanded parliamentary monarchy in which the King reigns but does not rule.

Since his arrival, King Mohammed VI has sent signals of gradual transition to democracy. Specifically, in 1999, he set a new concept of power, he ruptured the past practices, and he gradually started decentralizing powers. He emphasized on four main points: his role as the arbiter of the political system, his status as a Commander of the

[522] Mohammed Darif, "Morocco: a Reformist Monarchy?," *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, 3: 1, (2012), p. 83.

Faithful, respect of the ceremonial nature of the monarchy[523] (the sacredness of the King), and the adoption of democratization to the Moroccan socio-cultural realities. Continuity is manifest in Mohamed VI's rule in the sense that he uses his predecessor's policy of ministries including the ministry of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Justice, Islamic Affairs, the Secretariat of State of National Defense, and the Secretariat General of Government.

During the Arab uprisings, Morocco witnessed the emergence of the 20 February Movement that put pressure and demanded genuine reforms. The local and the regional pressures led to a shift in policies concerning governance and this was expressed in the King's speech of March 9th. The movement demanded the abolition of the constitution of 1996, the abolition of the parliament, and solutions for unemployment, poverty, and corruption. Demands also included the recognition of Tamazight, the release of political prisoners and detainees of expression, more freedom, justice, and dignity. The movement asked the civil society to join demonstrations. The Moroccan Association of Human Rights (AMDH), the leftists and Amazigh people along with the Justice and Charity Movement joined the movement. One of the successful things is that the Islamists and the leftists reached an agreement and mutually demanded the same reforms. They put aside the ideological differences, placing more emphasis on the establishment of a civil and modern state. Thereafter, King Mohammed VI responded quickly to the demands and he created a committee to draft the new constitution. "The Moroccan Constitution of 29 July 2011 is the first constitution promulgated under the reign of Mohammed VI."[524] Unlike the previous constitutions, this one does not present the king as the supreme representative and as above all the institutions of the country. It grants many rights and freedoms and the separation of powers even though many critics believe that the King still holds significant powers and thus he reigns and rules.[525] They also believe that the political life does not reveal

[523] Anna Theofilopoulou, "Morocco's New Constitution and the Western Sahara Conflict: a Missed Opportunity?," *The Journal of North African Studies*, 17: 4 (May 2012), p. 688.

[524] Baudouin Dupret and Jean-Noêl Ferrié, "The Moroccan Constitution of 29 July 2011," *IEMED. Mediterranean Yearbook* (2014), p.133. The article is accessible at https://www.iemed.org/observatori/arees-danalisi/arxius-adjunts/anuari/anuari-2014/Dupret_Ferrie_Morocco_Cosntitution_IEMed_yearbook_2014_EN.pdf,

[525] Mohamed Madani, Driss Maghraoui, and Saloua Zerbouni, "the 2011 Moroccan Constitution: a Critical Analysis," *The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance* (2012), p. 6. The Article is accessible at

any significant change, for the time being. The head of government does not seem to enjoy the strength given by the new constitution which has been clear in government coalitions.[526]

The challenge of the New Constitution was to secure the transition to democracy and to strengthen the civil society. - This constitution should not be grasped as a legal paper that inaugurates a democratic era, but as a paper that frames the next stage in the transition to democracy. For other critics, all what was presented in the New Constitution are merely ideas that need to be put into practice. In addition to that, violations of human rights still exist, and this is against the content of the constitution.

6. Moroccan Malaise and the Notion of '*Hogra*': February 20 Movement and '*Hirak Rif*''

The 2011 youth-driven revolts in Tunisia and Egypt gave birth to a tsunami in Morocco's political landscape. On February 20th, a group of Moroccan protesters took to the streets and "demanded increased political and economic rights and freedoms."[527] Across Morocco, the movement organized rallies in which thousands of Moroccans took part.[528] Unlike the neighboring countries, the February 20 Movement did not ask for the removal of the monarch from office or for the abolition of the monarchy as a political system. Instead, they called for critical constitutional reforms. Born in the context of the Arab Spring, the movement did acquire regional and national legitimacy and embraced both Islamist and leftist political figures, civil society activists, intellectuals, students, and journalists, to name but a few. However, after Mohamed VI responded to some of its demands by announcing immediate constitutional revisions, the movement started to lose effective influence. The Moroccan scenario was different from that of the Tunisian and Egyptian one in the sense that the Moroccan regime did not react violently to counter the movement. Therefore, the crackdowns did not cause

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https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/the-2011-moroccan-constitution-critical-analysis.pdf,

[526] Ibid., p. 135.

[527] Anne Wolf, "Morocco's Hirak Movement and Legacies of Contention in the Rif," *The Journal of North African Studies*, 24:1 (October 2018), p. 1. The article is downloadable at https://sci-hub.do/10.1080/13629387.2018.1538188

[528] https://www.mei.edu/publications/moroccos-arab-spring

brutality as much as in the MENA region. This does not mean that some protesters did not encounter the police brutality. Mouad Belghouat known as *Al haqed*, a Moroccan Rap singer, produced a song in which he changed the national sacred trilogy, which is God, Nation, King (*Allah, al Watan, Al Malik*) into God, Nation, Freedom (*Allah, al Watan, al Huriyya*). Consequently, he was arrested in September. In order to understand the movement's strategies, it is useful to point out that social media platforms including Facebook and YouTube played a significant role in not only promoting its visibility, but also in facilitating its operational organization. In other words, the February 20 Movement through social media websites, was a political game changer for a generation yearning freedom and change after decades of oppression and tyranny.

By contrast, the emergence of *Hirak Rif* in October 2016 sparked the country due to the death of Mohcine Fikri, a fish seller in the Rif's coastal town of Al-Hoceima. The fish seller was crushed by a garbage truck while trying to rescue his fish confiscated by local authorities. In solidarity with a humiliated death, as described, daily protests in the Rif were organized to condemn the incident. Protesters were demanding an end to the marginalization of the Rif region, a region that has been marginalized since the Hassan II's era. The list of demands also included a better healthcare system, improved infrastructure, an end to corruption, and increasing job opportunities in the region. Unlike the case of 2011, Moroccan authorities arrested hundreds of protesters including children and many journalists. Despite the numerous attempts by authorities to quell the movement, the latter swept into other cities and villages. It is true that the Popular Movement was not framed by political parties or organizations, but a number of political and civil society groups expressed their sympathy with the wave. After that, the protesters' demands evolved from socioeconomic grievances into political messages. Protesters raised slogans denouncing the *Makhzen*'s corruption, unfair distribution of national resources, and the poor governance. The movement was disregarded by the authorities which increased the scope of the protests. Not only that, the protests reached their zenith when Nasser Zefzafi, the Hirak leader, was arrested after he interrupted a Friday sermon prayer. Inside the mosque, Zefzafi accused the Imam for criticizing and discrediting the movement. Consequently, he was sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Hirak Rif is often considered to be a continuation of the 20 February Movement which in turn an extension of the Arab Spring. On the globe, the popular protests in

Morocco represent a success on the grounds that the wall of fear has fallen apart. The only difference between the 20 February Movement and *Hirak Rif* is that the former relied on the support of political parties, unions, and associations, whereas the latter did not trust the mediation of any political institutions which Zefzafi referred to as "*Dakakin Siyasiya*"/ political grocery stores.

This theoretical chapter has been meant to provide insights into religion and politics and the dynamics of social and political change in post-2011 Morocco, and also to help the reader understand the analysis of newspaper coverage of aspects this dissertation is focusing on.

PART TWO
ANALYTICAL PART

COVERING RELIGION: A NEWSPAPER CONTENT ANALYSIS

CHAPTER I: TOWARDS A MORE POLARIZED SOCIETY: MOROCCAN NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF *HIJAB*, INHERITANCE, POLYGAMY, EDUCATION, AND SEXUALITY-RELATED ISSUES

1. Preliminary Discussion

Since Morocco is categorized as a transitional setting, topical issues related to Islam still divides the country, polarizing the nation and the political elite. Various segments of the population have divergent views *vis-à-vis Hijab*, inheritance and gender equality, polygamy, eating during Ramadan, abortion, and homosexuality. These segments act by strong supporters belonging to political parties, social movements, civil society organizations, and traditional as well as digital media platforms. It is indispensable to argue that that the post-9/11 era has generally been characterized by a tense debate on matters related to Islam in various, and Morocco is no exception. In the context of changing events and globalization, the relationship between Moroccan society and religion is far from immune to foreign impacts and the rise of global extremism disseminated through books, audio-visual contents, TV channels, and websites. This explains why the religious policy in Morocco and the idea of safeguarding traditions the only mechanisms the state adopts to provide citizens with a religious mobilization.

Since the terrorist attack in Casablanca on May 16, 2003, the content of print media in Morocco has been brimming with articles that either celebrates Islam and Islamic traditions or with others that controversially promote liberal and secular values. The dramatic attacks awakened political actors and public authorities to how religious discourses are constructed and spread, and also to how powerful they are in attracting a significant number of Jihadists who seek to harm the stability of the nation. Political actors and public authorities agreed in 2003 to hold everyone accountable and to keep an eye on the ideological messages both traditional and modern means of communication circulate. Messages spread through Friday sermons, CDs, radio stations, TV channels, newspapers, and magazines have become under scrutiny. The speech King Mohamed VI delivered on May 29, 2003 marked the adoption of a multi-dimensional strategy meant to alleviate the aftermaths of the terrorist attacks of May 16. Along with putting stress on the role of the authorities in protecting the nation and the stability of the country, King Mohamed VI was crystal clear in the role media outlets

are expected to play in order to curb the spread of extremist ideas. He insisted that an educational, religious, cultural, and media approach be adopted so as to instill openness, modernity, hard work, moderation, and tolerance in society. As a response to this, the audio-visual media in Morocco have known a quantitative and qualitative progress embodied in the category of religious media programs presented as well as in the birth of religious media outlets such as Mohamed VI Channel and Sadissa Channel. All these efforts are meant to defend and promote what has become referred to as "Moroccan Islam". Hence, managing the religious question has become a strategic choice since 2003. In this regard, it is important to mention that the religious field, like education, health, and economy, is given priority and enough resources by political actors.

Islam is the religion embraced by 99% of Moroccans, according to official statistics. There exists a Jewish minority in the country and other community of other faiths. Despite the fact that the constitution insists that Islam is the State's religion, it does also guarantee religious freedom and liberty of belief and practice to the believers of other faiths. The Penal Code is another story as it instills the centrality of Islam in Moroccan society and makes attacking Islam, the spiritual life of Moroccans, and attempts to "shake off" people's belief in Islam punishable. Eating in public and attacking places of worships are also punishable. At the social level, a set of rituals and traditions are religious in essence. Marriage ceremonies, funerals, national and Islamic holidays, and festivals are among the social events during which religious and spiritual rituals are displayed through reading the Quran, doing prayers, or chanting religious songs.

Politically, the Moroccan Monarchy, like the majority of States in the Arab world, gives a central role to Islam and Islamic traditions because of the religious legitimacy they provide the ruling dynasty. Here, Islam and politics are interconnected in the political culture of the country. The King remains the highest political and religious authority according to the Constitution. Still, there are many other players in the religious field such as political parties, associations, and religious groups that are not recognized by the State such as *Al Adl Wal Ihssan* Movement. The King is the Commander of the Faithful and the Constitution gives him the authority to produce symbolic religious knowledge under the guidance of several state-sponsored councils and institutions.

The role of media lies in its power to reach the audience and shape a public opinion. Hence, it is not surprising to observe the state's focus on media outlets. Media outlets

are powerful tools that provide useful in shaking off beliefs, constructing meanings, and in perpetuating the state's policies. Because of the sensitivity of religious contents, the authorities are keeping an eye on what is published on newspapers and magazines. The media field in Morocco should also be perceived as a battlefield within which ideological clashes take place. These clashes are about visions, strategic identical values that characterize the media outlets involved, and are also about opinions on politics, gender, Islam, and the dynamics of change in society. The way media outlets approach the religious question remains conditioned to very specific historical contexts and also to the dynamics of change that the audio-visual field and the technological advancement know.

This chapter is not meant to assess the print press coverage of issues related to Islam, but it is an attempt to discuss some issues that have been discussed on newspaper articles since 2003, the year when the debate on Islam, terrorism, secular values started in the country. This analysis is also useful in providing insights into the battlefields where conflicting and irreconcilable ideologies clash in Morocco. It is worth noting that there exists an important margin of freedom of expression that allows journalists to bring to the surface a tense public debate regarding sexuality-related issues and Islam, provided that the latter is not insulted or impugned as a source of legitimacy to the Monarchy. Hijab, inheritance, polygamy, jurisprudence, and sexuality-related issues like sex outside marriage, abortion, and LGBTQ+ community remain among the topics that contribute to the polarization of Moroccan society Not only does this chapter seek to analyze the content of newspapers in Morocco, but it is also meant to deconstruct the discourses print media outlets disseminate.

2. Discussion of Newspaper Coverage

Professionalism and objectivity are essential in the way journalists analyze the news. While looking at a substantial number of articles published on different newspapers, journalists tend to insist that professionalism and objectivity be adopted. Indeed, this is seldom, if not never, the case, not because journalists cannot be both professional and objective, but because a given news could be analyzed professionally without necessarily maintaining a degree of objectivity. Here, it was easily observed that the coverage of independent newspaper content is totally different from that of partisan newspapers. This could be explained by the fact that journalists working for

independent newspapers enjoy a significant margin of freedom of expression compared to the ones functioning within the partisan press. Unlike the independent press, the partisan press is generally confined with ideological values and tend to seek votes in the coming elections, the reason why they are more careful while presenting religious news and frames to the audience.

2.1. The Case of Ibn Chekroun's Friday Sermon of June 25, 2004

This case is important because of its historical context as well as the content of the Friday speech Redouan Ibn Chekroun on June 25, 2004 at the largest and most famous mosque Hassan II of Casablanca. This Friday's sermon was an attack on artistic festivals organized by the government, on the workplace where people of different sex work, and on several feminist organizations and profiles that seek the promotion of gender equality in Morocco. This incident took place after the adoption of the new Family Code known as *Moudawana*. The sermon was broadcasted live on national TV and radio stations. Along with this, Ibn Chekroun had just been appointed the head of the religious council of Casablanca before the incident. The Ibn Chekroun incident brought back the type of ideological clashes that had existed between leftists/liberals and Islamists in the 1980s. The content of newspapers was brimming with ideological meanings and conceptions about 'them', as a reference to the conservative block that opposes modern values, vs 'us' as a reference to liberals. The debate on Ibn Chekroun started in the parliament when the Moroccan MP Mrs. Zoubida Bouayad and found its way to media outlets, creating an ideological war waged through columns, newspaper headlines. Zoubia Bouayad described Ibn Chekroun's sermon as a set of "extremist and disgusting ideas" do not go hand in hand with the democratic choice King Mohamed VI had announced in 1999. Several feminist organizations demanded the ousting of Ibn Chekroun, demands that *Assabah*, *Al Ahdath Al Maghribia*, *Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki*, and *Bayan Al Yawm*, four leftist and liberal newspapers in Morocco, all reported. On the other hand, the Justice and Development Party and its allies in civil society, particulary *Harakat Attawhid Wal Islah*, decided to stand in support for Ibn Chekroun and his ideas. The war between *Attajdid*, the official supportive voice of the PJD and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribia* on the statements made by Ibn Chekroun was unprecedented in the country. This pressure led by newspapers in particular pushed Ibn Chekroun to change his tone

regarding women and subsequently adopted an open and modern discourse. *Al Ahdath Al Maghribia*'s issue Number 1986 of July 3, 2004 reported a new Friday speech delivered in Casablanca and in which he insisted on respecting the "efforts women make in the building of society".[529] This affair not only brought about a heavy newspaper coverage of the incident but was also a reason why assessing the state-adopted religious policy and the religious profiles appointed by the state became needed.

2.2. **Women, the Veil, Polygamy, Inheritance and the Family Code**

The new Family Code of 2003 represented a revolutionary step towards gender equality in the country. King Mohamed 6, after receiving recommendations from political parties, NGOs, and the religious council of Ulama he presides, presented to the nation the Family Code, known as Moudawana, which has given major rights to women and restricted polygamy. This reform and the discussions that had marked society before 2003 was also the reason behind a tense debate on newspapers. The way *Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki* and *Bayan Al Yawm* newspapers represented the two women's march of "liberals" in Rabat and that of "Islamists" in Casablanca on March 12, 2000 turned the debate on the reform into a battle between pro-feminist values and Islamists.

Attajdid, the newspaper of *Attawhid Wal Islah*, a movement that is ideologically supportive the Islamist Party Justice and Development, was controversial during the debate on the Family Code. Even after the adoption of the Moudawana, *Attajdid* devoted a section to Fatwa in which citizens seeking religious guidance address questions and expect answers from religious experts partnering with *Attajdid*. It is a newspaper that defends Moroccan conservative values and identity and stands in opposition of Western ideals. France 24, a French TV Channels, brought the controversy caused by *Attajdid*'s *Fatwa* (religious guiding interpretation) which tremendously conflict with the progressive articles of the new Family Code.[530] The uproar Attajdid caused in 2013 and 2014 was the result of the religious interpretations it published. Mustapha El Khalfi, the chief editor of this newspaper at that time and a key member of the Justice and Development Party, recognized the mistake and believed

[529] See Al Ahdath Al Maghribia, issue 1986, July 3, 2004.

[530] See the reportage of France 24 at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HxfBeLghcos. Retrieved on March

that such mistakes shouldn't have happened.[531] The Fatwa remembered most is the one that suggested polygamy even without the first wife's approval, something that completely conflicts with the new Family Code. While the state's prerogatives tend to be pro-women's rights, Attajdid, through the Fatwas it published, resisted this change in society and eventually isolated itself. Mohamed Sassi, a leftist key figure, criticized the coverage of *Attajdid* and called for more openness so that women would have the full rights.[532]

Attajdid also insists on the sense of family while discussing the gender question. It gives a high value to family as the framework within which women could live with decency. Attajdid even warns those in power to proceed with initiating laws that make Morocco experience that 'disgust' and 'issues' Western societies go through. Women are framed as a source of chaos and society could never be prosperous if Moroccan women are treated the way Western women are treated. Here, both *Al Adl Wal Ihssan* Movement and *Attajdid* agree on the fact that the condition which Moroccan women live in today are just the result of the state's return to backwardness. The *Attajdid* newspaper, in several articles, suggests a return to the gist of the Shari'a law in order to explore how Islam empowers women. Instead of acclimating laws with the current context, *Attajdid* suggests working on changing the current social context in order to pave the way to a return to *Shari'a*. *Attajdid* also insists on benefiting from the Islamic heritage which is "rich of examples of successful and highly respected women".[533]

Attajdid defends Morocco's adoption of international treaties and laws that empower women. Nevertheless, it does not accept Morocco's full adoption of these laws, proposing a rejection of the articles that do not go hand in hand with the teachings of Islam. Like the PJD, *Attajdid* promotes women's rights the way Islam defines them, not the way Western philosophies approach the gender question. *Attajdid* seeks to safeguard the Islamic identity that is at stake if women in the country are totally free to decide on their bodies. The sense of family, for *Attajdid*, is what helps women remain chaste. Marriage is the institution that protects women from the ills of society and also from sex outside marriage which both the PJD and *Attajdid* reject. The newspaper endorses women's literacy and involvement in the political process provided that the

[531] Ibid.
[532] Ibid.
[533] Attajdid, March 16th, 2017.

latter is not accomplished at the expense of family. The absence of the sense of family in Morocco explains, according to *Attajdid* newspaper, the societal ills such as sexual assault, rape, and prostitution that exists in Morocco.

Assabil is another newspaper published by an Islamist movement. It is a weekly independent newspaper that shares the discourse of Salafism among its audience. The chief editor is Ibrahim Taleb and the newspaper is known of its harsh attacks of secularism, Western values, and freedom of belief and expression and is known internationally. This newspaper criticizes the PJD because of its involvement in the political process. Politics is a corrupt game, as *Assabil* defines it. The figure is issue N. 272 which appeared on July 1, 2018. In this issue, *Assabil* attacks the believers and defenders of individual liberties and contends that human rights activists are just squandering their time and energy while trying to instill individual freedoms in the new penal code.

Figure 7: *Assabil*, Issue 272, July 1, 2018



Unlike *Attajdid* which picks some freedoms and reject others, *Assabil* rejects the whole Western arsenal of human rights and liberties. For *Assabil*, Western settings are disgusting and falling apart due to the social disorder that characterizes societies. Sexual intercourse outside marriage, for both *Assabil* and *Attajdid*, should not be a human right adopted in Morocco if stability of the nation is the concern of the ruling elite. In issue

N. 277 published on December 1, 2018, *Assabil* interviewed Ahmed Raisouni, a well-known Islamic jurist, a former head of the Movement of Unity and Reform, a key member of the Justice and Development Party, the current President of the International Union of Muslim Scholars, who contended that those who demand gender equality in inheritance directly insult the King, the Commander of the Faithful and the highest authority that is responsible for protecting the Islamic identity of the nation. The figure below is the front-page of *Assabil*'s issue 277. The issue was *Assabil*'s reactions to both Tunisia's move to recognize equal share in inheritance among men and women and to the recommendation made by the National Human Rights Council to recognize equality in inheritance.

Figure 8: *Assabil*, Issue 277, December 1, 2018



Assabil also devoted issue N. 269 of April 1st, 2018 to rejecting the calls to alter the Islamic law and tradition on inheritance (see the figure below).

Figure 9: *Assabil*, Issue N. 296, April 1, 2018



Assabil, in the front-page of issue N. 296, states that "the attempts to change the inheritance system in Morocco is the result of two decades of hatred from the leftist and secular movement in society". This confirms *Assabil*'s editorial line that defends Islam but also attacks the "enemies of Islam" as it refers to them. *Assabil* believes in the notion of the nation/ umma that is homogenous and that should be prepared to defend Islam from foreign and domestic threats. Publishing articles on the history of the Caliphates and their "successful Islamic rules. Sharing a nostalgic view about the Islamic history, *Assabil* contends that the Moroccan society is corrupt, full of ills, and unfaithful to the teachings of Islam. In order to prove this, this Salafist newspaper rejects modernity and defends the Shari'a law as the only framework where Muslims could live in happiness and serenity. Interestingly, *Assabil* severely attacks *Al Adl Wal Ihssan* Movement despite the latter's defense of the Caliphate system. Political Islam, for *Assabil*, is just a justification of some greedy Muslims who seek privileges democracy, which is represented as a purely Western product, provides.

Attajdid did also devoted an issue to react against the recommendation made by the National Human Rights Council to recognize equality in inheritance. The latter is a constitutional institution that deals with all questions relating to defending and protecting human rights and freedoms, guaranteeing their full exercise and promotion as well as preserving the dignity, rights and freedoms of citizens, individuals and collectives, in strict compliance with national and universal standards in this area. The

CNDH contributes to reinforce the human rights system. It also works to protect it, promote it and develop it considering the universality and indivisibility of such rights. Besides, it contributes to encourage the implementation of the principles and rules of international humanitarian law. For the first time in 2015, CNDH suggested that the Moroccan government grant women in Moroccan the same share men get in inheritance. The call was again repeated in late June 2018. *Attajdid* devoted Issue N. 3883 published on July 14th, 2018 to react against this call and express its rejection of the CNDH's attack against the Moroccan Islamic identity (see the figure below). For *Attajdid*, "CNDH attacks the constitution that makes reference of Islam as the State's religion, and also attacks society as a whole and its values".[534]

Figure 10: The front page of *Attajdid*, Issue 3883, July 14, 2018



Assabil's tone about polygamy is somewhat different from that of *Attajdid*. The latter defends polygamy as an Islamic right God has given to men but does not suggest that men have more than one wife just for the sake of polygamy. On the other hand, *Assabil* harshly attacks the secular block that aims at not only restricting polygamy in Morocco but making it illegal and punishable. *Assabil* devoted more than two issues just to attack

[534] See issue 3883 of *Attajdid*, published on July 14, 2018, p. 1.

Ahmed Assid, a key active secularist in Morocco well known for his criticism of Muslim fundamentalists and Arabization, whose friend Malika Mazzane claimed in December 2014 that she had been in a love affair with him and that he had harassed her several times in the past. Because Assid was married and had kids, the scandal was in the front-page of most print and digital newspapers. Mrs. Mazzane subsequently revealed a customary "marriage contract" written and signed by Assid. She also stated that Assid "destroyed my house and my life because of the alleged passion he had for me… and was one of the reasons behind my divorce".[535] After coming under pressure and receiving threats of having denounced Assid, she made public a video of him in her house, as well as a number of photos them together."[536] Assid has never accepted to discuss this affair on media outlets. *Assabil* seized the opportunity to bring to the fore the blessings of polygamy Islam grants to men to help them abstain from sinful practices like adultery and prostitution. On May 1, 2015, which marked the tenth anniversary of *Assabil*, it published issue N. 191 whose front page (See figure below) addressed the idea that having two wives is better than having one and multiple mistresses. The front page was also a support of

Figure 11: *Assabil*, Issue N. 191, May 1, 2015



[535] "مليكة مزان تتهم عصيد بتهديدها وتنشر فيديو له" [Malika Mezzane accuses Assid of threatening her and publishes a video of him]. *Tizpress* (in Arabic). 2014-12-23. Retrieved 2021-06-02.

[536] Med Amine (2014-12-23). "عصيد.. هذا رأيي في وثيقة الزواج التي كشفت عنها مليكة مزان". *فبراير.كوم / موقع مغربي إخباري شامل يتجدد على مدار الساعة*. Retrieved 2021-06-02.

Interestingly, Al Ahdath Al Maghribya, an independent leftist newspaper promoting gender equality and the caramelization of sexual harassment, reported Assid's incident with Malika Mazzan without giving justice to the latter who had hoped the press NGOs would stand in support of her. In an article entitled "believe it or not: has he (Assid) shared bed with her or hasn't he do so? This is the question", *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* suggests that readers should not take literally what Mazzane said about her relationship with Assid, arguing that she might have just used metaphors as she is a poet! In other articles, *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* framed Malika Mazzane as a deranged Amazigh woman who has lost a sense of direction in her life. From sharing news about her support of the Kurdish minority in Turkey and the state of Israel to her insults of Arabs, Al *Ahdath Al Maghribya* presents Malika Mazzane as a mentally deranged person whose thoughts lack coherence and organization.[537] In this regard, it is interesting to observe how *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, an independent newspaper promoting socialist secular values and women's rights, has been supportive of Ahmed Assid in this incident without displaying any kind of objectivity while covering Malika Mazzane. While trying to find out the reason behind this coverage, I came to realize that Assid has been a faithful contributor to Al Ahdath Al Maghribia since its first appearance in 1999. In his interview with Ridouane Remdani at Med Radio, Ahmed Assid mentioned that among the newspapers he respects most is *Al Ahdath Al Maghribia* because of the space it has provided members of the Amazigh movement since 1999 so they can express their ideas and have them reach a significant number of Moroccans.[538] Assid also stated that had never been renumerated for the articles he sent to *Al Ahdath Al Maghribia* for publication and that he was happy to contribute voluntarily. This relationship between *Al Ahdath* and Ahmed Assid explains the reason why this newspaper not only impugned Malika Mazzane's story but also attacked and mocked her in several other articles.

Assabah, another independent broadsheet founded in 2000 by Abdelounaim Dilami who is the editor-in-chief as well, is also a controversial newspaper of a leftist leaning. Its coverage of Malika Mazzane's affair with Ahmed Assid was not different

[537] See the archive of Al Ahdath Al Maghribia to find out the article that have so far been published on Malika Mazzane at https://ahdath.info/?s=%D9%85%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%83%D8%A9+%D9%85%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%86. Retrieved on May 6, 2021.

[538] See Ahmed Assid's interview with Remdani at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_kdO5ZZgMU. Retrieved on May 6, 2021.

from that of *Al Ahdath Al Maghribia*. Even though the newspaper tends to promote freedoms, women's rights, and secular ideals, Malika Mazzane was sympathized with by *Assabah*. On the contrary, her accusations of Assaid were mocked and not taken seriously. *Assabah* remains the third mostly read daily newspaper in Morocco with the average of 32556 copies sold monthly. According to *Le Desk*, *Assabah* is known of its fake news as well as its supportive coverage of security apparatuses in Morocco.[539]

Both *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* promote gender equality and an equal share in inheritance between men and women. They endorsed the recommendation CNDH made in 2014 and 2015 and supports feminist human rights organization. After studying 30 issues of these two newspapers, it has been observed that no female journalist wears the veil and that the veil/ Hijab is framed as a dress of extremist women. The head scarf is represented as a source of backwardness and fear in society. The figure below shows is an article that appeared on *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* on July 24, 2015, Issue N. 5423, on page 17 and entitled " Hijab/ the Veil is a return to the age of ignorance and it is a type of intellectual decadence".

Figure 12: *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, Issue 5423, July 24, 2015



Both *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* do not make conservative women active participants in the coverage; that is, instead of providing them with their platforms so that these women will have the chance to talk about themselves, *Al*

[539] https://maroc.mom-rsf.org/fr/medias/detail/outlet/assabah-1/. Retrieved on May 7th, 2021.

Ahdath in particular talks on their behalf and rejects to interview them or any member belonging to the PJD, the Charity and Justice Movement, or the Unity and Reform Movement. The opinion of Islamists or even of the ordinary citizens whose ideas and dressing protocols are not favored by *Al Ahdath Al Maghribia* does not have a place in the latter. In 2004, the editor-in-chief of *Al Ahdath Al Maghribia* Mohamed El Brini was interview by *Al Ousbouiya*, a Moroccan weekly newspaper, and clearly stated that

> We give the floor to the enlightened who believe in the real Islam, the modern Islam, the Islam that meets the needs of people… we cannot give the floor to the extremists who doubt the religious beliefs of Moroccans, who doubt our state's democratic institutions, who call for Hijab which I appose… this conflicts with our editorial line and we are crystal clear about this matter… we cannot give the floor to those who question Morocco's sovereignty over its Western provinces… and for us, we do not care about the leftist platforms that give the floor to the extremists in the name of democracy… we see the results of this![540]

Al Massae, which was launched by Rachid Niny, Taoufiq Bouachrine, Samir Chaouki and Mohamed Aslifi in September 2006, is an independent publication and has no affiliation to the government or any political party. It is based in Casablanca. In October 2008, its publisher and editor Rachid Niny was condemned to pay 6,120,000 dirhams (560,000 euros) for alleged "defamation" and "public injury" for a November 2007 article about the presence of an unnamed judge at an alleged same-sex marriage in Ksar Kbir. In November, around 500 persons demonstrated in Rabat against the government and supporting freedom of expression and information. In December, Niny was condemned again to pay 620,000 dirhams for alleged "defamation" and

[540] See the full interview with the chief editor of *Al Ahdath Al Maghribia* at *Al Ousbouia* Newspaper, issue N. 145, published on March 18, 2004.

"public injury", accused by the dean of Rabat bar association. These high sanctions compromised the continued publication of the newspaper. In June 2011, Rachid Niny was sentenced to a year's imprisonment for "disinformation" following his criticism of Moroccan intelligence agencies. While looking at more than 30 issues of this newspaper, it was easy to conclude that the newspaper avoids ideological clashes and attempts to maintain a high degree of objectivity. Several leftist and Islamist figures have alike been interviewed by *Al Massae* as a move to provide its platform to various political and social actors and let the audience take a stance. Unlike *Assabah* and *Al Massae* that depends on its unmentioned sources to publish news about the Islamists, Al Massae interviews them and let speak about themselves without speaking on their behalf.

Between 2011 and 2020, *Al Ittihach Al Ichtiraki* newspaper, the official newspaper published by the Social Union Party, the average of 43 articles were published on inheritance and 31 articles on polygamy and the progress the New Family Code came with. This partisan newspaper supported Idriss Lechkar, the head of the Social Union Party, when he argued that the inheritance system adopted in Morocco was not fair and that the majority of women in the country suffered due to it. Lechkar was attacked by the conservative block and *Al Ittihach Al Ichtiraki* newspaper answered back defending the chief secretary of its party. The 43 articles published since 2011 on inheritance were all supportive of NGOs and scholars who call for altering the inheritance system. All the academic scholars interviewed on this matter by *Al Ittihach Al Ichtiraki* newspaper share their ideas about the Moroccan inheritance system as an archaic social and political system. Polygamy is represented as a backward act Islamists defends. Without insulting Islam, *Al Ittihach Al Ichtiraki* newspaper defends the Family Code of 2003 and frames Monarch as the savior from the dogmas the conservative block spreads in society. *Al Ittihach Al Ichtiraki* newspaper encourages moderate and modern interpretations of Islam that help religion and modernity reconcile instead of clashing. Digging in the newspaper archive at the National Library of Rabat, I came to find that before 2009, the year when the PJD did successfully in the parliamentary elections, *Al Ittihach Al Ichtiraki* newspaper demonized the Islamists describing them as “backward”, “terrorist”, “the enemies of the nation”… The tone started waning down as the Socialist Union Party looked forward to future coalition with the PJD in the government. Here, it could be safety deduce that the partisan press in Morocco, unlike

the independent one, remains reluctant to discuss openly several issues in order that the audience, potential voters, will not be shocked and also that the political parties will successfully manage to be part of governmental coalitions. Here, the elections, economic privileges, and ministerial portfolios are the ultimate objectives political parties seek to accomplish through their newspapers. Whereas, the independent press enjoys a significantly large margin of freedom of expression that enables it to bring to the fore topics deemed shocking and controversial to the audience.

Annahj Adimocrati/ the Democratic Way is a partisan newspaper published by the Democratic Way Party, a communist, Marxist, socialist and anti-imperialist left wing political party founded in 1995. The party boycotts the elections and calls for a secular democratic state where there is no place for the *Makhzen*. *Annahj Dimocrati* does not receive enough popularity nor enough funding from the state, which explains why sometimes its newspaper fades away from the market and sometimes it is available in Moroccan major cities. The party is active in several movements and unions like its members' presence in the trade unions, committees for defending public social services or supporting social struggles, the unemployed university graduates movement, fighting against "savage liberalism", privatization, and deregulation. The party seeks more implication of its militants on the Moroccan human rights movement, opposing the human rights violations of the regime. The struggle for democracy, denouncing the actual "*façade* democracy" through active campaigning for the boycott of elections, and reclaiming free and honest elections, with the base of a democratic constitution made by a Constitutive Assembly. It is known of its struggle for recognition of the Amazigh language and culture as official and gives the regions with Amazigh majorities the maximum autonomy. Furthermore, it is known of its support of the people's struggles, and above them the Palestinian people's, and the struggle "against the normalization with the "Zionist entity". The Democratic Way Pary also supports the Sahrawi people's struggle for self-determination, direct negotiations between Morocco and the Polisario Front and peaceful solutions. *Annahj Dimocrati* newspaper covers on a variety of issues such as marginalization, the circumstances under which the "oppressed" work and live in Morocco, the authoritarian culture in the country, women's rights, human rights, and secularization. The newspaper is weekly and appears every Tuesday. The editor-in-chief- is Mustapha Brahma who is also the head of the party. It is weekly issue N. 290 published on December 18, 2018, *Annahj*

Dimocrati newspaper addressed the prospect of secularization in Morocco as a condition to build a strong democratic national state. Here, this issue is just one of many others that appear annually and that this political party makes use of to call for a secular state where religion is the affair of individuals and not of the state. A significant space on the front page was allotted to discussing Moroccan women's contributions in the gender development witnessed in the country in the few last decades (see figure below).

