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THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC LEGACY OF FRENCH
COLONIALISM IN MOROCCO

The lasting impact of the French protectorate on
Moroccan trade, agriculture and education

Aicha Alexandra BAHIJ

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Aicha Alexandra BAHIJ

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine the socio-economic legacies of the French Protectorate in Morocco and the attitude of modern-day Moroccans to that legacy, through a series of in-depth interviews with a wide range of people who lived through colonialism and came after it.

I use these interviews alongside documents of the time and the findings of contemporary commentators to chart the establishment of the Protectorate's social and economic policies in Morocco and how they destroyed the traditional infrastructure and cultural heritage of the country to replace them by a more 'modern and civilised' westernised system. I argue that, although some good did come from French colonialism in Morocco, these policies were not viable and so, when decolonisation came about, the country was unable to sustain itself and, therefore, had no choice but to continue to look to France both financially and educationally.

Through highlighting how France transformed every aspect of Moroccan life to match that of *la Métropole*, this research shows why Moroccans find it so hard to shake off their colonial past, why they continue to use the French language in business,

politics and education and why, unless Morocco steps out of the shadow of its former occupier, and make its own way in the world, they feel it will never be truly independent.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1:1 The Arab Spring

2011 saw spread across the Arab world, uprisings against autocratic regimes, the like of which has not been seen in the region since the end of European colonialism. And, much like that fight for independence, the so-called 'Arab Spring'¹ was born from decades of social hardship, lack of political participation and abuses of power. In an article for the American Journal *Counterpunch*, Reverend Jesse Jackson writes how the wave of protests shaking the Arab political regimes came about because of the despair felt by a vast body of educated people, unable to find employment and the uneducated masses who want to become educated. Their desire for change is a legitimate one and they need it from the bottom up: "What changed in the Arab Spring? In the fullness of time, people's minds changed.

¹ There are many political commentators who dislike the term 'Arab Spring'. Ziya Meral writes how the changes in the region: "are not simply about Arabs, but include Turks, Iranians and a host of other ethnic groups and countries". Moreover: "the language of *spring* assumes a linear process from worse to better. But we know that socio-political changes are not linear and, after spring might come winter". Brian Whitaker of the Guardian also dislikes the term 'Arab Spring' as it: "implies something that arrives without anyone needing to do anything about it - I much prefer the term *Arab Awakening*". Some, however, find this term patronising, as if the Arabs have been sleeping all these years, not feeling a thing. However, for the purposes of this thesis, 'Arab Spring' will be used, as it has become the most popular and widely understood term for this extraordinary period. See: Meral, Z. 2011. "Demystifying social media and the Arab Spring", *The Commentator*, [online] Available at http://www.thecommentator.com/article/563/demystifying_social_media_and_the_arab_spring [Accessed 23 October, 2011] and Brian Whitaker quoted in Tisdall, S. 2011. "The aftermath of the Arab Spring", *The Guardian*, [online] Available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/jul/06/arab-spring-aftermath> [Accessed 9 October, 2011]

The insult level changed. The quest for dignity changed. And the outlet to tell their story changed”.²

The Arab Spring also made its way to Morocco, a little more quietly, but forcefully nonetheless. The February 20th youth movement – made up of a coalition of Moroccans from all political and social backgrounds – led the call for change. Since February 2011, it has organised several demonstrations across fifty major cities and towns, drawing several hundred thousand protestors. In an article for *The Guardian*, Giles Tremlett, notes that while protests demanding political and social change in Morocco are nothing new (nor do they yet threaten the survival of the monarch) they do signal a major shift in popular attitudes towards the monopoly and abuses of power by the *Makhzen*, the: “wealthy and, often hated, power structure surrounding him [the king]”. It is this ruling elite whose: “fingers are in pies from the government to the big banks”.³

The response of the Moroccan monarch, King Mohamed VI, was swift and several reforms were implemented in the hope of appeasing his subjects, so

² Jackson, J. Rev. 2011. “Irreversible Winds of Change: What Changed in the Arab Spring?” *Counterpunch*, [online] Available at <http://www.counterpunch.org/2011/05/20/what-changed-in-the-arab-spring/> [Accessed 4 August, 2011]. This “outlet” to which Reverend Jackson refers is the internet and the myriad social networking sites that have allowed a more radical type of protest to spread. For those protesting against colonialism, it was modern transportation links allowing people to move from the country to the town more quickly, a new mass media in the form of newspapers and radio and, most importantly, as one research interviewee put it, the: “globalisation of a language” (Research Interview 1). By this, they meant the ability of the colonised to speak the language of the coloniser, so allowing the former to vent their grievances to the latter and the world beyond.

