


RESEARCH

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**A JOURNEY THROUGH THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF
THE PRESS IN MOROCCO: FROM ITS ORIGINS TO THE PRESENT**

**UN RECORRIDO POR LA HISTORIA Y EL DESARROLLO DE LA
PRENSA EN MARRUECOS: DESDE SUS ORÍGENES HASTA LA
ACTUALIDAD**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the following pages is to provide an overview of the fundamental characteristics of the evolution of the press in Morocco from its origins in the 19th century to the present. We believe that this work is very significant because it tries to bridge the lack and the bibliographical void that we find in the history of the Moroccan press. As for the theoretical value of this study, it will become an antecedent for future work related to the subject, as well as setting a precedent for research in the history of Moroccan journalism.

KEYWORDS: History, press, Morocco, public opinion.

RESUMEN

El propósito de las páginas que siguen es ofrecer una visión panorámica de las características fundamentales de la evolución de la prensa en Marruecos desde sus orígenes en el siglo XIX hasta la actualidad. Creemos que este trabajo resulta muy significativo porque intenta salvar la carencia y el vacío bibliográfico que encontramos con respecto a la historia de la prensa marroquí. En cuanto al valor teórico de este estudio, el mismo se convertirá en un antecedente para futuros

trabajos relacionados con la temática, de igual manera, sentará un precedente en cuanto a investigaciones abordadas en la historia del periodismo marroquí.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Historia, prensa, Marruecos, opinión pública.

UMA VIAGEM PELA HISTÓRIA E DESENVOLVIMENTO DA IMPRENSA EM MARROCOS: DAS ORIGENS AO ATUAL

RESUMO

O objetivo das páginas que se seguem é oferecer uma visão panorâmica das características fundamentais da evolução da imprensa em Marrocos desde as suas origens no século XIX até aos dias de hoje. Acreditamos que este trabalho é muito significativo porque tenta preencher a carência e o vazio bibliográfico que encontramos em relação à história da imprensa marroquina. No que se refere ao valor teórico deste estudo, ele se tornará um precedente para futuros trabalhos relacionados ao assunto, da mesma forma, ele irá abrir um precedente em termos de investigações abordadas na história do jornalismo marroquino.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: História, imprensa, Marrocos, opinião pública.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The press in Morocco is inseparable from the history of the country and its political reality. For many authors it is the mirror of its historical and socio-cultural reality, it is also an indispensable instrument for creating public opinion. In this sense, it is worth mentioning the opinion of Cándido Monzón, who establishes a type of cause-effect relationship between the media and public opinion:

Public opinion has always found its best means of expression in the media [...] Opinions belong to the public, but their publicity is in the media, hence it continues to be heard today that public opinion is what the media say. (Ramírez, 2005. p.177).

Attending to this precision, we can induce that public opinion is the effect of a process of a set of ideas expressed by the media. Thus, people find out what is happening in the world through these media outlets.

What is presented below is a brief sketch of the panorama that the Moroccan press has kept from its origins in the 19th century to the present day. The period of study extends to practically two centuries. The reason for choosing this time frame is

mainly due to our main interest in studying one of the most complex historical contexts in the history of journalism in Morocco. During this period, a large number of newspapers appeared and disappeared. For this we distinguish between the following historical periods:

1.1. From 1820 to 1912

In times before the appearance of printing presses, the information flow in Morocco was channeled through four means: firstly, the so-called *Raqqas* (pedestrians) (El kettani, 1962, p.17), which are the postmen who act aloud at the urban level the official messages:

C'est qu'un bon courrier, courant en moyenne 20 jours sur 30, gagne 40 francs par mois, et il est assurément dans ce pays-ci peu de familles ouvrières qui jouissent d'une pareille aisance.

He is a good postman, he works an average of 20 days out of 30, earns 40 francs a month, at that time very few working-class families enjoyed such prestige. (Boutbouqalt, p.116).

Second, the *Barrāhs*, who are the postmen who inform the people of all the news dictated by the *Makhzen*; It is a traditional information apparatus that was in charge of warning the populations when it came to news. Third, the mosques were another informative medium, since they represented a meeting point where news from different parts of the country was exchanged. Finally, street vendors were also an important source of news dissemination. These traditional communicative forms constituted an important oral information network and a true information apparatus in Morocco.