Figure 13: *Annahj Dimocrati,* Issue N. 290, December 18-24, 2018



Unlike *Al Ahdath Al Maghribia* for instance, *Annahj Dimocrati* always associates women's empowerment with the historical struggle against the Makhzen and the ruling elite. It mentions names of women killed or arrested during their struggle on campuses in the 1970s and 1980s. *Annahj Dimocrati* revolutionizes the debate on women and gender equality and accuses the defenders of polygamy of backwardness. Paradoxically, it is supportive of the Republic of Iran and its military forces against foreign capitalist interventions. *Annahj Dimocrati* suggests that Moroccam female employees in the field of industry and agriculture need to become affiliated to labor unions and political parties so that their voices will be heard. The issue N. 399 which appeared on March 2, 2021 was a clear call for women to become involved in the political process to demand change of their professional circumstances and become freed from the lobbyists owning the major agricultural lands where these women work (See figure below). *Annahj Dimocrati* seeks the involvement of women in the political field that should allow them to speak out again harassments, low incomes, humiliation,

and the "inhuman" work conditions. Unlike Al Ahdath Al Maghribya that seeks change for the sake of women wearing the veil, *Annahj Dimocrati* encourages Moroccan women to act, lead, and be the harbinger of change through their active involvement in the struggle for gender equality, democracy, and development.

Figure 14: *Annahj Dimocrati,* Issue N. 399, March 2, 2021



As Annahj Dimocrati Party boycotts the elections, its newspaper does not take into account how it should address its ideas or the number of votes they might lose if they cover this way or another. Generally, *Annahj Dimocrati* does trespass the red lines and goes beyond the mainstream discourse in Morocco. The newspaper believes in democracy as it is defined internationally and rejects humiliation of the proletarians. It supports social movements and is active in the streets during protests. This leftist newspaper denounces polygamy and suggests an emancipation from religious dogmas that have given the existing elite more chances to exercise a total control over the mindset of the "marginalized" Moroccans. The newspaper promotes gender equality and stresses on the adoption of international Declaration of Human Rights which grants women and men the same rights and duties. Inheritance is actually no exception for this radical leftist newspaper. The Family Code, which is regarded by national and international communities as a breakthrough King Mohamed VI accomplished in his first years, is not celebrated by *Annahj Dimocrati* exactly the same way the other partisan newspapers do. On the contrary, *Annahj Dimocrati* still contends that women deserve more rights compared to what Moudawana has granted and that this legal reform is not the result of the King's efforts alone but rather the outcome of a decade of women's struggles for emancipation, freedoms, and gender development. However,

Annahj Dimocrati sometimes fades away from the market due to the absence of enough financial resources. When it is available, it is hard to be found in every city and town because of the high cost of distribution. The newspaper remains almost unknown compared to the very small number of copies it sells on a weekly basis.

Generally, inheritance, polygamy, the veil, and the *Moudawana* do not bring the national press together. On the contrary, these topics are battlefields where ideological clashes take place. While these religion-related issues/themes create more wounds, polarization, and divisiveness in society, they are still not debated in depth. Partisan newspapers tend to avoid covering these issues, especially a while before the elections. This explains how worried they are about the outcomes of elections and future government coalitions instead of mobilizing the audience and sharing intellectual ideas with them. The independent press, in this respect, enjoys more freedom while bringing these issues to the surface.

2.3. Education and Art on Newspapers

Education and art are two themes that are usually discussed in connection with Islam. While the conservative block seeks to Islamize textbooks, educational spaces, and artistic products, the secular forces in contemporary aims at modernizing them. Arabic is popularly perceived as a sacred language because it is the language of the Quran, the holy book Muslims worldwide believe in. this explains to a large extent why the ideological war wages higher and higher on print and digital media outlets whenever the policy of Arabization is brought to the surface. The discourse of Moroccan newspapers on education is not the same. The ideological color of each newspaper explains the latter's stances on education.

The discourse of partisan press on education is stronger than that of independent newspapers. This could be explained by the fact political parties usually tend to associate education with the Islamic identity of Moroccans, language, Islamic values, and with combatting the threats of Westernization. *Attajdid* newspaper, an Islamist weekly partisan newspaper in Morocco, stresses on identity and language in its editorial line. The newspaper seeks to consolidate Islamic values through educational textbooks and prevents Arabic from foreign and domestic threats. *Attajdid* calls for instilling the Islamic identity through schools and textbooks, a goal the Justice and Development

Party works on accomplishing. More than 20 issues of *Attajdid* have been look at between January 2006 and May 2012, it was easy to observe that this partisan newspaper calls for the protection of the national cultural and linguistic identity from the threats imposed by the deep state in the country. The deep state in Morocco is framed as a group of people and institutions working for foreign interests, usually for French ones, at the expense of the Islamic identity of Moroccans. *Attajdid* also criticize the way radical Islamists in Morocco think of education. It accuses them of radicalism and calls for modern and lenient methodologies that diversify the goals of education in Morocco without jeopardizing the national Islamic identity and heritage. It suggests that the teachings of Islam should be introduced to student at both public and private schools and that Arabic should also be taught for students in higher education.

Attajdid insists on the need to put an end to illiteracy, especially among women, within a reasonable time frame. To encourage the enrollment for illiteracy classes, *Attajdid* suggests relying on the national media and mosques to help people fight illiteracy. For *Attajdid*, this method should not only help in the fight of illiteracy but also in the consolidation of the Moroccan Islamic values. For *Attajdid*, there should be a democratic educational system in Morocco that involves students regardless of their economic background. *Attajdid* criticizes the current educational system and accuses the previous government of wasting time and financial resources on designing unfruitful textbooks. Instead, it suggests that there should exist a sound governance so that genuine educational reforms get adopted and teachers and educational professional finally work with environments where their dignity is protected.

Attajdid's issue N. 1579 published on January 26th, 2007 attacked the Justice and Charity Movement that had announced that Morocco's move to revise textbook of Islamic studies was due the result of a foreign pressure.[541] Here, it could be noted that *Attajdid*, being an Islamist party, remains moderate in the way it assesses the state's educational policies. In its issue N. 1577 published on January 24th, 2007, in its issue N. 1598 published on February 22, 2007, and in issue N. 1573 published on February 18, 2007, *Attajdid* criticizes the absence of adequate number of tables, classrooms, teachers, and of crowded classrooms.[542] In issue N. 1595 published on February 19,

[541] See *Attajdid*, issue N. 1579 published on January 26th, 2007.
[542] See *Attajdid*, Issue N. 1577 published on January 24th, 2007.

2007 and issue N. 1572 published on February 17, 2007, *Attajdid* believes that the government must increase the salaries of teachers and heed the demands they raise in their protests in front of the parliament.

It is important to point out that *Al Alam*, the daily Arabophone newspaper of the Istiqlal Party/ Independence Party. The newspaper was founded on September 11, 1946 and its current editor-in-chief is Omar Al Darkoli. In 2001, it was the second largest daily in the country with the average of 100,000 copies sold. In 2003, the number dropped to 18,000 copies. During the mid-1970s the paper was frequently banned by the Moroccan authorities with its sister publication, *L'Opinion*, and *Al Muharrir*, another oppositional paper. *Al Alam* is a conservative and monarchist daily that also displays the Istiqlal Party's anti-colonial consciousness against French imperial rule. Indeed, *Al Alam*'s coverage on education is not significantly different from that of *Attajdid*. Both tend to seek the endorsement of Islamic identity through Arabization and textbooks. Between 2007 and 2012, more than 120 articles appeared on *Al Alam* tackling the theme of education. They were either informative regarding the new schools or universities expected to be built, or about the difficult circumstances teaches encounters in rural areas, or about the mismanagement of financial resources caused by government. Interestingly, the criticism of the government's educational policies wanes down when the Independence Party is part of the government coalition. For *Al Alam*, Quranic schools should be funded and that all resources should be made at disposal to promote and develop the teachings of Islam Al Qarawiyyin University has always consolidated since it was built.

Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki, the daily Arabophone newspaper and the voice of the Social Union Party, is not radically different from the two previous partisan newspapers in terms of the way it covers education. However, this socialist newspaper is open to the adoption of French language as the language of textbooks and classrooms alike, a policy that both *Attajdid* and *Al Alam* have rejected and criticized as it should, according to these two conservative newspapers, put the Islamic, linguistic, and cultural identity of Moroccans at stake. On the contrary, *Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki* is supportive of the French model of learning as it is, according to it, more useful for students and graduates. *Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki* rejects considering Arabic a sacred language just because it is the language of the Quran. For this newspaper, Arabization has always been the embodiment of inequality in society as the elite's kids are sent to schools where the

language of instruction is French or English. *Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki* supports the protests led by educators and criticize the government of giving a deaf ear to their demands. *Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki* supported the calls to reform Islamic texts so that Jihadism would be curbed in society. Modernizing teaching methods and teaching democratic values, human rights, and the gist of good citizenship is, according to *Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki,* the objectives the ministry of education in Morocco should fulfill.

Education represents one of the most important topics for Moroccan independent newspapers, too. *Almassae* frequently covers scandals of corruption within the ministry of education to push forward accountability. Its stance *vis-à-vis* Arabization and potential reforms of Islamic textbooks is neutral compared to other independent newspapers like *Assabah* and Al *Ahdath Al Maghribia. Almassae* finds it enough to interview experts of different perspectives and let the audience choose what intellectual side is worth adoption. *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribia* frame the failure of the educational system in Morocco as the result of decades of pressure maintained by conservative lobbyists. These two newspapers, through a sensational reporting, turns education as a battlefield where binarism, instead of a healthy debate of reforming education, finds its way and dominates the landscape. *Al Massae* interviews experts of different perspectives while *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* give the floor to a few secular profiles they often invite. In fact, the ideologization of educational reform in Morocco is more manifest in the independent press since the latter's coverage is expected to reach out to the maximum number of readers and not meant to attract voters.

Between January 2016 and January 2017, approximately 28 articles appeared on *Assabah* addressing the importance of sexual education, 16 articles on *Al Ahdath Al Maghribia*, 8 on *Al Massae*, none on the Islamist newspaper *Assabil*, and no article about the topic on both the two partisan conservative newspapers *Al Alam* and *Attajdid*. Sexual education is still treated as a taboo topic by conservative newspaper that suggest that youth embrace the teachings of Islam the way their ancestors did so they can live in chastity and be faithful to the teaching of the Quran. The independent newspapers are also critical of the status quo and call for a healthy educational system. How the educational system should be depends on how each newspaper defines education and perceives its function in modern societies.

Figure 15: *Al Ahdath Al Maghribia*, Issue N. 5843, Monday March 7, 2016



نعم لإصلاح المناهج التربية الدينية، لكن أي أساس؟

تحية لعناصر الأجهزة التي تحارب الإرهاب الظلامي

In this article, Aziz Oumami, a Morocco columnist, supports the reform of Islamic studies textbooks which King Mohammed VI requested the government consider. This article favors the step and emphasizes that this reform could take place without negatively changing the Moroccan sense of identity. Here, *Al Ahdath Al Maghribia,* which published about 25 articles in 2016 on this reform, favors the reform that Islamists rejected.

Art is also among the topics that polarizes society. Newspapers differently cover on art, artists, and artistic gatherings and products. Mawazin International Festival, which annually attracts a significant number of national and international artists and attendees in the different stages held in Rabat, the capital city of Morocco, is either celebrated or attacked depending on which newspaper one is committed to reading. *Attajdid*, the Islamist partisan newspaper and the voice of the PJD, always attacks this festival even though it is organized under the patronage of King Mohamed VI. *Attajdid* stresses that Mawazin Festival is a waste of huge sums of money that Moroccans need to lead a decent life.On June 2nd, 2016, Attajdid's issue N. 3877 addressed a tough criticism of Mawazin Festival (See Figure below).

Figure 16: *Attajdid*, Issue N. 3877, June 2nd, 2016



In this issue, *Attajdid* provides an answer to why those who are against Mawazin "are not protesting this year". The answer, for *Attajdid*, is that the last year's arrests of protesters against Mawazine might have been perceived as a warning. In issue N. 3877, *Attajdid* stresses that the parliament is giving a deaf ear regarding the noise and security issues caused by this festival. It also discusses the amount of money invested on this festival when the majority of youth are unemployed, and a big number of families live in poverty. In other issues of *Attajdid,* the latter also criticized Mawazin festival defining it as "an attack against our national Islamic symbols", especially after the transparent dress Jennifer Lopez appeared with on stage. While the organizing committee of this festival defends it and argues that it should promote co-existence and art for art sake, *Attajdid* argues that the festival provokes Moroccans and attacks their Islamic identity and symbols. Mawazine is a Moroccan International music festival held annually featuring many international and local music artists. The festival is presided over by Mounir Majidi, the personal secretary of the Moroccan King Mohamed VI and founder and president of Maroc Culture, the cultural foundation that organizes Mawazine and other events.[543] Officially, Mawazine is one of several events which are intended to promote an image of Morocco as a tolerant nation, and a post on the event's website declares that the goal of the festival is to promote Rabat as a city open to the

[543] See Nick Vivarelli, "Justin Timberlake to Open Morocco's Music Festival" at https://variety.com/2014/music/news/justin-timberlake-to-open-moroccos-mawazine-music-fest-1201112457/, retrieved on May 18, 2021.

world. It has nonetheless sparked controversy, and some Moroccan newspapers like *Attajdid* and *Assabil* have criticized the event for "encouraging immoral behavior," as well as critiquing its purported financing by Moroccan state-owned companies or private companies whose only client is the Moroccan state. Every year, *Assabil* devotes one or two issues to addressing its rejection of Mawazin. The latter is represented by *Assabil,* an independent Salafist newspaper, as "fornication".

Interestingly, Assabil refers to Moroccan national art and the state-sponsored media outlets as sources of "fornication". In Issue N. 193 published on June 1st. 2015, *Assabil*'s front-page was an attack on both 2M TV channel that broadcasted Jennifer Lopez's performance in Mawazin Festival, and also on Nabil Ayyouch's *Much Loved*, a controversial movie that addressed sex tourism in Marrakech, corruption, homosexuality, and sex work (See figure below).

Figure 17: *Assabil,* Issue N. 193, June 1st, 2015



In this cover page, *Assabil* addresses a question as an attempt to hold 2M TV channel accountable for broadcasting Jennifer Lopez with a transparent controversial dress while performing on Mawazin stage in Rabat. On the same page, *Assabil's* headline is a harsh attack on *Much Loved*. In the articles of page 3 and 4, *Assabil* stresses that money is spent in Morocco on the promotion of corruption and fornication, which Islam expects us to end. Two weeks after Lopez's performance, Al Ahdath Al Maghribia, a leftist independent newspaper, published almost ten articles on this debate. Mokhtar

Leghzioui, the editor-in-chief, published a column entitled “ladies and gentlemen, Lopez is greeting you”. In this article, he rejects the Islamists’ wrath towards Mawazin Festival and Lopez’s performance in it with a transparent, bikini-like, dress. Leghzioui argues that attacking local media for broadcasting a singer’s performance and focusing on poses and how she is dresses means that extremism is still on the rise and that the future of the country is precarious. Not only did *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* positively covered Lopez’s performance, but it also mocked at Abdelilah Benkirane, the head of government from the Islamist party PJD, and the MPs who had been angry about the organizing committee of Mawazine. Here, *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, like *Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki*, suggests focusing on the performance, lyrics, and dances instead of “the legs of a woman”. On the contrary, *Attajdid*, the newspaper deemed the closest to the PJD, regarded Lopez’s performance and appearance on 2M TV channel an “insult” to Morocco’s traditions and religious values of Moroccans who took to social media to vent their anger. In June, the head of the government sent a letter to the HACA, urging it to take legal action against 2M. Benkirane considered the broadcast of the concert “a blatant violation of the Moroccan Constitution, of audiovisual legislation, and legal provisions related to the company SOREAD 2M.” on July 3, 2015, *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* reported on the HACA’s rejection of Abdelilah Benkirane’s complaint letter about 2M’s broadcasting of Lopez’s concert in Rabat. Through publishing a photo of Lopez with her dress next another photo of Abdelilah Benkirane with his hand on his head as a sign of shock and loss, *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* tends to display the head of government’s powerlessness in front of HACA, a powerful state institution (see figure below).

Figure 18: *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya,* July 3, 2015



To conclude, education and art remain two battlefields where newspapers ideologically clash. They bring about a war of ideas or disagreement of totally opposing ideals, ideologies, or concepts through which newspapers' owners or the party that sponsor them seek to mobilize, if not to polarize.

2.4. Coverage of Sexuality-Related Issues: Abortion, Sex outside Marriage, and Homosexuality

A look at Moroccan newspapers, especially independent ones, tells a great deal about important sexuality-related issues are in newspapers' agenda-setting. Topics of rape, sexual harassment, sex outside marriage, prostitution/sex work, abortion, and homosexuality. Here, news coverage plays an essential role in shaping public understanding of sexuality-related issues in important ways. While taking a look at the articles in which the words "sex outside marriage", "abortion", and "homosexuality" appeared between 2015 and 2018, the following remarks were taken:

- Moroccan independent newspaper content is brimming with stories of sexuality-related issues.
- Sexuality is no longer a taboo topic in Morocco, and newspaper contribute to bringing to the fore a public debate on legalizing/ criminalizing sex outside marriage.
- The ideology of the newspaper explains the way sexuality is covered.
- Leftist newspapers such as *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* encourage an open debate on topics society avoids discussing.
- Sex outside marriage is illegal in Morocco, and newspapers such as *Attajdid* and *Assabil* (Islamist newspapers) reject the calls to legalize it.
- *Assabil*, an independent Salafist newspaper, attacks the secular forces in society, and rejects their calls to build a more modern society. It proposes the belief in Islamic values and prophet's practices in order to remain chaste. In several articles, it discusses how important marriage at an early age and fasting in helping avoid sex outside marriage.
- Partisan newspapers avoid covering sexuality-related issues, and even *Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki* tend to avoid publishing extensively on sexuality. This could be

explained by political parties' interest in attracting voters/ supporters instead of shocking them through articles.

- Partisan newspapers never address the sexuality minority question as the topic is still not socio-culturally reconciled with in Morocco.
- On January 23, 2017, *Al Massae*, an independent mostly read Moroccan broadsheet, allotted its front page and the first headline to covering the "marriage of two guys with a sexual perversion in Ksar Kbir according to Moroccan marriage rituals" (see figure below).

Figure 19: *Al Massae*, January 23, 2017



Here, *Al Massae* uses the word sexual perversion instead of homosexuals/ homosexuality or gays, which denotes its rejection of the practice.

- On November 1st, 2019, *Assabil*'s issue N. 288 was a clear rejection of the calls for sexual freedoms (see figure below).

Figure 20: *Assabil*'s Issue N. 288, November 1st, 2019



In this issue, *Assabil* suggests "either a state of *Shari'a* and law or total chaos". For this Salafist newspaper, legalizing and recognizing sexual freedom in Morocco is a call raised by the secular block that serves the prerogatives of foreign countries. For *Assabil,* legalizing sexual freedoms should bring out a chaotic scene in society. In this issue, and on pages 4, 5, and 6, *Assabil* attacks the secular discourse that calls for legalizing sex outside the institution of marriage and "sexual perversion" which is a reference to homosexuality.

- On March 16, 2015, *Assabil*'s issue was a harsh criticism/ attack of the secular block calling for women's right of abortion. The issue appeared after the National Conference on abortion held by the ministry of health. The conference was held in Rabat and several religious, sociologist, health experts, and civil society activists were involved. The conference witnessed a tense ideological debate between the famous secular sociologist Abdessamad Dialmy and the well-known religious scholar Mustapha Ben Hamza.

Figure 21: *Assabil*'s Issue N. 188, March 16, 2015



In this issue, *Assabil* is seeking to answer why "they (a reference to secularists) are legalizing abortion by force?". "Killing the fetus between scholars (religious scholars) and abortionists". The word used here to describe civil society and scholars calling for the right of abortion is "abortionist". On page 18 of this issue, there is an interview with

Ahmed Raissouni who states that "abortionists are trying to bring shame to women while Islamists seek to protect women's dignity and chastity".

- On March 15, 2015 *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, a leftist socialist independent newspaper, attacked Mustapha Ben Hamza and doubted his scholarship. For *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* Mustapha Ben Hamza lost temper during the conference and insulted Abdessamad Dialmy only because the latter had enlightened Ben Hamza that only the Maliki school of jurisprudence considers abortion a sin while the other three schools of Islamic jurisprudence allow it in the first weeks of pregnancy. For *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya,* Ben Hamza did not accept to be enlightened by a sociologist about religious ideas he should already know and share with Moroccans.
- Between January 2016 and January 2018, the word "consensual sexual intercourse" appeared 41 times on *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* and 29 times on *Assabah.* Based on the issues looked at, these two independent newspapers always seek to open a public debate about sexual freedom in Morocco. They both support the normalization and recognition of sexual freedoms in Morocco.
- On May 11, 2017, Assabil's headline was "Sex between law, religion, and freedoms" (See figure below). In this issue, Assabil is sending a warning to society. For Assabil, secularists are coming up with a new religion in Morocco.

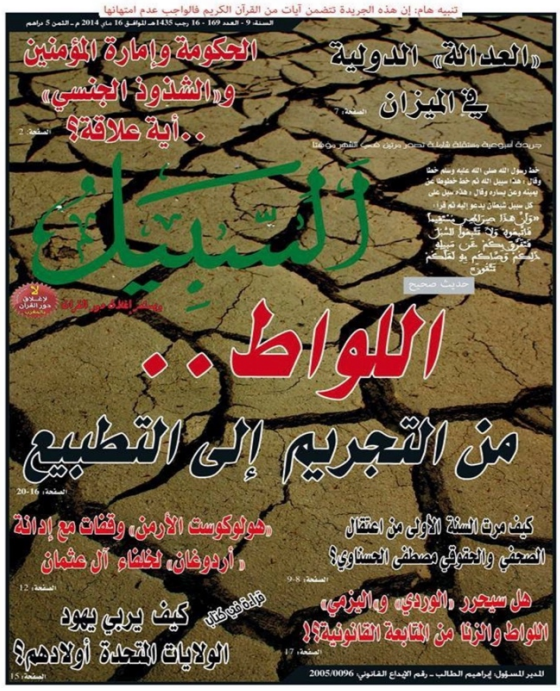
Figure 22: *Assabil*, May 11, 2017, Issue N. 252



- For Assabil, homosexuality is framed as a disgusting act. It is always associated with Lut's story the Quran narrates. Though Lot was not born among the people

he'd been sent to preach to, the people of Sodom are still regarded as his "brethren" in the Quran. Like the Biblical narrative. the Quran states that Lot's messages were ignored by the inhabitants of the cities/ tribes, and Sodom and Gomorrah were subsequently destroyed. The destruction of the cities is traditionally presented as a warning against rape and homosexual acts. In issue N. 169 published on May 16, 2014, *Assabil*, with an unprecedented tone, appeared with “Homosexuality… from criminalization to normalization” as a main headline with other shorter, but more controversial, headlines like “The government, the Commander of the Faithful, and Sexual Perversion: Any Relationship?” (see figure below).

Figure 23: *Assabil*, Issue N. 169, May 16, 2014



In this issue, Assabil attacks also El Houssein El Ouardi, the Moroccan minister of health in Abdelilah Benkiran’s government, and Driss El Yazami, the president of the National Council of Human Rights. “Are El Ouardi and El Yazami making sexual perversion (homosexuality) and sex outside marriage legal?” (See figure above).

- *Al Ayyam*, an independent weekly newspaper known historically of its daring headlines, appeared on May 20, 2015 with a new daring issue N. 665. In this issue, *Al Ayyam* problematizes homosexuality and seeks to provide new different insights about it. In this issue, there is a controversial interview with

Mohamed Zahid, an Imam in a French mosque, Zahid is a homosexual. In the interview, the Imam narrates his story with homosexuality, the Quran he wrote and learned, his Ph.D. in religious studies, and the South African gay he has married (see figure below).

Figure 24: *Al Ayyam*, May 20, 2015, Issue N. 665


الملف

20

في حوار حصري مع إمام مسجد بفرنسا مثلي جنسيا:

البحث عن أجوبة لحيرتي أوصلني للحصول على الدكتوراه في الإسلام والمثلية الجنسية

كتب "القرآن والجسد" وتزوج من جنوب إفريقي اعتنق الإسلام

Here, not only does *Al Ayyam* normalize the debate on homosexuality among Muslims, but it also seeks to reconcile Islam with homosexuality. The latter is presented and framed as a normal biological detail, not as an indication of any sexual perversion, a term used by *Al Massae* and *Assabil*.

- On June 11, 2015 *Al Ayyam* appeared with issue N. 669. 8 pages of this issue were devoted to sexuality in Morocco, sexual freedom, sex before marriage, and to introducing Abdessamad's Dialmy's theory of Morocco's sexual transition. For *Al Ayyam*, virginity should no longer be associated with the women's hymen that society gives too much importance. *Al Ayyam's* issue N. 669 shares a new shocking statistic that 56% of Moroccan unmarried adults have sexual intercourse (see figure below)

Figure 25: *Al Ayyam*, Issue N. 669, June 11, 2015



Al Ayyam is generally a liberal independent newspaper. Its coverage of sexuality-related issues is deep compared to *Assabah*'s. This depth is manifest through the number of insiders and experts *Al Ayyam* interviews before sharing its stances on religion and sexuality.

To sum up, sexuality is another important theme that polarizes the media scene in Morocco. As a result, Moroccan society remains hard to understand due to the multiplicity and heterogenous views held by each group of people. Where people live and to what extent they have access to sources of information such as newspapers and magazines could determine the way the conceptualize the world around them.

3. Concluding Remarks

Moroccan newspapers, especially independent ones, contribute the making of society and to the construction of meanings. The Hijab, inheritance, polygamy, education, art, and sexuality-related issues such as abortion, sex outside marriage, and homosexuality make the contemporary print media scene polarized and controversial. It is hard to assume that this is healthy for Morocco's transitional phase. Even though these topics are heavily covered and addressed by newspapers, the lack of depth in the analysis of these issues does not help build a more cultured and enlightened society. Apparently, each newspaper in Morocco tends to attack or insult the group that opposes its ideology or school of thought. As a result of this, the media scene has become a

cause of social and cultural polarization that does not necessarily contribute to the making of a healthy and enlightened society. polarization has created hatred discourses adopted by social groups. In the election or in any debate on potential educational reforms, this polarization stands in the way of healthy debates. Even though newspapers are no longer selling a significant number of copies a day, they still prove useful in shaping the public opinion in Morocco.

CHAPTER II: THE SACRED TRILOGY in POST-2011 MOROCCAN NEWSPAPERS and The MANUFACTURE of CONSENT: MOROCCAN ISLAM, the MONARCHY and The TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY



*The triad of the sacred hierarchy**: (Allah) God, (Al Watan) the Homeland, (Al Malik) the King**, painted on a hill in the heartland of Morocco*

1. Preliminary Discussion

In Morocco, the constitution, the penal code and the press codes all make it clear that Islam, the Monarchy and Morocco's claim of sovereignty over the Sahara are the foundations of the *'Umma'*/ nation. Doubting one of these foundations or critically approaching them is among the reasons why journalists and political activists would be jailed. Indeed, the representations of Islam, the King and the Sahara's issue in Moroccan print press in particular should tell a great deal about the existing limited margin of freedom of expression and the degree of exercise of self-censorship. In order to understand how Moroccan partisan and independent newspapers configure Islam, the Monarchy and Morocco's claim of the Sahara issue, a content-analysis of *Al Alam* (the

Istiqlal/ Independence Party, daily), *Al Itihad Al Ichtiraki* (Socialist Union Party, daily), *Attajdid* (the Justice and Development Party, daily), *Annahj Dimoqrati* (The Democratic Path Party, weekly), *Al Massae* (daily independent), *Assabah* (daily independent), *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* (daily independent) and *Assabil* (monthly independent) has been conducted. To find out how the aforementioned partisan and independent periodical, weekly and monthly newspapers represent the sacred trilogy in Morocco, purposive sampling has been adopted of a period of coverage that starts from February 2011, the year of uprisings and political reforms in Morocco, and ends in February 2015. The focus on this period emanates from a firm belief to give importance to post-2011 Morocco instead of assessing the status of print journalism before the process of democratization had been initiated with a constitutional reform. This should help assess the state's claims regarding the press freedom and political openness.

In order to study how each newspaper represented the sacred trilogy, a theme selected for study in this chapter, I needed to dig deeper, interpret many aspects of the news stories. To accomplish this goal, a purposive data sample was chosen in order to determine how Islam, the King and the Moroccan claim of Sahara issue were represented in newspapers. According to Patton, the power and logic of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling.[544] The purpose of studying information-rich cases is because they yield insights and in- depth understanding.[545] Further, Maxwell explained that purposeful sampling is "a strategy in which particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices".[546] In addition to this, the usefulness of the purposeful sampling or qualitative sampling lies in the ability it gives to select specific elements or cases based on specific

[544] Micheal Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002), p. 230.

[545] Ibid., p. 230.

[546] Joseph A. Maxwell, "Designing a Qualitative Study," in L. Bickman and D. J. Rog (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Applied Social Research* Methods (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2009), p. 235.

purposes related to the research.[547] In this regard, the population for the data sample was selected in order to draw conclusions regarding the Moroccan newspaper configurations of Islam, the Monarchy and the territorial integrity.

2. Findings

A content analysis of *Al Alam* (the *Istiqlal*/ Independence Party, daily), *Al Itihad Al Ichtiraki* (Socialist Union Party, daily), *Attajdid* (the Justice and Development Party, weekly), *Al Massae* (daily independent), *Assabah* (daily independent), *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* (daily independent) and *Assabil* (monthly independent) was conducted. The findings have been divided into three categorical sections: Islam and Moroccan Islam, the King of Morocco and Morocco's claim of sovereignty over Sahara. In order to collect data, a coding-sheet has been drafted.

Chart 3: Islam and Moroccan Islam in Moroccan Newspapers (Feb. 2011-Feb. 2015)

Newspaper	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Al Alam	302	0	165
Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki	105	0	23
Attajdid	489	0	95
Assabah	297	19	38
Al Massae	276	0	102
Al Ahdath Al Maghribya	196	12	71
Assabil	183	29	7
Total	1848	120	501

[547] See Abbas Tashakkori and Charles Teddlie, *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003).

Chart 4: Sufism in Moroccan Newspapers (Feb. 2011- Feb. 2015)

Newspaper	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Al Alam	97	0	6
Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki	45	0	11
Attajdid	59	0	4
Assabah	61	0	5
Al Massae	39	0	12
Al Ahdath Al Maghribya	25	0	7
Assabil	0	23	1
Total	326	23	46

Chart 5: The King of Morocco in Moroccan Newspapers (Feb. 2011- Feb. 2015)

Newspaper	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Al Alam	105	0	11
Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki	84	0	5
Attajdid	119	0	19
Assabah	78	0	6
Al Massae	203	0	9
Al Ahdath Al Maghribya	198	0	4
Assabil	18	0	5
Total	805	0	57

Chart 6: Morocco's Claim of Sovereignty over the Sahara & Anti-Polisario Front Articles (Feb. 2011- Feb. 2015)

Newspaper	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Al Alam	97	0	5
Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki	102	0	11
Attajdid	62	0	21
Annahj Dimoqrati	0	16	3
Assabah	78	0	12
Al Massae	111	0	35
Al Ahdath Al Maghribya	79	0	28
Assabil	18	0	5
Total	547	16	120

3. Data Analysis and Interpretations

A quick look at the statistics collected from the Moroccan newspapers this chapter focus on could tell a great deal about the regulatory political and cultural landscape within which the print press operates in post-2011 Morocco. Focusing on the post- 'Moroccan Spring' era does not actually mean that the same constraints had not been imposed before the uprisings and constitutional reform of 2011. Indeed, the landscape has not remarkably changed for journalists who, according to the statistics shown above, tend to exercise self-censorship in order to avoid fines, jail and the shut-down of their newspapers. Those trying to transgress the Moroccan sacred trilogy would have to deal with the state's interventions that stifle freedom of expression and, therefore, bring about the weakening of civil society in general. In fact, this still could be practiced against journalists due to the sacredness that even the constitution of 2011, the penal code and the press code clearly give to Islam (the state's religion), the King and

territorial integrity. Interestingly, the state here plays the role of the protector of the sacred Monarchy as well as Islam, two symbols of legitimacy and unity.

The data collected clearly show how the current effective order in Morocco is maintained. In this regard, Moroccan newspapers play a vital role in keeping the social order maintained through the consecration of certain values, persons, symbols and ideas. Here, *Allah* (Islam), *Al Watan* (the Homeland) and *Al Malik* (the King) are made above and beyond any criticism. The press, both partisan and independent, in this sense operates while abiding by the regulations the constitution, the penal code and the press code reinforce. This dissertation clearly problematizes freedom of expression and the independence of journalism in a society that is said to be in transition to democracy, not just since 2011 but actually since the accession of King Mohamed VI to the throne in 1999. In Morocco, the state tends to limit dissent and control criticism by establishing the King, Islam and the territorial integrity as absolutes (red lines) that any political discourse could critically address.

The sacred trilogy this chapter focuses on is generally perceived as the symbol of unity and legitimacy. Besides, the King is the Commander of the Faithful (*Amir al-mu'minin*), the highest religious authority according to the constitution. This title allows the King to play an important role as a political actor as well in Morocco as well as to lay a claim to absolute authority over the people. As the Commander of the Faithful, the Monarch has the authority to bestow on his rule a divine mandate and a monopoly on preserving all that is Islamic. Both Moroccan partisan and independent newspapers, as the findings clearly show, except *Annahj Dimoqrati* newspaper which is a radical-left-wing party-affiliated weekly newspaper, abide by the regulations and adopt self-censorship. In this regard, the coverage of Moroccan newspaper, as this chapter argues, plays a fundamental role in 'manufacturing consent', a term coined and used by Lippman, Herman and Chomsky. The press abides by laws that subsequently become political tools imposed to safeguard the sacred trilogy not through negotiation, but through acceptance. Due to this political climate, Moroccan newspapers this chapter studies are bound to operate within a space constrained by the domains of Allah *(God)*, *Al Watan* (Homeland) and *Al Malik* (the King).

Figure 26: *Al Ahdath Al Maghrbia*, Issue December 13, 2015



Figure 27: *Al Massae*, March 11, 2011



Figure 28: *Attajdid*, Issue July 28, 2016



In such a system, the press, along with government and civil society organizations, is bound to operate within a space constrained by the domains of God, the Homeland, and the King. Obeying such limitations is what the print press in Morocco, as the findings clearly show, has opted to do. Contesting the ruling elite or negotiating the foundations of the nation instead of accepting the mainstream state-adopted political and religious discourses is what Moroccan newspapers avoid being involved in.

As the footages selected for this chapter show, the Monarch, as a political leader as well as a religious authority, is celebrated and given a very significant space, most often on the front pages of Moroccan partisan newspapers like *Attajdid* and independent ones like *Al Massae*. When people take to the streets denouncing the publications of cartoons that negatively depict the Prophet Muhammad, like was the case with Charlie Hebdo in January 2015, the state tolerates the protests as long as they aim at defending Islam, one of the main foundations from which the political legitimacy is derived. By allowing such protests to take place in the country, the state succeeds in legitimizing the restrictions being imposed on the press.