³ Tremlett, G. 2011. “King’s power in spotlight as desperate youth prepare to test Morocco’s claims to liberalism”. *The Guardian*, Friday 18 February, pp:23.

avoiding the revolutions that were flaring up across North Africa and the Middle East. However, for many of the protestors, these changes fell well short of their “legitimate demands”. According to Younes Abouyoub, lead organiser of *Morocco Tomorrow* and political analyst at Columbia University, the reforms have shown that the *Makhzen* is still: “locked in a logic of privileges and not of rights; a system of power based on vertical not horizontal legitimacy, which still perceives Moroccans as subjects, not citizens. Thus, the new constitution, as the social contract between the ruler and the ruled, states in Article 1 that *the system of government in Morocco is a constitutional, democratic, parliamentary, and social Monarchy.*”⁴ This old institution of the *Makhzen* has been a part of the Moroccan framework since the first royal dynasty was founded by Idriss I in the eighth century.⁵ Although down the centuries, the *Makhzen*’s power and sovereignty fluctuated, it is still very much enshrined in contemporary political practice and the constitution, so blurring the boundaries between government, regime and state.⁶ It is these blurred boundaries against which those protesters in the Moroccan

⁴ Yet the word “citizen” is used throughout the Article to refer to the people of Morocco. But a citizen does not have a concrete physical existence, merely a legal one whereby he/she only exists in the realm of the law. If one considers that citizenship is the founding principle of political legitimacy, it follows that citizens should possess a share of the political legitimacy. It is the body of citizens constituted into a political collectivity or a “community of citizens” who are and should be the sole legitimate elector of its rulers. It is wholly from the totality of “citizens” that power originates and decisions made by rulers can be justified. Abouyoub, Y. 2011. “From Subjects to Citizens: A ‘Democratic Moment’ in Morocco?” *Counterpunch*, [online] Available at <http://www.counterpunch.org/2011/07/20/a-quot-democratic-moment-quot-in-morocco/> [Accessed 17 August, 2011]

⁵ Idriss justified his political and military leadership by his so-called descent from the family of the Prophet Mohammed, thereby: “laying the grounds for temporal-religious claims”. See Gellner, 1969: 150.

⁶ Its authority was linked to sovereignty and autonomous zones of power held by rival tribes in the north, in mountainous areas in the Middle and High Atlas regions and even on the coastal strips such as around Rabat and Casablanca. As a result, although royal power existed, it was limited to the main urban areas, mainly around Meknes and Fez, at the edges of the middle Atlas and Marrakesh in the south. Waterbury defined the *Makhzen* as a: “stable system of organised violence”, referring to the display of violence that marked much of pre-colonial Morocco and that informed the king’s relationship with some of his subjects in the post-colonial period, what Moroccans now refer to as ‘years of lead’. See Waterbury, 1970: 15.

street were demonstrating and continue to demonstrate against; boundaries that were blurred even more by the French colonial powers under the Protectorate, when this ruling elite were brought into the French fold and given more power than they had ever had before 1912. As a result, many feel that, until the *Makhzen* goes, the legacy of the old colonial power will continue to have its influence in the affairs of Morocco.

One of the main aims of this thesis is to examine this legacy further, for, at a time when Morocco is asking questions about its future, it is essential that it remembers its past.

1:2 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into two main parts: 'Economic' and 'Social'. Each part is then sub-divided into 'During' and 'After' the Protectorate.

1:2:1 The Research Interviewees

Much like those protestors on the Moroccan streets who are striving to have their voices heard, so this thesis aims to hear the voices and memories of the Moroccans, some of whom have lived under French rule, but all of whom have been living with the legacy of it for more than half a century. It is these voices that give this work its originality through interviews and it is to these accounts that the leading explanations on the legacy of the French Protectorate in Morocco will be linked. It is these personal accounts that will bring to life all the narratives that have gone before and help to better understand the economic and social context of Morocco's colonial past, as well as its present-day concerns.

The interviews for this work were recorded over several visits to Morocco, from 2005 to 2007 and each personal experience documented, provided a tangible and more direct basis for assessing the legacy of French rule on the daily lives of Moroccans. Literature about colonial history can only ever show a partial understanding of the colonial experience.