Regarding the history of the written press in Morocco in the 19th century, we must begin by clarifying that, although Morocco had a printing press since 1756 (El kettani, 1962, p.14), there was no attempt to publish a journalistic edition. Regarding this point, the Moroccan historian Ibn Azzuz Al-Hakim presents the following statement:

Even though the Arabic book publishing industry, has had a great boom and importance, especially in Fez, the truth is that no Moroccan publisher thought of making a newspaper or something similar to it, until the example of Europeans, French, and Spanish residents in the country served as an incentive to imitate them (Azzuz Al Hakim, p.11).

With these words, Ibn Azzuz sends a guilty message to Moroccan publishers for not thinking of publishing any Arabic-language newspaper throughout the 19th century. Another author who confirms this lack of interest in publishing a newspaper was Tayeb Boutbouqalt who assures that:

Il est vrai que le Gouvernement Chérifien n'avait pas prêté grand intérêt à la création d'une presse arabe nationale. (Boutbouqalt, p.47)

It is true that the Cherifian government had not taken much interest in the creation of a national Arab press.

The result of this situation is the fact that the foreign press took advantage of this lack and implanted its own bodies in the Moroccan cultural journalistic scene. Indeed, from the 19th century on, northern Morocco received a large wave of European press. From the point of view of Adila Mustapha, the colonialist movement of the great European powers played a very decisive role in the birth and subsequent development of the foreign press in Morocco during the 19th century:

Indeed, the development of the press in Morocco takes place in an international political context strongly marked by the triumph of the interventionist theses, with all that this means of tense and complex discussion of territorial distributions, political influences, and commercial interests in what was then called the Cherifian Empire. (Adila, 2013, p.109).

Once these introductory details have been exposed, it is now time to present the newspapers that appear in this historical framework, according to the place of their appearance and following a chronological order.

1.1.1. Tetouan newspapers

In the history of Moroccan journalism, Tetouan is considered by many historians as the cradle of Moroccan journalism, it receives the first newspaper of Spanish expression to be published in the same city. Indeed, in 1860, *El Eco de Tetuán* was published, a newspaper that spans four pages, which was directed by Pedro Antonio de Alarcón. In this regard, we reproduce the reflections of Ibn Azzuz:

Tetouan has the unique privilege of having seen the dawn, first than any other town in Morocco, of the great cultural lever that the press represents. (Azzuz Al Hakim, p.17).

1.1.2. Tangier newspapers

The city of Tangier, the diplomatic capital of the former Moroccan empire, represented the central axis of the foreign press in our country. As José González Hidalgo suggests:

If at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, there is an overflow of the local press in all the major cities and towns, in Tangier it surpasses that of any city due to the coexistence of different nationalities, cultures, religions, languages, etc. And it will be accentuated in its international era. (González. Estudios Africanos, 1995, 113-133).

The previous precision described the city of Tangier as a veritable journalistic rainbow of different linguistic expressions; It is estimated that, between 1870 and 1912, there were just over seventeen French-language newspapers (Fannan, 2004, p.4). This fact is reinforced taking into consideration that this city represented a

geopolitical point where practically all the interests of the great European powers intersect. In other words, the competition between the colonial powers had a direct impact on the development of the journalistic activity.

The first newspaper to be published in Tangier, received the name of *L'Oeil de Tanger*, a French-language newspaper that appeared in 1834 (Fannan, 2004, p.4). In 1870, two newspapers appeared: *El Mauritano* and *La Alianza Israelita*. It should be noted that this last publication had its own printing press, was published in three languages: Arabic, Spanish, and French, and was particularly interested in international events and international maritime activity. In 1883, the first issue of the *Al-Magreb Al-Aksa* newspaper (Fannan, 2004, p.4) was published, which was founded by Gregorio Trinidad Abrines, from Gibraltar of Jewish origin. This newspaper was considered the defender of British interests in the area. In the same year, another publication appeared, *Le Réveil du Maroc* (El Kettani, 1960, p.140). In this same year, the *Tánger Gazzeti* newspaper appeared in its French and Spanish versions.