Figure 29: *Assabah*, August 6, 2016



It is of paramount important to point out that I clearly remarked while looking at Moroccan newspapers this chapter studies and while collecting data how very

carefully journalists are covering aspects of Islam. While attempting to understand the reasons behind this careful coverage, I thought of how the terrorist attacks of September 2001 in the United States, the terrorist bombings of 2003 in Casablanca and the laws and international treaties Morocco signed and adopted afterwards have helped the Moroccan state to act against the press with impunity. Since the Casablanca attacks, journalism, being the conscience of society, has been among the primary victims of the Moroccan state that has since May 28, 2003, when the anti-terrorism law 03.03 was ratified and immediately rushed to the parliament for adoption, been pressuring journalists with fines and jail sentences once they discuss religion critically. As the law adopted does generally give the government too much room to interpret any piece of information, photograph, satirical headlines and commentaries as being an act of terrorism or of promoting terrorism, Moroccan newspapers, according to my content analysis, seem to be quite careful in the way and the tone used to discuss religion. It is the lack of freedom of expression and the rise of the culture of fear due to the ambiguous anti-terrorism law Morocco adopts that makes journalists unable to share information and make commentaries based on their editorial colors. Paragraph 12 of the first Article of Law 03.03 states that "propaganda, advertising, and praise are considered acts of terrorism [*al-di`ayah, al-ishhar, wa-'l-ishadah tu`tabaru `amalan irhabiyyan*]."[548] Here, the case of Ali Anouzla[549], the editor-in-chief of *Lakome.com*, one of the most well-known online newspapers in Morocco, was jailed when his platform just shared a video of ISIS threatening Morocco. Exactly on September 17th, 2013, Ali Anouzla was arrested in Rabat after being summoned for interrogation by the Moroccan authorities. Lakome's offices were raided and even Anouzla's personal laptop was confiscated. Apparently, it is because of Anouzla's critical perspectives and the journalistic standards journalists affiliated to Lakome adopted that the government decided to jail

[548] The law 03.03 could be found at http://adala.justice.gov.ma/production/legislation/ar/penal/luttecontreleterrorisme.htm. Accessed on February 20, 2019.

[549] Ali Anouzla is a human rights defender, independent journalist and political analyst. He reports on violations of human rights in Morocco and is also the director of Lakome, a Rabat-based, independent online newspaper focusing on civil liberties, human rights and the promotion of the rights of access to information and freedom of expression. He is also the co-founder, along with fellow human rights defender Maati Monjib, of Freedom Now (Committee for the Protection of Freedom of the Press and Free Expression in Morocco), a human rights organization which was denied registration by the authorities in Many 2014.

him and accuse him of promoting terrorism and terrorist attacks against the nation. Even though Ali Anouzla was released because of national and international pressure, his case continues to be characterized by delays as the hearings planned usually get adjourned.[550] Ali Anouzla, whose case was also discussed in the second chapter of the theoretical part, still faces charges of "material support for terrorism", "sympathizing with terrorism" and "incitement to commit acts of terrorism".[551] If convicted, he will face up to 30 years in Morocco. While Anouzla had already tried several times to have an independent newspaper in Morocco before he decided to move to the digital sphere, he also got Lakome.com eventually shutdown by the authorities. After he had been released by the authorities, he had to start from the beginning and create Lakome2.com. Indeed, Ali Anouzla simply tried to raise an issue of public concern, a work every professional journalist in supposed to do. Contrary to what the governments said about Anouzla's reporting of the ISIS video, his article did not endorse the statements in the video but was rather critical to the content of the video. It is true that he is now free and is the editor-in-chief of Lakome2.com, but the fact that he could be summoned by the court any time because of a case that dates back to 2013 is a sword of Damocles hanging over his head. This explains a great deal why Ali Anouzla, despite the important role he plays as the editor-in-chief of Lakome2.com, seems to have decided to avoid publishing.

Thus, the context of the war on terror is among the reasons why the state has not shown tolerance *vis-à-vis* journalistic criticism. All the violations of the right of freedom of express, especially when reporting is related to the sacred trilogy, are always based on the press codes that Morocco has known since 1958. This does conflicts with what the previous constitution and the one that has been adopted since 2011 highlight. Indeed, Moroccan independent journalists, national human rights organizations and the international ones lobbying for press freedom believed that the press code would undergo changes right after the death of King Hassan II whose period in power had been marked by crackdowns against activists and journalists; on the contrary, no press code reform was initiated when King Mohamed VI came to the throne in 1999 nor did it seem to be a priority reform for the ruling class. This could be explained by the fact

[550] See https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/case-history-ali-anouzla. Accessed on February 20, 2019.

[551] Ibid.

that the traditional features of authoritarian politics remained unchanged in the country even though King Mohamed VI inaugurated his reign with a "New Era" phase characterized by reconciliation with past abused activists, openness and reforms. Still, the reforms that had been initiated and adopted in Morocco before 2002 always disregarded the urgency to reform the press code adopted in November 1958. Even though King Hassan II's era witnessed constitutional reforms thanks to which several oppositional political parties believed again in Morocco's process of democratization and eventually in functioning from within, reforming the press code of 1958 had never been the concern of the state. In 2002, three years after the arrival of King VI to the throne, the press code was slightly amended; nevertheless, several Moroccan journalists were still imprisoned "solely for their nonviolent speech, under both the press code and the penal code."[552] These included "journalists convicted of defaming persons, disseminating false news, denigrating the judiciary, praising terrorism, rappers convicted of insulting the police, and ordinary citizens convicted of insulting the King on Facebook or Youtube."[553] For instance, on April 1, 2003 Ali al-Mrabit was questioned for five hours in Rabat because he had published articles addressing the "budget of the royal palace," others containing "critical cartoons," and an interview with a Moroccan opposition figure who discussed the case the Sahara issue. While he was passing customs at the airport two weeks after the incident, Al Mrabit's passport was confiscated. Just a week later, he was indicted and charged with "dereliction of the respect due to the King and casting doubt about the territorial unity of the country." Al-Mrabit to was later sentenced four years in prison, fined 20,000 dirhams, and the publication of his satirical newspaper *Demain* was banned. The basis of this ruling was Chapter 41, Article 77 of the Code of the Press.

The popular uprisings Morocco witnessed in 2011 demanded the release of imprisoned journalists like Rachid Ninni, the previous editor-in-chief of *Almassae* newspaper. Among the slogans raised by the February 20 Movement protesters is "Freedom of Speech Now". Indeed, the new constitution does clearly recognize freedom of expression in Article 25 that states that "the freedoms of thought, of opinion

[552] See the Human Rights Watch's Report on "Morocco's Reforms of its Speech Laws," https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/05/04/red-lines-stay-red/moroccos-reforms-its-speech-laws Accessed on January 3, 2018.

[553] Ibid., Accessed on January 3, 2018.

of express under all their forms are guaranteed."[554] It adds that "the freedoms of creation, of publication and of presentation in literary and artistic maters and of scientific and technical research are guaranteed."[555] Article 28 of the New Constitution was meant to be clear enough in addressing the press freedom. It states that

> The freedom of the press is guaranteed and may not be limited by any form of prior censure.
> All have the right to express and to disseminate freely and within the sole limits expressly provided by the law, information, ideas and opinions.
> The public powers encourage the organization of the sector of the press in an independent manner and on democratic bases, as well as the determination of the juridical and ethical rules concerning it.
> The law establishes the rules of organization and of control of the means of public communication. It guarantees access to these means respecting the linguistic, cultural and political pluralism of the Moroccan society.
> In accordance with the provisions of Article 165 of this Constitution, the High Authority of Broadcasting [Haute autorite de la communication audiovisuelle] sees to respect for this pluralism.[556]

Despite the importance the new constitution gives to freedom of speech and expression, Moroccan independent newspapers, as the findings show, seem to be aware of the contradictions inherent in the state's discourse and its actions against journalists. They

[554] See Morocco's New Constitution, Article 25. The translation of the New Constitution is available at https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Morocco_2011.pdf. Accessed on April 26, 2019.

[555] Ibid., Accessed on April 26, 2019.

[556] Ibid., Accessed on April 26, 2019.

seem also aware of the lack of coherence between the constitution and the regulations the penal code and the press code highlight. It is the lack of clarity and the large room for the interpretation of laws the judge is allowed to have that makes independent journalists in Morocco either avoid news reporting on sensitive issues like Islam or the Sahara issue, an idea just a quick glance at the findings should confirm.

As the findings show, the content of Moroccan newspapers is brimming with religion; nevertheless, it is the depth of the analysis as well as the absence of scholarly investigation of Islam or the state's adopted religious reforms that make the coverage on Islam superficial. As examples here, one of the most dominant religious topics newspapers in Morocco address today is terrorism, extremism and Islamic fundamentalism, especially on *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, two independent newspapers whose coverage tend to promote liberal ideals. Generally, Moroccan newspapers, both partisan and independent, negatively report on terrorist attacks taking place in the world. They also, as the findings show, favorably report on Sufism as a form of moderate and peaceful Islamic spirituality that Morocco has made a strategic choice since the terrorist attacks of May 16, 2003 in Casablanca. "Serving as a powerful recruiter of youth in Morocco and a strong proponent of the Morocco government and Monarchy while also being in harmony with Orthodox Islam – helping to limit the influence of extremist ideology", May Hu stresses in his article that both the *Tijaniyya* and the *Qādiriyya Budshishiyya* Sufi orders play viable roles in the deradicalization of society through recruiting youth.[557] Because of the Sufis' peaceful form of religiosity, the state has decided to promote Sufism and support Sufi orders in order that they would be able to attract youth. Because of the state's efforts to consolidate Sufi orders in the country, especially those seeking spirituality while standing in support of the Monarchy and the territorial integrity, newspapers in Morocco do not criticize Sufism. They also regularly publish articles, commentaries, news about the arrests of people who have shown allegiance to terrorist groups and organizations, and the King's religious and political activities that aim at fostering religious tolerance and a moderate and peaceful

[557] See May Hu, "A Tale of Two Turuq: An Exploration of Sufism in Morocco through the Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya," *Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection*, N. 2834 (2018), p. 5. The article is available at https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3864&context=isp_collection. Accessed on February 20, 2019.

version of Islam. Below are some examples of what *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* Newspapers have published regarding this:

Figure 30: Assabah, Issue July 31, 2014



Figure 31: *Assabah*, September 9, 2014



Figure 32: *Assabah*, July 13, 2018



Figure 33: *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, January 5th, 2017



Looking at the figures above and at the findings gathered from a content analysis of Moroccan partisan and independent newspapers, it is safe to conclude that Moroccan newspapers, like the other state institutions, place a high importance on countering radicalization and Islamic fundamentalism. This explains why Sufism is represented positively in the majority of newspapers in Morocco regardless of their political and ideological differences. Adopting the agenda-setting theory, a theory first introduced by Donald Shaw and Max McCombs in a study on the 1968 American presidential election, Moroccan newspapers have a great influence on the audience in the sense that they instill what the audience should think about Islamic fundamentalism instead of what they may think because of the globalized extremist ideologies. Here, Moroccan newspapers make Sufism and the importance to fight radicalization frequently and prominently covered, hence making the audience regard the issue of the war on terror as more important than any other topics. In this respect, the agenda-setting, a concept explained in chapter I of this dissertation, is the creation of public opinion and public awareness. The theory helps describe the way that media try to influence views through establishing a hierarchy of news prevalence. Here, the fight against Islamic fundamentalism through the promotion of Moroccan Islam and Sufism is among the main topics Moroccan partisan and independent newspapers do through their coverage. Interestingly, as the footages selected below, the King is the leader of the religious reforms and the leader of Morocco's fight against terrorism. While the interpretations of various verses of the Quran, especially the ones related to inheritance and women,

are usually contested by different newspapers in Morocco, the Islam the Monarchy has branded remains unattackable and unnegotiable. What newspapers are expected to do is the promotion of a moderate and open Islam that safeguards the spiritual security of Moroccans without inclining them in dogmatic and fundamentalist forms of religiosities and, more importantly, without harming the pillars upon which Morocco has managed to brand Islam, particularly the Sunni Maliki school of thought and the institution of the Commander of the Faithful.

Along with this, the findings of the content analysis of Moroccan partisan and independent newspapers also show the centrality of the King as the major reformist is dominant in newspaper reporting. The space allotted to the King and his activities is large compared to other news stories of public concerns. Here, not only is not the King criticized by partisan and independent newspapers, but he is also even celebrated by the press. In this sense, the print press in Morocco does not seem to be contributing to a healthy transition to democracy through the pressure it could exercise on the state to respect human rights and freedom of speech as well as through holding all the constitutional institutions without exception accountable, an argument this dissertation repeatedly highlights. On the contrary, it is a tool at disposal of the state essentially used to manufacture consent.

In the past, the partisan press in Morocco was known of its criticism to the monarchy and to the policies adopted by King Hassan II. Due to the power of the left during the reign of King Hassan II, partisan newspapers were known of their critical coverage. As the power of political parties waned down in Morocco because of coaptations, fragmentations of political parties and their interest in ministerial portfolios and economic privileges instead of in democratic change in the country, the Moroccan partisan press has eventually lost a sense of direction. The fact that youth in particular shun political parties in Morocco explains why the party-owned newspapers are not anymore selling well or gaining the audience's trust. The data collected, as shown in this chapter, clearly explain how partisan newspapers in Morocco tend to abide by the regulations without negotiating them. The fact that the majority of political parties in Morocco today seek economic gains, ministerial portfolios, and have some members involved in corruption should explain why party-owned newspapers like *Al Alam* (the voice of Al Istiqlal Party), *Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki* (The Socialist Union Party) and *Attajdid* (the Justice and Development Party) adopt a very favorable reporting on

Islam as the state's religion, the King and his political activities and religious reforms, and the state-adopted discourse regarding the Sahara issue. This explains also the masses' distrust of news and information circulated by partisan newspapers and their interest in reading independent newspapers. This is certainly very a difficult situation for the press in general and the partisan one in particular in a society that does not seem to be interested in written press according to the following statistics of the number of newspaper copies sold in 2015 compared to previous years according to www.ojd.ma.[558]

Figure 34: *statistics of the number of newspaper copies sold in 2015 compared to previous years according to www.ojd.ma*

AKHBAR AL YOUM AL MAGHRIBIYA	Quotidien	2015	30 070	18 080
ALAKHBAR	Quotidien	2015	66 203	55 162
AL AHDATH AL MAGHRIBIA	Quotidien	2015	23 491	9 100
AL ALAM	Quotidien	2015	21 107	8 764
AL AYAM	Hebdomadaire	2015	24 297	9 233
AL HARAKA	Quotidien	2015	4 629	1 011
AL ITTIHAD AL ICHTIRAKI	Quotidien	2015	22 291	5 778
AL MASSAE	Quotidien	2015	77 686	47 453
AL MICHAAL HEBDO	Hebdomadaire	2015	23 000	8 163
AL MOUNAATAF	Quotidien	2015	4 934	369
AL MOUNTAKHAB	Bi-hebdomadaire	2015	19 773	12 093
ANNAHAR AL MAGHRIBIA	Quotidien	2015	7 377	702
ASSABAH	Quotidien	2015	68 480	38 784
ATTAJDID	Quotidien	2015	7 149	1 828
AUJOURD'HUI LE MAROC	Quotidien	2015	10 000	4 546

Having said this about the partisan press in Morocco, it would not be academically safe to disregard the case of *Annahj Adimocrati* newspaper, a party-owned weekly issued every Tuesday by the Democratic Path Party in Morocco, a Rabat-based party founded in 1995 adopting extreme leftist, Leninist and Marxist ideology. The party does boycott the elections and has never been represented in parliament. While looking at the content of this newspaper, the first observation made is that it tends to devote a large space to proletarian masses, to the activities of the party and to denouncing the violations of human rights in Morocco. In fact, the King's activities do not have a space in the reporting of *Annahj Adimocrati* newspaper. Instead, this leftist party-owned newspaper prefers criticizing the *Makhzen*, which refers to the

[558] See https://lakome2.com/media/44831. Accessed on February 20, 2019.

state, the deep state and to the state's apparatuses and not to the government which is, according to *Annahj Adimocrati* party, is passive and functioning in a system that does not function within a meaningful framework of checks and balances. Hence, criticizing the *Makhzen* and questioning the credibility of the New Era[559], should tell how this party-owned newspaper is transgressing the limitations set by the state in Morocco. The *Makhzen* is the enemy as well as the country's mafia according to *Annahj Adimocrati Newspaper*, as the footages below show. The *Makhzen*, traditional in nature, plays a significant role in buttressing the modern institutions of the country. It is the authority of the *Makhzen* that makes *Annahj Adimocrati Party* distrust Morocco's political process or the state-adopted policies and discourses. The following figures are examples of some issues that made the criticism of the *Makhzen* and the masses' yearning for human rights central themes of the front-page.

Figure 35: *Annahj Adimocrati*, December 31, 2015



[559] A reference to King Mohamed VI's rule. The term was used by the King himself in 1999, the year he accessed to the throne.

Figure 36: ***Annahj Adimocrati*****, July 1, 2016**



Figure 37: ***Annahj Adimocrati*****, December 31, 2018**



Figure 38: ***Annahj Adimocrati*****, September 1, 2018**



The case of *Annahj Adimocrati* newspaper is exceptional, but it confirms that not all partisan newspapers are chipping away at the sacred trilogy, known as the nonnegotiable red lines. If fact, this partisan newspaper has a radically different coverage of the Sahara issue compared to the other partisan newspapers or even

independent newspapers, as the findings show. Unlike all the partisan newspapers existing in Morocco as well as the independent ones, *Annahj Adimocrati* newspaper supports the Sahrawi people and their struggle for self-determination, an idea that Morocco not only does not tolerate. King Mohamed VI always takes the opportunity to reaffirm Morocco's unwavering position on the question of its territorial integrity. Suggesting the Autonomy Plan to solve the country's conflict with the Polisario-Front over the Sahara, the King and the state's institutions always stress on Morocco's adherence to the political process under the exclusive auspices of the United Nations. While all partisan and independent newspapers in Morocco promote the Autonomy Plan the King suggests, *Annahj Dimocrati* Newspaper is the only newspaper that transgresses this unnegotiable red line as the findings show. In fact, many would assume that by doing so, *Annahj Dimocrati* Newspaper is getting the trust of the audience. On the contrary, the audience may adopt many of the standpoints this newspaper share, especially those addressing the need to reinforce the rule of law, the need to *de-makhzenize* the state, the need to build democracy and to respect human rights in the country, but they would reject the newspaper's anti-Morocco's Autonomy Plan as a way out to resolve the Sahara issue. This could be explained by the fact that only a small number of Moroccans who are still members of this political party. Because this political party is shunned by the majority of people in Morocco, the state does not seem to be thinking of banning the publication of its newspapers, especially that the party "has around 50 local sections in Morocco as well as European branches for Moroccan immigrants in Spain, France, Italy and Belgium."[560] Still, the existence and circulation of *Annahj Dimocrati* Newspaper's discourse in Morocco just help the state get a broad spectrum of opinion reflected. In general, the circulation of *Annahj Dimocrati* Newspaper cannot be compared to other political parties that receive an important funding from the state on a yearly basis. This radical, leftist and Marxist newspaper seems to be struggling. The quality of the paper used is not as good as other weekly newspapers in Morocco, and the newspapers is usually unavailable in small Moroccan towns like Ouazzane, a Northern Moroccan tiny town where I was born and grew up. What was more surprising to me is the unavailability of the majority of issues of *Annahj Dimocrati* Newspaper even in the archive of the National Library of Rabat. In the

[560] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Way. Accessed on February 20, 2019.

newspaper archive of Mohamed VI Library of Al Akhawayn University of Ifrane, *Annahj Dimocrati* Newspaper does not exist at all among the archived newspapers. This tells also a great deal about how politicized the archive in Morocco is.

Another similar case is that of *Assabil*, an independent Islamist Salafist monthly newspaper in Morocco, which has a long history of conflicts with the State in Morocco. The Arabic-language monthly *Assabil* had its third issue blocked after the first two carried articles supporting the release from house arrest of a prominent Islamist. The newspaper is also typically known of its criticism of "the repressive treatment of persons accused of terrorism since the 2003 attacks in Casablanca".[561] *Assabil* newspaper, I argue in this chapter, is one of the most controversial newspapers in Morocco nowadays. The content of the newspaper is always deep and loaded with religious analyses and interpretations, with Quranic verses and Prophet's sayings, and with pictures used to either criticize that state's religious policies or those demanding the building of a secular state and the respect of individual liberties in Morocco. Adopting a Salafist discourse, *Assabil* newspaper promotes a strict application of the *Shari'a* laws. By so doing, it seeks putting pressure on the Moroccan state to safeguard the "state's religious identity". While *Assabil* always avoids criticizing the King as the Commander of the Faithful and as the main religious authority responsible for the religious policies in the country, it does address its criticism through attacking Ahmed Taoufiq, the Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs in Morocco since 2002 and who is also known as a Sufi and a personal advocate of interfaith dialogue, as the footages below clearly show:

Figure 39: *Assabil*, July 3, 2016



[561] See http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/wgad/54-2013.html, accessed on February 20, 2019.

Figure 40: ***Assabil*, July 29, 2017**



Any criticism addressed to Ahmed Taoufiq is an implicit criticism to the religious authority in Morocco. The Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, structured and restructured into four divisions, endowments, Islamic affairs, Mosques, and Original Education, by the Monarch himself with a royal decree (*Zahir*) 1.03.300.[562] This tells how important this ministry is in the political landscape of the country and how close the Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs should be to the King who is the Commander of the Faithful, the highest religious authority in Morocco. Indeed, *Assabil*'s regular attacks against Ahmed Taoufiq could be interpreted as an implicit form of criticism addressed to the Monarch himself. Because the press code and the penal code make it clear that Islam, the Monarchy and the territorial integrity are not negotiable, journalists affiliated to *Assabil* tend to criticize the state's religious policies through addressing tough criticism to Ahmed Taoufiq, a technique that the majority of newspapers in Morocco avoid adopting because of the power of the ministry Ahmed Taoufiq has been heading since 2002. The Islamist challenge in Morocco, especially the Salafist one, is the reason behind the state's tolerance of some of the issues *Assabil* has published.

[562] Ann Marie Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam: Morocco and the War on Terror*, p. 101.

Interestingly, *Assabil*, as the findings show, usually attacks Sufism. Almost every month, the newspaper devotes a very significant space to attacking and criticizing Sufis and Sufism. In a column titled *"Chatahat Al Mou'tazila"*, the dances of the Sufis, this Salafist newspaper attacks Sufism even though the latter is among the state's strategic choices and deradicalization strategies. This newspaper transgresses the state's interpretations of Islam and the laws it adopts, like was the case with the restriction of polygamy in Morocco with the new Family Code. *Assabil*, despite its clear defense of the institution of the Commander of the Faithful, the Sunni Maliki tradition of thought and the "Islamic identity" of the state, contests Sufism and addresses criticism *vis-à-vis* Sufism, Sufi orders and the amount of money the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs spends on shrines and the Mausoleums, with a focus on the Mausoleum of Moulay Idriss[563] in Fez. The three footages below are just examples of the articles *Assabil* publishes every month attacking Sufism and Mausoleums and accusing Sufis of heresy and apostasy:

Figure 41: *Assabil*, July 29, 2017



الصوفية

التأسيس وأبرز الشخصيات:

ظهور الفرق:

وفي القرن السابع ظهر أيضا جلال الدين الرومي صاحب الطريقة المولوية بتركيا ت672هـ.

أصبح القرن الثامن والتاسع الهجري ما هو إلا تفريع وشرح لكتب ابن عربي وابن الفارض وغيرهما، ولم تظهر فيه نظريات جديدة في التصوف.

ومن أبرز سمات القرن التاسع هو اختلاط أفكار كلتا المدرستين.

وفي هذا القرن ظهر محمد بهاء الدين النقشبندي مؤسس الطريقة النقشبندية ت791هـ، وكذلك القرن العاشر ما كان إلا شرحا أو دفاعا عن كتب ابن عربي، فزاد الاهتمام فيه بتراجم رجال التصوف، والتي اتسمت بالمبالغة الشديدة، ومن كتاب تراجم الصوفية في هذا القرن: عبد الوهاب الشعراني ت 973هـ صاحب الطبقات الصغرى والكبرى.

وفي القرون التالية اختلط الأمر على الصوفية، وانتشرت الفوضى بينهم، واختلطت فيهم أفكار كلتا المدرستين وبدأت مرحلة الدراويش.

ومن أهم ما تتميز به القرون المتأخرة ظهور ألقاب شيخ السجادة، وشيخ مشايخ الطرق الصوفية، والخليفة والبيوت الصوفية التي هي أقسام فرعية من الطرق نفسها مع وجود شيء من الاستقلال الذاتي يمارس بمعرفة الخفاء، كما ظهرت فيها التنظيمات والتشريعات المنظمة للطرق تحت مجلس وإدارة واحدة الذي بدأ بقرمان أصدره محمد علي باشا والي مصر يقضي بتعيين محمد البكري خلفا لوالده شيخا للسجادة البكرية وتفويضه في الإشراف على جميع الطرق والتكايا والزوايا والمساجد التي بها أضرحة كما له الحق في وضع مناهج التعليم التي تعطى فيها، وذلك كله في محاولة لتقويض سلطة شيخ الأزهر وعلمائه، وقد تطورت نظمه وتشريعاته ليعرف فيما بعد بالمجلس الأعلى للطرق الصوفية في مصر.

من أشهر رموز القرون المتأخرة:

- عبد الغني النابلسي 1143-1050هـ.
- أبو السعود البكري المتوفى 1812م أول من عرف بشيخ مشايخ الطرق الصوفية في مصر بشكل غير رسمي.
- أبو الهدى الصيادي الرفاعي 1287-1220هـ.
- عمر الفوتي الطوري السنغالي الأزهري التيجاني ت 1281هـ، ومما يحسن ذكره له أنه اهتم بنشر الإسلام بين الوثنيين، وكون لذلك جيشا، وخاض به حروبا مع الوثنيين، واستولى على مملكة سيغو وعلى بلاد ماسينه، ومن مؤلفاته: سيوف السعيد، سفينة السعادة، رماح حزب الرحيم على نحور حزب الرجيم.
- محمد عثمان الميرغني ت1268هـ، سنأتي ترجمة له في مبحث الخنمية.

- أبو الفيض محمد بن عبد الكبير الكتاني، فقيه متفلسف، من أهل فاس بالمغرب، أسس الطريقة الكتانية 1327-1290هـ، انتقد عليه علماء فاس بعض أقواله ونسبوه إلى فساد الاعتقاد، ومن كتبه: حياة الأنبياء، لسان الحجة البرهانية في الذب عن شعائر الطريقة الأحمدية الكتانية.
- أحمد التيجاني ت1230هـ، سنأتي ترجمة له في مبحث التيجانية.

- حسن رضوان 1310-1239هـ صاحب أرجوزة روض القلوب المستطاب في التصوف.
- صالح بن محمد بن صالح الجعفري الصادقي 1399-1328هـ انتسب إلى الطريقة الأحمدية الإدريسية بعد ما سافر إلى مصر والتحق بالأزهر، وأخذ الطريقة عن الشيخ محمد بخيت المطيعي، والشيخ حبيب الله الشنقيطي، والشيخ يوسف الدجوي، ومن كتبه: الإلهام النافع لكل قاصد، القصيدة التائية، الصلوات الجعفرية.

الأفكار والمعتقدات:

مصادر التلقي:

- الكشف: ويعتمد الصوفية الكشف مصدرا وثيقا للعلوم والمعارف، بل تحقيق غاية عبادتهم، ويدخل تحت الكشف الصوفي جملة من الأمور الشرعية والكونية منها:

1. النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: ويقصدون به الأخذ عنه يقظة أو مناما.
2. الخضر عليه الصلاة السلام: قد كثرت حكايتهم عن لقياه، والأخذ عنه أحكاما شرعية وعلوما دينية، وكذلك الأوراد، والأذكار والمناقب.
3. الإلهام: سواء كان من الله تعالى مباشرة، وبه جعلوا مقام الصوفي فوق مقام النبي حيث يعتقدون أن الولي يأخذ العلم مباشرة عن الله تعالى بينما أخذه الملك الذي يوحي به إلى النبي أو الرسول.
4. الفراسة: التي تختص بمعرفة خواطر النفوس وأحاديثها.
5. الهواتف: من سماع الخطاب من الله تعالى، أو من الملائكة، أو الجن الصالح، أو من أحد الأولياء، أو الخضر، أو إبليس، سواء كان مناما أو يقظة أو في حالة بينهما بواسطة الأذن.
6. الإسراءات والمعاريج: ويقصدون بها عروج روح الولي إلى العالم العلوي، وجولاتها هناك، والإتيان منها بشتى العلوم والأسرار.
7. الكشف الحسي: بالكشف عن حقائق الوجود بارتفاع الحجب الحسية عن عين القلب وعين البصر.
8. الرؤى والمنامات: وتعتبر من أكثر المصادر اعتمادا عليها حيث يزعمون أنهم يتلقون فيها عن الله تعالى، أو عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، أو عن أحد شيوخهم لمعرفة الأحكام الشرعية.

السنة 11 - العدد 204 - 19 ذو القعدة 1437هـ الموافق 01 دجنبر 2015م

[563] Moulay Ismail created this pilgrimage site by building the mausoleum during the late 17th and early 18th centuries in a successful attempt to rally the support of the faithful.

Figure 42: *Assabil*, March 11, 2018



الصوفية

شطحات الصوفية:

سلك بعضهم طريق تحضير الأرواح معتقدا بأن ذلك من التصوف، كما سلك آخرون طريق الشعوذة والدجل، وقد اتخذوا بناء الأضرحة وقبور الأولياء وآثارها وزيارتها والتمسح بها، وكل ذلك من البدع التي ما أنزل الله بها من سلطان.

- يقول بعضهم بارتفاع التكاليف - إسقاط التكاليف - عن الولي، أي أن العبادة تصير لا لزوم لها بالنسبة إليه، لأنه وصل إلى مقام لا يحتاج معه إلى القيام بذلك، ولأنه لو اشتغل بوظائف الشرع وظواهره انقطع عن حفظ الباطن وتشوش عليه بالالتفات عن أنواع الواردات الباطنية إلى مراعاة الظاهر.

- وينقل عن الغزالي انتقاده لمن غلبه الغرور، ويعدد فرقهم:

1- فرقة اغتروا بالزي والهيئة والمنطق.

2- وفرقة ادعت علم المعرفة، ومشاهدة الحق، ومجاوزة المقامات والأحوال.

3- وفرقة وقفت في الإباحة، وطووا بساط الشرع، ورفضوا الأحوال، وسووا بين الحلال والحرام.

4- وبعضهم يقول: الأعمال بالجوارح لا وزن لها وإنما النظر إلى القلوب، وقلوبنا والهة بحب الله وواصلة إلى معرفة الله، وإنما نخوض في الدنيا بأبدينا، وقلوبنا عاكفة في الحضرة الربوبية، فنحن مع الشهوات بالظواهر لا بالقلوب.

- ومذهب الوحدة المطلقة لم يكن له وجود في الإسلام بصورته الكاملة قبل ابن عربي، فهو الواضع لدعائمه والمؤسس لمدرسته والمفصل لمعانيه ومراميه، وله نصوص الحكم والفتوحات المكية وغيرهما.

- أما الحلاج فيعتبر صاحب مدرسة الاتحاد والحلول، وله أقوال منها:

أنا من أهوى ومن أهوى أنا ... نحن روحان حللنا بدنا

فإذا أبصرتني أبصرته ... وإذا أبصرته أبصرتنا

وقوله:

مزجت روحك في روحي كما ... تمزج الخمرة في الماء الزلال

فإذا مسك شيء مسني ... فإذا أنست أنا في كل حال

- يستخدم الصوفيون لفظ (الغوث والغياث) وقد أفتى ابن تيمية كما جاء في كتاب مجموع الفتاوى ص 437: (فأما لفظ الغوث والغياث فلا يستعمله إلا الله، فهو غوث المستغيثين، فلا يجوز لأحد الاستغاثة بغيره لا بملك مقرب ولا نبي مرسل).

- لقد أجمعت كل طرق الصوفية على ضرورة الذكر، وهو عند النقشبندية لفظ الله مفردا، وعند الشاذلية لا إله إلا الله، وعند غيرهم مثل ذلك مع الاستغفار والصلاة على النبي، وبعضهم يقول عند اشتداد الذكر: هو هو، بلفظ الضمير. وفي ذلك يقول ابن تيمية في كتاب مجموع الفتاوى ص 229: (وأما الاقتصار على الاسم المفرد مظهرا أو مضمرا فلا أصل له، فضلا عن أن يكون من ذكر الخاصة والعارفين، بل هو وسيلة إلى أنواع من البدع والضلالات، وذريعة إلى تصورات أحوال فاسدة من أحوال أهل الاتحاد وأهل الاتحاد).

ويقول في ص 228 أيضا: (من قال: يا هو يا هو، أو هو هو، ونحو ذلك، لم يكن الضمير عائدا إلا إلى ما يصوره القلب، والقلب قد يهتدي وقد يضل).

- قد يأتي بعض المنتسبين إلى التصوف بأعمال عجيبة وخوارق، وفي ذلك يقول ابن تيمية ص 494: (وأما كشف الرؤوس، وتقتيل الشعر، وحمل الحيات، فليس هذا من شعار أحد من الصالحين، ولا من الصحابة، ولا من التابعين، ولا شيوخ المسلمين، ولا من المتقدمين، ولا من المتأخرين، ولا الشيخ أحمد بن الرفاعي، وإنما ابتدع هذا بعد موت الشيخ بمدة طويلة).

- ويقول أيضا في ص 504: (وأما النذر للموتى من الأنبياء والمشايخ وغيرهم أو لقبورهم أو المقيمين عند قبورهم فهو نذر شرك ومعصية لله تعالى).

- وفي ص 506 من نفس الكتاب: (وأما الحلف بغير الله من الملائكة والأنبياء والمشايخ والملوك وغيرهم فإنه منهي عنه).

- ويقول في ص 505 من نفس الكتاب أيضا: (وأما مؤاخاة الرجال والنساء الجانب وخلوتهم بهن، ونظرهم إلى الزينة الباطنة، فهذا حرام باتفاق المسلمين، ومن جعل ذلك من الدين فهو من إخوان الشياطين).

- وفي مقام الفناء عن شهود ما سوى الرب - وهو الفناء عن الإرادة - يقول ابن تيمية ص 337 من كتابه: (وفي هذا الفناء قد يقول: أنا الحق، أو سبحاني، أو ما في الجبة إلا الله، إذا فني بمشهوده عن شهوده، وبموجوده عن وجوده، وفي مثل هذا المقام يقع السكر الذي يسقط التمييز مع وجود حلاوة الإيمان كما يحصل بسكر الخمر وسكر عشق الصور. ويحكم على هؤلاء أن أحدهم إذا زال عقله بسبب غير محرم فلا جناح عليه فيما يصدر عنه من الأقوال والأفعال المحرمة، بخلاف ما إذا كان سبب زوال العقل أمرا محرما، وكما أنه لا جناح عليهم فلا يجوز الاقتداء بهم ولا حمل كلامهم وفعالهم على الصحة، بل هم في الخاصة مثل الغافل والمجنون في التكاليف الظاهرة).