1:2:2 Land Policy and Employment in Agriculture

In Chapter Two, the history of land ownership and employment under the Protectorate is examined with a view to understanding how the infamous *réforme agraire* was implemented. It will, firstly, look at land tenure in the colonial Maghreb as a whole, with particular attention being paid to Algeria, where land passed from Algerian to French hands at an alarming rate and how experiences learned from France's time in Algeria would go on to influence land policy in Morocco. These land reform policies will then be examined in greater detail, with insight given by the research interviewees that help to better understand what life was really like under French rule.

Chapter Two will also chart the increase of European colonialism to Morocco under the Protectorate and how the benefits of improved technologies in agricultural development did not always filter down to the Moroccan farmer. Once again, the personal experiences of those who lived during this time will be key to better understanding the relationship between the European settler and the Moroccan farmer.

In the final part of this chapter, a case study of the Gharb Plain is presented. It looks at the personal remembrances of those who lived and worked in the area and puts them into context with the Protectorate policies that were being implemented in the region at the time.

1:2:3 Agricultural Trade under the Protectorate

In Chapter Three, the benefits of the land policy are explored. Agricultural trade, which was virtually non-existent prior to the Protectorate, would take off after 1912. The chapter will first look at the increase of foreign business in the country and what impact this had on the economy. Research interviewees' opinions on the impact of this investment in Morocco are sought and the candidates are asked whether the benefits of this foreign investment trickled down to reach the ordinary Moroccan; for example, whether the promise made by the Protectorate that there would be employment was kept.

Finally, the chapter looks at migration to the cities. With land being taken by big business and agriculture, many Moroccans would head to the cities in search of work. Interviewees share their memories of this time and reveal whether the promise of 'streets paved with gold' was a reality.

1:2:4 The Moroccan Economy after Independence

Chapter Four of the thesis will analyse legacies of Chapters Two and Three. The first half of the chapter is concerned with agrarian reform and development after 1956. It looks at how the economic policies of the Protectorate had led to the establishment of a dual economy in Morocco and how early economic policies of the newly-independent government did little to change this. In fact, the policies strengthened this divide. The experiences

of the interviewees are crucial to this chapter, as they chart the euphoria of Independence with the sudden reality of the Morocco which they had inherited; one which still clung to its colonial past.

The final section of this chapter examines the attempts made by successive governments to try and break free from this colonial heritage and achieve economic independence.

1:2:5 Education under the Protectorate

Chapter Five moves on to the social aspect of this thesis.

The chapter starts with a study of the education system implemented under the Protectorate. It looks at how education was used as a means to divide the Moroccans, so that the population could be controlled, rather than as a means to better their lives. Interviewees' accounts of this time are essential and, once again, they shed a more critical and real light on the Protectorate's educational policies.

One of the tools used to divide the population, was the teaching of French to some, but not others. Interviewees explain what an enormous impact the French language would have; not only would it divide Moroccans, but it would change how they thought and how they perceived themselves.

1:2:6 Education After Independence: Arabisation

Chapter Six analyses the legacy experienced in Chapter Five. The Arabisation policy which was implemented not long after Independence is scrutinised. Just as the economic policies had created a dual economy, so the education system had created two nations: “A small elite who spoke French and the illiterate masses”.⁷

Once again, the experiences of research interviewees are crucial. They are asked to share their opinions of this time and why it was so difficult for Morocco to break away from the French language, even to this day.

1:2:7 French Language and Cultural Expression

Chapter Seven looks at the social impact the French language has on the day-to-day living of Moroccans. It traces the use of French by Moroccans through literature, the media and via the internet. Interviewees in this chapter are asked what it means to be Moroccan and whether their identity is shaped by the language they speak (be it French, or the language of their forefathers).

⁷ Editorial in *Al Hayat*. January 1957.

1:3 Literature Review

Swearingen, W.D. (1987) *Moroccan Mirages: Agrarian Dreams and Deceptions, 1912-1986*. I.B. Tauris: London.