In the English language, in 1884 a commercial information weekly, *The Times of Morocco* (El Kettani, 1962, p.142) was published. In 1886, *El Eco Mauritano* appeared. This biweekly in Spanish was created by Issac Toledano, Issac Laredo, and the Gibraltarian, Agustín Lugaro, who imported from England the second printing press that was established in Tangier (Larredo, 1935, p.233). In 1889 a journalistic publication appeared in Arabic, *El Moghreb* (Morocco) (El Kettani 1962, p.140). This newspaper is considered the first in Arabic at the national level. A year later, a new publication in Spanish was born, *El Porvenir*, directed by Francisco Ruiz López.

At the beginning of the 20th century, France has come to occupy a privileged position in journalistic matters. Indeed, there is a certain boom in the French press; In 1903, two French newspapers were published, *Le Journal du Maroc*, directed by David Saurin, and *Le Maroc*, directed by Augusto Terrier, both newspapers were printed in Paris. Furthermore, another newspaper appeared, published in Arabic *Assa 'āda* (Happiness) (El Kettani 1962, p.140). This newspaper was founded by an Algerian named Mulay Idriss Ibn Mohamed El Khabzaoui Aljazaeri and was edited by the French Embassy. It should be noted that this publication took advantage of important French state subsidies, which made it the newspaper with the greatest circulation in Morocco and lasted half a century (1883-1956). In 1904, the French Embassy published another newspaper of expression in French, *La Dépêche Marocaine*.

It is evident, based on the above, that European colonialist policy and the Jewish colony played a prominent role in the emergence and subsequent development of the foreign press in Tangier.

1.1.3. The press in Fez

For many historians, Fez is the Moroccan city that knows the first attempts at the emergence of the Arab, national, and autonomous press (El Kettani 1962, p.140).

Indeed, the Moroccan elite became aware of the danger posed by the foreign press and founded in 1906 the first national newspaper *A-Ta'ū* (the plague) (El Kettani 1962, p.140), created by El Cherif Sidi Mohamed Ibn Abd El Kebir El kattani. In the same year, *Al-Mūstabid* (The Tyrant) appears (El Kettani 1962, p.140), whose owner is Mohamed Ibn Yahya Assikili. A year later, another newspaper came out, *Sinān Al-Kalām* (The Essence of Speech) (El Kettani 1962, p.190). In 1908, two publications were born: *Al-Mūfākaha* (The fight) (El Kettani 1962, p.140) and *Al-Fa'îr* (The dawn). It should be noted that these publications criticize the editorial line of the imperialist newspaper *Assa'āda*. They also played an important role in directing public awareness of the risks in which the homeland finds itself, to raise awareness of the danger posed by the foreign press for Morocco.

1.1.4. The press in Rabat

Unlike other Moroccan cities, Rabat does not receive any journalistic publication before 1912, except that we mention the *Bulletin Officiel de L'Empire Cherifien*.

1.1.5. The press in Casablanca

In the pre-colonial period, the city of Casablanca received important French newspapers. Indeed, in 1882 the first French printing press, *Réunis Nord-Sud*, was established in this Moroccan city (El Kettani 1962, p.140). In 1901 the newspaper, *Bulletin de L'Enseignement Public du Maroc*, appeared. A few years later, the following newspapers appear: *La Vigie Marocaine* in 1908 and *Le Petit Marocain* in 1912. These two publications were destined for the service of French colonialism and had a long life. Their disappearance dates from 1971.

From the foregoing, some general considerations can be pointed out: first, the pre-colonial Moroccan press represents a mirror of the intersection of European colonialist interests; the newspapers were subsidized by foreign diplomatic representations. Second, the owners and journalists of these newspapers were foreigners; Spanish, English, Belgian, French, German, protected Jews, Arabs (Lebanese, Egyptians, Algerians...). Finally, one of the peculiar characteristics of those newspapers is the temporality of their production, they generally had a short life.

2. THE PRESS IN MOROCCO: 1912-1956

After the imposition of the French-Spanish Protectorate regime, Morocco, since 1912, was under the so-called French-Spanish Protectorate. The country is divided into three zones of dominion: the north and the areas of the south of the Sahara under Spanish rule. The city of Tangier is under international administrative control. The rest of the country is under the control of the French. This situation has a direct impact on the development of freedoms, in general, and the development of freedom of expression, in particular.