- أما في مقام الفناء عن وجود السوي فيقول ص 337 من الكتاب أيضا: (الثالث: فناء وجود السوي، بمعنى أنه يرى الله هو الوجود وأنه لا وجود لسواه، لا به ولا بغيره، وهذا القول للاتحادية الزنادقة من المتأخرين كالبياني والتلمساني والقونوي ونحوهم، الذين يجعلون الحقيقة أنه غير الموجودات وحقيقة الكائنات، وأنه لا وجود لغيره، لا بمعنى أن قيام الأشياء به ووجودها به كما يريدون أنه عين الموجودات، فهذا كفر وضلال).

السنة 11 العدد 208 ربيع الثاني 1437 الموافق 01 يناير 2016م

Figure 43: *Assabil*, December 1, 2014



كلمة العدد

أمريكا والشيعة تمدد من الشرق إلى الغرب

2

أنت كيف تسب الله؟

7-6

زعزاز: سب الله تعالى جريمة تستند على نصوص جامدة في القانون لا بد تفعيلها

7

ماذا بعد أن اعترف الوزير "التوفيق" أن الأضرحة فيها بدع وشعوذة؟!

19

السبيل

الأضرحة والمزارات في المغرب

بدع وشعوذة وخرافة

الصفحة 16-21

الخلف بين حتمية الغلط ومعظلة التدليس

8

القيم التربوية الإسلامية ودورها في بناء الكمال الإنساني

9

المدير المسؤول: إبراهيم الطالب - السنة: 10 - العدد: 181 - 8 صفر 1436 هـ الموافق: دجنبر 2014م - رقم الإيداع القانوني: 2005/0090 - الثمن: 5 دراهم

It is important to point out that Islam and the Islamic identity of the state in Morocco is among the reasons why the King is not criticized, even when newspapers like *Assabil* do not agree with the religious reforms or interpretations the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs or the Highest Religious Council adopt in Morocco. In fact, Islam has a strong influence on the social and legal culture in contemporary Morocco. Having said this, Muslim religious scholars have been debating on the right, or rather duty, of Muslims to express their minds, especially in the face of an unjust

leader or ruler. In this sense, freedom of expression is not treated by the classical schools of jurisprudence, such as the *Maliki* school of thought adopted in Morocco, the same way human rights organizations do. This should explain the sacredness of the Monarch in the cultural and legal rubric in Morocco and also the reasons why newspapers tend to focus on the government and the King's appointed officials instead of criticizing the King himself and the political decisions he makes. *Assabil*, being a Salafist newspaper in Morocco, adopts the classical school of religious thought and believes in the inappropriateness of criticizing the ruler/ the King even when the actions he initiates are not sound or fair. Ahmed Taoufiq and anyone appointed by the Monarch is criticized instead, one of the tactics newspapers in general decide to do.

4. Concluding Remarks

Print newspapers in Morocco do abide by the regulations and seek to cover the sacred trilogy, Islam, the Monarchy and the territorial integrity, according to the ruling elite prerogatives. Because of their total acceptance of the state-adopted discourses and policies and because of their exercise of self-censorship, Moroccan journalists in party-owned and independent newspapers turn Moroccan Islam, the Monarchy and Morocco's policies regarding the Sahara issue into sacred taboos. The fact that the state's apparatuses as well as the laws and regulations adopted in Morocco still tend to limit dissent and control criticism of what is known as the red lines would never help the press positively contribute to the rise of a healthy, well-thought-out and responsible public debate during the country's transitional phase. It is true that both *Annahj Adimocrati* and *Assabil* newspapers do not cover on a variety of issues based on what the regulations impose, but the rest, including independent newspapers, adopt self-censorship and opt for the dissemination of news according to the state's prerogatives. Here, I argue that the independent print press still does not exist in Morocco nowadays. On the contrary, I suggest "private" newspapers as an alternative concept to best describe the print media landscape in Morocco. It is true that Morocco has known several strong, critical and brave newspapers; still, most of them were shut down by the authorities or sold to stakeholders due to heavy fines and regular harassments against their editor-in-chiefs and journalists. This does not mean that in Morocco today there are no independent journalists. In fact, there are many ones. What is lacking today in

the country is an independent print press that is able to bring about socio-cultural and political transformations through a responsible, liberal, and deep analyses of news. It is true that the print press is decaying even in democratic settings like Spain, the United Kingdom, France and even in the United States. But the maturity of democracy in these settings, as has been argued in this dissertation, allows them to move to the digital sphere. On the contrary, Morocco is still said to be in transition to democracy and the existence of a free and independent print and online press is of high importance, an argument that I had the chance to highlight once I was interviewed by Lakome2.com.[564] It is true that the New Constitution recognizes freedom of expression, but the penal code, the press code and the ways they are manipulated by the State's apparatuses do not permit journalists and newspapers to operate according to what the new constitution and the international treaties Morocco signed state. The electronic sphere has emerged as a venue, allowing citizen journalism to emerge and journalists to negotiate, instead of accepting, all the actions, policies and regulations the state dictates.

[564] See the interview at https://lakome2.com/media/44831.

CHAPTER III: THE ISLAMISTS AND ISLAMISM VS SECULARISTS AND SECULARISM IN NEWSPAPERS: THE CASE OF *AL AHDATH AL MAGHRIBYA*, *ASSABAH, ATTAJDID* AND *ASSABIL*

1. Preliminary Discussion

Like is the case in every setting, the conservative block in Morocco, represented by Islamist political parties like the Justice and Development Party and other social movements that promote their values outside the political scene such as the Justice and Charity Movement and Salafists, has been in conflict with the leftist and progressive block represented by several political parties like *Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki*, Annahj Dimocrati and other movements and organizations that promote secular values in society such as the Moroccan Association of Human Rights and the Amazing Movement. While the conflict took many forms in the 1970S, 1980s and early 1990s, like strong ideology-oriented communities on Moroccan university campuses, the conflict between the Islamists and Secularists has been taking new forms since late 1990s when the media landscape enjoyed a relaxation, a relaxation the state allowed as a preparation of the succession of King Mohamed VI to the throne. In fact, newspapers have since then been loaded with ideological messages, creating an unprecedented polarization in Moroccan society. While attempting to examine the coverage of Islamists and secularists in *Assabah* and *Assabil*, this chapter is meant to provide an analysis of Moroccan print media coverage Islamism and Secularism. In this chapter, I argue that Moroccan newspapers, unlike some ethical magazines like *Wijhat Nazar* (Point of View), are among the reasons behind the polarization that characterize society today in Morocco. It also argues that this ongoing division helps the *Makhzen*/ the ruling elite in Morocco maintain power and control over the status quo. I also argue that secular newspapers like *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* internalize orientalism, a term I use here to describe how lustful, ugly, and blood-thirsty, hence adopting Western Orientalist ideas about Orientals. This chapter also stresses that Moroccan Islamist newspapers like *Assabil* seek the dissemination of archaic and undemocratic ideals and values without helping the political process to speed in Morocco.

In order to study how each Islamists are represented in secular and liberal newspapers and how conservative-based newspapers represent secular forces in

Morocco, a theme selected for study in this chapter, I needed to dig deeper, interpret many aspects of the news stories. To accomplish this goal, a purposive data sample was chosen in order to determine newspaper coverage of Islamists and Seculars. According to Patton, the power and logic of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling.[565] The purpose of studying information-rich cases is because they yield insights and in- depth understanding.[566] Further, Maxwell explained that purposeful sampling is "a strategy in which particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices".[567] In addition to this, the usefulness of the purposeful sampling or qualitative sampling lies in the ability it gives to select specific elements or cases based on specific purposes related to the research.[568] In this regard, the population for the data sample was selected in order to draw conclusions regarding the Moroccan newspaper configurations of Islam, the Monarchy and the territorial integrity. The period of coverage of newspaper representations of Islamism/ Islamists and Secularism/ secularists starts from January 3, 2012, when Abdelilah Benkirane's governmental coalition was first appointed by King Mohamed VI and ends on January 3, 2016.[569]

2. Findings

A content analysis of *Assabah* (daily independent), *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* (daily independent), *Attajdid* (Partisan Weekly) and *Assabil* (monthly independent). The

[565] Micheal Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002), p. 230.

[566] Ibid., p. 230.

[567] Joseph A. Maxwell, "Designing a Qualitative Study," in L. Bickman and D. J. Rog (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Applied Social Research* Methods (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2009), p. 235.

[568] See Abbas Tashakkori and Charles Teddlie, *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003).

[569] Abdelilah Benkirane, born on April 8, 1954, is a Moroccan politician who was Prime Minister of Morocco from November 2011 to March 2017. He is one of the founding members of the Justice and Development Party, an Islamist political party in Morocco.

findings have been divided into three categorical sections: Islamists on *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* Secularism and Seculars in *Attajdid* and *Assabil*. In order to collect data, a coding-sheet has been drafted. The period of coverage of newspaper representations of Islamism/ Islamists and Secularism/ secularists starts from January 3, 2012, when Abdelilah Benkirane's governmental coalition was first appointed by King Mohamed VI and ends on January 3, 2016. The period chosen is, as I argue, very significant in the post-2011 Moroccan history in the sense that newspapers played a role in shaping a public opinion regarding the Islamists' experience in government. It is also significant because it should help understand the public opinion newspapers raised to make Moroccans ready to accept the way the Abdelilah Benkirane was forced to eclipse from the political scene in 2018. Details about this political period were provided in the third chapter of the theoretical background. *Assabil*, because it is a monthly Islamist independent newspaper and for the sake of collecting a substantial number of pertinent articles, was examined during the period of January 2015 and January 2020. *Attajdid* newspaper, the journalistic voice adopted by the Justice and Development Party, has also been looked at from January 2015 to just January 2017 since the newspaper foundation stopped issuing the newspaper in mid-2017 due to hard economic circumstance as was explained previously.

Chart 7: Islamists in *Assabah*, *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* and *Al Ittihadch Al Ichtiraki* (Jan. 3, 2012- Jan. 3, 2016)

Newspaper	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
Assabah	10	159	8	177
Al Ahdath Al Maghribya	3	182	16	201
Total	13	341	24	378

Chart 8: The Justice and Development Party in Secular Newspapers (Jan. 3, 2012- Jan. 3, 2016)

Newspaper	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
Assabah	3	103	26	132
Al Ahdath Al Maghribya	3	182	16	149
Total	6	285	41	281

Chart 9: The Justice and Charity Movement and Other Islamist Movements (Jan. 3, 2012- Jan. 3, 2016)

Newspaper	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
Assabah	2	36	7	45
Al Ahdath Al Maghribya	2	39	11	52
Total	4	75	18	97

Chart 10: The Number of Articles Appearing on *Assabil and Attajdid Addressing Secularism* and Anyone Adopting it (Jan. 2015- Jan. 2020)

Newspaper	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
Assabil	0	38	1	39
Attajdid (Jan. 2015- Jan. 2017)	0	36	12	48
Total	0	74	13	87

Chart 11: Secular Activists and Miscellaneous Issues on *Assabil* (Jan. 2015- Jan. 2020)

***Assabil* Coverage of**	**Positive**	**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Total**
Ahmed Assid (Civil Society Activist)	0	13	0	13
Nourdine Ayyouch (Businessman and Secular Activist)	0	9	0	9
Homosexuality	0	4	0	4
Moroccan Shi'i Activists & Shia Islam	0	15	0	15
The Use of French in Teaching	0	7	0	7
International Organization like the United Nations and their Resolutions	1	8	2	11
Western powers/ the United States and Israel	0	16	0	16

Restriction of Polygamy in Morocco	0	16	3	19
Artistic Production and Freedom of Expression	0	5	1	6
Total	1	71	5	100

3. Data Analysis and Interpretations

3.1. *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, *Assabah and Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki* and the Demonization of the Islamists: Towards the Creation of Balance in Morocco

Just a quick look at the findings shown in the first chart of this chapter, it is crystal clear that *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, two privately-owned liberal newspapers in Morocco, tend to demonize the Islamists. Negatively framing the Justice and Development Party and its leader Abdelilah Benkirane who was the prime minister during the period the data were being collected was an almost daily feature of the newspapers' reporting. The PJD members were described as *Ikhwan*, a word in Arabic used to refer to members of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt whose perspective about state-building is religion-based. In fact, associating the PJD in general and Abdelilah Benkirane with the Muslim Brotherhood, a movement whose experience in governance ended up with a military coup in Egypt and the imprisonment of the President of the republic Mohamed Morsi, was meant to demonize the PJD and to scare people in people of a similar Egyptian scenario. He was represented, even after January 2016 as the figure below shows, that he lies while speaking to the public seeking conflicts between the institutions in Morocco. Usually did the articles attacking Benkirane appear with a photograph of him, either when he is crying while speaking to public or with an auto-focus on his bead and face. In fact, the photographs used on *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* are used to help complete the frame. As Bhabha stresses, the image and text,

when both articulated, both develop their conjoined meanings.[570] Here, Lyford and Payne contend that images have an enormous power to construct the public sentiment.[571] The images used on *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* were meant to misrepresent Islamists in Morocco. I argue that the attacks Abdelilah Benkirane was receiving from these two newspapers among other ones not studied in this dissertation, regardless of the limited number of newspaper copies sold in Morocco in general, helped in the shaping of a public sentiment in Morocco that is anti-PJD, anti-Islamism and anti-Islamists. This sentiment contributed to the polarization Morocco witnesses today, hence making easier for the ruling class to send out Abdelilah Benkirane, whose political discourse gained much popularity in the country, from the political scene without any social opposition.

Figure 44: *Al Ahdath Al Maghirbya*, May 6, 2016



The total of articles published by *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* between January 3, 2012 and January 3, 2016 were 378 articles, 303 of which were attached with large, medium size, or small photographs. Photographs do represent the anti-

[570] Homi K. Bhabha, "Beyond photography," in T. Simon (Ed.), *A living man declared dead and other chapters (*2011), pp. I – XVIII. Retrieved from (http://w.tarynsimon.com/essays-videos/docs/Beyond%20Photography_Homi%20Bhabha.pdf)

[571] See Amy Lyford and Carol Payne, "Photojournalism, Mass Media and the Politics of Spectacle," *Visual Resources: An International Journal on Images and Their Uses*, Vol. 21, N. 2 (2005), pp. 119-129.

Islamism ideology adopted by these two newspapers. They are loaded with messages, meanings, representations, and with ideological knowledge the newspapers studied seek to convey. The fact that Mohamed Abbadi, the Chef of *Al Adl Wal Ihssane* Movement, always appears on newspapers with traditional dress, sitting down as a master whose disciples are expected to obey should tell us how photographs as such are able to articulate and disseminate ideas not implicitly contained in the text the photograph is attached with. Like in the footage below, Mohamed Abbadi, an islamist figure leading the previously mentioned movement that is a Sufi and anti-state, is portrayed by *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* as Abou Bakr Al Baghdadi, the previous leader of ISIS. Associating Islamist political figures in Morocco with terrorism and extremism is routinely done by the two newspapers this section studies.

Figure 45: *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, January 10, 2016



Two interesting remarks I noted while collecting data, especially when I tried to look back at how the PJD had been portrayed just a few days before the 2011 early elections. I observed that the coverage was to a large extent objective and neutral. This could be explained by the fact that the two newspapers, when they had understood that the ruling elite was favoring a government led by Islamist as a smart tactic to calm down the initial turmoil, decided to be neutral. Just by the time Abdelilah Benkirane started gaining a popularity that no political actor had before, the two newspapers had already started attacking him and the Islamists standing in support of him to make his popularity wane down.

One of the observations made is that the two newspapers adopt a defamatory discourse while framing the Islamists, particularly Abdelilah Benkirane and members belong to *Al Adl Wal Ihssan*. This is done to maintain the social and political balance the authorities were seeking. The ruling elite does not seem to tolerate a political actor gaining much popularity and attention in society. The ruling elite does not accept any political figure to compete with it. Because of this, I argue that *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, even though they stress on their independence, are not independent newspapers but rather privately-owned periodicals at disposal to serve the interests of the ruling elite. While it is hard to prove this, the coverage of these two newspapers does not at least seem to be genuine and objective. Here, I argue that Morocco's process of democratization, which has already taken much time, is going to be lengthy due to the absence of an independent press that is objective, professional and able to enrich the public debate with fact-based stories. Defamation creates tenses, social anger and one's rejection of the other. Morocco, a transitional setting in North Africa, is characterized with an unprecedented polarization that newspapers like *Assabah* and Al *Ahdath Al Maghribya* are partially responsible for.

The Islamists are portrayed also as inexperienced and unable to practice democracy or govern the state's institutions. Besides, they are portrayed by *Assabah* and Al *Ahdath Al Maghribya* as homogenous. Indeed, Islamist groups are many in Morocco and they all disagree with each other on several important matters related to governance, laws, and political participation. The two newspapers seek to homogenize Islamism in Morocco while also associating Moroccan Islamist group with Gulf countries and Islamist organizations of other settings known of unrest and instability.

Generally, *Assabah* and Al *Ahdath Al Maghribya's* portrayal of Islamists, particularly Abdelilah Benkirane, was very negative. The adoption of defamatory, biased and lie-based discourse characterized the daily coverage of these two newspapers. Here, I argue that the two newspapers adopt such a biased discourse to impact the popularity Abdelilah Benkirane has gained in Morocco because of his different style of communication with the masses compared to other political actors whose rhetoric is elitist. The purpose behind these two newspapers' attack of the head of government Abdelilah Benkirane was to help the Self, the ruling class/ the Monarchy, main its control over the political scene. In this regard, I argue that Morocco, since the shut-down of *Demain, Douman* and *Le Journal*, has not known free and

independent newspapers but rather privately-owned newspapers/ enterprises that cannot function without being dependent on the government's annual funding and the revenues earned from advertisement contracts signed with very powerful and well-connected companies.

I also argue here that the articles *Assabah* and Al *Ahdath Al Maghribya* published between January 2012 and January 2016 were also meant to construct a dichotomy based on the Self, seculars, and the rest/ the Other, Islamists. Internalizing Orientalist ideas is the work *Assabah* and Al *Ahdath Al Maghribya* did during the period I focused on. Islamists are always associated with violence, backwardness, lack of knowledge, extremist ideas, which are descriptions Orientalists in the West use to refer to people living in the rest of the world/ Orientals. In this sense, I contend that *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* seek the perpetuation and dissemination of a Western Orientalist discourse to describe the Islamists. For instance, the following footage, an article published on *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, as an attempt to explain "how a citizen becomes Muslim, then Islamist and then terrorist in Morocco", on April 26, 2014 in an attempt to suggest secularism as the solution to this.

Figure 46: *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, April 26, 2014


أصدر كتابا حول : كيف يُصنع المسلم في المغرب، وكيف يتحول إلى إسلاموي، وكيف يتحول الإسلاموي إلى إرهابي؟

شكلت قضايا الجنسانية والنوع والنسائية سلب عمل عالم الاجتماع عبد الصمد الديالمي، الممتد على مدى أربعين سنة. وضمن هذه القضايا الثلاث الأساسية، كانت حاضرة قضية الدين والإسلاموية، التي أنتج بصددها مجموعة كبيرة من الدراسات والأبحاث والأوراق الجامعية. لكنها الإنتاجات التي يرى عبد الصمد الديالمي أنها لم تصل بالشكل الكافي إلى المغاربة، وخاصة المهتمين بنظيراته، نظرا لنشر أهمها في مجلات دولية متخصصة باللغتين الفرنسية والانجليزية. ولذلك، جاء تفكيره بتقريبها إليهم من خلال تجميعها في كتاب "مصنع الإسلاموية في المغرب"، الذي أصدره بداية السنة الجارية عن دار النشر توبقال. وهو الكتاب الذي يعكس من خلاله اشتغاله التخصصي كعالم اجتماع الدين. ويؤشر ذلك التخصص على أن الظاهرة الدينية أحد مواضيع البحث والدراسة في العلوم الانسانية والاجتماعية، على رأسها علم الاجتماع.

حاورته: فطومة لعفيفي

1 الدولة العلمانية هي الحل للإشكال الديني والمواطنة أسمى من الإيمان

د.عبد الصمد الديالمي

عالم اجتماع جنس، جندر وإسلاموية، أستاذ جامعة، الرباط

Here, I argue that *Assabah's* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*'s coverage of Islamism construct a binary-oppositional discourse based on the Self and the Other. Internalizing Orientalist ideas while addressing Islamism, these two Moroccan newspapers create polarization and disseminate Orientalist configurations *vis-á-vis* the Islamists. Here, I suggest a postcolonial media studies reading of "secular" Moroccan broadsheets for the deconstruction and decolonization of the discourse they disseminate.

3.2. *Assabil and Attajdid* and the Rejection of Secularism and Secularists

Assabil, an independent Salafist monthly newspaper, and *Attajdid*, a weekly newspaper perceived as the official voice of the Justice and Development Party, published over 80 articles between January 2015 and January 2020 (for the case of *Assabil*) and between January 2015 and January 2017 (for the case of *Attajdid* which disappeared from the market in mid-2017 due to difficult economic circumstances). Below are some examples of front-paged editorials of these two newspapers attacking secularism and seculars in Morocco. The first one appeared on *Attajdid* on June 9, 2016 asking if Islamists in North Africa and the Middle East have finally accepted secularization. Even though the question seems to be neutral, the inside-text articles were mostly a criticism of Islamist parties/ figures who have finally accepted secularization while serving.

Figure 47: *Attajdid*, June 9, 2016



Figure 48: *Assabil*, July 2018



Figure 49: *Assabil*, April 2018



The second one is the front page of *Assabil*, the issue of July 2018, while the last one appeared in April of the same year. The second one attacks the secular block in Morocco calling for individual liberties, a theme *Assabil* does regularly address. The last one is the front-page of *Assabil* attacking the secular block in Morocco, led by the National Council of Human Rights, that demanded gender equality and equality in inheritance.

Based on the coverage of *Assabil* and the interviews it does with religious scholars and conservative political actors, a third space for Ijtihad (open religious interpretations) should never be tolerate in Morocco where the King is the Commander of the Faithful, the highest religious in the country according to the constitution.

Generally, the tense debate between secularists and Islamists seem to be ongoing, *Assabil*, which is still issued in Morocco, is always addressing discontent regarding the taboo topic seculars transcend in Morocco. *Assabil* promotes the building of a religious state in which laws are derived from the Quran and the Sunnah, and not from the declaration of human rights or the United Nations resolutions. This controversial newspaper embodies the quest for an Islamic state, a desire common to most Islamist movements in Morocco and in the Middle East and North Africa.

Assabil is also discontent about the visibility minorities in Morocco seek, especially homosexuals and Shi'i Moroccans who support the Iranian foreign policy. *Assabil*'s coverage is always brimming with articles, front-paged and inside text ones, that address Iran and those who stand in support of it as a threat to the unity of Morocco and of the region (See the two footages below).

Figure 50: Assabil, February 2014



Figure 51: *Assabil*, July 2016



The two previous figures are front pages of *Assabil*'s newspaper (February 2014 and July 2016) through discontent is addressed regarding the spread of Shi'i Islam in the region (the case of February 2014 issue) as well as the increase of Shi'i Moroccans and the policies adopted by Ahmed Taoufiq, the Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs that *Assabil* holds accountable for the "un-Islamic" textbooks, and the minister of higher education and scientific research.

Generally, *Assabil*'s discourse could be described as radical. Minority groups in Morocco are negatively represented, secular forces hardly attacked and third-way religious scholars whose interpretations of Islam are reconciled with modernity and democracy are accused of heresy and apostasy. When many social media activists share posts not even as extremist in tone as the articles *Assabil* publishes every month, they usually get summoned by the authorities for investigation about the motifs of their posts, while *Assabil* has never been harassed by the authorities, at least since 2011. Having said that, it seems that the ruling elite in Morocco is quite relaxed and satisfied with the polarization *Assabah*, *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* and *Assabil* bring about in society. Each newspaper here is biased and not fact-based, just seeking to defame and attack the different Other.

Assabil pays tribute to Wahhabi Movement that originated in the Najd region of modern-day Saudi Arabia. Advocating a return to the traditions of the Salaf, the first three generations of Muslims, *Assabil* Newspapers attack civil society activists in Morocco who call for individual liberties, restriction of polygamy, gender equality in inheritance, the teaching of foreign language particularly French and English, and the right of minorities including Shi'i and Baha'i Moroccans. Because those who publish on *Assabil* are not political activists nor are they Jihadists calling for acts of terror in Morocco or elsewhere, it could be argued that *Assabil*'s journalists are purist Salafists, usually referred to as quietists as they avoid politics. This could explain why they never cover the Monarch or contest his authorities.

Adopting strict and puritanical approaches to Islam, unlike *Attajdid* that is moderate in tone and coverage, *Assabil* usually quotes Ibn Taymiyyah and his disciple Ibn Kathir, who are usually referred to as Assalaf Salih, while putting a great emphasis on practicing actions in accordance with the known Sunnah, not while praying but also while eating and drinking water (health section of the newspaper for instance).

For art and national media outlets, particularly Moroccan cinema and 2M Channel, *Assabil*'s discourse is rejectionist. For *Assabil*, Moroccan movies, national channels like 2M and the press share lies, stain the sacred, and shake off Islamic values Moroccans want to maintain, and the figures below are examples of front-pages that attack Moroccan art, freedom of expression and national media outlets. Assabil argues that this national media does not represent Moroccan Muslims.

Figure 52: *Assabil*, April 27, 2017



Figure 53: *Assabil*, June 16, 2015



Figure 54: *Assabil*, June 1, 2015



The third figure is the front page of the June 2015 issue. The issue was all devoted to criticizing Moroccan cinematic productions, with a particular focus on the newest movie in 2015 *Much Loved*/ *Zin Li Fik*, a controversial movie made by Nabil Ayyouch. *Much Loved*, a movie that addresses sexual tourism in Marrakech and the visits of Saudis to Morocco in search of sex and pleasure, was banned by the government. The

film is available on Youtube and thousands have seen it according to the number of viewers Youtube gives. The June 2015 issue was an attack to the movie and to those defending freedom of creativity and expression in Morocco.

One of the most controversial issue was that of January 26, 2015, a few days after two brothers, Said and Cherif Kouachi, had forced their way into the offices of the French satirical weekly newspaper Charlie Hebdo in Paris. Armed with rifles and other weapons, according to news reports, they killed 12 people and injured 11 others. The attacked took place after Charlie Hebdo published satirical cartoons defaming Prophet Mohammed.

Figure 55: ***Assabil*, January 26, 2015**



In this issue, *Assabil* attacked the activists who supported Charlie Hebdo without criticizing the cartoons the weekly Charlie Hebdo had published attacking Prophet Mohammed. "Instead of Je Suis Charlie, I am Charlie, Je suis Mohammed, I am Mohammed", a note *Assabil* made in the 2015 January Issue, describing the cartoons as acts of terrorism. I believe this issue is very controversial in the sense that no text, neither a front-page text nor an inside text, condemned the shootings against Charlie

Hebdo newspapers in Paris in early January. On the contrary, the newspaper considered the Cartoonists terrorists. When similar stances are expressed by Moroccans, especially when done on social networks like Facebook and Youtube, they immediately get summoned for investigations. Surprisingly, the issue was not banned, and no journalist was intimidated.

4. Concluding Remarks

As a conclusion of this chapter, it is abundantly clear that *Assabah*, *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* and *Assabil* are biased newspapers in Morocco. They are not fact-based and always seek to attack and demonize. Leftist and liberal newspapers like *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* adopt fake news and defamatory style of journalism against Islamists, especially Abdelilah Benkirane, while *Assabil*'s aganda-setting is clearly oriented towards attacking secularists and secularism. In this chapter, I have tried to look how each block represents the other. Because of this search for demonizing the different Other, the print press in Morocco is accordingly to be held accountable, at least partially, for the polarization that characterizes Morocco today. While each block is determined to misrepresent the other, I argue that the print press in Morocco cannot provide alternative discourses that help a public healthy debate about democratization reforms, free speech and liberalization during Morocco's transitional phase to take root. Having said that, the public sphere, the way Habermas explains it, is not necessarily a space for all but rather, like in Morocco, a space where defamation, biased reporting and disoriented coverage take place. It is a terrain where everything is discussed, except the things that truly matter. Has the print press lost a sense of direction? Probably the answer is "yes", but what remains certain is intensity of Moroccans' struggle to have a free press that helps transform the state and society without causing damages. The digital sphere, I argue, is the refuge of those seeking plurality of voices, agency, and visibility.

PART III

ANALYTICAL PART

COVERING POLITICS: NEWSPAPER CONTENT ANALYSIS

CHAPTER I: PRINT MEDIA'S SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF CORRUPTION AND THE WATCHDOG ROLE OF THE NEWS MEDIA IN MOROCCO

1. Preliminary Discussion

Just a few years before the death of King Hassan II, especially with the emergence of private print journalism in Morocco and the relaxation journalists enjoyed with the Alternance Government lead by the Socialist Union Party, corruption had already emerged as one the most dominant themes in the public debate in Morocco. With the arrival of King Mohamed VI to the throne and his stress on the "New Era" during which a fight of corruption should be the priority of the government and civil society organizations, the print press's coverage has been brimming with stories of corruption, framing it as an epidemic phenomenon that hampers the country from progressing. Adopting the agenda-setting theory that was thoroughly discussed in the theoretical chapter of this dissertation, newspapers in Morocco have since the mid 1990s determined corruption as the most important issue to the public. In their attempt to expose corrupt practices in the Moroccan public and private sectors, the press in Morocco has shaped public opinions on the threat of corruption. While it is true that corruption is a global phenomenon today, it is, in developing countries like Morocco, perceived as a major factor due to which the acceleration of socio-economic and political transformations finds its way. As it is evident in every sphere, be it pubic or private, corruption, the way it is being treated by Moroccan partisan and independent newspapers, could be political, electoral, institutional, bureaucratical or even cultural. As covered by newspapers in Morocco, corruption, taking a variety of forms, includes bribery, theft, embezzlement, blackmailing, electoral fraud, nepotism, the abuse of power, forgery, the conflict of interests, receiving dirty money or funds, etc.…

Because of the harm the consequences of corruption cause in societies, this chapter is meant to discuss how frequently and deeply independent newspapers in Morocco cover corruption. The method followed in this chapter is a qualitative method using purposive sampling. As the name suggests, the sample is selected based on the goal of this study. It is one of the most convincing method by which data is collected in the most time and cost-effective way. Content analysis is used to determine the newspaper

coverage of corruption news in the newspapers selected over a period of ten years (February 20, 2011-January 20, 2020). As it was difficult to find the archives of all these newspapers online, I decided to visit the newspaper archive at the National Library of Rabat to collect data. As they were manually inspected, print articles were selected based on the topic at hand, so that if a key word such '*Fassad*' (meaning corruption) was included in the title or in the body of an article, it was automatically selected for data collection and analysis. The results can be qualitatively generalizable since the selection is based on one single topic from different sources. This purposive sampling method tests the general impact the findings have on the press landscape in Morocco. *Attajdid* newspaper is an exception here. It is the only newspaper that was looked at only from February 20, 2011 to February 2017, just a few months before its issuance stopped in the country due to difficult economic circumstances.

2. Findings

Chart 12: Corruption in Moroccan Newspapers (February 20, 2011- January 20, 2020)

Newspaper	Category	Number of articles
Al-Massae	Independent	987
Assabah		1478
Al- Ahdat Al-Maghribia		1302
Attajdid	Partisan	41
Al-Alam		96
Al- Itihad Al ichtiraqui		134

Chart 13: Space Allotted to Corruption Articles in the Selected Newspapers

Space	*Al Massae*	*Assabah*	*Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*	*Al Alam*	*Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki*	*Attajdid*	*Total*
One Quarter Page	369	234	361	53	52	23	1092
Half Page	324	611	389	14	22	11	1371
Three-quarter Page	245	602	515	26	47	5	1440
Full Page	49	31	37	3	13	2	148
Total	987	1478	1302	96	134	41	4038

Chart 14: Prominence of Corruption and Corrupt-Practices-Oriented Articles in the Selected Moroccan Independent Newspapers

	Al Massae	*Assabah*	*Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*
Inside Page	551	821	575
Back Page	13	14	26
Front Page	423	643	701
Total	987	1478	1302

3. Data Analysis and Interpretations

For the sake of objectivity, the rise of anti-corruption journalism in Morocco could be regarded as an improvement witnessed in democracy and good governance. Looking at the number of articles published between February 20, 2011 and January 20, 2020 could

tell how journalism in Morocco, especially independent newspapers, is important in the fight against corruption. Paradoxically, the more frequently newspapers in Morocco cover stories of corruption in the public and private sectors, the more the country continues to be plagues by corruption according to national and international indexes (90 out of 176 according to Transparency International, 2017). Transparency International has also recently published a study about corruption in Morocco stating that 74% of Moroccans believe that the government is doing bad job in the fight against corruption.[572] The latter give an idea of how serious corruption is in Morocco and how the laws are not usually reinforced effectively to curb the culture of nepotism, patronage and connections.

Moroccan partisan newspapers usually comment on reports or cover stories of the government and of persons affiliated to educational institutions. Generally, the data collected show that, unlike the independent press, the partisan press in Morocco does not regularly cover stories of corruption. This could be explained by the fact that party-owned newspapers do not tend to dismay officials in the government and in other public institutions with whom leaders from political parties have governed with. Political parties also think of future coalitions, the reason why party-owned newspaper avoid prioritizing scandals of corruption taking place in Morocco.

This chapter argues that even though the most dominant theme covered by Moroccan newspapers, particular the independent ones, remains corruption according the finds previously shown, the print press does still pick and choose while avoiding corruption in King Mohammed VI's companies and entourage. Once the international press does so, the national print press, which fears intimidations and harassments, completely disregards the narrative. It also argues that due to the fact that the anti-corruption laws and regulations are seldom reinforced, Moroccan newspaper coverage of corruption could just be meant to sensationalize the audience and to normalize corruption in the country. The chapter also argues that since the government grants a subsidy of approximately Six Milliard de Centimes (6 Million USD) every year in support of the national press, journalists, who are expected to display patriotism and respect to the Monarch and Islam, criticism of the government and weighty officials should remain within the appropriate boundaries. The chapter argues that even if the

[572] See https://lakome2.com/politique/156465.

number of articles published between 2011 and 2020 addressing corruption and scandals of corruption by Moroccan newspapers, the majority of the articles collected tackle “petty corruption” (the four figures below are examples, others have been listed in the appendix), while scandals associated with weighty officials, the security apparatus and the King’s owned company and entourage are never covered. When print and digital media outlets do so, the authorities intervene. The recent case in point is that of *Goud*, an online newspaper that often publishes stories in Moroccan Arabic, when it addressed corruption the King’s office, an incident that happened in 2015 and due to which *Goud* was fined almost 5000,000 Moroccan Dirhams (over 50000 USD).