The second chapter in the thesis looks at the impact of the French protectorate on Morocco's agricultural economy. The purpose of this chapter is to look at land policy and changes in employment; who got what when the French came and how the land was developed. Will D. Swearingen's *Moroccan Mirages: Agrarian Dreams and Deceptions*, is one of the most detailed books to focus solely on Moroccan agriculture. In it, Swearingen illustrates the long-term continuities between Morocco's colonial and independent state. It may be that one reason why Morocco has been (and is) so very difficult to rule, is that it is not an easy land to live in. The natural environment and, in particular the problems brought on by an unpredictable and irregular rainfall, as well as the effects of man's activity, have been inexorably linked to the political and economic policies of successive Moroccan rulers. Tackling these issues can be seen, says Swearingen, in the export policies of pre-colonial sultans (which helped to determine their relationship with European trading powers) and in the irrigation policies of the colonial period that shaped the Protectorate administration's relationship with both the Europeans and the Moroccan population. In the policies of governments after Independence, these issues helped fix the pace of land reform (or lack of it) and, once again, determined the relationship with Western economies. What the thesis adds to this research are people's experiences of these policies and how they impacted on their daily lives; how land was taken and traditional methods of farming were replaced by modern

machinery, which required less man-power, so forcing hundreds of farmers to leave the countryside and flood to the cities.

Stewart, C.F. (1964) *The Economy of Morocco, 1912-1962*. Cambridge: MA

Stewart's book deals with pre-Protectorate Morocco, the forty-four years of French control and the six years after independence. Stewart was particularly interested in Morocco's trade with Europe, especially as they had been trading partners for well over 200 years, prior to the Protectorate. His work is particularly useful where he discusses the rise of modern industry at the expense of traditional handicrafts. He also looks at the conflict of interests between the Europeans and the Moroccans over the division of agricultural land: "Anyone wanting to understand the emotional and the bitter character of present-day debate between the emerging countries and the ex-colonial powers will find the conflict over land most illuminating", states Stewart. To this, the thesis adds greater insight into the plight of the Moroccans during these forty-four years, with the aid of the research interviews. These interviews back up many of Stewart's analyses which put forth the proposal that, especially after the Protectorate, the Moroccans sought (and are seeking still) economic independence, while "living on the margins of that part of the world which has fertile land, ample water, a temperate climate and a vigorous population". The thesis looks at the legacy of France's agrarian policies on the changing landscape of Moroccan farming and how that affected employment.

Pennell, C.R. (2000) *Morocco since 1830: A History*. C. Hurst & Co: London.

Supporting Swearingen's *Moroccan Mirages*, Robert Pennell's *Morocco Since 1830*, has two chapters that chronicle the history of post-independence Morocco to the present day. In it, he traces developments of the Moroccan economy under the new independent government. Pennell writes about one of the consequences of the transformation of the Moroccan economy under the Protectorate as being the mass exodus from the countryside and the subsequent shanty towns that sprang up. The thesis looks at the crisis that took place in the cities as the population grew to bursting point and how a series of economic crises did little to ease the situation. Research interviews were used to gain insight into people's experiences, not only during the Protectorate, but also after it. Real insight was gleaned from these interviews into the daily lives of the Moroccan people, which archives and texts cannot always provide. The memories shed greater light on the daily lives of those who had to live in the shanty towns (*bidonvilles*) a life of high unemployment, where once useful artisan skills went to waste in the modern European economy. The interviewees' memories of the Europeans reflect upon how, despite their being the minority in Morocco, they were the dominant force in the cities. It was the Europeans who controlled government and big business; they who controlled trade and opened ports; they who built all the factories. The interviews highlight the resentment felt by Moroccans towards this loss and humiliation.

Gershovich, M. (2003) “French military rule in Morocco: Colonialism and its consequences”, *Middle Eastern Studies* 36.4: 203-208.

This article is an excellent example of how the French colonies were useful in terms of providing not only raw materials, but also manpower. Gershovich explains how, when the French first came to Morocco in 1844, the two armies: “collided at the Battle of Isly, marking the beginning of Morocco’s incorporation within the rising orbit of European Imperialism” (203).

However, by the time the Second World War began, over 100 years later, both French and Moroccan troops were fighting side by side for the liberation of France. Gershovich then goes on to describe and analyse the method of colonial conquest and rule of Marshal Louis-Hubert Lyautey, France's first resident general in colonial Morocco. He explains how Lyautey attempted to popularise the notions of ‘peaceful penetration’ and ‘indirect rule’, as part of a grand colonial design of military pacification, economic development, political modernisation and social betterment. However, says Gershovich, if things did not go to plan, he would always resort to violence. This proved an insightful read; not only did the French want to conquer the country and control its indigenous inhabitants, but it also managed to use them for their own gain. The thesis looks in greater detail at Lyautey’s ‘peaceful penetration’, by means of his work in industry and agriculture. It looks at the impact of his economic policies from land redistribution to the opening of vocational schools and tracks their progress and how they translated into practice. While there were some things that were praiseworthy in Lyautey’s approach to colonial matters, in the end, he always relied on force and it failed to stem the Moroccan resistance to French rule. Once again, the

research interviews give first-hand experiences of these economic policies, how people felt about them and how they are still impacting on the lives of Moroccans today, as much of the land that was taken by force was never returned to its rightful owner.