2.1. The press in the French protectorate

In the French zone, to confront the Moroccan nationalist press and for fear of the installation of a foreign press adverse to the French colonialist action, General Lyautey (1925-1912) approved a decree-law, on April 27th, 1914:

Le Dahir du 27 avril 1914 fut promulgué comme première loi visant la codification de la Presse au Maroc. Il s'inspirait, en principe, de la loi française du 29 juillet 1881 ; mais, sur des points, la législation marocaine était beaucoup moins libérale :

-Elle imposait la déclaration préalable pour faire paraître un périodique, alors que cette contrainte avait été abolie en France.

- Elle exigeait le dépôt d'un cautionnement s'élevant aa 6000 francs alors que cette mesurée avait été supprimée en France depuis 1881.

The Dahir (royal decree) April 27th, 1914 was promulgated as the first law governing the codification of the press in Morocco. In principle, it was inspired by the French law of July 29th, 1881; but, on the points relating to Moroccan legislation it was much less liberal.

-Prior declaration was imposed to have a newspaper published, when this limitation was abolished in France.

-The presentation of a surety of 6000 francs was required, when this measure had been abolished in France since 1881. (Biada, 1996, p.94)

As can be seen, this law requires, among other things, that publishing directors be of French nationality. The main content of this law is summarized in the following point: that before publishing, any newspaper must request prior authorization from the attorney general for publications in Arabic or Hebrew. This legal framework makes the development of a Moroccan nationalist press extremely difficult; It supposes total and iron control over it. This situation forced many academics at Al-Qarawiyyin University to go underground to transmit their ideas by writing manuscripts. Such is the case of Said Hajji, considered by many historians to be the precocious genius of the Moroccan nationalist press, who produces by his own means a clandestine Arabic-speaking newspaper *Al-Widad*, edited and written by his own hands.

Unlike the nationalist journalistic publications, the pro-colonialist press received greater support, subsidies, and accompaniment. As an example, Pierre Mas has been able to create a media empire that controls practically all journalistic publishing. What's more, he has been able to found his own news agency and manipulated all the advertising revenue. Along the same lines, we illustrate the example of the newspaper *Assa'āda* (Happiness), which was very fortunate and received significant French state subsidies for greater editorial convenience.

It should be noted that at the beginning of the Second World War, France was under German rule, the field of freedoms was considerably reduced; the legal regulations are very severe; the press is subjected to military rule and many newspapers disappear and are systematically banned or subjected to censorship. Thus, on August 29th, 1939, a new very severe decree was produced to limit freedom of expression, which prohibited the dissemination of military news and created new administrative cells for the censorship and prohibition of the press.

However, after the Second World War ended, an important change took place in the Moroccan press: the journalistic body was divided into two opposing blocks: on the one hand, a national press that vindicates the legitimate rights of sovereignty and independence and another, of a pro-colonialist tendency that defends the French occupation of Moroccan territory.

Among those represented by the first group is the nationalist press, which exploits all possible means to claim the independence of the country. Some nationalist journalists sometimes resorted to allying with the *Barrahs* to market their newspapers. What most identifies the nationalist press is its sensitizing nature; their pens were directed at the service of the legitimate national issue, which was the vindication of the country's independence. It should be noted that the nationalist press was represented by three organs: partisan, trade union, and independent. Regarding the partisan press, the Al-Istiqlal party publishes its first newspaper in Arabic, *Al-Alam* on September 11th, 1946, and another in French, *L'Opinion*, in 1947, which was directed by Abderrahim Boubid (El Messari, *Al-Alam*, 09/11/1996, p.11). For its part, the communist party publishes two weeklies, one in French, *Espoir* (Baida, p.308), and another in Arabic, but it publishes it in hiding, *Hayāt Ashabāb* (Life of the young). Regarding the trade union press, we cite *L'Action Syndical* and *Al-Istiqlal*, in which Al-Mahjoub Ben Sdiq actively collaborated. Finally, the independent press was represented by the newspaper, *L'Hebdomadaire Juene Magrébin* (Baida, 1996, 313-315).

In conclusion, at the time of the French protectorate, we can distinguish between two journalistic groups: a press that vindicates the legitimate rights of sovereignty and independence and another, of a pro-colonialist tendency that defends the French occupation of Moroccan territory.