Figure 56: *Assabah*, October 18, 2018



Figure 57: *Al Massae*, May 25, 2015



Figure 58: ***Al Massae*****, 24 May, 2012**



Figure 59: ***Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*****, January 16, 2020**



According to the data collected from a content analysis on Moroccan partisan and independent newspapers, even constructive criticism of the King, the companies he owns, his entourage and family does not appear on newspapers. The King, who constitutionally possesses significant unchecked powers, is not subject to criticism or investigation by journalism in Morocco. The fact that journalists are aware of the suspension they and their newspapers may face any time if they report on the King should explain the absence of even a constructive analysis or criticism in the press. This reality does contradict with the constitution that guarantees freedom of speech and expression, but the political culture as well as the press and penal codes restrict it. Article 29 of the press code allows the government to shut down any publication that is 'prejudicial to Islam, the Monarchy, territorial integrity or public order'. This situation of the print press in Morocco is not healthy, especially that the King, usually referred to as the coolest King, the King of the poor and the liberal King, usually addresses his

yearning to see the country and its institutions moving into the modern world. Despite the constitutional recognition of freedom of expression and speech, its vague language gives much powers to judges and the government to interpret anti-corruption newspaper articles. It is the vagueness of the constitution and the press regulations that do not allow interpretations that protect journalists to be adopted. The court usually accuses journalists with defamation, a punishable criminal offence by up to one year in Morocco. This legal and political context explains why, based on the findings of the data collected as well, newspapers in Morocco do not actually provide various viewpoints on corruption issues. Additionally, it has been observed while collecting data and pertinent footages that newspapers usually report on nepotism (*wasta*). They cover, as this chapter call them petty corruption, scandals of the government transactions that are done so fast to either recruit someone, to renew the document of a minister's family member, to hire or promote people close to political parties and political leaders, to remove fines and waive taxes. Interestingly, the data collected show no criticism or coverage of any scandals attributed to *Attijari Wafabank*, the biggest bank owned by the King, or even to Marjane, the biggest grocery store owned by the King.

The Moroccan partisan newspapers studied in this chapter along with the other ones I tried to observe while collecting data have never covered the leakage of King Mohamed VI's HSBC Private Bank Account opened on October 11, 2006 in Geneva. On February 5, 2015 the news went viral because of the coverage the story got from European and American media outlets like the French *Le Monde* (See Figure below). The international press, *Le Monde* as an example, covered the news and raised up questions regarding the double standards of the financial laws in Morocco that do not allow ordinary citizens to open bank accounts in foreign countries and do bank transfers of huge sums of money. Even if this story went viral on Facebook and was the week's main topic social media activists in Morocco were debating on, no partisan newspaper among the ones I studied shared the news or even reported on what international media outlets had addressed. This explains the self-censorship journalists exercise in order to avoid fines, or to help their political parties guarantee a number of seats in parliaments in the following elections, or in order to help the state maintain the status quo.

Figure 60: Le Monde, February 5, 2015


Consulter
e journal

Le Monde

ACTUALITÉS ÉCONOMIE VIDÉOS OPINIONS CULTURE M LE MAG

ÉCONOMIE

Partage

« SwissLeaks » : Sa Majesté Mohammed VI, client numéro 5090190103 chez HSBC

Le roi du Maroc a ouvert un compte en 2006 à Genève avec son secrétaire particulier, Mounir Majidi. Une information qui tombe mal au moment où les autorités insistent sur le « patriotisme économique ».

Par Gérard Davet , Fabrice Lhomme et Ahmed Benchemsi · Publié le 05 février 2015 à 20h17 - Mis à jour le 19 août 2019 à 13h32

The independent newspapers I studied, unlike the partisan ones, were late in mentioning the story. Still, they all attacked the international press, with a focus on *Le Monde*, accusing it of attempting to harm Morocco's strong ties with Western governments especially France. *Assabah* newspaper, on February 6, clearly attacked *Le Monde*, accusing it of defamation and jealousy of the progress Morocco has accomplished under the leadership of King Mohamed VI.[573] This article also defended Prince Moulay Rachid and Pricess Lalla Meryem whose names also listed as HSBC Private Bank Clients. In this context, this dissertation convincingly argues that a truly independent press in Morocco does not exist. The term I suggest in this dissertation is "private newspapers". This does not deny the fact that many independent journalists work in Morocco. Yet, they are always subjected to lawsuits and arrests if the question the ruling elite and members of the royal family. As an institution that constitutionally possesses much unchecked powers, the Monarchy is normally supposed to be covered by the press.

Another case that caused an uproar in the world is the Panama Papers Scandal which refers to the leakage by the so-called "John Doe", the anonymous whistleblower' to German journalist Bastian Obermayer from the newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* of 11.5 million documents that detail financial and attorney–client information for more than 214,488 offshore entities. Some dating back to the 1970s, "the documents contain personal financial information about wealthy individuals and public officials that had previously been kept private. While offshore business entities are legal, reporters found

[573] This article is available in the archive of *Assabah* newspaper and could be retreieved at https://assabah.ma/80204.html.

that some of the Mossack Fonseca shell corporations were used for illegal purposes, including fraud, tax evasion, and evading international sanctions."[574] Morocco became concerned with this leakage when Mounir Majidi, the personal secretary of King Mohammed VI, came in the leaked documents on April 3, 2016. The British Virgin Islands firm was used by Majidi to purchase a luxury 1930s yacht which is now used by the King. Many prime ministers whose name appeared in the documents resigned immediately and apologized, while others in other countries remained silent. In Morocco, Mounir Majidi's lawyer confirmed that "the two companies to which panama papers refer were created in strict accordance with laws in place and their existence is available from public registers."[575] Expectedly, the international press covered the leakage and many articles on well-known international newspapers addressed King Mohamed VI's and Mounir Majidi's economic activities in Panama. Surprisingly, no Moroccan newspaper, not just the one this dissertation studies, covered the Panama Papers Leakage and the King's and his secretary's activities in the British virgin Island except *Akhbar Al Yawm* independent newspaper which front-paged the scandal on April 4th, 2016 with a picture of Mounir Majidi sitting on a couch (see below).

Figure 61: *Akhbar Al Yawm*, April 4, 2016



[574] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panama_Papers.

[575] See http://moroccansoftheworld.com/panama-papers-how-the-worlds-most-secretive-company-helped-the-king-take-to-the-sea-on-luxury-yacht/.

In fact, rarely do Moroccan newspaper cover similar corruption scandals the way *Akhbar Al Yawm* did. Even though the newspaper was not selected to be studied in this dissertation because of the similarities it shares with *Al Massae*, I took this footage while observing the newspaper coverage of Panama Papers. Later, Moroccan newspapers started report Mounir Majidi's confirmation that the two companies mentioned in the leaked documents are legal. *Akhbar Al Yawm* displayed brevity while covering the involvement of King Mohamed VI and his secretary in Panama Papers. This could maybe explain why Taoufiq Bouachrine, the editor-in-chief of *Akhbar Al Yawm,* has been sentenced 15 years in prison by the court of appeal of Casablanca on Friday October 25, 2019. The police arrested Bouachrine in February 2018 on charges of human trafficking, rape and sexual assault against several female journalists at his newspaper, charges that Bouachrine denied against him, suggesting that his arrest was politically motivated. Indeed, the reason why newspapers this dissertation is meant to examine and analyze avoid covering corruption within the King's owned companies for instance is because journalists always remember past experiences investigative journalists in Morocco went through.

Past state's actions against journalists explain why newspapers today are very careful in the way they cover the Monarchy or people belonging to the *Makhzen.* For instance, Ali Lmrabet, the editor-in-chief of satirical *Demain* and *Douman* was given a three-year jail sentence in 2003. Lmrabet was accused to attaching the monarchy, defaming the King, and for putting the territorial integrity at state. As he holds a Spanish citizenship and did not accept to cease hunger strike while in prison, Lamrabet was given a royal pardon on January 7, 2004 but was forbidden to work as a journalist for 10 years, a sentence that "no one in the galaxy has never ever been given", Lamrabet said when he was invited by Freedom Now Organization in April 2015.[576] Similarly, the *Economie et Entreprises* was ordered to pay about 6,000,000 Moroccan Dirhams in in June 2007, for libeling a holding company owned by the royal family. Indeed, the newspapers studied in this chapter, my content analysis has revealed, seem to be cautious and aware of the power dynamics in Morocco while turning a plastic eye on the issues that may bring about conflicts with the authorities.

[576] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_K6Sdmctibw.

From 2015 to 2018, a period of coverage I meticulously looked because of the availability of a very organized archive at the National Library of Rabat, I just observed how journalists, either the ones working for partisan newspapers or those working for independent newspapers, are operating in fear, sometimes defaming journalists who expose corruption within the royal family or the King's owned business. For instance, *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, since March 2015 when Hicham Mansouri was jailed, has been defaming him, attributing him with foreign funds received to harm the stability of the country. Hicham Mansouri, who is now an asylum-based resident in Europe, was sentenced in March 2015 to 10 months in prison for charges of 'adultery and starting a brothel', a conviction he and many critics in Morocco considered a step to intimidate journalists seeking to expose corruption in the government and the royal family. Interesting, *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, although it is said to be an independent liberal newspaper in Morocco, has published around 27 newspaper articles defaming Hicham Mansouri and standing in support of the police report, even though *Al Ahdath Al Maghrbya* does basically promote sexual freedom. If it is true that Hicham Mansouri was actually jailed because of adultery, not because of his deep investigative journalism, then *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* is supposed to stand in support of him as long as sexual freedom, among other freedoms, are among the values it has been promoting since late 1990s.

While looking at the case of *Al Massae* newspaper, a quality Moroccan broadsheet always associated with Rachid Nini although he is no longer the newspaper editor or one of its journalists today, I was just able to observe how exposition of corruption narratives and how the critical tone has waned down since 2011 when Rachid Nini, a controversial columnist in Morocco and the previous editor-in-chief of *Al Massae*, was jailed for one year in prison for "stories about widespread corruption among the security services and law enforcement agencies."[577] In his columns, Rachid Ninni, whose information sources have never been unveiled, was exposing scandals of corruption, never those the royal family has been associated with, of weighty persons in the country including Fouad Ali El Himma, one of the closest advisors of King

[577] See BBC's 2017 Article "*Morocco profile-media"*. Retrieved from http://www.bbc.com/ news/world-africa-14123019.

Mohamed VI. *Al Massae*, founded in 2006 by Rachid Nini and Taoufiq Bouachrine, is among the most popular and highly circulated broadsheets in Morocco. Rachid Nini's daily column "*chouf tchouf*" had been read by a significant number of Moroccans every day before Nini was arrested in 2011, a tumultuous year of uprisings and political unrest in Morocco. While looking at the archive, I could see how Nini, while believing in the positive role the monarchy plays in the stability of the country, was devoting most of his columns to attacking the security apparatus in Morocco and exposing corruption within the police department and intelligence body. In his controversial column published on April 19, 2011 (see figure below), a column said to be the reason why Rachid Nini was jailed, Nini addresses the abuse of power exercised by Abdellatif Hammouchi, currently the head of the Moroccan secret service and the General Directorate for Territorial Surveillance or DGST. Nini criticized corruption within the Moroccan secret apparatus, calling for the end of power abuse in a country where post-Arab Spring Moroccans want to be treated with dignity.

Figure 62: *Al Massae*, April 19, 2011


حموشيات مغرب الأمس

نشر بوساطة رشيد نيني في المساء يوم
2011 - 04 - 19

المساء

لم تتعرض مؤسسة «المساء ميديا» منذ تأسيسها سنة 2006 لحملة استنزاف واختراق مثل التي تتعرض لها هذه الأيام. والسبب هو أن «المساء» أصبحت شوكة في خاصرة بعض المسؤولين الفاشلين والفاسدين بالأجهزة القضائية والأمنية، والذين أصبح شغلهم الشاغل هو محاربة هذه الجريدة التي تقض مضاجعهم كل

Because of his extensive reporting about corruption among government officials, exactly those Abdelilah Bekirane had been opposing before his party arrived to government during a period of unrest and uprisings, Benkirane, in a televised interview, promised to request amnesty for Nini once when meeting the King. The release of Nini never happened and the royal pardon was never given. Being convicted of

"disrespecting the judiciary", Rachid Nini spent a yearlong prison sentence and left prison on April 30, 2012. Known of his vitriolic newspaper columns and of his attack of powerful members of society, Nini was also convicted under the penal code, not the press code. Unexpectedly, Nini decided to leave *Al Massae* when he was released. A few months later, he established *Al Akhbar*, a Moroccan daily broadsheet, but much of Nini has already changed.

Based on the findings of content analysis of six Moroccan daily partisan and independent newspapers, it has been observed that *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* play a significant role in disseminating corruption messages among the audience/ readers/ receivers by giving them special prominence and a wide coverage. However, I argue that the category of corruption-oriented-stories covered by these two newspapers remain generally betty corruption scandals. *Al Massae*, a quality broadsheet in Morocco addressing its discourse to the educated elite in Morocco, does has also failed in covering very important corruption scandals in which weighty people in Morocco and members of the royal family were involved. Compared to *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, *Al Massae*'s language quality used and details provided surpass by far those of the former.

In this chapter, I also argue that the high number of articles tackling corruption and the significant editorial space allotted to this category of news articles in Moroccan newspapers, particularly privately-owned ones, should not necessarily be interpreted as a positive coverage. On the contrary, it could also be regarded as the outcome of a biased reporting adopted by the newspapers studied in this chapter. Because *Assabah, Al Ahdath Al Maghribya, Al Massae,* or even *Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki* (Socialist) seldom cover scandalous stories of corruption taking place in the private sector, the public sector instead is usually negatively portrayed and associated with the absence of an effective management, bribery, clientelism and with nepotism. The private sector, I argue, is not receiving enough scrutiny by privately-owned newspapers in particular. While trying to explain this, it is worth noting that privately owned newspapers in Morocco, in spite of their heavy reliance on state advertising subsidies, "the market for printing and distribution of newspapers is largely free and features a number of pribate

and competitive companies" as Chama stresses.[578] He also contends that "many newspapers are heavily indebted to these companies."[579] In this respect, the media in Morocco, as Benchenna, Ksikes and Marchetti argue, is a highly political economy.[580] Here, along with being locked in a reciprocally dependent relationship with the government, especially that each newspaper receives a funding from the government on a yearly basis, the print media in Morocco does not depend on businessmen who own houses of distributions and who are powerful enough to withdraw advertisement contracts signed with privately-owned newspapers. Indeed, the economy is a very important variable in the understanding of situation of the press in Morocco. It is absolutely this economic context that creates "both encouraging opportunities and disturbing issues involving journalists' need to report the news in an impartial and unhindered manner."[581] Because of these complex dynamics of dependency and economic power, I argue that the private sector in Morocco, which is highly promoted and endorsed by the political and economic elite in the country, is not criticized in Moroccan newspapers. The latter, due to the regular attacks on the public sector through covering the sector's scandals of corruptions, seem to be providing to the audience a biased content while covering corruption. The private sector, however, is immune to '*fassad*', corruption, as the data collected show. Besides, the general idea that almost everyone repeats in Morocco is that once there is a public debate about scandals of corruption taking place within the public sector, then it is because the political elite is seeking more privatization. In this respect, the Moroccan print media, because of its dependency on the capitals and on the connections of the stakeholders and owners of firms in the country, do rarely cover corruption-oriented stories taking place in giant firms in the Morocco. Here, the media text in Morocco is supposed to be impugned.

Paradoxically, newspapers in Morocco, despite their efforts to expose corruption almost on a daily basis, have not had a decisive and profound impact on the state's reinforcement of anti-corruption laws and regulations, international and

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[578] Brian Chama, *Anti-Corruption Tabloid Journalism in Africa* (Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2019), p. 87.

[579] Ibid.

[580] Abdelfettah Benchenna, Driss Ksikes and Dominique Marchetti, "The Media in Morocco: a Highly Political Economy, the Case of the Paper and On-line Press since the Early 1990s," *The Journal of North African Studies*, Vol. 22, N. 3 (2017), pp. 386-410.

[581] Brian Chama, *Anti-Corruption Tabloid Journalism in Africa,* p. 89.

domestic ones. This should explain, as I argue, the lack of depth in the analysis of corruption-related stories in Morocco and to the pick and choose attitude newspapers are adopting while addressing corruption in Morocco. Corruption stories are usually instead exposed as scandals or as tabloidized news contents in order to attract a wide audience instead enlightening it. On the other hand, the partisan newspapers, as the findings described in the Findings Section of this chapter, had the lowest coverage of articles compared to independent newspapers, and the majority of the corruption-related newspapers were reported in the inside page in *Attajdid*, *Al Alam* and *Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki*, which implies that the print partisan press in Morocco is making some efforts in informing the populate about corruption news without sufficiently doing so as the articles addressing the theme of corruption had been allotted a space in the inside pages. This could be explained by the fact that political parties are more into economic privileges, future coalitions in the government, future electoral elections, and the ties the majority of political party leaders have with corrupt persons affiliated to various institutions in Morocco.

The case of *Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki* newspaper could be regarded as an exception here. The number of articles covering corruption is higher compared to that of the other two partisan newspapers. In fact, the fact that *Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki* was not part of Abdelilah Benkiriane's government coalition but an oppositional party in the parliament since explains why this socialist partly-owned newspaper had more space to criticize. As the focus was on mainly on the public sector institution lead by the Islamists, I argue the coverage of corruption done by *Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki* could also be biased. Therefore, the lack of deep and objective analytical coverage of corruption is what characterizes and the Moroccan partisan and independent newspapers in Morocco.

4. Concluding Remarks:

Moroccan newspapers, especially the privately-owned ones, regularly cover scandalous of corruption taking place particularly within various institutions of the Moroccan public section. The monarchy, the King's owned companies, the King's advisors and the security body are never associated with any stories of corruption that the international press tend to cover. Because of their reluctance to cover the King's

owned companies and because of the privately-owned press's dependence on advertisement contracts with powerful businesses in the private sector, Moroccan privately-owned newspapers' coverage of corruption remains generally biased and too selective. Here, the independent press, which is supposed to positively enrich the public debate during Morocco's transitional phase, fails in addressing many stories of the public concern. In this regard, this chapter argues that in Morocco there exists a variety of privately-owned newspapers and not a variety of independent newspapers. Independence does necessarily the economic autonomy of the newspaper foundation as well as the freedom to cover on all the issues of the public concern. In Morocco, this remains still impossible to take place with a press code and a penal code that do still restrict free speech. It is true that the new constitution recognizes freedom of expression and speech, but the penal code and the press code still restrict journalists who attack Islam, the Monarchy and the territorial integrity. Because the laws and regulations are still very vague, giving the judge much space to interpret, journalists still get intimidated if they transgress the red lines. In this sense, Moroccan post-2011 newspaper coverage of corruption remains very limited compared to that the online platforms provide. While it is true that the print press is decaying even in very democratic settings in Europe and North America where the online press is holding the reign, the case of Morocco is different in the sense that Morocco's transitional phase to democracy as well as the socio-cultural and political transformations taking place is in need of a free and independent print and online press in the country so that a healthy public debate would be enriched. In the absence of a free, ethical and independent print press in Morocco, it would be difficult to envisage a healthy public debate taking root in the country. The landscape now is not in favor of print journalism in Morocco nor does the international context, especially with the rise of Trumpism in Europe and the US, encourage independent journalist to establish quality print newspapers in Morocco. The fear of being fined, jailed and regularly harassed by the authorities in Morocco explains why journalists avoid covering corruption weighty people in the private sector, the King's owned companies and his entourage are involved in. Due to this regulated press landscape in Morocco, many newspapers appear and fade away quickly, like the case of *Baboubi*, a satirical independent newspaper that Khalid El Keddari, a famous cartoonist in Morocco, established in 2016. After a year of operation within a complex system of economic, legal and political dynamics, Khalid El Keddari stopped issuing

the newspaper and migrated to the digital sphere where space of free speech remains larger compared to that the print press enjoys in Morocco.

CHAPTER II: FEBRUARY 20 MOVEMENT, *HIRAK RIF* (RIF MOVEMENT) AND THE KING'S 2011 CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM: ANALYSIS OF MOROCCAN NEWSPAPER COVERAGE



A Street Protest, 20 February Movement

1. Preliminary Discussion

The Jasmine revolution in Tunisia which started in late December 2010 was the initiator of other protests and street marches all over the Arab world. What is called now as the Arab Spring has overthrown many regimes and long-established status quos. However, unlike what happened in the majority of the MENA region countries, Morocco is an exceptional case. The memorable date of February 20th, 2011 forms the beginning of a series of protests demanding genuine political reforms and the end of corruption by various citizens and activists. The date then marks the uprising of the February 20 Movement demanding strong and audacious reforms. It should be noted, though, that since the ascendance of Mohamed VI to the throne in 1999, many political, economic, legal, and social reforms have been implemented. A surprising political decision in Morocco, that came as a consequence to the ruling of Islamist parties in the Arab world, is the inclusion of a moderate Islamist party, i.e. the Justice and Development Party, (French acronym: PJD) in the governing body.

However, the frustration resulting from ineffectiveness of the government and the corruption of many instances led to the beginning of protests by February 20 Movement

activists. This action had an instant consequence manifested in the king's speech calling for a constitutional reform. Although the recognition of the movement is absent in the king's speech, he addressed some general demands raised by the protestors; thus soothing and dissolving the public's frustrations and potential risks of civil disobedience. Consequently, in July 2011, a referendum on the constitutional reforms took place. The king announced that such reforms concerned:

- ✓ increased individual freedoms,
- ✓ independent power of the judicial body,
- ✓ promoting democratization and checks and balances,
- ✓ free and fair elections for the parliament,
- ✓ an elected House of Representatives,
- ✓ the appointment of a prime minister based on a party securing a majority of votes,
- ✓ invigorating the role of political parties in a pluralistic-regionalized system,
- ✓ allowing parliament to grant amnesty,
- ✓ and recognizing Amazigh as an official language alongside Arabic.

All of these amendments came as a consequence of February 20 Movement uprising and played an essential role in these constitutional reforms. In fact, it was the initiator of the amendment of a long-drawn established status quo. However, the movement has not been praised and appreciated neither by the press nor by the public opinion. The movement was sometimes ignored, and other times vilified in order to promote the monarchy and re-gain control over the country. Therefore, this study investigates how the print press in Morocco nourishes the ideology of hegemony, control, and consent by the dominating power over the dominated. Whether newspapers are partisan or independent, it is almost impossible to claim that Morocco has acquired a free press.

The method followed in this chapter is a qualitative method using purposive sampling. As the name suggests, the sample is selected based on the goal of this study. It is one of the most convincing method by which data is collected in the most time and cost-effective way. "Purposeful sampling allows for the most effective use of limited resources to provide the most efficient and convenient method by which to achieve a

depth of understanding related to the subject matter under investigation in order to show the full spectrum of cases and reflect the purposes of the given study."[582] Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, and McKibbon state that purposive sampling is "the most commonly described means of sampling in the qualitative methods literature today".[583] This sampling, therefore, allows the researcher to concentrate on textual analysis of news reports and articles and stories related to February 20 Movement and the constitutional reform, the main topics of the sampling. In this respect, purposeful sampling and textual analysis are two connected qualitative methodologies which form the most suitable approaches by which this study can be conducted and questions regarding how the Moroccan press covered February 20 Movement and the constitutional reform can be answered to deeply understand the past, the present and possibly the future of the journalistic landscape in Morocco.

In this chapter, the selection of the newspapers studied is based on their circulation and their availability in the archive. Some newspapers that are affiliated with political parties were not selected because their presence in the political landscape is not impactful. The issues of the following newspapers were studied from February 2011 to February 2013, due to their coverage of the February 20 Movement and of the constitutional reform:

- Partisan newspapers:
  - ✓ *Al-Itihad Al-Ishtiraki*
  - ✓ *Al-Alam*
  - ✓ *Atajdid*
- Independent newspapers:
  - ✓ *Asabah*
  - ✓ *Al-Masae*
  - ✓ *Al-Ahdath Al-Maghribiya*

As it was difficult to find the archives of all these newspapers online, I visited the National Library of Rabat and Mohamed VI Library at Al Akhawayn University to

[582] Micheal Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002), p. 230.

[583] Stephen J. Gentles, Cathy Charles, Jenny Ploeg and K. Ann McKibbon, "Sampling in Qualitative Research Insights from an Overview of the Medthods," *Qualitative Report*, Vol. 20, N. 11 (2015), p. 1778.

obtain access to their newspaper archive for the period of February 2011 to February 2013. As they were manually inspected, print articles were selected based on the topic at hand, so that if a key word such as February 20 Movement or constitutional reform was included in the title or in the body of an article, it was automatically selected for data collection and analysis. Careful scrutiny was given to publications which matched important dates such as February 20th (beginning of the protests), March 9th, 2011 (King's speech), and July 1st, 2011 (the constitutional reform and call for participation in the referendum). The primary data collection was again scrutinized to eliminate any articles whose main concern is not the topics this research is interested in. The results can be qualitatively generalizable since the selection is based on one single topic from different sources. This purposive sampling method tests the general impact the findings have on the press landscape in Morocco.

2. Findings

Chart 15: Coverage of February 20 Movement from February 2011 to February 2012

Newspaper	Category	Number of articles	Neutral	Positive	Negative
Al-Massae	Independent	102	86	13	3
Asabah		112	36	14	62
Al- Ahdat Al-Maghribia		96	41	9	46
Attajdid	Partisan	37	22	5	10
Al-Alam		42	27	7	8
Al- Itihad Al ichtiraqui		71	49	13	9
Le Matin du Sahara et du Maghreb	Pro-state Private	0	0	0	0

Chart 16: Coverage of the Constitutional Reform from March 2011 to February 2013

Newspaper	Category	Number of articles	Neutral	Positive	Negative
Al-Massae	Independent	44	23	11	10
Asabah		93	21	68	4
Al- Ahdat Al-Maghribia		75	19	54	2
Attajdid	Partisan	89	43	44	2
Al-Alam		62	33	26	3
Al- Itihad Al ichtiraqui		53	25	21	7
Le Matin du Sahara et du Maghreb	Pro-state Private	30	0	30	0

3. Data Analysis and Interpretations

3.1. February 20 Movement and the King's Constitutional Reform of 2011 in Moroccan Newspapers

Before delving into the analysis of the findings, it is essential to restate that a large number of newspapers in Morocco depend on government funding. This obviously traces the editorial line which journalists must abide by. These partisan newspapers underwent two different phases of existence. In fact, during the 1970s and 1980s, this press was strong, critical, and audacious in asking for reforms since political parties had a strong presence in the political scene. Today, however, the majority of the political parties in Morocco have become weak and their impact is nearly non-existent. Their discourse has become consumed and lost its credibility among the people. The sharp-witted and virtuous tone dissolved and has given space for the emergence of opportunist phraseology through which partisan newspapers campaign for discourses which will ensure the participation in ministerial portfolios and government coalitions.

Some partisan newspapers, however, don't receive enough funding from the state such as *Al-Ishtiraki Al-Mouahhad* and *Anahj Adimcrati*. Even if they offered some reformist proposals, they receive a very weak funding which does not enable a frequent publication, thus their impact is invisible. Other newspapers which do not depend on government funding are financed by private corporations. However, even if these do not receive any subsidy from the government, they cannot be considered completely independent. The reason returns to the practice of self-censorship. In fact, during the 1990s and 2000s, there were some independent newspapers such as *Telquel*, *Nichan*, *Le Journal*, and *Demain* whose editors in chief were Ahmed Benchemsi, Bou-Bker Aljamii and Ali Lmrabet. These newspapers faced several attempts of state censorship, harassment by the authorities, and the payment of colossal fines which all caused bankruptcy and so either the newspaper disappeared or was sold to other editorial lines. The editors in chief were also affected by the state's punish and discipline ideology and chose to immigrate or to seek asylum. As a consequence, the existing newspapers do not enjoy the privilege of producing free press and choose to self-repress before dipping their pen in gall. Thus, whether working for a partisan or an "independent" press, journalists are aware that criticism, be it constructive or not, can engender potential substantial risks and regulatory constraints on their job.

The coverage of the February 20 Movement by partisan and independent newspapers is an example of the lack of a free press in Morocco. The findings show the transition which all Moroccan newspapers have undergone in reporting the events of February 20 Movement. In other words, the editorial lines moved from neutrally reporting the street protests, as the figure below show, to attacking and defaming the movement, and to finally erasing its presence from the Moroccan resistance scene. At the outset, reporting the protests and street events was impartial to some extent. Partisan and independent newspapers allocated space in headlines and reported images of February 20 Movement activists standing in the street and holding different slogans. However, not all slogans were reflected in the newspapers since they avoided publishing those that criticized the King and his advisors.

Figure 63: *Attajdid*, March 21, 2011



After the King's speech addressed to the nation on March 9th, 2011, newspapers rarely mentioned February 20 Movement's demands or activists, and rather focused on the reforms called for by the king. Indeed, despite its ideological framework, there was a positive attitude towards the constitutional reform as being a solid and revolutionary change in the history of the country. Having adopted the ideology that the king is the savior, the problem-solver of the crisis, and the harbinger of all positive change in Morocco, the majority of newspapers jumped on the bandwagon. Instead of triggering discussion and public debate over the reform of the constitution, newspapers were rather a space to vehicle the preferred reading of promoting the king's role in the political and democratic process. While many voices were calling for the boycott of the constitutional referendum since it didn't reflect the people's demands, the print media was promoting a satisfactory opinion and image of the reform.

Le Matin newspaper, for example, is a semi-public press which clearly adopts the state discourse. It's an elitist and French speaking newspaper which is exported to France in order to give a positive image of a new Morocco. *Le Matin* did not produce any article on February 20 Movement as a way to show that there is no recognition of the body as a movement and of its demands. Thus, the newspaper reported the reforms established by the king as being the only generator of political change in the country.

Figure 64: Le Matin, March 11, 2011



LE MATIN • JEUDI 10 MARS 2011 • 5 Rabia-II 1432 • 26 ⊖⊙⊥/Q 2961 • 4 Adar-II 5771 DIRECTEUR DE LA PUBLICATION : MOHAMED JOUAHRI www.lematin.ma N° 14 376 • PRIX : 3,00 DH- 1,00 EURO

Dans un discours adressé à la Nation

S.M. le Roi annonce une révision constitutionnelle profonde, vouée à la consolidation de la démocratie et de l'Etat de droit

- Au vu des progrès qu'il a réalisés en matière de démocratie, le Maroc est apte à entamer la consécration constitutionnelle de la régionalisation avancée, afin qu'elle soit l'émanation de la volonté populaire directe, a souligné le Souverain en réponse à la proposition de la CCR prônant l'instauration de la régionalisation avancée au moyen d'une loi, dans le cadre institutionnel actuel.
- S.M. le Roi souligne que la régionalisation se doit d'occuper la place qui lui échoit dans la Constitution, parmi les collectivités territoriales, et ce dans le cadre de l'unité de l'Etat, de la nation et du territoire et conformément aux exigences d'équilibre et de solidarité nationale entre et avec les régions.
- Le Souverain précise que cette réforme vise à consolider les fondements d'une régionalisation marocaine à travers tout le Royaume, avec en tête les provinces du Sahara marocain.
- S.M. le Roi Mohammed VI réitère son ferme engagement à donner une forte impulsion à la dynamique réformatrice profonde en cours, et dont le dispositif constitutionnel démocratique constitue le socle et la quintessence.
- Le Souverain annonce la mise en place d'une commission ad hoc pour la révision de la Constitution et la nomination de Abdeltif Mennouni à sa présidence.
- S.M. le Roi invite cette commission à être à l'écoute et à se concerter avec les partis politiques, les syndicats, les organisations de jeunes et les acteurs associatifs, culturels et scientifiques qualifiés, en vue de recueillir leurs conceptions et points de vue à ce sujet. La commission se doit de soumettre les résultats de ses travaux à la Haute appréciation royale courant le mois de juin prochain.

Lire le texte intégral du Discours Royal en page 2
Lire également les premières réactions à chaud en page 3

Figure 65: Le Matin, July 2, 2011



LE MATIN

LE MATIN DU SAHARA ET DU MAGHREB

RÉFÉRENDUM CONSTITUTIONNEL

Une opération dans la sérénité, l'enthousiasme et l'engagement patriotique sur tout le territoire national

Lire nos reportages, pages 2, 4 & 5

Amir Al Mouminine accomplit la prière du vendredi à la mosquée Al Aâdham à Salé

S.M. le Roi Mohammed VI accomplit Son devoir national

Figure 66: Le Matin, July 2, 2011



RÉFÉRENDUM SUR LA NOUVELLE CONSTITUTION

S.A.R. le Prince Moulay Rachid accomplit son devoir national

S.A.R. la Princesse Lalla Salma accomplit son devoir national

S.A.R. la Princesse Lalla Meryem accomplit son devoir national

Son Altesse Royale la Princesse Lalla Meryem a accompli son devoir national, vendredi, en votant au référendum sur le projet de nouvelle Constitution. Son Altesse Royale a voté à l'école Ibn Sina à Rabat (Karakchou) dans le 19e arrondissement à Souissi. MAP

The independent newspapers such as *Asabah* and *Al-Ahdath Al-Maghribia* chose a belligerent editorial line. Despite claiming the adoption of a progressive discourse in general, this press employed a defamatory language against February 20 Movement as a whole. Accusing it of being financed by foreign agencies and questioning the activists' religious beliefs as well as mocking and minimizing their actions contributed to the distrust of the movement by the public opinion. People fearing instability and the re-production of the Arab spring scenario in some Arab countries refused to grant any support to the movement even though it started as a grassroots movement. Instead, and thanks to partisan newspapers, the public opinion was directed towards believing that all reforms are generated by the king who listens and knows what the people want and need. Thus, non-partisan newspapers contributed to maintaining the status quo promoted by the partisan newspapers and didn't offer a resistant discourse or one which supports the movement.

Likewise, *Al-Massae* newspaper editorial line complied with the dominant state of play. This is shown in in the following figures.

Figure 67: Al Massae, July 2-3, 2011



Figure 68: Al Massae, July 2-3, 2011



استفتاء دستور 2011 والتجدد المستمر للمؤسسة الملكية

ادريس الكنبوري

Al Massae Newspaper remain one of the few exceptional independent newspapers in Morocco in the sense that, it, along with lining up with the state's prerogatives, is also known for offering different perspectives and being a space for a multiplicity of political analysis and opinions without adopting them. Indeed, interviewing figures from oppositional political parties like Mohamed Sassi from *Al Ishtiraki Al Mouahad* (a leftist political party that joined the rallies in 2011 and boycotted the constitutional referendum) Khadija Riyadi (the Director of the Moroccan Association for Human Rights) and Mohamed Abbadi (the new chef of *Al Adl Wal Ihsane* Movement, the most famous oppositional Islamist movement in Morocco) could, for the sake of objectivity, also be regarded as a brave coverage that seems to open an important space within which the negotiating the state's prerogatives instead of the full adoption of them could occur. The figures below are examples of these interviews:

Figure 69: Al Massae, July 17, 2012, p. 3



الساسي يصف دستور 2011 بأنه أكثر الدساتير «احتيالية» في العالم

أكادير
محفوظ آيت صالح

وصف محمد الساسي الدستور الحالي، الذي تم التصويت عليه خلال سنة 2011، بانه اكثر الدساتير «احتيالية» في العالم بالنظر إلى لغته الفضفاضة التي تفتح الباب للتأويل. وقال الساسي، الذي كان يتحدث خلال ندوة حول الانتقال الديمقراطي، إن الدستور الحالي لا يتضمن حقوقا مضمونة. وبعد استعراضه اهم مؤشرات وشروط الانتقال الديمقراطي في أي دولة من دول العالم، اكد الساسي أن المدخل الوحيد إلى الديمقراطية في المغرب هو الملكية البرلمانية على اعتبار انه لا توجد هناك منازعة في شرعية الملكية لدى كل الفرقاء، بمن فيهم المعارضون، حيث إن هناك إجماعا على الملكية على الأقل علانية، يقول الساسي.