Brunschwig, H. (1966) *French Colonialism 1871-1914: Myths and Realities*. Pall Mall Press: London.

Brunschwig's book was revolutionary at the time of its publication in the mid-1960s and caused much furore. Before the book was released, it had long been held true that colonies were formed for the purpose of improving France's economic status. However, after much analysis of the economic interests of the French imperialists and the economic figures from France's adventures overseas, Brunschwig concluded that, financially speaking, the motherland barely benefitted from her colonies. Those who were responsible for the creation of the empire did so, argues Brunschwig, not for economic motives or interests but nationalistic ones. In relation to Morocco, the thesis mostly agrees with Brunschwig's theory, as it was certainly true that independent companies benefitted most from the Protectorate. This was principally down to Lyautey, as he was intent on more than just conquest; he wanted to change Morocco and, for that, he needed money, investment and a new infrastructure. The thesis shows that, for Lyautey, big businesses were much more likely to cooperate with the Protectorate government and invest on a large scale than the government in the *métropole*, who were becoming ever-more weary of the cost of colonial expansion.

Betts, R.F. (1960) *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory: 1890-1914*. Columbia University Press: New York.

This book studies the evolution in colonial theory during France's most active colonial years. Prior to 1890, French colonial policy towards the indigenous society was to assimilate it administratively and culturally into the French nation. Moreover, says Betts, the part played by the native in the 'civilising' of his own country was minimal. He was: "considered the source of physical power by which the colonist's brain and money would be profitably employed" (p138). However, by the end of the nineteenth century, notes Betts, it soon became clear that the policy of assimilation was not working and that one of association would have to take its place. There were two reasons for this, says Betts. The first was economic; France did not want to see the Empire prove to be a financial burden; therefore, it was essential to satisfy the: "natives' wants and needs", so as to keep them working productively. The second was military: France's Empire now expanded over three million square miles; it, therefore, required protection and the French army lacked the necessary manpower. It was essential that the natives were kept on side, not only to stop them from rebelling, but also to train them as soldiers to defend against foreign aggressors who may want to 'steal' them from France.

For the thesis, this work helped to analyse why the French thought it was so important to bring the young Moroccan generation through the French educational system, rather than leaving the traditional system of learning in place. If France were to finally have full control in one of her territories, then assimilating the Moroccans into the French fold was the best way of doing so. What the thesis adds to this book is the experience of those people who

were 'assimilated' by the French. The research interviewees' memories of being: "turned into little Frenchmen", underline how drastic this change in policy from association to assimilation was on the culture of Morocco. The research interviews also show how the legacy of this policy is still affecting the Moroccan today, with continued use of French, not only in schools and businesses, but in the media, which is continuing to grow as the most influential vessel for the transmission of culture.

Bidwell, R. (1973) *Morocco under colonial rule: French administration of tribal areas 1912-1956*. Frank Cass: London.

The education chapter of the thesis analyses the policies of the French in Morocco and how, not only did it divide down class lines, but ethnic ones also. Moreover, it examines, in detail, the role of the French language in changing the shape of learning in Morocco for decades to come. One of the principal works on the transformation of the educational system under the French is Robin Bidwell's *Morocco under Colonial Rule*. Bidwell explains how the education of the country was central to its pacification and, by dividing the education along social and ethnic lines, the French hoped to make a group of Moroccans a separate community directly linked with and loyal to France. Research interviews would, again, give insight into the legacy of this educational system and how the Moroccans themselves perceive the language and its place in their country; how natural it was for them to use it, how so entrenched in daily life it had become and how the thought of getting rid of it was almost inconceivable.

Heggoy, A.A & Zingg, P.J. (1976) 'French Education in Revolutionary North Africa', *Middle East Studies*. 7: 571-578.