2.2. The press in the Spanish zone

Unlike the French area, where only the pro-colonial newspaper, *Assa'āda*, edited by the General Residence of France in Rabat, was authorized, the Arab press in the northern area of Morocco enjoyed better conditions. In this regard, we reproduce the reflections of Ibn Azzuz:

It is worth noting the flourishing of the Arab press in the northern part of Morocco, as it contrasted with the scarcity of titles that were given in the rest of Morocco, where only one Arab body was published as if the spirit of freedom of press [...] The authorities of the French Protectorate have

prohibited the publication and circulation of all the press written by the Moroccans or devoted to defending their interests (Azzuz Al Hakim, 1967, p.11).

The previous precision makes it clear that the press in the Spanish zone had days of relative freedom of action. Moreover, it must be said that the press in the Spanish area covers many cities and towns. In Adila Mustapha's words:

According to our own calculation, a total of 157 periodical publications on diverse subjects, with a variable periodicity, and different pagination, see the light of day in various cities and towns in the North of Morocco. (ADILA, Magriberia, No. 8/9, 2013, 275-289).

The foregoing shows the great interest that the press has had in the area under Spanish rule. Indeed, the Arab press in Tetouan had majestic and brilliant Moroccan journalists, among them, we cite Mohamed Daoud, who was the first to publish an Arab nationalist newspaper, *Assalām* (Peace) in 1933. Another of the great nationalist journalists, Abdeljalek Torres, who in 1934 published the newspaper *Al-Ḥayāt* (Life). For his part, on February 3rd, 1937, the nationalist Mohamed Al-Makki Annasiri, gave birth to a new publication in Arabic and Spanish, *Al-Waḥda Al-Magribiya* (The Moroccan Unity). It should be noted that the nationalist press in the north of Morocco represented the emancipation desires of the entire country, but it was never of a regional tendency, its only objective is to defend the independence of the entire country. For many historians, the development of the Arab press in Tetouan is due to the abundance of printing presses. In this regard, Fernando Valderrama comments:

When the presence of Spain returned to Tetouan, printing presses were created again, the first being La Papelera Africana, founded in 1914, which was followed by the Córdoba y Vialá printing press in 1917. In Larache, the first was created, which was the Iberian, in 1914. Today Tetuán has 12 printing presses, 5 of them with Arabic characters. (Valderrama, 1956, p.746).

Regarding the legal framework of the press in the Spanish area, it must be said that it was governed by the Regulation of July 22nd, 1927, repealed by Dahir of January 11th, 1936. Among the journalistic publications in the Spanish area, we can cite the example of the newspaper *El Español*, which appears in 1938. This is considered the first Spanish newspaper in Tangier and the Spanish protectorate in Morocco. Another important newspaper in the Spanish area is the *Diario de África*, which was created under the direction of Mr. José Carrasco Téllez on November 15th, 1943:

The Diario de Africa is, to a greater extent and by its more detailed life than its predecessor Marruecos, the practically official organ of expression of the Protectorate. [...] The majority of its columnists, the treatment of the information given by its editors, the subsequent support for the work of the

High Commissioners, the way of talking about the Jalifa [...] were the usual ones of any government newspaper (Gil, 2002, p.72).

It is evident from the above that it is a journalistic publication that conforms to the policy of the Spanish Government. Once the development of the press in times of the Protectorate has been broadly exposed, it is now time to indicate the evolution of the press in Morocco in post-colonization times.

3. THE PRESS FROM 1956 TO THE PRESENT

In this section, we will present the great characteristics that define the development of the post-colonialist Moroccan press. To do this, we distinguish between the following historical frameworks:

3.1. The partisan press (1956-1990)

After the independence of Morocco, France wanted to maintain, through the press, its influence and economic interests. The French media group Mas (named after its boss, Pierre Mas) maintains a strong presence, especially through its four francophone newspapers that continue to be freely published: *Le Petit Marocain*; *L'Echo du Maroc*; *La Vigie Marocaine*, and *Le Courier du Maroc*.

Independent Morocco rejects the single party and establishes multipartyism. One of the natural consequences of this process is the appearance of numerous press bodies of different political sensitivities. Among the large newspapers, we cite *Al-Alam* (the flag), the official body of the *Al-Istiqlal* (Independence) party, which has extensive professional experience. Founded in 1946, this newspaper goes on to represent the spokesperson that disseminates the ideology of the militants of this political party.