وفي معرض حديثه عن الحالة المغربية، اكد الساسي، خلال الندوة التي نظمها حزب الاشتراكي الموحد، أن المغرب عهد بانفجار بسبب استمرار التفاوتات والاقصاء الريع والبطالة، وان الإصلاحات التي خاضها المغرب منذ 55 سنة لم تكن متراكمة، بل متوازية

وفي كل مرة تتم المداينة من جديد. وحدد الساسي الشروط اللازمة لتحقيق الانتقال الديمقراطي في ضرورة وضع دستور للملكية البرلمانية محل ازدواجية سلطة الحكومة وسلطة الدولة، وتبعية المجلس الحكومي للمجلس الوزاري. وكذا حل المشكل الانتخابي، الذي حدده في عدم مشاركة مجموعة من الفاعلين السياسيين الذين ظلوا خارج اللعبة، وكذا نسبة المشاركة التي تظل دون المعدلات المطلوبة، ومشكل استعمال المال الذي يقر به الجميع، ولكن لا احد يعترف بانه يفسد العملية الانتخابية، بحسب الساسي.

كما اشار الساسي ايضا إلى ضرورة ضمان استقلالية القضاء، ومحاربة الفساد في الوسط القضائي، ووقف استعمال القضاء في الصراعات السياسية. كما اكد ان من بين مؤشرات الدخول في مرحلة الانتقال الديمقراطي الانفتاح الإعلامي، وجدد التاكيد على أن مجموعة من الوجوه لازالت ممنوعة في الإعلام العمومي، وذكر على سبيل المثال شيوخ السلفية الجهادية ونادية ياسين وغيرهم.

وفي تعليقه على المحاكمات التي تطال بعض النشطاء المحسوبين على حركة 20 فبراير، اكد الساسي أن الأمر يعتبر انتقاما من هذه الحركة، التي كانت سببا وراء الدفع باخراج دستور 2011. وقال إن الأمر كان يستدعي مكافاتها وليس معاقبتها، مما يؤثر في نظر المتحدث على غياب الإرادة السياسية في الدخول إلى عتبة الانتقال الديمقراطي. وعلى أن التحولات التي حدثت جراء الربيع العربي أكرهت عليها الدولة ولم تكن اختيارا.

ومن خلال استعراضه لمؤشرات الانتقال الديمقراطي وصف الساسي ما يحدث في مصر وتونس بانه مؤشرات حقيقية على بداية الانتقال الديمقراطي بهذين البلدين.

Figure 70: *Al Massae*, October 12, 2012


الرياضي: الدولة وظفت العدالة والتنمية وتحكمت في إعداد الدستور

على من يتهمون الجمعية بالتبعية للمنهج تقديم أدلتهم

Figure 71: Al Massae, February 22-23, 2014



Both partisan and non-partisan editorial lines form an ideological state apparatus through which the state exercises its power by utilizing different ways of functioning for each one. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the "independent" press exercises self-censorship fearing the repressive state apparatus manifested in the state harassment and application of fines that may lead to bankruptcy. Consequently, the consent of state hegemony puts the press in a subordinate role avoiding the exercise of force and staying in the safe side.

The press media, being part of expressing public opinion, is rather used as a pawn to ensure the consent of the public opinion. Allowing the opening of a space for the representative of the people to voice out their opinions and demands is but an illusory image of democracy. Nevertheless, this lack of resistance or negotiation of meanings in the print media as well as the crisis of readership in Morocco has resulted in the migration of readers to the online platforms. Similarly, however, Moroccan print newspapers are not playing a major role in contributing to the rise of a healthy public

debate regarding the democratic process because of the set of regulations the state imposes on journalists.

3.2. *Hirak Rif*/ the Rif Movement in *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* and *Assabah*: Social Movements between the Crackdown of Authorities and the Defamatory Fake News Media

In this section, I argue that *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* and *Assabah*, two privately-owned newspapers in Morocco, have been known also of their defamation of activists, investigative journalists and social movements in Morocco. This has put these two newspapers, which are usually referred to as independent newspapers, in an awkward position in the sense that they been allotting a large space to attacking investigative journalists like Hicham Mansouri and of scholars and civil society activists like Maati Monjib, a historian and human right defender based in Morocco.

The collection of data to examine and analyze *Hirak Rif*/ *Rif* Movement in Morocco starts from October 28, 2016, when Mohcin Fikri was crushed to death in a garbage truck after jumping in the back to follow the confiscation of his allegedly illegal fish merchandise, and ends on May 29, 2017 when Nasser Zefzafi was jailed by the authorities.[584] *Hirak Rif*, a social movement ended with the imprisonment of more than 500 protesters and social media activist including the leader of the movement Nasser Zefzafi, could come back any time because of the dismay of families and civil society activists in the Rif Region.

The qualitative data on which this study is built was either the front-page texts or the inside-text of the newspapers studied. The unit of analysis was the entire news story under investigation. In order to study how *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* and *Assabah* portrayed the Rif social movements and its leaders, I needed to dig deeper, interpret many aspects of the news stories. To accomplish this goal, a purposive data sample was used, and a coding sheet was prepared to find out how the words *Hirak Rif* and *Zefzafi* appeared in newspaper articles.

Based on the findings of the one-year coverage of the *Rif* Movements and its leader Nasser Zefzafi (from October 28, 2016 to May 29, 2017), 139 articles appeared

[584] Nasser Zefzafi, born on November 4, 1979, is a Moroccan political activist, who has been described as the leader of the protest movement in the Rif and the city of Al Hoceima.

on *Al Ahdath Al Maghrbya*, many of which from front-paged, while 172 appeared on *Assabah*. Only 6 percent of the articles gathered are neutral, while the rest are negatively portraying the Rif Movement, people of Hucima city, and the leader of the movement.

Just a quick look at the articles *Al Ahdath Al Maghrbya* and *Assabah* published between October 28, 2016 to May 29, 2017 tells how the discourse of defamation has been the journalistic style these two "independent" newspapers adopt in today's Morocco. Indeed, the rise of fake news and defamation campaigns emerged in the context of 2011, when the February 20 Movement was taking to the streets on a daily basis. During that period, several news websites saw light and it is still not possible to have an idea about who owns them or who is responsible for them. Barlamane.com, Cawalisse.com, and Rue20.com are a few examples of this category of websites. They all have been defaming social movements activists and anyone demanding democratic change in Morocco. *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* and *Assabah*, based on the findings of content analysis, seem to have adopted the fake news style of journalism. In most articles I came across while looking at the newspaper issues, I came to notice several shocking narratives.

First, *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* and *Assabah* have been actually campaigning to discredit the movement and any one supporting it. The movement, according to *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya,* is led by discredited people, agents who work for embassies, agents seeking violence and confrontations with the authorities, and agents coordinating with some living abroad to destabilize the country, and the following footage is one of the examples.

Figure 72: *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, March 14, 2017



Looking at the previous footage, associating the Rif Movement, a movement that was introduced in the last section of the third chapter of the theoretical part of this dissertation, with separatism, propaganda, and conflict of interests with foreign agenda is one of the fake stories this "independent newspaper" has been brimming its coverage with. The newspaper also defamed Nasser Zefzafi, the leader of the movement, through accusing him of disloyalty to the political system, terrorism, service to foreign powers, sex, violence, extremism, and his dependence on compensations and funds to destabilize Morocco.

Figure 73: *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, December 23, 2016


الأحداث المغربية

بسبب أموال الدعم الأوروبية والاغتناء وتوريط زوجة معتقل في تهريب المخدرات إلى السجن

نشطاء الريف يفضحون الزفزافي!

For *Assabah*, the context of the Rif uprisings should not be taken for granted as the movement is associated with ISIS, receives funds from the Polisario-Front and with the Cannabis, a drug the Rif region has always been perceived as the best land for its growth. Three footages from three different issues of *Assabah* have been combined together in one footage to show how *Assabah* used fake news even in the front-page to associate the Rif Movement with the Polisario-Front which seeks separation of the Sahara from Morocco, with Cannabis, and which ISIS which is a terrorist organization in Syria and Iraq.

Figure 74: *Assabah* Negative Coverage of the Rif Movement



In fact, defamation and the rise of fake news in in Moroccan print newspapers in particular could explain the reason why only one percent of the Moroccan population today buy newspapers in Morocco. While illiteracy could be a reason why only a small number of newspaper copies is sold every day, the absence of trust between readers and media outlets in Morocco is, I argue, one of the main reasons why the print media in Morocco is falling apart. Trying to get an answer from an experienced journalist working the print press, a Moroccan journalist, who chose to remain anonymous for safety reasons, told Accessnow.com Platform that the "Moroccan authorities' use of defamation campaigns to pressure and discredit opponents and independent activists started in 2011 during the Arab uprisings."[585] He adds that "facts and events may be created as part of a set-up, or in some cases, the facts may be real, but deeply altered and presented with the intent to discredit the target."[586]

The importance of this statement lies in its source. The source here is an insider, a journalist working for a Moroccan newspaper. He recognizes how the authorities seek the defamation of those demanding change in the country. Based on this, it is safe to assume that *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* and *Assabah*, regardlness of the notion of

[585] See https://www.accessnow.org/how-pro-government-media-in-morocco-use-fake-news-to-target-and-silence-rif-activists/. Retreieved on October 13, 2019.

[586] Ibis.

independence they stress, are not independent newspapers but rather privately-owned traditional media outlets that coordinate with the authorities before framing issues of public concern. Here, the definition Habermas gave to the public sphere, a definition that was thoroughly discussed in the first chapter of the theoretical part of this dissertation, does not necessarily provide a platform to the marginalized (the case of the Hucima city population), but could instead play a role in the victimization of those in vulnerable situations. The negative portrayal of *Hirak Rif* and the movement leaders in *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghrbya*, which is still taking place but with a low frequency, shows how even the privately-owned newspapers in Morocco lack immunity to the authorities' influence.

The over use of fake news to negatively frame *Hirak Rif* and the movement leaders in *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghrbya* newspapers was meant to shake off the public trust in the movement first, and in the possibility to bring about a democratic change within their communities through protests. By doing so, the audience in Morocco seems to be quite polarized. While many sympathize with Nasser Zefzafi and the other activists who are behind bars, others do believe that the Rif Movement was flawed because its connectedness with foreign interests and hands seeking to destabilize the cohesion and the unity of the *Umma/* nation, a discourse used by some media outlets adopting a fake-news based journalistic style to defame those seeking change in the country. Due to this tense polarization that has characterized Morocco since the early days of the movement in Hucima city, the authorities were able to jail Nasser Zefzafi and more than 500 activists.

4. Concluding remarks

The shift of newspaper focus from February 20 Movement to constitutional reform was intentional. The purpose was to deviate public attention from what was taking place in the streets to what the monarchy was offering as a reform to calm down the turmoil. Thus, to what extent can we consider print journalism in Morocco as independent? The answer to this question regarding this study of the coverage of February 20 Movement and the constitutional reform shows that there is no independent journalism but rather private journalism in the country.

The tactics used to escape state harassment and the self-censorship practiced show that the print journalism industry in Morocco is declining, hence it is not contributing to the democratization process in the country even though the print media are needed for public debate. This latter is taking place more in the virtual world due to ongoing migration to the online public sphere rather than the print one. Moreover, the political parties that can offer alternative discourses do not receive enough funding to establish print newspapers nationwide. More dangerously, however, when independent newspapers, which are leftist, liberal, and progressive, use defamation of activists who belong to grassroots movements and adopt state discourse; it raises the question of how much these newspapers are progressive, and it reflects the ambivalent position and ideological contradictions of such press. It is, therefore, difficult to anticipate that the current print press can contribute to a healthy transitional phase towards democracy.

CHAPTER III: CHALLENGES FACING PRINT JOURNALISM IN MOROCCO:

This chapter presents an overview of the rise of digital media as alternative media in Morocco, and the political and economic pressures they encounter. Media do not seem to function and operate in a vacuum in the sense that they are embedded in both local and global economic, political, and cultural settings. For that reason, it may be quite challenging to understand how important alternative media are without situating them in the "political and democratic theories that have provided theoretical and intellectual support for their identities and practices."[587] Since the image of the mainstream or traditional media is negative and the allegiance that press companies pledge to decision makers and people in power, there has been an absolute necessity for alternative media to emerge. It is acknowledged that classical media exert self-censorship and deprived of professional bravery to shed light on certain sensitive issues or some red lines. In this regard, it is important to point out that alternative media appeared to respond to youth uncertainties. Nevertheless, digital media face a plethora of impediments that hinder alternative voices to be heard. For instance, economic pressure, and the weaponization of ads along with the Moroccan political climate that does not allow media to dispute red lines are challenges that are worth discussing.

It has become as clear as crystal that Moroccan digital media have radically changed media consumption patterns. Cyber activism and the globalization of social protests have paved the way for digital media to show up with the ultimate goal to overcome autocracy, question unlimited powers of regime, as well as to criticize government decisions. Besides, the turmoil leading up to the 2011 mobilizations gave birth to a new generation of online media platforms wherein a mix of anti-system information and marginal opinions can be found. Along with that, digital media escape the high control and censorship the state imposes in order to find new havens for freedom of expression on the one hand, and to distinct themselves from discredited traditional media, on the other hand.[588] It is relatively true that these digital media managed to embrace freedom of expression but have not succeeded yet in overcoming economic pressures and political repression. The so-called Arab Spring was not only

[587] Olga Guedes Bailey, Bart Cammaerts, and Nico Carpentier, *Understanding Alternative Media* (New York, Open University Press: 2007), p. 4.

[588] https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/36378

about revolutions against dictatorships, but also a revolt on the mainstream media. Independent media platforms namely ***Lakome***[589] and ***Mamfakinch***[590], two electronic journals, contributed to mobilize protestors by publishing articles which harshly questioned the monarch authority and criticized his corrupt entourage. During the Arab Spring popular uprisings that swept across Morocco, the Kingdom "responded by rapidly drafting and adopting a new constitution in July 2011."[591] It is commonly believed that Morocco pretended to embrace democratization and promote freedom of speech at the times of social anger; however, the state started to detain independent journalists and opposite voices right after the pacification of street protests.

1. Economic Pressure: the Weaponization of Ads

Moroccan press has been subjected to financial repressions and economic blackmails. Meanwhile, Moroccan authorities tend to use nuanced means to limit independent media users. According to Media Ownership Monitor known as MOM[592], "nine of the 36 media companies involved in Morocco's most influential media are directly linked to the state, the government or the royal family."[593] Due to the political landscape in Morocco, it is problematic to closely scrutinize Moroccan media and its relations to the country's power centers. This section aims at investigating media companies that are funded by the state while others are facing economic crackdowns. It is important to point out that each media sector namely TV, radio, print media and digital media has different characteristics in the sense that the state along with the royal family as well as Moroccan wealthiest businessmen control the sector. The Moroccan media market is still opaque, and the way the advertising market functions is still controversial. The allocation of advertising is characterized by unfairness. Hence, the

[589] Lakome is a Rabat-based, independent online newspaper that focuses on civil liberties, human rights, and the promotion of the rights of access to information and freedom of expression.

[590] Mamfakinch means "not giving in" is a Moroccan citizen media website which was founded during the Arab Spring movement in the Middle East. Mamfakinch woked on disseminating information about the February 20th protests, and countering state-misinformation that started ahead of the events.

[591] Mohamed Madani, Driss Maghraoui and Saloua Zerhouni, "The 2011 Moroccan Constitution: A New Critical Analysis," *International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance*, 2012 https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/the-2011-moroccan-constitution-critical-analysis.pdf. Accessed on May 28, 2021.

[592] MOM is a global research and advocacy initiative that creates transparency on "who owns the media", and ultimately answers the question "who controls the media?" through contextualization and analysis.

[593] Visit https://www.mom-rsf.org/en/countries/morocco/ to see the findings.

lack of fairness does not allow the media environment to get rid of public control. Independent media are, therefore, the victims of this policy. TV sector is statistically the most attractive one for advertisers with a 39.8% share of the market in 2017 while print media take only 13.2%.[594] For this reason, traditional media outlets have a fragile economic model that focus on advertising. Moroccan government exerts financial pressure to push the most outspoken print media into bankruptcy or closure. The advertising revenue granted by the government-linked companies is not split fairly between progovernment and independent publications.[595] Media sector in Morocco includes multiple shadow outlets editorially supportive of the state's agendas. Their primary focus is to divert attention from sensitive issues on the one hand, to compete for online advertising money and audience share, on the other hand. It could be believed that the state follows this strategy to impede the growth of dissent voices. In this regard, the prominent journalist Aboubakr Jamai, the co-founder of the Moroccan news magazine *Le journal* which was stymied by lawsuits and an advertising boycott, explained that "the carrot in Morocco is bigger than the stick; the state would rather reward you for obedience than punish you for dissent."[596] *Le Journal* was closed in 2010 and Jamai ultimately left the country. How Moroccan media are funded and supported is still problematic. Media companies that have links to the monarchy monopolize the advertising funds. When unfavorable information and stories are published by independent news outlets, advertisers pull out. That financial carrot and stick is, according to Maati Monjib, one of the powerful tools used by the government to control the press. Journalists who criticize the regime are exposing their reputation and patriotism to questioning. They can be accused of disparaging Islam or destabilizing the state's national security.

The same destiny *Akhbar Al Yawm* newspaper faced after its co-founder Taoufik Bouachrine was sentenced to 15 years in prison. Consequently, the daily newspaper's editor-in-chief announced a farewell post on his official Facebook page, and closed its doors after 14 years of production. Employees and journalists bitterly expressed their

[594] Ibid.

[595] Interview with Driss Ksikess, former editor in chief of *Nichane*, he left the journalism profession after he was sentenced to three years in jail over a report on Moroccan jokes he published in his magazine, conducted on 28 February 2017.

[596] See https://www.refworld.org/docid/5be16b04a.html. Retrieved on May 16, 2021.

sadness after the institution announced closure for financial reasons. It is acknowledged that heavy restrictions continue by preventing advertisements from reaching the newspaper's pages while government institutions refrain from paying the financial dues they owe to the closed newspaper. The execution of *Akhbar Al-Yawm* was completed by the government's decision and the Minister of Communication. The newspaper is no longer receiving its legitimate right and financial support. The new editor-in-chief of *Akhbar Al-Yawm*, Munir Abu Al-Maali, said in a statement to *Al- Arabi Al-Jadeed* that the trend towards closing the newspaper was expected due to the sequence of events it witnessed. Basically, the suspension of support allocated by the government to pay the salaries of its journalists, and the state's repression has fatally weakened the newspaper.[597] In 2017, the same story happened with *Attajdeed* newspaper along with its website *Jadeed Press*, the mouthpiece of the Movement for Unification and Reform, the advocacy arm of the Justice and Development Party (PJD), announced its official closure for compelling economic reasons. After a suffocating financial crisis that lasted for several years, and despite several successive rescue attempts, it was no longer possible to continue issuing especially after major advertisers suspended the advertising contracts with *Attajdeed* that had been bringing them together with the institution.[598] Interestingly, newspapers that face problems with advertisement are not in good standing with the ruling elite. The PJD's popularity is waning down, and it seems that the state is seeking other coalitions after the next elections. This explains how advertisement could be the weapon of a powerful economic oligarchy that works for the state's prerogatives.

2. The political climate as another challenge:

Moroccan independent media that tackle and violate the taboos on criticizing the monarchy, the state's foreign policy to solve Moroccan Sahara issue, and Islam as the state's official religion are doomed to receive heavy fines economic pressure. International reports have registered a frightening number of cases of independent journalists who are being annoyed and harassed for digging into sensitive matters. Ali Lmrabet, a journalist who was gagged and sentenced to a ten-year ban on working as

[597] https://www.alaraby.co.uk/entertainment_media/"أخبار-اليوم"-المغربية-تتوقف-عن-الصدور/
[598] https://www.raialyoum.com/index.php/جريدة-مقربة-من-العدالة-والتنمية-المغر/

journalist, wrote a report for the Spanish daily El Mundo in which he described "…the Sahrawis living in camps on the outskirts of the Algerian town of Tindouf"[599] as refugees and not hostages as the Moroccan officials tend to claim. The journalist previously faced a three-year sentence in prison in 2003 on a charge of undermining respect for the king and interviewing a left-wing former prisoner. After eight months in jail and a fifty-day hunger strike, he received a royal pardon in January 2004. Another typical case which is that of Ali Anouzla, the director of *Lakome* and a human rights defender, came to the surface when he faced charges. Anouzla reported on human rights violations against people in Morocco and Western Sahara. In an interview with the German newspaper Bild, Anouzla mentioned the limitations on freedom of expression, the repression imposed on independent journalists, as well as corruption. Therefore, the police summoned him for interrogation and accused him of using the term "occupied Western Sahara"[600] which he denied. Accordingly, in May 2016 the Court of First Instance of Rabat accused the journalist of undermining national territorial integrity, supporting and sympathizing with terrorism, and encouraging people to commit acts of terrorism. If convicted, he was to face up to 30 years in jail. This was not the first time that the prominent journalist Anouzla faced judicial harassment in the sense that he was arrested in September 2013 for publishing a video related to the terrorist group *Al-Qaeda* in the Islamic Maghreb. In October 2013, the human rights defender was released. If convicted, he could have faced up to 15 years' imprisonment.

Moroccan independent journalists are being judicially harassed by authorities for the latter do not seem to allow criticism. *Akhbar Al-Yawm*[601] is another controversial case worth tackling. Both the newspaper and its director Bouachrine have been the subject of lawsuits by the Minister of Economy and Finances, and by the Minister of Agriculture in 2015. In the same year, Bouachrine faced another lawsuit filed by Ahmed Charai for defamation. It is obvious that *Akhbar Al-Yawm* has long been regarded as the newspaper that is most critical of Moroccan government and decision makers. In November 2018, the court handed Bouachrine a sentence of 12 years in jail on charges of human trafficking, rape, and sexual assault against female journalists working at

[599] See https://rsf.org/en/hero/ali-lmrabet

[600] See https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/case-history-ali-anouzla

[601] Akhbar al-Yawm is a daily newspaper created in 2009 and directed by Taoufik Bouachrine who participated in the creation of Al Massae newspaper in 2006.

Akhbar Al-Yawm. Casablanca's Court of Appeal increased Bouachrine's sentence to 15 years in prison. Not only that, but the court also forced Bouachrine to pay compensation of 1,3 million MAD to his "victims" as well as 300.000 MAD to the state. The journalist strongly denied all the charges against him and claimed that his arrest was politically motivated.[602] Annoyance continues to cover Soulaimane Raissouni, the newspaper's editor, who was accused and arrested for sexually assaulting an LGBT rights activist while intercourse between people of same sex is against law in Morocco.[603] Raissouni has been in detention since May 2020. As a response of it, he is undergoing a hunger strike for more than 55 days now. Omar Radi, an investigative journalist and the head of investigations for the Moroccan new site *Le Desk*, has also been facing a series of arrests since last year. In less than a month, Radi was summoned seven times by the National Brigade of Judiciary Police "as a part of an investigation into his alleged involvement in receiving foreign funding, linked to foreign intelligence services".[604] The multiple long interrogation sessions aimed at exerting psychological torture because of his journalistic works. This came when a report published by Amnesty International on the use of spyware produced by Israeli company NSO Group, the same controversial software used to spy on Jamal Khashoggi. Omar Radi was arrested in late December 2019 eight months after his critical tweet about the unjust convictions of Hirak Al Rif protestors.

Authorities' harassment started against Moroccan human rights activists and journalists including Maati Monjib, a political analyst, human rights activist, and historian at the University of Mohammed V in Rabat. In 2019, Amnesty International mentioned that Monjib's phone had been targeted since October 2017. The academic and human rights defender Maati Monjib has gone through a harsh intimidation and harassment campaign by Moroccan authorities. He, according to The International Federation for Human Rights, faced charges of endangering state security after receiving funding from a Dutch non-governmental organization to develop training for

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[602] See https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2019/10/285352/casablancas-court-of-appeal-taoufik-bouachrine-sentence-prison

[603] Article 489 punishes same sex behaviors by 6 months imprisonment and a fine of 200 to 1000 MAD.

[604] https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/human-rights-defenders/morocco-end-the-judicial-harassment-against-journalist-omar-radi

Moroccan journalists.[605] In 2015, Monjib was placed on a travel ban and prohibited from teaching at the University. In 2021, the historian Monjib was once again convicted of fraud, laundering money, and undermining state security. Therefore, he was sentenced to one year imprisonment. After going on a hunger strike, he was released from the *Al Arjat 2* prison near Rabat. His lawyers denounced these accusations and linked them to the Moroccan Association for Investigative Journalism which he co-founded in 2011. Because of his critical journalism and activism, he has been a target of campaigns and intimidation. Notwithstanding, Monjib continues to peacefully advocate for justice and freedom of expression in Morocco.

In 2019, the case of Hajar Raissouni, a Moroccan journalist and Soulaimane's cousin, went viral when she was sentenced to a year in jail for premarital sex and abortion.[606] She was arrested with her fiancé on their way out of a gynecologist in Rabat. It is safe to mention that Hajar works as journalist at *Akhbar Al Yawm* daily newspaper. She strongly denied the charges and denounced the case against her as a political trial. The court sentenced her fiancé to a year in jail while her doctor to two years. In this perspective, the regional director for Human Rights Watch, Ahmed Benchemsi, described on a tweet that "this is a black day for freedom in Morocco."[607] While being in custody, Hajar Raissouni wrote a letter in which she described how the police interrogated her about her political writings. Hajar's case became known nationally and internationally when both Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International as well as local human rights voices called for an immediate release of the journalist, her fiancé, and the medical staff who were involved in the case. Human rights organizations denounced the numerous violations of rights and freedoms, consequently, on October 16 King Mohammed VI granted a royal pardon to Hajar and her Sudanese fiancé. The pardon also included the doctor and the medical staff arrested for performing the alleged abortion. By doing so, human rights activists and national and international NGOs warmly welcomed the royal pardon which put an end to this

[605] See https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/human-rights-defenders/joint-statement-morocco-intimidation-and-harassment-campaign-against to read more.

[606] Article 453 of the Penal Code mandated that abortion is not punishable if it is done to save the mother's health, whereas article 490 stipulates that sexual relations outside marriage are punishable by arrest and imprisonment for up to two years.

[607] See the whole twit at https://twitter.com/AhmedBenchemsi/status/1178729064477147137

deplorable situation. Nonetheless, the king's pardon will not prevent the same abomination from happening again for abortion remains a crime in Morocco.

3. Professionalism:

There are no special criteria for selecting professional journalists. The criteria differ from one media institution to another. For instance, graduation from private institutes is crucial while other institutions take other criteria into consideration. Some of these criteria could be private and family relationships, and membership of the party in party-related press. The degree of reliance to select journalists depends on whether the institution is private or public. In public institutions, political considerations prevail over specialization and efficiency. In private institutions, political considerations exist but are limited. In other words, private institutions when selecting journalists, do not attach any importance of political affiliations which is not the case in the public media institutions. Accordingly, a sociological study for Moroccan journalists should answer these questions. Who are the Moroccan journalists? What values do they defend at the professional and personal levels?

Journalism as a field was established within a framework of ethics and professional conscience. Unfortunately, the body of journalism in Morocco is not strong enough as some journalists have become known of their attacks and criticism of independent reporters whose neutrality and objectivity are rarely questioned. Recently, the frictions between the independent and the *Makhzenized* journalists have come to the surface. As an example of this, journalist Younes Dafkir, who is a journalist at *Al Ahdath Al Maghribia* daily newspaper, took advantage of his passage to 2M channel and violently attacked the prominent Maati Monjib without mentioning his name while Monjib's picture was displayed. He described Monjib as a thief of public money. Dafkir also attacked Hamid Al Mahdaoui, an independent journalist who had been directing the website *badil.info* before his three-year imprisonment. On his official Facebook page, Dafkir describes Al Mahdaoui as a fool man whose place should be at *Bouya Omar* Mausoleum.[608] Additionally, *Al Ahdath Al Maghribia*, edited by la Fondation

[608] The mausoleum is located in El Kelaat Essraghna Province in the Marrakesh-Safi region in Morocco. The shrine was closed by the Ministry of Health after studies had proven that patients who suffer from mental and neurological disorders had been receiving unhuman treatment until they die.

Maghrebine des Medias and owned by Ahmed Charai's Global Media Holding, wrote more than 70 articles between 2015 and 2021 attacking and defaming Monjib even before the latter's appearance in court.

Thus, the state is pushing any critical voice to find a refuge elsewhere. Social media platforms are where resistant voices have found their ghetto. Moroccans started their collective trip onto Facebook and YouTube to know what is happening in Morocco on the grounds that official TV stations are disseminating the state's official discourse.

The use of social media websites and the introduction of internet at the end of the 20th century have witnessed an extraordinary growth in Morocco. This has paved the way to a new area of expression. The digital space has shown new types of protest and activism which are entirely in opposition with the official media discourse. In Morocco, YouTube is one of the most popular social media tools use by alternative voices. Hamid Al Mahdaoui, who is the founder and the editor in chief of the electronic newspaper *Badil* (alternative), is a Moroccan journalist who has become active on YouTube. As of 14th May 2017, Al Mahdaoui's YouTube channel views were almost 21 million views in total.[609] El Mahdaoui, talking alone in front of the camera, is touching the red lines and other sensitive issues. His discourse seems to be logical, critical, structured, and more importantly respectful. For instance, in one of his videos, Al Mahdaoui shows contradictions of using Islam in politics by some parties and the monarchy. He also sees that King as head of state should be criticized.

4. The Shift from Text to Picture

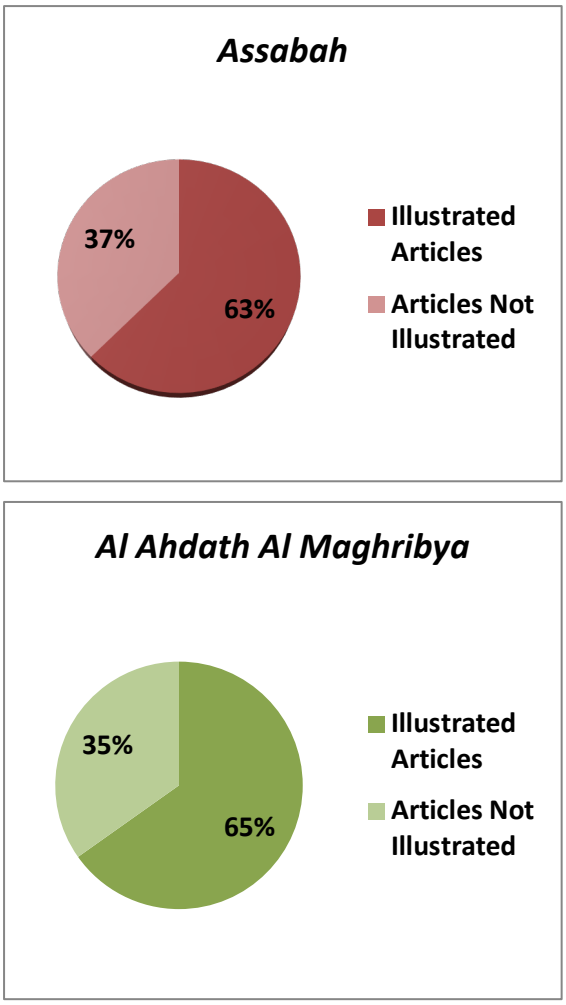
In order to empirically know how tabloidization has caused a shift from text to picture in *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, I tended to work on six issues of each newspaper and to see the number of both the illustrated and the not illustrated articles. The period investigated starts from April 1st to April 6th, 2013. The chart below gives a clear idea about the method and the findings:

[609] https://www.researchgate.net/deref/https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fuser%2Felmahdaouy22%2Fabout

Chart 17: Number of illustrated and the non-illustrated articles on *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*

Name of Newspaper	***Total Number of Articles***	***Number of Articles Illustrated***	***Number of Articles Not Illustrated***
Assabah	705	441	264
Al Ahdath Al Maghribya	655	427	228

Figure 75: The Findings of Chart 17 Expressed in Percentage Terms



The statistics presented in the Diagram above demonstrably show that roughly 65% of the articles published on *Assabah and Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* are accompanied with illustrations. The latter are most often, if not always, pictorial material. As argued before, the shift from text to picture is one of the most fundamental key indicators of tabloidization. The two newspapers have actually supplemented the literacy pleasure with the visual one. Pictures do attract the reader's attention and the two newspapers incontestably aim at circulation and profitability. In this regard, the shift from text to picture is now a strategic choice.

It is also interesting to argue that the editors of the two newspapers understudy long for an attractive appearance as well as a simplified readability. Pictures help fill in the pages of the newspapers quickly; on the opposite, the publication of critical articles and sourced news does require time and energy. The traumatic decrease in text and increase in visual materials such as impact pictures, ads, and caricatures do all contribute to the visual pleasure at the expense of textual depth. In journalism industry, newspapers resort to some tactics, like the shift from textual depth to visuality, in order to maintain readership. But what should be emphasized here is that this very tactic is not ethical at all seeing that it gravely lowers the traditional journalistic values and standards. Critics perhaps will not blame *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* under the pretext that it has the size of tabloid, but all the blame should be directed to *Assabah* since it is officially a broadsheet. The popularization of broadsheets is primarily meant to vulgarize taste as well as to devalue the audience. *Assabah*'s editor, for example, is aware of the fact that the majority of Moroccans are illiterate or less educated. Such editors profit from the people's illiteracy to sell their trivial and vulgar newspapers, while well-educated citizens, as I will show in the last chapter, find these newspapers not worth selling at all. The process of tabloidization in the Moroccan press is very much rapid, and this will undoubtedly lead to the abolishment of differences between quality newspapers and tabloids.

Media culture is the culture of the image and so is tabloidization. Tabloidization has led to a cultural shift to the visual making the verbal lagging behind. *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* try to legitimize and normalize the shift from the textual to the visual. The problem is not basically with the visual culture but with the newspapers' supplementation of the textual/ verbal culture by the visual one. What also makes the editors of *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* accelerate the rhythm of tabloidization

is their fear from the competition from the side of the online journalism. The number of online newspapers in Morocco is increasing day in day out and they have so far succeeded in attracting a large number of visitors.

The overuse of illustrations, mainly pictures, is needed to be looked at and interpreted in their cultural and economic context. What the two understudied newspapers try to reach is the visual persuasion; that is, the use of pictures is meant to affect the reader's behavior and attitudes. This could be, for instance, explained through pictures of ads through which newspapers aim at disseminating a consumer culture. Normally, the reader behaves and thinks according to what they view in newspapers. Moreover, one could also notice that some articles about politics and the government on *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* are accompanied with "funny" pictures. Indeed, this is very serious because such a journalistic behavior does lead to the tabloidization of hard news. Articles dealing with politics and the government are expected to be serious and deeply critical in tone.