The post-colonialist Moroccan press was closely linked to the great ideological forces on the Moroccan political scene. In other words, the media landscape was strongly dominated by a partisan press, which no longer has as its objective the fight against colonization, but rather the struggle for power between the two political parties themselves. This new reality has allowed a great boom in the partisan press that reigned over the landscape of the written press for decades. In this way, once a new party is created, it is provided with a journalistic body as a spokesperson and diffuser of its ideology and political ideas (*Al-Istiqlal* and the *Socialist Union of Popular Forces*).

The starting point of this new journalistic scenario was within the *Al-Istiqlal* party itself since the oldest party in Morocco suffered a split in 1959. Which gave birth to a new left-leaning party, called the National Union of Popular Forces, which will become the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) in 1975. The UNFP will immediately equip itself with its official Arabic-language body, *A-Ttahrir*, under the leadership of Mohammed Basri, its chief editor was Abderramán Yussufi. What opens a political-media war with the conservative party of *Al-Istiqlal* and its newspaper *Al-*

Alam. The political rivalry between the two parties, Al-Istiqlal and the UNFP, was clearly felt in the press, *Attahrir* and *Al-Alam* wage a daily battle of opposing ideas.

It should be noted that, for many authors, during this historical context, the Moroccan press lived an unequalled time; it enjoyed a greater margin of freedom of expression. The newspapers were highly politicized; related to their editorial lines. In other words, the profession of journalism at that time has become synonymous with political militancy and the press was above all a spokesperson, before being an informative medium. Additionally, it had brilliant and majestic journalist-militants, who possessed literary pens of great professional quality. Among them, we cite Mehdi Ben Barka, Mohamad Hasan Ouazzani, Allal El Fassi, Abdallah Ibrahim, Abderrahman Bouabid.

It should be noted that despite the long media career of the Moroccan press, the names of the journalists who have given rise to its popularity in the Arab world, and the publication of dozens of Moroccan newspapers since the early 19th century, there was no journalism training institution in Morocco. We will have to wait until 1969 for the first journalistic training nucleus to emerge led by the German Friedrich Neuman Foundation. This training is outlined in two stages: the first lasting two years, during which students receive theoretical classes. In the second stage that takes place in two years, students complete their training with aspects related to the technical and practical, besides receiving the official title of journalist.

In short, the Moroccan press after independence had an institutionally political militancy, be it of the right, of the left, or of the monarchy. The post-colonialist Moroccan press was heavily dominated by the great ideological forces on the Moroccan political scene. Each political party maintains its publications as bodies or spokespersons for its political proposals. The most prestigious newspapers are in the hands of political parties. In this way, the newspapers *Al-Alam* and *L'Opinion* are considered the journalistic voice of the Al-Istiqlal party. In turn, the two newspapers: *Al-Ittihad Al-Ichtiraki* and *Libération*, are journalistic voices of the USFP party. *Al-Bayane* is the newspaper of the Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS). *Al-Haraka* for the Popular Movement Party (MP), etc. With the creation of new right-wing or center-right parties such as the National Congress of Independents in 1978, the National Democratic Party (PND) in 1981, and the Constitutional Union (UC) in 1983, they will immediately equip themselves with their journalistic organs: *Attajammoue Al-Watani*, *Al-Ittihad Addoustouri*, etc.

In the same line, the 1973 Foreign Companies Marroquinization Law made many foreign newspapers disappear. Thus, the press of the MAS group changed its name and came under the control of the Moroccan group Maroc Soir. As a result of this new situation, the French newspaper, *La Vigie*, will receive the name of *Le Soir*, and the newspaper *Le Petit Marocain* is transformed into *Le Matin* (later, *Le Matin du Sahara*). Furthermore, in 1974, the Maghreb Arab Press Agency (MAP) (*Al-Ittihad Al-Ichtiraki*, 10-02-1992, p.4), will be placed under the tutelage of the State. This situation allows the Moroccan regime to represent real competition to the partisan press.

Starting in the late 1980s, the partisan press has finally weakened and soon began to lose its influence and a large part of its readership, as a result of the decline in popularity of political parties. Some newspapers have disappeared, while others have survived, thanks in large part to state subsidies. This situation greatly favored the development of new journalism in the last decade of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century.