In this section, I have tried to show, according to the findings of the thematic analysis on *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, that the Moroccan independent newspapers, including broadsheets like *Assabah*, have witnessed a traumatic shift toward tabloidization. This shift, as strongly argued in this paper, is ideological and unethical. Tabloidization is, from my point of view, unethical on the grounds that it gravely lowers the traditional journalistic standards. More importantly, it is very much ideological in the sense that instead of raising the important issues of the public, the tabloid-like content of the understudied newspapers divert the audience away from the real serious cultural and political concerns of society through focusing too much on trivialities like fashion, celebrities, crimes and scandals, advertisement, to mention only a few. To put it briefly, my argument is that the prioritization of soft news over hard news, especially on *Assabah*, is by far ideological and unethical. Interestingly, this was the remark of Souaiaia when he looked at the content of Moroccan newspapers. In this respect, he concludes that

> Based on many interviews with journalists and after examining a number of the daily and weekly newspapers in Arabic and French languages, I was left with the impression that journalism in Morocco

> operates under low standards of ethical and professional guidelines. I have noticed front-page stories that are typical of tabloid publications, front-page pictures that do not have any relations to the story, provocative headlines that hardly represent the actual stories, blurred boundaries between news and opinion, and coverage of topics that are clearly de- signed to increase circulation rather than inform the public. This first impression was confirmed by some journalists and by officials from the SNPM. I was told that "training and professionalism remain the biggest challenges facing the creation of free press in Morocco." Union officials do not express this assessment in private discussions only; rather, they have shared with me public statements and official reports wherein the union expressed alarm over many practices that are unbecoming of journalists.[610]

Even though Souaiaia did not study thoroughly the content of Moroccan newspapers while trying to assess the regulations and constraints under which the press in Morocco functions, he was actually able to detect the tabloidized content of newspapers along with the lack of training and professionalism in Moroccan newspaper coverage, issues that should always hamper any healthy public debate regarding democracy, the public sphere and reforms from taking root.

5. After the Decay of the Print, the Struggle of Minority Groups in the Digital Sphere

5.1. Media Minorities' Online Fight for Visibility and Social Integration:

Social integration is related to the social connectedness status a person would choose in order to enforce his in-group cohesion into the system.[611] Regardless of the difference or the distance, social media connecting people from different groups, can positively influence their integration in society at large. The use of social media would

[610] Ahmed Souaiaia, "Politics of Appearances: Religion, Law, and the Press in Morocco," *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 4, N. 2 (2007), p. 16.

[611] Hartmut Esser, "Migration, Language and Integration," *AKI Research Review*, (2006), pp. 1- 130.

lead in this case to ensuring inclusion of the marginalized groups through the following dimensions: acculturation, interaction, identification, and placement.[612] Social media can also function as an additional mechanism responsible for empowering the disempowered through web-based generated content that focuses on their communal disturbances manifested through the lens of social media sites (Facebook).

The focus in social integration in this context is to transcend the social and the political divide for an elaboration of a more diverse Moroccan identity. This perspective tells us more about how minorities use social media to gratify their needs (e.g. need to connect with other people) what their motives are, and the consequences that follow from their needs[613] (e.g. integration). Consequently, their interaction within the net-shared content places them in a social position where they can gain rights in the online community. In this section, we outline images of media representations of minorities as outlined on Facebook to provide a glimpse into their attempt for potential visibility in the Moroccan society.

Because there is no real national stage where gay activists can present their case and advocate publically for their rights, LGBT groups often focus their activism within the social network to retain some form of anonymity. It will be a long road for gay activists to achieve their goals, but the gay movement in digital media is only a beginning towards securing an affirmative existence. Now, it is important to mention that homosexuality is illegal in Morocco and punishable by up to three years of imprisonment. In 2014, the Moroccan court upheld the convictions of six men accused of homosexual acts. Four of the six defendants were convicted, under article 489 of the penal code, on charges that included "unnatural acts with an individual of the same sex". On the 12th of May of the same year, police arrested two men for homosexual acts along with incitement to prostitution and public drunkenness. One of them was sentenced to three years in prison and the other to two and a half years. According to the Ministry of Justice there were 81 prosecutions for homosexuality since 2011, though it is unknown how many of these resulted in conviction. Surprisingly, Moroccan

[612] Allerd Peeters and Leen d'Haenens, "Bridging or Bonding? Relationships between Integration and Media Use among Ethnic Minorities in the Netherlands," *Communications*, V. 30, N. 2, (2005), pp. 201- 231.

[613] John and Jennifer Bonds Raacke, "MySpace and Facebook: Applying the Uses and Gratifications Theory to Exploring Friend-Networking Sites," *Cyber Psychology and Behavior*, V.11, N.2, (2008), pp. 169- 174.

newspapers disregard the incident and the few that mention it did not allot a large space to analyze it.

Figure 76: Content in this shot is designed specifically to represent Moroccan minorities 'come out' to call for their 'religious and LGBT' rights to be recognized, Association Akaliyat – Facebook Page



Figure 77: Content in this shot represent Moroccan Christians fight for online existence- Moroccan Christians Facebook Page



Religious minorities, besides to the LGBT minority, also suffer from marginalization and exclusion and in response to the apparent suppression of their worship ceremonies

and assembly, they choose to migrate to Facebook to highlight the common challenges faced by their group. By law, only foreign Christians are allowed to collectively worship in Moroccan churches, Moroccan Christians however; claim that they suffer from discrimination by authorities that refuse their openness. Despite the King's positive vision towards religious pluralism (as expressed via a royal message read out by the Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs and addressed to the participants of a conference on Protecting Religious Minorities in Muslim Countries hosted in Marrakech from 25th to 27th January, 2016) all faiths are still not yet welcomed and proselytism is punishable by up to three years in prison.

Figure 78: A shot representing the shared feelings of minority religions for a legal social recognition, Minority Council Facebook Page



Christians, *Shias* and *Baha'I* are all afraid to be charged with threatening the stability of the country and could even be sentence to death for this reason. This ruling goes against a United Nation resolution made in April 2014 which stipulates that everyone has the freedom to believe whatever he wants "…including the right to change one's religion and beliefs". However, fear of government's pressure led local Christians, Bahais and Shia to refrain from public worship and meet on the media platform to express their frustrations. From what have been listed above, we figure out

that minority community is diverse, fragmented, and connected at the same time. The virtual space is segmented in terms of issues and divided into a number of heterogeneous and independent circles of social networking. But yet, although it is split up according to areas of interest, online minorities on the networking platform play an essential role in bridging the offline and the online community. Furthermore, the diversity that the online space provides indicates some degree of pluralism, which fosters the democratic value of respecting and celebrating difference. In this respect, Facebook, being an open space that offers equal access to all voices to demonstrate their point of views, is set up as a sphere that tolerates differences among those groups who hold different convictions but tend to be sharing and celebrating single unified written language of freedom in its widest sense.

The peaceful demonstrations of minorities in the digital media suggest a new definition of nationhood for a social cohesion of all the marginalized groups in contemporary Morocco. Even though so many still suggest that minorities be disallowed integration within the Moroccan society, these minorities do not identify themselves as alienated from the country. Contrasting the expectations of the majority, minority groups in Morocco, as so many footages gathered from Facebook and YouTube pages clearly show, do identify themselves as nationalist inclusive citizens and seem to be seeking the building of an inclusive society where differences in terms of religion, political beliefs, language, gender, and sexual orientation are embraced but never feared. Generally, having a public debate in Morocco regarding the minority question could actually be perceived as a positive change in the country. While newspapers in Morocco have failed in giving visibility to minority groups in Morocco, either due to the legal constrains the state puts or due to ideological and biased newspaper coverage like that of *Assabil*, newspapers avoid allotting an editorial space to the minority question in Morocco. Other newspaper must be concerned with avoiding taboo topics, like *Al Massae* and *Akhbar Al Yawm* for instance, to avoid shocking the audience and to, accordingly, maintain the number of newspaper copies sold daily at least the same.

5.2. No Longer Dependent on the Print in Search for Visibility: The Case of '*Mamfakinch*' Movement on Youtube and Facebook in Post-2011 Morocco

"*Mamfakinch",* a word in Arabic meaning "no concession" or "not giving up", has become a Moroccan citizen media. Th media platform was founded by Hicham Almiraat during the turmoil Morocco witnessed in 2011, a tumultuous year of protests and unrest in Morocco. The platform appeared just a few after the February 20 Movement had taken to the streets for the first time. The platform is particularly available as a Facebook Page and a Youtube Channel. As I was a member of the February 20 Movement, I had the chance to hear many activists discussing the situation of official media outlets like RTM and 2M as well as the national print press. When I started working on this dissertation, I had the chance to meet with Omar and Leila, two February 20 Movement activists who are very active as well as *Mamfakich* Movement activists. They confirmed that the main reason why they had thought of founding the *Mamfakinch*[614] as a citizen media platform on social network is because of their conviction that both the state-run media and the "so-called independent newspapers and magazines" are not, sometimes cannot be, sources for citizens to gain awareness of important topics. Surprisingly, the official Website www.mamfakinch.com, because of a hacking campaign, was shut down. After the shut-down, Hicham Almirat, a very respect human right activist, was interviewed by Amnesty International. In his interview, he confirmed that the aim "was to circumvent the Moroccan media blackout over protests and to offer a platform for dissident voices that were totally sidelined by state-owned media."[615] Indeed, the findings of the fourth chapter of the analytical part confirm this claim in the sense that newspapers in Morocco, both partisan and independent, tended to disregard the February 20 Movement and to choose the King's constitution reform. While newspapers' coverage was neutral in the beginning, the focus was gradually shift to the announced reform. This must have been the reason why *Mamfakinch* Movement, social media networks and official website saw light. Since mid-2011, the *Mamfakinch* has been very active on Facebook and Youtube, providing

[614] See the interview at https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2016/12/how-a-hacking-campaign-helped-shut-down-an-award-winning-news-site/.

alternative discourses *vis-à-vis* many issues of high importance to the public.

Figure 79: *Mamfakinch* Movement's Facebook Page



Being largely credited to Clemencia Rordiguez, provided important insights into citizen journalism, the latter, as he argues, emerged as a more interactive source of information through which ordinary citizens for other fellow ordinary citizens without necessarily being constrained by the political landscape, legal regulations, or business interests as the case of newspapers in Morocco. In this regard, Rodrigues argues that

> First, citizens' media can give voice to the voiceless. By gaining access to the media, previously silenced communities can break the culture of silence and regain their own voices. Second, citizens' media can foster empowerment. Social structures of inequality and injustice result in entire communities feeling disempowered and paralyzed. Involvement in citizens' media projects strengthens people's sense of self and their confidence in their own potential to act in the world. Third, citizens' media can connect isolated communities. Facilitating alternative communication networks, citizens' media link communities and people who have much to gain from joining forces in projects for collective action. Fourth, citizens' media can foster conscientization [a sort of political consciousness critical of the status quo]. [...] And finally, citizens' media can serve as

> alternative sources of information. Unlike most mass media, which are normally restricted by either economic or political forces, citizens' media are able to maintain an independent position when gathering, processing, and distributing information.[616]

In fact, *Mamfakich* has given space to those who are not represented by mainstream media outlets, hence voicing the voiceless by providing activists with the opportunity to address their concerns and frustrations without being constrained by the current legal, economic and political environments. By supporting and empowering the February 20 Movement, *Mamfakinch* has succeeded in connected people of various backgrounds and from diverse parts of the country. Providing space for discussion debate as well as connecting isolated communities, *Mamfakinch*, as a citizen media source, succeeded in fostering consientisation, a word used by Rodriguez, by challenging the mainstream media discourse that never challenges that state's agenda. *Mamfakinch* has chosen to provide alternative discourses, interpretations and analyses to issues of public concern instead of perpetuating the ones that serve the state's prerogatives. Unlike newspapers today in Morocco and state's owned media channels that have disregarded the post-2011 aspiration of youth in Morocco, *Mamfakinch* has given rise to collective communities that are digitally savvy and well-connected angry women and men in the country. Interestingly, dozen similar citizen media platforms in Morocco have seen light since the foundation of *Mamfakinch.* Is the state going to adopt the Chinese model of internet surveillance in an attempt to stop the increase in number of citizen journalists in Morocco, the answer is hard to predict. But what remains certain is the intensity of Moroccan youth struggle to express their minds, to share knowledge, to transgress taboos, to refute the traditional media outlets' discourses, and to build up a country in which the unheard finally finds a space for activism and free speech.

[616] Clemencia Rodriguez, "Civil Society and Citizens' Media: Peace Architects for the New Millennium," in *Redeveloping Communication for Social Change*, ed. Karim Gwinn Wilkins (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), p. 150.

Concluding Remarks:

Journalism in Morocco lived a short honeymoon after King Mohammed VI came to power in 1999. At that time, the young and comparatively progressive monarch showed a reformist determination when he announced that Morocco needs a political breakthrough which ends the "years of lead" that "was characterized by repression of political dissent, the enforced disappearance of hundreds of individuals, arbitrary detention of thousands of others, and the systemic use of torture and other ill-treatment."[617] Unluckily, the honeymoon period did not last. When journalists started tackling sensitive issues such as the monarch's vast financial interests, institutionalized corruption, and the slow pace of democratization, they were quickly muzzled. In recent years, when the Ministry of Communication does not like a story told in the press, official institutions tend to discredit the reporter by leaking information about the journalist's private life. Media in Morocco was not developed throughout scientific research. The filed established its traditions and limits without subjecting these traditions to academic supervision or scientific accountability. Nowadays, the press has become a type of research not as a tool for conflict and subjugation as it used to be in the past. Basically, the content of newspapers in Morocco has become tabloidized. Instead of shaping a positive public opinion and tackling sensitive subjects, newspaper work hard to earn money and make profit.

To sum up, newspapers have failed in representing social movements in particular and the aspirations of post-2011 Moroccan citizens. This has pushed minority groups in Morocco and *Mamfakinch* Movement to seek refuge in the digital sphere that is hard to control legally, economically and politically. These voiceless Subalterns would not have migrated to the digital sphere, which is defeudalized and liberalized compared to traditional means of communication like newspapers and magazines, had they and their demands been addressed by the state-owned media outlets and privately-owned newspapers in Morocco. Due to their exercise of self-censorship, to their dependence on powerful companies for advertisement contracts and to their tabloidized content, newspapers in Morocco, especially privately-owned newspapers, have failed to gain the trust of citizens who have sought news platforms that help them address

[617] Amnesty International, Amnesty International Briefing: Morocco (Index: PUB 78/00/77) at https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/8000/mde290042014en.pdf

their frustrations and express their aspirations. This situation of the print press does not help the process of democratization to speed up in Morocco, a country that has been in transition since late 1990s. because of their impatience and yearning for democracy and liberalization, youth in Morocco in particular have migrated to the digital sphere where their isolation fades away and where a space for debate is largely significant. Becoming citizen journalists, without having been students in journalism, minority groups and February 20 Movements, among others, have displayed their capacities to express their minds and share news on social networks without needing biased news, attacks, defamations, or tabloidized content to reach the audience. On the contrary, the style adopted while addressing concerns and debating topics of importance to the public is much more professional compared to that *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghrbya*, to name but a few, adopt.

Instead of launching a defamation campaign to shut down ctizen media platforms like www.mamfakinch.com, Morocco will need to heed the call for change without relying any more on outdated and archaic news content newspapers still tend to dissiminate. The number of newspaper copies sold every day is insignificant compared to the number of likers and followers of citizen media platforms on Facebook, Twitter and Youtube. It is time for change, and if newspapers still want to help a healthy public debate take root in the country, the must accept change. Otherwise, they will ultimately be changed instead. What the Moroccan state should rely on is the honesty and the highly motivation of pro-democracy and human rights youth whose nationalistic yearning for a better, more democratic, more liberal and more stable Morocco is not fake. It is the fakeness of news print newspapers, like was discussed in previous analytical chapters, that should be criminalized.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, this dissertation was meant to analyze Moroccan newspaper coverage of religion and politics in an attempt to provide accurate insights into the legal, economic and political environments within which print journalism operates in post-2011 Morocco. It was also an attempt to explore the discursive ideological discourse Moroccan newspapers, both independent and partisan, seek to disseminate to maintain the status quo. Each chapter, be it theoretical or analytical, was meant to provide an answer to anyone seeking to understand what being a journalist in post-2011 Morocco means.

As a conclusion, it is of paramount importance to state that while it is true that Morocco has started the process of democratization, the absence of freedom of expression, especially when it comes to the independent press, puts this process at stake and the reforms introduced thus far have been impugned. One of the main arguments I have been attempting to defend throughout this dissertation is that the democratization of the press could never be achieved as long as the public discourse that brings monarchical powers and actions into question is still illegal. This has been tested in Moroccan newspaper coverage of the sacred trilogy: Islam, the Monarchy and Moroccan claim of sovereignty over the Sahara. I reached the conclusion that print newspapers in Morocco do abide by the regulations and seek to cover the sacred trilogy, Islam, the Monarchy and the territorial integrity, according to the ruling elite's prerogatives. Because of their total acceptance of the state-adopted discourses and policies and because of their exercise of self-censorship, Moroccan journalists in party-owned and independent newspapers turn Moroccan Islam, the Monarchy and Morocco's policies regarding the Sahara issue into sacred taboos. The fact that the state's apparatuses as well as the laws and regulations adopted in Morocco still tend to limit dissent and control criticism of what is known as the red lines would never help the press positively contribute to the rise of a healthy, well-thought-out and responsible public debate during the country's transitional phase. It is true that both *Annahj Adimocrati* and *Assabil* newspapers do not cover on a variety of issues based on what the regulations impose, but the rest, including independent newspapers, adopt self-censorship and opt for the dissemination of news according to the state's prerogatives.

Here, I argue that the independent print press still does not exist in Morocco nowadays. On the contrary, I suggest "private" newspapers as an alternative concept to best describe the print media landscape in Morocco.

It is true that Morocco has known several strong, critical and brave newspapers; still, most of them were shut down by the authorities or sold to stakeholders due to heavy fines and regular harassments against their editor-in-chiefs and journalists. This does not mean that in Morocco today there are no independent journalists. In fact, there are many ones. What is lacking today in the country is an independent print press that is able to bring about socio-cultural and political transformations through a responsible, liberal, and deep analyses of news. The print press is decaying even in democratic settings like Spain, the United Kingdom, France and even in the United States. But the maturity of democracy in the aforementioned settings for instance, as has been argued in this dissertation, allows them to safely migrate to to the digital sphere. On the contrary, Morocco is still said to be in transition to democracy and the existence of a free and independent print and online press should still be of a central importance, an argument that I had the chance to highlight whenever I was interviewed by independent online media outlets like Lakome2.com (see appendix).

Another important concluding remark is that even if the New Constitution recognizes freedom of expression, the penal code, the press code and the ways they are manipulated by the State's apparatuses do not permit journalists and newspapers to operate according to what the new constitution and the international treaties Morocco signed dictate. The electronic sphere has emerged as a venue, allowing citizen journalism to come to light and citizen journalists to negotiate, instead of accepting, all the actions, policies and regulations the state adopts.

This dissertation was also meant to focus on how stories of corruption are covered by Moroccan newspapers. Indeed, Moroccan newspapers, especially the privately-owned ones, regularly cover scandals of corruption taking place particularly within various institutions of the Moroccan public section. The monarchy, the King's owned companies, the King's advisors and the security body are never associated with any stories of corruption that the international press tend to cover. Because of their reluctance to cover the King's owned companies and because of the privately-owned press's dependence on advertisement contracts with powerful businesses in the private sector, Moroccan privately-owned newspapers' coverage of corruption remains

generally biased and too selective. Here, the independent press, which is supposed to positively enrich the public debate during Morocco's transitional phase, fails in addressing many stories of the public concern. In this regard, this dissertation argues that in Morocco there exists a variety of privately-owned newspapers and not a variety of independent newspapers. Independence does necessarily fulfill the economic autonomy of the newspaper foundation as well as the freedom to cover on all the issues of the public concern. In Morocco, this still remains impossible to take place with a press code and a penal code that do still restrict free speech. The new constitution recognizes, as previously pointed out, freedom of expression, but the penal code and press code laws and regulations are still very vague, sometimes archaic, thus giving the judge much space to interpret cases. Therefore, journalists still get intimidated if they transgress the red lines. In this sense, Moroccan post-2011 newspaper coverage of corruption remains very limited compared to that the online platforms provide. While it is true that the print press is decaying even in very democratic settings in Europe and North America where the online press is holding the reign, the case of Morocco is different in the sense that Morocco's transitional phase to democracy as well as the socio-cultural and political transformations taking place is in need of a free and independent print and online press in the country so that a healthy public debate would be enriched. In the absence of a free, ethical and independent print press in Morocco, it would be difficult to envisage a healthy public debate taking root in the country.

The landscape now is not in favor of print journalism in Morocco nor does the international context, especially with the rise of Trumpism in the United States and some European settings, encourage independent journalists to establish quality print newspapers in Morocco. The fear of being fined, jailed and regularly harassed by the authorities in Morocco explains why journalists avoid covering corruption weighty people in the private sector, the King's owned companies and his entourage are involved in. Due to this regulated press landscape in Morocco, many newspapers appear and fade away quickly, like the case of *Baboubi*, a satirical independent newspaper that Khalid El Keddari, a famous cartoonist in Morocco, established in 2016. After a year of operation within a complex system of economic, legal and political constraints, Khalid El Keddari stopped issuing the newspaper and migrated to the digital sphere where space of free speech remains larger compared to that the print press enjoys in Morocco.

This doctoral dissertation has also attempted to analyze Moroccan newspaper coverage of Islamists and Seculars. Interestingly, I could easily observe how biased *Assabah*, *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* and *Assabil* are. They are not fact-based and always seek to attack and demonize. Leftist and liberal newspapers like *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya* adopt fake news and defamatory style of journalism against Islamists, especially Abdelilah Benkirane, while *Assabil*'s aganda-setting is clearly oriented towards attacking secularists and secularism. While trying to look at how each block represents the other, it was easy to observe how each newspaper is seeking the demonization of the different Other. Accordingly, the print press in Morocco needs to be held accountable, at least partially, for the polarization that characterizes Morocco today. While each block is determined to misrepresent the other, I argue that the print press in Morocco cannot provide alternative discourses that help a healthy public debate about democratization, reforms, free speech and liberalization during Morocco's transitional phase to find its way. Having said that, the public sphere, the way Habermas explains it, is not necessarily a space for all but rather, like in Morocco, a space where defamation, biased reporting and disoriented coverage take place. It is a terrain where everything is discussed, except the things that truly matter. Not only did newspapers disregard social movements during periods of unrest, but they did also defame key activists like Nasser Zefzafi. It is this biased, unprofessional and unethical coverage that has pushed several activists and grass-root movements like "*Mamfakinch*" Movement to migrate to the digital sphere, a terrain that is more liberal and 'defeudalized', and a terrain where those unvoiced citizens display their agency, contest mainstream discourses, put an end to the dislocation of communities and attain visibility.

This dissertation has helped safely assume that Moroccan newspapers, especially independent ones, contribute the making of society and to the construction of meanings. The Hijab, inheritance, polygamy, education, art, and sexuality-related issues such as abortion, sex outside marriage, and homosexuality make the contemporary print media scene polarized and controversial. It is hard to assume that this is healthy for Morocco's transitional phase. Even though these topics are heavily covered and addressed by newspapers, the lack of depth in the analysis of these issues does not help build a more cultured and enlightened society. Apparently, each newspaper in Morocco tends to attack or insult the group that opposes its ideology or

school of thought. As a result of this, the media scene has become a cause of social and cultural polarization that does not necessarily contribute to the making of a healthy and enlightened society. polarization has created hatred discourses adopted by social groups. In the election or in any debate on potential educational reforms, this polarization stands in the way of healthy debates. Even though newspapers are no longer selling a significant number of copies a day, they still prove useful in shaping the public opinion in Morocco.

The most interesting findings were those gathered while trying to find out how newspapers in Morocco covered the February 20 Movement, the *Rif* Movement and the King's constitutional reform of 2011. The shift of newspaper focus from February 20 Movement to constitutional reform was intentional. The purpose was to deviate public attention from what was taking place in the streets to what the monarchy was offering as a reform to calm down the turmoil. Hence, to what extent can we consider print journalism in Morocco as independent? The answer to this question, based on the findings gathered, is that there is an almost total absence of independent journalism in post-2011 Morocco. What is available is rather a private journalism in the country. The tactics used to escape state harassment and the self-censorship practiced show that the print journalism industry in Morocco is declining, without contributing to the democratization process in the country even though the print media are needed for public debate as well as for the construction of public opinion. This latter is taking place more in the virtual sphere because of the ongoing migration to the online sphere, a terrain that helps the voice of citizens whose aspirations and demands have not been embraced and addressed by the print industry in King Mohamed VI's Morocco be heard.

Moreover, the political parties that can offer alternative discourses do not receive enough funding so that their print newspapers will be circulated nationwide. More dangerously, however, when independent newspapers, which are referred to as leftist, liberal, and progressive, use defamation against activists who belong to grassroots movements and adopt state discourse, it raises the question of how much these newspapers are progressive, and it reflects the ambivalent position and ideological contradictions of the print press in Morocco. It is, therefore, difficult to anticipate that the current print press can contribute to a healthy transitional phase towards democracy.

Trying to discuss some of the challenges facing the print press in Morocco, besides the strict regulations and the dominant economic environment within which the press operates in Morocco, it has been the aim of this dissertation to study one feature of tabloidization: the shift from text to picture. This has vulgarized taste and replaced seriousness with anti-seriousness, especially that the illustations used by most newspapers are pictures of celebrities anf fashion. The popularization of independent newspapers, especially of broadsheets like *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, is actually one of the serious challenges facing the ethical standards of professionalism. The independent press appeared to tackle the most important socio-economic and political matters of society, but *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, through a tabloid-like coverage of news, long only for the maximization of drops of circulation. Here, I argue that tabloidization in Morocco could be regarded as a challenge facing the print industry in general in the sense that the number of newspaper copies sold decreases year in year out while the majority tend to read news online. The situation of the print in Morocco has undoubtedly got worse and worse with economic crisis the context of COVID-19 has brought about and also with people's tendency to rely on electronic sources while seeking information. The economic environment as well as the weapanization of advertisement has become among the pressing challenges that either force newspapers to eclipse from the market for a period of time, to fade away forever, or to change its editorial line and exercise self-censorship to gain the trust of corporatios and eventually sign potential advertisement agreements. Without the latter, the newspaper goes bankcrupt and its journalists migrate to other companies seeking a stable income. *Attajdid* and *Akhbar Al Yawm are* two important newspapers that have recently stopped appearing due to funding issues and the absence of support from companies and investors. Studying the media economy in Morocco is interesting as it tells a great deal about the economic oligarchy existing in Morocco. Without the support or endorsement from oligarchs, newspapers cannot survive longer.

The digital sphere, regarded as a 'defeudalized sphere' to put it in Habermas term, provides in today's Morocco alternative voices and interpretations of the news, which could explain why Moroccans are migrating to it. Here, I firmly argue that believing that newspapers are not sold because the majority of Moroccans do not read could be a very shallow and simplistic reading of Morocco's context. Alternatively, I argue that because of the low standards of reporting the majority of print newspapers

adopt in Morocco, citizens seek alternative analyses elsewhere, in international media channels along with citizen media platforms like *Mamfakinch* for instance, in order to be well-informed about matters of public interest. Another interesting finding of this dissertation is that there is a dramatic shift from text to picture in newspapers. The editors of the *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*, like the majority in Morocco, long for an attractive appearance as well as a simplified readability. Pictures help fill in the newspaper's pages quickly, but the publication of critical articles and sourced information requires time and energy. The traumatic decrease in text and increase in visual materials contributes to the visual pleasure, while the textual depth is, unfortunately, no more a main concern. The shift from textual depth to visuality is one of the tactics through which newspapers try to maintain readership. The idea that should be stressed on here is that this kind of tactics is not ethical in the sense that it gravely lowers the traditional journalistic values and standards. Investigating Moroccan popular partisan and independent newspapers has helped discern two important judgments on the question of politics and how it is covered. The first judgement discerned is that tabloidized broadsheets/ contents are anti-political while the second judgement is that tabloidized newspapers could be political but with ambivalent normative import. Therefore, the Moroccan independent newspapers do not only face the challenge of censorship and red lines as was previously discussed in this dissertation, but also face the challenge of tabloidization.

In this very complex context, newspapers have not succeeded in representing those seeking representations, the minority groups in Morocco as a case in point. Here, I have looked at the case of religious and sexual minorities in Morocco who have migrated to the digital sphere while trying to address their concerns and frustrations. In this regard, the peaceful demonstrations of minorities in the digital media suggest a new definition of nationhood for a social cohesion of all the marginalized groups in contemporary Morocco. Even though so many still suggest that minorities be disallowed integration within the Moroccan society, these minorities do not identify themselves as alienated from the country. Contrasting the expectations of the majority, minority groups in Morocco, as so many footages gathered from Facebook and YouTube pages clearly show, do identify themselves as nationalist inclusive citizens and seem to be seeking the building of an inclusive society where differences in terms of religion, political beliefs, language, gender, and sexual orientation are embraced but never feared.

Generally, having a public debate in Morocco regarding the minority question could actually be perceived as a positive change in the country. Newspapers in Morocco have failed in giving visibility to minority groups in Morocco, either due to the legal constrains the state imposes or due to ideological and biased newspaper coverage like that of *Assabil*; therefore, they avoid allotting an editorial space to the minority question in Morocco. Other newspapers must be concerned with avoiding taboo topics, like *Al Massae* and *Akhbar Al Yawm* for instance, to avoid shocking the audience and to, accordingly, maintain the number of newspaper copies sold daily at least the same.

In this respect, the increase of tabloidized-contend as well as the rise of citizen journalism in Morocco are regarded are the main challenges facing the print journalism industry in post-2011 Morocco. In order to find out how out digital journalism emerged in Morocco, I looked at the interesting case of "*Mamfakinch*" Movement. Due to the newspapers' failure in representing social movements in particular and the aspirations of post-2011 Moroccan citizens, "*Mamfakinch*" Movement, a group of February 20 Movement activists who believe the state-owned media and the privately-owned platforms do not cover their stories, sought refuge in the digital sphere while relying on Facebook and Youtube. These voiceless Subalterns would not have migrated to the digital sphere, which is defeudalized and liberalized compared to traditional means of communication like newspapers and magazines, had they and their demands been addressed by newspapers, a claim that was confirmed by Hicham Almiraar (the founder of the movement) once interviewed by Amnesty International. Due to their exercise of self-censorship, to their dependence on powerful companies for advertisement contracts and to their tabloidized content, newspapers in Morocco, especially privately-owned ones, have failed to gain the trust of citizens who have sought news platforms that help them address their frustrations and express their aspirations. This situation of the print press does not help the process of democratization to speed up in Morocco, a country that has been in transition since late 1990s. because of their impatience and yearning for democracy and liberalization, youth in Morocco in particular have migrated to the digital sphere where their isolation fades away and where a space for debate is largely significant. Becoming citizen journalists, without having been students in Journalism, minority groups and February 20 Movements, among others, have displayed their capacities to express their minds and share news on social networks without being in need to use biased news, attacks, defamations or tabloidized content to reach the

audience. On the contrary, the style adopted while addressing concerns and debating topics of importance to the public is much more professional compared to that *Assabah* and *Al Ahdath Al Maghrbya*, to name but a few, adopt.

Instead of launching a defamation campaign to shut down citizen media platforms like www.mamfakinch.com, Morocco will need to heed the call for change without relying anymore on outdated and archaic news content newspapers still tend to dissiminate. The number of newspaper copies sold every day is insignificant compared to the number of likers and followers of citizen media platforms on Facebook, Twitter and Youtube. It is time for change, and if newspapers still want to help a healthy public debate take root in the country, the must accept change. Otherwise, they will ultimately be changed instead. What the Moroccan state should rely on is the honesty and the highl motivation of pro-democracy and human rights youth whose nationalistic yearning for a better, more democratic, more liberal and more stable Morocco is genuine. It is the fakeness of news newspapers dissiminate, like was discussed in previous analytical chapters, that should be criminalized. Within this context, fact-checking, according to Graves, Nyhan and Reifler 2016 stress, has emerged as a response to the growing threat of misinformation, and the eagerness of professional journalists to reclaim the importance of journalism to accurately inform the public in moments of electoral campaigns and to double-check politicians' statements Morocco is in need of fact-checking, a task that only a few citizen journalists voluntarily decide to accomplish in Morocco today. Despite the fact that fact-checkers are not adequately professional or well-established, they are producing organized informative content to the public about various sensitive issues. They seek to examine claims and assess information circulated in the Moroccan media landscape. Examples like the '*AjiTafham'* YouTube channel, Najib Mokhtari's channel, and Othmane Safsafi's channel have managed to appeal a total of more than 900,000 subscribers and millions of viewers. Fact-checkers are in need of funding and training so that they will be able to attack fake news which have caused harm even in democratic settings.

If the Moroccan state is sincere with its process of democratization, then the print press should not be decaying so early. It is still needed to enrich and deepen the public debate ragrding important issues. What should be done now is the implementation of serious and effective measures to fight the country's most precarious social issue, illiteracy, to enable Moroccans to understand and interact with the various media

discourses. Nothing could actually justify the state's regular imprisonment and financial penalties against journalists while the rate of illiteracy is still very high. Along with that, the Moroccan state should take into consideration the post-'Arab' Spring people's dreams and aspirations, and it is, therefore, expected to promote freedom of expression by establishing a democratic and more liberal environment with institutions able to function within a meaningful framework of checks and balances. Regional and small private newspapers need to be funded so that a freer environment will thrive and so that the voice of those in vulnerable situations will be heard. The current newspapers' spendings need to be assessed and audited before the government decides to provide the annual funding to newspapers. Training should be provided so that jounrnalists remain faithful to the ethics and to the international standards of accountable reporting. As long as these things are not still prioritized by the Moroccan political system, the state's promise to support a free press will always be regarded as an empty rhetoric.

The current landscape of the press does not support a healthy political process to take place. The fact that Hamid El Mahdaoui, a Moroccan independent journalist and the editor-in-chief of Badilinfo, was jailed while covering the protests of Hucima in 2017, the fact that Hajar Raysouni, an independent journalist working for *Akhbar Al Yawm* whose editor-in-chief is behind bars because of accusations he completely denies, had been taken to jail and accused of pre-marital sex and abortion before she was granted a royal pardon should tell a great deal about how the Moroccan government is still flailing at this and that without a real strategy or decent end insight. While it is true that the revised press code does not allow journalists to be jailed, it still does allow the court to accuse them based on an archaic penal code that journalists and political activists have been criticizing since 1999, the year when King Mohamed VI successed to the throne. Along with these recent cases of intimidations against free journalists, many others have either chosen to exit Morocco seeking protection in Europe. In order that Morocco will be really stable and better, the building of a free press is supposed to be the ultimate goal of the state. The incidents of attacks, fines and court sentences against journalists that have happened since 2013 are important elements scholars should look at while assessing Morocco's post-2011 political culture and landscape. Instead of standing in support of journalists who have been intimidated, many Moroccan newspapers, as I observed while examining their coverage, do also defame the jailed journalists and circulate tha narratives adopted by the authorities. *Assabah*,

Al Ahdath Al Maghribya and other Moroccan broadsheets expected to promote the respect of freedom of expression have attacked several journalists and political activists that have been jailed. What makes matters worse is that these two newspapers, to name but a few, rely on reports provided by security apparatuses instead of devoting a deep coverage to explore and refute the claims adopted by those in power. Has the print press lost a sense of direction? Probably the answer is "yes", but what remains certain is the intensity of Moroccans' struggle to have a free press that helps transform the state and society without harming the political process. The digital sphere, I argue, is the refuge of those seeking plurality of voices, agency and visibility.