3.2. 1990- today

Starting in the mid-1990s, the Moroccan journalistic world map underwent a profound change. Several motivations have influenced this evolution, among which we can mention the favorable political considerations; At the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties, we witnessed new political measures in the field of freedoms: the liberalization of the press and political prisoners, the new Constitution of 1990, and the creation of the Consultative Council on Human Rights.

To all these conditions, it should be added that at the beginning of the nineties, great technological innovations began to revolutionize printing techniques; the renewal of its technical means with the introduction of computing and color. To this must be added the weakness suffered by the partisan press had a very positive echo in the field of the press.

The combined effects of these factors had a great impact on the development of new journalistic voices. In particular, they are beginning to give birth to the partisan press. The first independent newspapers, *Maroc Hebdo* in 1991, the daily newspaper *Assahifa* in 1997, followed in 1998 by *Al Ahdath Al-Maghribia*.

The rise of the liberal press is specified with the arrival of King Mohamed VI in 1999. Indeed, the Moroccan press is going to experience a radical change thanks to globalization, the ease of information circulation, human rights... various newspapers and weeklies in Arabic and French, called independent and non-partisan, will be created. Then came the titles *Nichane*, *Al-Massae*, *Akhbar Al-yawm*, and many other Arabic or French-speaking daily and weekly newspapers. The number of titles in 2006 was 398 newspapers and magazines. It should also be noted the appearance of regional newspapers even in small cities. The press has become a full-fledged trade thanks to its operation dictated by specialized and professional companies but above all thanks to the advertising that is the greed of all public and private media. It should be noted that in 2004, the Diffusion Justification Body (OJD by its acronym in Spanish) was created as a body whose objective is to control the circulation and dissemination of printed newspapers and magazines, provide statistics, and negotiate advertising prices.

In our days, many newspapers of the political parties have disappeared and no longer have partisan journalistic bodies. Others experience a free fall in sales and only survive thanks to the help of the state. At present, numerous difficulties weaken the good development of the journalistic practice in Morocco. Indeed, a series of structural-professional and legislative limitations limit the implementation of the good

functioning of the written press. Among the serious problems the Moroccan written press face, we can highlight the fact that the number of newspapers read by Moroccans is very modest. According to a report by the Ministry of Communication, only 1% of the Moroccan population reads the written press:

Presse écrite : Lectorat: A peine 1% de la population.

Written press: readers: barely 1% of the population. (M.AZ, *L'Économiste*, 02/05/201; Available at: <http://leconomiste.com/article/presse-ecritebrlectorat-peine-1-de-la-population>. Consultation date: 25/05/2019).

The above precision makes it clear that the low reading rate in Morocco greatly hinders the development of the journalistic business enterprise. According to the data provided by the OJD, in 2017, the total number of copies sold every day throughout the country was 189,662 (Assemblée Générale de l'OJD Maroc, 07/10/2017. Available at: <http://www.ojd.ma/Actualites/Observatoire-2017>. Consultation date: 25/09/2019). This situation is mainly due to the high illiteracy of the population. Besides the lack of newspaper reading habits and low purchasing power. Another very worrying element for the Moroccan written press is the excessive competition from the digital press. To this should be added another phenomenon that violates the paid written press, is that of free newspapers that are widely read, such as *L'Intermédiaire*, *Au Fait*, *Logic Hebdo*.

Regarding the income of the Moroccan press, it must be said that it comes from three sources: sales, advertising, and state subsidies. Concerning advertising, it should be noted that it constitutes one of the main incomes of most newspapers:

L'aide de l'Etat a la presse est devenu l'une des éléments clés de l'économie de la presse dans la mesure ou elle conditionne la suivre de certaines publications en difficulté qui n'arrivent pas par leurs propres moyens a assurer l'équilibre de gestion.

State aid to the press has become one of the key elements of the economy of the press and constitutes an important source of income for some publications in crisis that cannot ensure management balance by their own means. (Association des Economistes Marocains, 1996, p.65)

As far as public subsidies are concerned, it is convenient to distinguish between three types: direct subsidies granted by the Royal Palace and others from the Ministry of Communication. There are also other types of indirect aids, such as: free subscription to the service of the official MAP agency, free transport, and accommodation for journalists, etc.