Working on the Moroccan newspaper coverage of religion and politics has been a pleasure because of the important insights into the political culture, legal and economic environments the coverage allowed me to grasp. The limitations of the study are many. I missed many issues, especially of *Assabil* and *Annahj Adimocrati* newspapers while looking at the representations dissiminated by newspapers. The National Library of Rabat provided me with an excellent opportunity to access its newspaper archive; nevertheless, I could not find many newspapers available or many issues at disposal. Compared to other archives, the one at the National Library remains by far the best and most organized one. Besides, I also believe it would have been very important to conduct a comparative study in order to find out if the coverage of newspapers before 2011 had been different from the one I observed while collecting data. The third limitation, I argue, is that French dailies in Morocco had not been included in the analysis, except with the case of *Le Matin* that I looked at while comparing Arabic newspapers to examine their similarities in coverage with *Le Matin*, a privately-owned newspaper and the voice of the ruling state in Morocco.

While I must confess that the the data collected and the way they have been analysed may be flawed and the Critical Discourse Analysis misused in many parts of the dissertation, I have endeavored to remain objective and neutral while provding insights into Morocco and its print press. The issue of Moroccan print journalism has been sidestepped even in national scholarship which tends to favor issues of representation, public diplomacy and elections. This dissertation, regardless of its flaws, diverges from the viewpoint adopted and offers a new outlook on studying contemporary Moroccan media and how an ethical and responsible print media coverage is still needed for a healthy transition to democracy. Also, the importance of

the dissertation lies in the fact that it is, according to the best of my knowledge, the first doctoral project in Morocco that treats religion and politics in relation to print media. Not only was this doctoral dissertation meant to look at how religion and politics are configured and debated on Moroccan newspapers, but it is also meant to create and foster a vibrant academic platform that allows for conversation on diverse contemporary issues, issues that were deemed taboos and unspeakable two decades ago. In this sense, this doctoral dissertation was meant to provoke and stimulate. It is the outcome of a purely academic desire to deal with this provocative topic that has never been looked at in Morocco. I also aim to utilize this provocation to stimulate new research directions, paving the road for Eastern and Western scholarships on Moroccan media landscape as a whole. Moroccan media landscape has been sidestepped in Western scholarship which tends to favor issues of Orientalist representations, postcolonial thought, women and the dynamics of change in society. What is striking in fact is that many Ph.D. theses have been written in the United States on Morocco's process of democratization and the Islamist challenge, but none of them has devoted a space to discussing the status of media landscape in Morocco. This could be explained by the fact that any discussion about Morocco's reforms routinely focus on the family code, the penal code, and religious reforms without including media. Furthermore, this doctoral project fits in with the university reform in Morocco that tries to introduce and develop media and journalism studies in university curricular. I should also stress that my interest in, and study of, Moroccan print media arises from my conviction that the letter are forms of public sphere best suited to be discussed in relation to religion and politics, and that the process of democratization would always be hampered if the media industry in Morocco, including print and digital, do not function properly or rather do not enjoy the margin of freedom of expression needed to function.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: *Findings of Al Ahdath Al Maghribya*

Themes	25/03/2013	26/03/2013	27/03/2013	28/03/2013	29/03/2013	30-31/03/2013	01/04/2013	02/04/2013	03/04/2013	04/04/2013	05/04/2013	6-7/03/2013	TOTAL
National News and Politics	19	12	19	20	18	19	21	21	22	21	18	28	238
Regional and World Politics	1	10	10	4	3	1	4	1	1	3	1	1	40
Moroccan Economics	5	5	1	7	9	5	5	8	8	6	1	1	61
World Economics	1	0	7	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	12
Opinion	13	16	8	14	6	11	9	5	10	8	11	11	122
Culture and Education	21	13	20	10	16	7	11	16	14	13	8	8	157
Scandals and Crimes	23	25	31	27	22	18	21	18	18	23	20	20	266
Advertisement	9	6	1	3	6	3	5	7	9	7	8	1	65
Entertainment	5	13	11	6	11	16	9	16	8	8	9	9	121
Celebrities and Fashion	4	9	4	7	4	12	3	11	4	7	2	6	73
Sport	16	20	18	16	17	16	18	19	16	11	19	19	205

Appendix 2: *Thematic Analysis: Findings of Assabah*

Themes	25/03/2013	26/03/2013	27/03/2013	28/03/2013	29/03/2013	30-31/03/2013	01/04/2013	02/04/2013	03/04/2013	04/04/2013	05/04/2013	6-7/03/2013	TOTAL
National News and Politics	6	9	16	9	12	12	16	20	10	12	15	13	**150**
Regional and World Politics	9	4	6	2	7	0	3	8	1	4	2	0	**46**
Moroccan Economics	5	4	4	10	9	16	10	4	9	6	4	5	**86**
World Economics	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**7**
Opinion	2	5	4	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	**36**
Culture and Education	6	8	10	4	16	0	6	6	18	5	14	13	**106**
Scandals and Crimes	17	14	20	25	26	19	16	27	27	21	22	18	**252**
Advertisement	22	12	17	18	12	18	19	21	14	19	19	35	**226**
Entertainment	11	6	9	11	14	14	12	15	16	19	14	14	**155**
Celebrities and Fashion	1	6	5	4	8	1	2	1	3	4	1	1	**37**
Sport	25	36	25	23	21	33	22	30	28	34	29	30	**336**

***Appendix 3**: A Sample of the Newspaper Articles Selected*

بوعبيد: خطاب بندورو تيئيسي وموغل في التشاؤم

بندورو يهاجم الدستور الجديد ويشبهه بـ«دستور نابليون»

الرباط
محمد أحداد

وصف عمر بندورو، أستاذ القانون الدستوري بكلية الحقوق السويسي بالرباط، الدستور الجديد بـ«دستور نابليون الغامض والمفخخ» وأنه «القابل لأكثر من تأويل». وقال بندورو، الذي كان يتحدث في ندوة نظمتها مؤسسة عبد الرحيم بوعبيد، أول أمس، بمدينة سلا، إن «الرغبة السياسية في التغيير غير موجودة، لأن كل الدلائل تشير إلى استمرار الممارسات السابقة، بل أكثر أحيانا».

وأبرز بندورو، في معرض رصده لثغرات الدستور الجديد، أن «سوء نية السلطة ظاهرة في الدستور الجديد، من خلال وجود بنود كثيرة تتسم بالغموض». وتعت أستاذ القانون الدستوري، المثير للجدل، الدستور الجديد بـ«الماسيور الذي يهدف إلى اجتياز هذه المرحلة الصعبة من الثورات، التي يعيشها العالم العربي، والعودة إلى الممارسات السابقة»، متسائلا بنبرة استنكارية «كيف لي أن أكون من المتفائلين؟ صراحة أرغب أن أكون كذلك، لكن لا يوجد ثمة مؤشر يوحي بأنه تغير شيء بعد المصادقة على الدستور الجديد، بل إن عقلية السلطة لم تتبدل وبقيت كما كانت من قبل».

وبخصوص قانون المالية، اعتبر بندورو أن الحكومة عاجزة عن التحكم في معالمه الكبرى، لأن الملك هو الذي يتدخل في أهم نقاطه خلال ترؤسه المجلس الوزاري. وختم بندورو مداخلته بالسؤال عما إذا كان رئيس الحكومة المقبلة يستطيع قول «لا» للملك، مضيفا «إذا افترضنا ذلك جدلا سترفعه السلطات الواسعة للملك لتلقي به خارج الحكومة».

من جهة أخرى، هاجم علي بوعبيد، عضو المكتب السياسي للاتحاد الاشتراكي للقوات الشعبية، عمر بندورو، واصفا كلامه بـ«التيئيسي والموغل في التشاؤم»، محملا الطبقة السياسية مسؤولية أي تأويل سيء للدستور. وأكد بوعبيد أن الدستور الجديد لم ينص على أن المغرب ملكية برلمانية، ولا يجب أن يكون التحليل على هذا المستوى، معتبرا الخطابات القائلة بأن الملك قادر على التدخل لتغيير البرنامج الحكومي أثناء ترؤسه المجلس الوزاري «مبالغة كبيرة، لأن الملك قد يغير نقطة أو نقطتين فقط ويبدي ملاحظاته، ولكنه لا يستطيع تغيير البرنامج أو القانون كلية».

في السياق ذاته، رد بوعبيد على مداخلة بندورو بشأن الإصلاح الدستوري الأخير، مشيدا بالدستور الجديد، وقال: «على الأقل، اليوم، عندنا نص واحد ووثيقة دستورية واضحة، أما فيما سبق، فكانت هناك إمارة المؤمنين تلعب دور الدستور إلى جانب الوثيقة المعدلة سنة 1996». وأوضح بوعبيد أن الدولة لن تعود إلى توظيف الأساليب القديمة في الحكم، بالنظر إلى المتغيرات الإقليمية المتمثلة بالأساس في الربيع العربي.

عبد اللطيف المنوني يعد بدستور لم يسبق للمغرب أن عرف مثله



عبد اللطيف المنوني رفقة عمر عزيمان أثناء ندوة أمس

الرباط
عادل لجدي

كشف عبد اللطيف المنوني، رئيس اللجنة الخاصة بمراجعة الدستور، أنه لم تتم صياغة دستور جديد وإنما سيتم إدخال تعديلات على دستور المملكة المعمول به حاليا، مشيرا إلى أن المساحات التي يتضمنها التعديل الدستوري ستفضي إلى تعديل لم يسبق للمغرب المستقل أن عرف مثله، حيث ستكون الإصلاحات شاملة. ولم يمنح المنوني، خلال الندوة الصحافية التي عقدها صباح أمس بمعية عمر عزيمان، رئيس اللجنة الاستشارية للجهوية، ما إن كانت أشغال اللجنة ستفضي في نهاية أشغالها إلى إقرار الملكية البرلمانية التي تنادي بها بعض الأصوات في المشهد السياسي المغربي، أو ستشمل الفصل الأول من الدستور، مشيرا إلى أنه لا يمكنه إبداء رأي في الموضوعين دون انتظار ما ستفضي إليه أشغال اللجنة التي كلفها الملك محمد السادس بمراجعة الدستور.

وأوضح المنوني، ردا على سؤال حول ما إذا كانت الاستشارات التي سيباشرها اللجنة ستشمل شباب «حركة 20 فبراير»، أن هذه «الاستشارات» ستشمل جميع مكونات المجتمع بالإصلاحات الدستورية، وأشار إلى أن عمل اللجنة لن يقتصر على الاتصال بمنظمات المجتمع المدني والأحزاب السياسية والنقابات والمنظمات المناصرة.

وأن يتم الاكتفاء بالإصغاء فقط وإنما سيتم النقاش معهم ومحاولة الوصول إلى حلول ترضي الجميع.

وقدما أكد رئيس اللجنة الخاصة بمراجعة الدستور المغربي أن المجالات التي سيشملها الإصلاح المرتقب هي مجالات واسعة ومختلفة تتضمن مطالبا أساسية، كدسترة مؤسسة مجلس الحكومة وميات الحكامة الجيدة وحقوق الإنسان وحماية الحريات، كشف عمر عزيمان، رئيس اللجنة الاستشارية للجهوية، أن الاقتراحات التي قدمتها اللجنة إلى الملك عقب انتهاء أشغالها في ديسمبر الماضي شملت اقتراحات بإصلاح الدستور في بعض الفقرات المتعلقة أساسا بموضوع الجهوية، مشيرا إلى أن اللجنة اعتبرت أن الجهوية المتقدمة لا تجد الآن مكانها الطبيعي في الدستور الحالي ومن جملة الاقتراحات التي تقدمت بها اللجنة، بعد سنة كاملة من العمل، تغيير الفصل 101 من الدستور في اتجاه منح رئيس الجهة سلطة وأن تكون لمجلس الجهة سلطة تنفيذية، كما اقترحت اللجنة إضافة فقرة تشير إلى تشجيع وصول المرأة إلى مناصب الانتخاب بواسطة القوانين، لتشجيع مساهمة المرأة في الحياة السياسية.

من جهة أخرى أوضح عزيمان أن تطبيق الجهوية الموسعة أو الحكم الذاتي في الأقاليم الجنوبية مرتبط بمصير المفاوضات حول النزاع المفتعل الذي يعاكسه الأمم المتحدة، مشيرا إلى أنه على ضوء ذلك سيتحدد من سيكون له الأولوية في التطبيق وفي الوقت الذي أبقى عزيمان الكشف عن عدد الجهات المتضمنة للتوصيات التي رفعت إلى القصر، أكد أن اللجنة حرصت على أن تكون الجهة رافعة في مجال التنمية الاقتصادية والاجتماعية والثقافية، وعلى القضاء على الفوارق الجهوية ومحاولة الاجتهاد لوضع الآليات التي يمكن أن يتم بها تجاوز «مغرب نسبر غاته».

عصيد: الدستور مليء بالتناقضات وهناك من حاول إلغاء ترسيم الأمازيغية

توفيق ناديري

اعتبر مصطفى الخلفي، رئيس المركز المغربي للدراسات والأبحاث المعاصرة أن الدستور الجديد يمثل نقلة حقيقية على مستوى إقرار تعدد مكونات المجتمع المغربي، ويقطع مع ماضي إقصاء الآخر في إطار الوحدة والأمة - حسب الخلفي - أن الدستور المغربي كان صريحا في مسألة موقع الإسلام، وأضاف أن المغرب يتقدم في اتجاه الديمقراطية دون أن يفقد خصوصيته وهويته.

وأضاف الخلفي في برنامج «موعد مع الدستور» على دوزيم، أنه يجب ألا ننطلق من فرضية وجود تعارض بين الإسلام والديمقراطية، وإذا افترض البعض ذلك فهذا نقاش آخر، وأكد أن الدستور الجديد نص على الضوابط التي يمكن أن تحل بها كل الإشكاليات، إذ نص على الاجتهاد الذي أكد- في تاريخ المغرب- أنه قادر على فك القضايا الخلافية.

ومن جانبه، أكد أحمد عصيد (فاعل جمعوي أمازيغي) أن مشروع الدستور الجديد حقق خطوة مهمة، من خلال التنصيص على البعد الأمازيغي وترسيم اللغة، إلا أن المنهجية التي تم اتباعها في اللحظات الأخيرة التي سبقت الإعلان عن الدستور خلقت مشاكل من خلال التعديلات التي أحدثت في آخر لحظة ومست ترتيب الأمازيغية كمكون أول للهوية المغربية.

ودعا عصيد إلى احترام التاريخ في التنصيص على الأمازيغية، وأكد عصيد أن هذا الدستور مليء بالتناقضات، وأشار إلى وجود أناس غير مؤمنين بالمساواة كرسوا المزاجية في ترسيم الأمازيغية، وأضاف أن هناك من حاول إلغاء ترسيم الأمازيغية في آخر لحظة وفشل، لكنه دفع في اتجاه تغيير ترتيبها في علاقة بالهوية.

وأضاف عصيد في مداخلته أن الدستور الجديد جبر للخواطر، مما أدى إلى وجود تناقضات، فالدساتير الديمقراطية لا تمنح حقا وتضع فقرة للغير.

وفي موضوع آخر، انتقد عصيد قيام الدولة بالدعاية للدستور واضطهاد من يعارضه(20 فبراير) ودعاها إلى أن تلتزم الحياد وتفتح للجميع باب الحرية للتعبير عن موقفه وأن يتم احترام المواطن والحركة الشبابية وأن تغير القيادات الحزبية سلوكاتها.

وفي الحلقة ذاتها، اعتبرت فاطمة الرويسي أن الدستور الجديد منح مكاسب استراتيجية من خلال الاعتراف بالتعدد الثقافي والديني للمجتمع المغربي ومن خلال التنصيص على سمو المواثيق الدولية وتقوية التزامات المغرب في مجال حقوق الإنسان، وأكدت أن سيرورة المشروع الدستوري تعد مصالحة جديدة مع أناس تم التنكر لحقوقهم.

وأبدت رئيسة «بيت الحكمة» تخوفها أن يتم تأويل بعض المواد والنزوع بالخصوصية وإفراغ المكتسبات من قيمتها، ودعت، مقابل ذلك، إلى إصلاح الحقل الديني.



منهم من اكتشف أنه مطالب بالسفر إلى مدينة أخرى لأنه لم «ينقل» تسجيله بعد رحيله
الرباطيون حجوا باكرا إلى مراكز التصويت على الدستور الجديد



استفتاء دستور 2011 والتجدد المستمر للمؤسسة الملكية
ادريس الكنبوري



أجواء الاستفتاء تمر في ظروف سلسة في أكادير وإقبال مهم من طرف النساء
محفوظ أيت صالح
ساكنة كلميم تصوت على الدستور مبكرا ومسؤول يصف الإقبال بـ«غير المتوقع»
الحسن بوتعما



حكمة توظيف ورقة الإصلاح الدستوري في زمن «الربيع العربي»
محمد السادس يدشن السنة الـ12 من حكمه بـ«ثورة» إصلاحية
عادل نجدي
بالنسبة إلى عبد العالي حامي الدين، عضو الأمانة العامة لحزب العدالة والتنمية، فإنه لا أحد في المغرب يطرح تقييم حصيلة عهد الملك محمد السادس في سياق المحاسبة وإنما في سياق الأمل في غد أفضل، في ظل ملكية ديمقراطية، مشيرا إلى أن أغلب المراقبين في الداخل والخارج يسجلون، بإيجابية، ما تحقق في المغرب

LE MATIN • DIMANCHE 21 AOÛT 2011

48e ANNIVERSAIRE DE S.M. LE ROI MOHAMMED VI

Le Roi et la jeunesse en symbiose pour une démocratie de défis

HASSAN ALAOUI

La Fête de la jeunesse est un moment de communion qui exalte une relation forte et particulière entre le Roi, dont nous célébrons avec allégresse l'anniversaire, et le peuple. Le Maroc change et se métamorphose à un rythme accéléré. Le propos s'apparente à un truisme, mais il n'a jamais pris autant de signification qu'en cet été 2011. On le souligne à la lumière d'une année riche en événements, marquée par une série de discours que Sa Majesté le Roi a prononcés et qui, chacun à sa manière, marque un tournant : le discours sur la Régionalisation, celui du 9 mars pour annoncer un train de réformes, celui ensuite pour annoncer la date et l'opportunité d'un référendum sur la Constitution, celui qu'il a prononcé hier à l'occasion de la célébration du 58ème anniversaire de la Révolution du

Elle est surtout porteuse d'un grand signal, à savoir que la volonté suprérieure qui donne son poids aux décisions, préside à une mobilisation sans commune mesure avec ce que nous avons connu jusqu'ici, elle marque de son sceau les nombreux et différents projets qui ont été lancés, continuent d'être et seront lancés. Un chantier permanent ! La formule qui s'apparente à une litote traduit aujourd'hui une réalité d'autant plus vraie que notre pays a connu depuis dix ans maintenant une évolution spectaculaire, transcendantale. Les autoroutes serpentent le territoire national comme jamais auparavant, les aéroports hérissent les régions et plantent le décor nouveau d'un Maroc aérien ancré dans la libéralisation du ciel qui est au développement du tourisme ce que le ballon d'oxygène est à la vie, les routes, les ports : les marins, les nouvelles villes





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مدير النشر: مصطفى الخلفي

الجمعة 5 رمضان 1432 موافق 5-11 غشت 2011 العدد: 2894 الثمن: 3 دراهم

■ لنا في قدسية ثوابتنا، التي هي محط إجماع وطني، وهي الإسلام كدين للدولة، الضامنة لحرية ممارسة الشعائر الدينية، وإمارة المؤمنين، والنظام الملكي، والوحدة الوطنية والترابية، والخيار الديمقراطي، الضمان القوي، والأساس المتين، لتوافق تاريخي، يشكل ميثاقا جديدا بين العرش والشعب

من خطاب الملك

محمد الحمداوي (رئيس حركة التوحيد والإصلاح):

الخطاب الملكي تضمن رسالة قوية ووضع عناوين تشكل ميثاقا جديدا بين الملك والشعب

7 مرتكزات لتعديل دستوري شامل و5 توجهات لدسترة الجهوية المتقدمة

قيادات سياسية وحقوقية ونقابية، الخطاب تاريخي تجاوب مع الانتظارات

التفاصيل ص: 3-4



الدكتور محمد ضريف (أستاذ العلوم السياسية) لـ«التجديد»:

الخطاب الملكي وضع ملامح دستور جديد واستجاب لأغلب المطالب الشعبية

هاوره: إسماعيل حمودي



التجديد

حركة التوحيد والإصلاح

"التوحيد والإصلاح" تستعد لاقتراح تعديلات دستورية وتنظم مهرجانا لدعم الإصلاحات

إضراب الأساتذة المدمجين يؤجج غضب التلاميذ بأميناتوت 02

"ينيم" يثمن الخطاب الملكي ويستغرب تغييب العلماء من لجنة إعداد الدستور 03

اختتام المنتدى الوطني الثالث عشر للحوار والإبداع الطلابي بالدار البيضاء 05

آلاف المغاربة في مسيرات سلمية ضد الفساد وللمطالبة بالإصلاح

نص البلاغ



متابعات 3

التجديد

الاثنين 23 ربيع الثاني 1432 28 مارس 2011 العدد 2605

في نشرة أخبار السبت الماضي بالقناة الثانية

طارق رمضان: هناك مسلسل للإصلاح في المغرب والخطاب الملكي مهم

هل تتجه العدل والإحسان نحو الحوار مع الدولة؟

ظريف: فزاعة الإسلاميين "لا معنى لها" بعد اندحار النهج الاستئصالي في مصر وتونس

المجازون المعطلون فوق سن 40 يشكلون مجموعة للمطالبة بالشغل

طلبة كلية الشريعة يستمرون في مقاطعة الدراسة



متابعات 2

التجديد

الجمعة/الأحد 28-30 رجب 1432 01-03 يوليوز 2011 العدد 2674

تحقيق لمركز دراسات «سيرجيا»:

70 بالمائة من الشباب يرون أن التعديلات الدستورية ستغير المشهد السياسي

المجلس العلمي المحلي بفاس يناقش الثوابت من خلال مشروع الدستور


تنبيه هام: إن هذه الجريدة تتضمن آيات من القرآن الكريم فالواجب عدم امتهانها
بان كي مون الجهة الخطأ في قضية الصحراء المغربية
السبيل
هل يمكن حل ملف الصحراء المغربية من بوابة الأمم المتحدة؟
محمد ربان: لا أعتبر الأصالة والمعاصرة قوة سياسية .. ونحن لا ناتي للحكومة لمحاربة الإسلاميين، بل لمحاربة الفقر والجهل والأمية والتخلف


تنبيه هام: إن هذه الجريدة تتضمن آيات من القرآن الكريم فالواجب عدم امتهانها
أزمة النخبة المغربية لواط لحسن حداد وفرنسية بلمختار
السبيل
الصحراء المغربية
التاريخ والأطماع
وزير التعليم والحرب المقدسة ضد اللغة العربية
التمذهب بالمذهب المالكي بين الوسائل و المقاصد
إلى المساواة يا عباد الله
جهود علماء المغرب في التصدي للتشيع الرافضي وتقاعس المتصدرين
الوظيفة عند الفقهاء المغاربة (الفقيه ابن المؤقت نموذجا)
وقفة تاملية في مسمى العقل العلماني ودعواه


التجديد
العدد 2675
2
مغاربات
المغاربة يقطر يقبلون على التصويت في جو أسري
الحمداوي: ما بعد الدستور سيشكل مرحلة جديدة للتدافع
إشادة دولية بنتائج الاستفتاء الدستوري
مختصرات
الخصوصات: وفاة
تأويلات: مغالطة
6763


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مدير النشر: محمد الحمداوي
الاثنين 26 شعبان 1433 الموافق 16 يوليوز 2012 ـ العدد 2940 الثمن: 3 دراهم
خالد مشعل (رئيس المكتب السياسي لحركة المقاومة الإسلامية حماس) لـ«التجديد»:
أقدر حكمة جلالة الملك محمد السادس في التعامل مع "الربيع العربي"
التطبيع مرفوض ومدان، وإن كان البعض قد سعى إليه في الماضي وهو خطأ في جميع الأحوال، فلا يصح اليوم أبدا في ظل نهضة الأمة
أجواء حماسية وحضور وطني



«فساد» صفقات الأكاديميات يحرج أمزازي

الإدريسي: الفساد بالتعليم بلغ مستويات خطيرة وهناك من يشم رائحة الصفقات عن بعد

مصطفى الحجري



ASSABAH الصباح

يومية مغربية شاملة Quotidien Marocain d'information

الموقع الإلكتروني: www.assabah.ma

مدير النشر: د. عبد المنعم دلمي
الإيداع القانوني: 3 ص 2000

الثلاثاء 18 دجنبر 2018
العدد 5790 - السنة التاسعة عشرة - السعر: 4 دراهم

فضائح تهز جامعة القاضي عياض

- الفرقة الوطنية تحقق في امتيازات لمسؤولين قضائيين ورجال سلطة
- أساتذة وطلبة أشباح في شعب الماستر أغلبهم يقيمون بالخارج

كما فجر المديني فضيحة عبد الرحيم بوعبيدة رئيس جهة كلميم واد نون، الذي استعان بيمني مقيم بالمغرب، لا تتوفر فيه شروط التدريس بأي جامعة مغربية، من أجل إلقاء محاضرات على طلبته بماستر شعبة العلوم الجنائية والأمنية، مبرزا أن اليمني ألف كتبا في القانون، من أجل ضمان مدخول مالي. وألزم طلبة كلية الحقوق بأقفانها، مشددا على أن هذه الشعبة، صارت حكرا على القضاة وأبنائهم

مسؤولي الكلية من أجل السماح لليمني بالتدريس بدله، رغم أن لا عقد يربطه بوزارة التعليم العالي.

وكشف المديني أن أساتذة قدموا وثائق تورط ابنة رئيس مركز الدكتوراه بكلية الآداب بجامعة القاضي عياض، والتي غادرت المغرب صوب بلغاريا، ومع ذلك تم منحها شهادة الماستر، بعد حصولها على نقطة جد مرتفعة، رغم أنها مسجلة غائبة



يومية مغربية شاملة Quotidien Marocain d'information

الموقع الإلكتروني: www.assabah.ma

مدير النشر: د. عبد المنعم دلمي
الإيداع القانوني: 3 ص 2000

300 مليار مهربة في حسابات سرية بالخارج

- شركات تستغل ثغرات قانونية لإيداع أموال في بنوك بالإمارات واليونان
- مكتب الصرف يعتزم في خطوة أولى التحقيق مع المعنيين بهذه الحسابات

التجارية، وذلك لإيداع الفارق في حسابات سرية بالخارج واقتناء عقارات.

ونمكن مراقبو الصرف، بعد التدقيق في حسابات الأشخاص، من رصد تحويلات مالية لفائدة جهات خارجية ناتجة عن تعاملات تجارية وهمية، تبين بعد التحقق من معطيات إدارة الجمارك أنه لم يسجل عمليات جمركية بشأن هذه التعاملات، في حين أن الوثائق المدلى بها بخصوص

شركات تنشط في الاستيراد والتصدير من أجل تحويل أموال إلى الخارج بالثلاثين في الفاتورات المدلى بها. ومكنت اتفاقيات الشراكة التي وقعها مكتب الصرف مع نظرائه بعدد من البلدان بتوفير قاعدة معطيات تمكن، بالاستعانة بالنظم المعلوماتية، من رصد أي تدفقات مالية مشبوهة بين المغرب والخارج.

باحث مغربي: الصحافة المكتوبة تنتظر شهادة الوفاة والفضاء الإلكتروني هو المستقبل



الصحافة المكتوبة المغربية تنتظر فقط شهادة الوفاة وتخلف الموعد

لكم
الثلاثاء 06 ديسمبر 2016 | 10:33

قال حمزة طيبي، الباحث مغربي بكلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية ظهر المهراز وبجامعة نيويورك الحكومية بنغامتون، إن "الصحافة المكتوبة بالمغرب ترفض الاعتراف بموتها الإكلينيكي"، مضيفا أن "واقعها غير صحي تماما في الحقيقة، لأن المغرب ما يزال في مرحلة انتقالية وهو في حاجة كبيرة لصحافة حرة ومتعددة تفتح نقاشات عميقة وجوهرية حول الإصلاحات السوسيوثقافية والسياسية والاقتصادية التي يعرفها المغرب".

واعتبر الطيبي في تصريحات خص بها موقع "لكم"، أن المغرب يمر من مرحلة انتقالية غير واضحة الأفق، وأن الصحافة المكتوبة "التي يفترض فيها الخوض في هذه الأمور وتعميق النقاش العمومي حولها، نجدها اليوم تنتظر فقط شهادة الوفاة وتخلف الموعد مع هذه المرحلة المهمة في التاريخ المغربي المعاصر"، على حد تعبيره.

وأكد ذات الباحث الأكاديمي، الذي يعد باحثا في موضوع "الإعلام المكتوب ومعالجته لبعض القضايا المتعلقة بالدين والجنس والسياسية"، أن الصحافة المكتوبة في المغرب لم تواكب هذه المرحلة الانتقالية التي يمر منها المغرب، موضحا في في ذات المقال "أن "بلدنا ما يزال في مفترق الطرق ولم تحسم السلطة بعد بشكل جوهري لا رجعة فيه في تبني الدولة الحديثة بمؤسساتها المستقلة المتعارف عليها دوليا كما لم تحسم أيضا حتى في تشبتها بالتقليدانية التي ماتزال تميز جوانب عدة من النسق السياسي"، على حد قول الباحث.

ويرفض الباحث مقارنة واقع الصحافة المكتوبة المغربية مع تجارب الصحافة المكتوبة بدول أخرى كالولايات المتحدة الأمريكية وإسبانيا التي تراجعت نسبة الإقبال عليها لصالح المواقع الإلكترونية الإخبارية ومواقع التواصل الاجتماعي، وبرر رفضه للمقارنة بكون أن "ما يجب على الجميع تذكره خلال عملية المقارنة هذه هو أن الدول الأوربية والولايات المتحدة الأمريكية انتقلت منذ مدة طويلة من مرحلة الانتقال الديمقراطي إلى مرحلة ما بعد الديمقراطية، وهذا عكس ما يحصل تماما في المغرب"، يوضح الباحث.

وعن واقع الصحافة المكتوبة بالمغرب، حمزة الطيبي، أرجع تدني نسبة المقروئية بالأساس إلى ارتفاع نسبة الأمية في البلد وعدم قدرة المواطن المغربي على شراء صحيفة أسبوعية مثلا بخمس أو سبع دراهم أو شراء جريدة واحدة يومية بأربع دراهم، في الوقت الذي يمكنه تصفح جرائد إلكترونية مجانا فقط إذا كان يملك أرخص هاتف ذكي.

من الأسباب التي فصل فيها الباحث ما وصفه بـ"عامل الثقة" في الصحف الورقية التي "تكاد تكون منعدمة"، موضحا، "وهذا يرجع إلى تخلي جل الصحف على أخلاقيات "صحافة الجودة" واعتمادها على تغطية الفضائح وأحداث العنف داخل المجتمع لجلب انتباه القارئ وبالتالي الرفع من عدد مبيعاتها ومداخيلها المادية".

ولتبريز وجهة نظره حول دور الصحف التي تعتمد الأخبار الصفراء في تعثر المرحلة الانتقالية بالمغرب، استشهد الطيبي بدراسة ستنشر في مجلة محكمة أوربية قريبا تبين بالأرقام مدى ارتفاع نسبة الأخبار الصفراء في الجرائد الورقية "المستقلة" بشكل سنوي، أي الجرائد التي يفترض فيها تبني معايير الصحافة المتعارف عليها في أخلاقيات العمل الصحفي، حيث تساءل ذات المتحدث عن دور هذه الصحف في المرحلة الانتقالية المتعثرة التي يعرفها المغرب.

وشدد الباحث على أن واقع الإعلام لا يزال يعاني من مشكلة الرقابة وضيق هامش حرية التعبير بالمغرب، وكذا الرقابة الذاتية "التي أصبح الصحافي يعتمدها تعرقل بالتأكيد بدورها العمل الصحفي وتعطي مؤشرات غير مطمئنة حول جاهزية السلطة لتقبل العمق في تحليل المادة الإعلامية" يشرح ذات المتحدث.

AKHBAR AL YOUM AL MAGHRIBIYA	Quotidien	2015	30 070	18 080
ALAKHBAR	Quotidien	2015	66 203	55 162
AL AHDATH AL MAGHRIBIA	Quotidien	2015	23 491	9 100
AL ALAM	Quotidien	2015	21 107	8 764
AL AYAM	Hebdomadaire	2015	24 297	9 233
AL HARAKA	Quotidien	2015	4 629	1 011
AL ITTIHAD AL ICHTIRAKI	Quotidien	2015	22 291	5 778
AL MASSAE	Quotidien	2015	77 686	47 453
AL MICHAAL HEBDO	Hebdomadaire	2015	23 000	8 163
AL MOUNAATAF	Quotidien	2015	4 934	369
AL MOUNTAKHAB	Bi-hebdomadaire	2015	19 773	12 093
ANNAHAR AL MAGHRIBIA	Quotidien	2015	7 377	702
ASSABAH	Quotidien	2015	68 480	38 784
ATTAJDID	Quotidien	2015	7 149	1 828
AUJOURD'HUI LE MAROC	Quotidien	2015	10 000	4 546

توزيع بعض العناوين المغربية عام 2015 (أرقام من موقع ojd.ma)

وربط المتحدث واقع الصحافة الحزبية بالمغرب بأزمة الأحزاب السياسية وفقدانها للبوصلة السياسية بسبب عبث المشهد الحزبي وإخفاق أحزاب عريقة في مراحل سياسية حاسمة. حيث أوضح في مقاله أن نتيجة هذه الأزمة هي عدم الثقة في الأحزاب والصحف الحزبية، وأن ظاهرة العزوف الانتخابي يقابلها عزوف على قراءة الجرائد الورقية الحزبية.

وأشار الباحث، إلى أن هناك مشكل آخر تعاني منه الصحافة الحزبية وهو عدم تبنيها لخط تحريري واضح وكذا ازدواجية خطابها في الافتتاحيات، "فمقارنة بسيطة بين افتتاحيات بعض الجرائد الحزبية خلال 2014 والافتتاحيات التي تنشر اليوم، خصوصا بعد الإعلان عن نتائج استحقاقات 7 أكتوبر، تعطي صورة قاتمة عن تخبط أحزابها السياسية وغرفها في التناقضات والسكيزوفرينيا" على تعبيره.

وخلص الباحث في ختام مقاله بالتأكيد، على أن الفضاء الإلكتروني هو المستقبل في المغرب وهو الأكثر أهمية اليوم "لأن الفضاء العام فيه يتسع أكثر للجميع ويبقى من الصعب جدا التحكم فيه كما هو الشأن في الصحافة التقليدية"، على حد قوله.

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