Regarding the legal framework that governs the Statute of professional journalists, it must be said that according to *dahir* number 1-95-9 of Ramadan 22 1415 (February 22nd, 1995), the journalist is one whose main, regular, and remunerated occupation is the exercise of their profession, in one or several publications or

newspapers published in Morocco, in one or more information agencies, or in one or more broadcasting organizations, whose main headquarters are located in Morocco.

The legislator added another condition to be able to enjoy the quality of professional journalists and to benefit from the advantages granted to the representatives of the press by the administrative authorities or by any other public or private institution; it is being the holder of a professional card granted by the Ministry of Communication. The same law requires that, within the framework of the exercise of their profession, the journalist has the right to access sources of information, respecting current legislation.

In Morocco there is only one public institution for training in journalism, is the Higher Institute of Information and Communication (ISIC), based in Rabat and under the supervision of the Ministry of Communication, which also has limited capacity. However, the students of this institute are increasingly deviating from the written press, opting for the electronic press.

Besides this public institute, there are some private journalism training schools, mainly in Casablanca, where most of the newspapers are concentrated. However, their students are not appreciated by the newspapers, as the training they provide is unsatisfactory due to the lack of professional teaching bodies. However, on many occasions, in the face of an insufficient supply of training, journalistic companies frequently turn to university professors in certain specialties, in particular economics, law, or languages. For its part, the media group Maroc Soir (which publishes the two newspapers *L'Économiste* and *Assabah*), has even created its own Journalism Training School.

Moroccan journalists, due to the nature of their work, face different risks of misinformation, of publishing erroneous information that could attack people or institutions, and harm their interests. Which often exposes them to legal action. In this regard, the journalistic profession is endowed with a Press Code.

The current organization of the sector is also based on a series of forums that represent professionals. They are the Moroccan Federation of Newspaper Editors (FMEJ), the Moroccan Federation of Media (FMM); and for journalists, the National Union of the Moroccan Press (SNPM), the Press Club, the Moroccan Association of Sports Press (AMPS), and the Arab League of Journalists accredited in Morocco.**4.**

CONCLUSIONS

In light of these general trends, we can summarize that the history of Moroccan journalism is multifaceted and rich. From the above on the history of the press in Morocco, we can conclude:

In the first place, from its inception, the emergence of the written press in the 19th century was a vehicle for promoting European colonialist work in Morocco. The newspapers of that time defended the interests of the great European powers. The pre-colonial Moroccan press represents a mirror of the intersection of European

colonial interests; the newspapers were subsidized by foreign diplomatic representations. The owners and journalists of these newspapers were foreigners; Spanish, English, Belgian, French, German, protected Jews, Arabs (Lebanese, Egyptians, Algerians...). One of the peculiar characteristics of those newspapers is the temporality of their production, they generally had a short life.

Second, in the development of the Moroccan journalistic world map in times of the protectorate, we can distinguish between two journalistic groups: a pro-colonialist press that developed extensively, but under the shadow of the French-Spanish protectorate; in the same way, their freedom of expression was constantly and closely tied to the will of these colonialist forces. Another journalistic group was related to the call for the independence of Morocco that was ravaged by a large number of newspapers that claim the legitimate rights of sovereignty and awareness among Moroccans for the defense of a nation threatened by French-Spanish colonization. Many Moroccan journalists saw the press as a means to demand Moroccan independence.

The Moroccan press after independence had an institutionally political militancy, be it of the right, of the left, or the monarchy. Moroccan newspapers in the post-colonial era were heavily dominated by the great ideological forces on the Moroccan political scene. This stage marks a qualitative development in journalism in form and content. The names of journalists who played a role, mainly in the crystallization of Moroccan political, intellectual, and social thought, have emerged.

In these last two decades, there has been a real change in the media landscape. Thus, many specialized magazines, and many other Arabic or French-language newspapers and weeklies were created. However, in recent years, numerous difficulties have weakened the good development of journalism in Morocco. Among the serious problems the Moroccan written press faces, we can highlight the fact that the number of newspapers read by Moroccans is very modest. As well as the excessive competition of the digital and free press.

In short, the history of the press in Morocco from its origins in the 19th century, and up to the present time was a faithful witness and an indispensable instrument to know the course of the great historical events of the Kingdom.

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