In this article, Heggoy and Zingg argue that the very nature of colonialism, the extension of authority by one nation over another people: "precludes any valid consideration of the system within a mere examination of its political and economic exploitative elements". They argue that the main reason for these motives has, however, often overshadowed other traditional reasons of the colonist himself in: "seeking advancement of his corrosive system".

Reference to the *mission civilisatrice*, the cultural and moral mission of the colonist: "preoccupied and prejudiced continued justification for the colonial institution". Yet, say Heggoy and Zingg, the fallacy of the major objectives of the system revealed the: "untenable character of its moral, humanitarian and cultural aspects" (p571). This work looks at what could be seen as the corrosive nature of the French educational system in its North African colonies and how it drastically changed the cultural landscape of the region. The thesis seeks to add to works such as this through the Moroccan perspective and to elicit whether the Moroccan truly believes that the educational system they were put through was as corrosive as Heggoy and Zingg claim it to be.

Damis, J. (1975) 'The origins and significance of the free school movement in Morocco, 1919-1931' in *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée*, Vol.19 Issue.19 pp. 75-99

Indigenously-sponsored private schools appeared in many, if not most, countries which experienced a period of colonial rule. The instruction given in these schools was usually confined to the elementary level, but, in most cases, the idea was to preserve traditional learning and culture. While these schools have been known under a variety of names, the designation that is perhaps most widely used is 'free school'. The term 'free', in this sense means 'private' or 'free from government control' rather than 'free of payment'. Damis' article explains the free-school phenomenon in terms of the dynamic contained in the colonial confrontation between an alien ruling power and a subject population. The free school movement never took off in the way the nationalists hoped, but it did play its part in their independence movement and their bid for independence. The thesis looks at how important the traditional educational system was for the Moroccans and how eager they were to hold on to it, not only during the Protectorate, but also after it.

Grandguillaume, G. (1998) *Arabisation et Politique Linguistique au Maghreb: Arabisation and Language Policy in the Maghreb*, G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larousse: Paris.

Morocco, like other countries, faces large national problems. The national language question is one of the most important, because it is central to national unity. Grandguillaume explores how the Moroccan government has,

since the 1970s, devoted considerable effort to crafting a careful and elaborate multi-sector language policy, with particular significance for the educational system, which aims at promoting Arabic as the language of literacy and wider communication. The thesis examines the background to these policies and their implications. It looks at how the French educational system under the Protectorate led to the need for an Arabisation policy and examines how successful it has been and the subsequent legacy on Morocco's younger generation. Some of the interviewees are of this generation and their experiences are compared to the findings of studies such as those of Grandguillaume's.

Krikez, A. (2005) *Statut, Nature et Enseignement de la Langue Française au Maroc*. Al Khalij Al Arabi: Tetouan.

Morocco is characterised by language and cultural complexity; the language situation is full of paradoxes and contrasts. Moroccan society has had a long tradition of multilingualism and multiculturalism, which have become more prominent since the beginning of the twentieth century, as a consequence of colonisation and international processes; most notably globalisation. Krikez's study investigates the debate on education and language planning policies in Morocco, during and since, independence and reveals the complexity of post-colonial Morocco, characterised by contradictory attitudes towards language policy and education. This work was of particular interest to the section of the thesis which focuses on the impact of multilingualism on cultural identity and education and how the Moroccan perceives himself. To

this, the thesis brings first-hand experience of these policies with the research interviews. The interviewees share their thoughts on the pros and cons of being bilingual, how their views on bilingualism impacts on their identity and how they see the world around them.

Scham, A. (1970) *Lyautey in Morocco: Protectorate Administration, 1912-1925*. University of California Press: Berkeley.

In publishing his book at the time he did, in an era of anti-war and anti-imperialist sentiment, Scham hoped that his work would, in the face of the criticism of colonialism: “illuminate the complexities of the problem and perhaps contribute to a more balanced understanding of the rationale of colonial rule”. Scham looks into the sweeping changes that occurred in the central and municipal governments. He believed that, since property holding and divisions in: “Muslim countries differ markedly from those in the West, the French introduced important changes, such as property registration, which bore a direct relationship to subsequent colonial holdings”. Scham notes how the: “advent of a European administration in a backward-looking country such as Morocco was in 1912, naturally affected education”. This work gives an intriguing insight into how the colonialist perceived the world and those people whom it colonised. It led the thesis to examine some of the benefits brought to Morocco by the Protectorate and, through the perspective of the interviewees, whether the negative aspects of colonialism were worth paying the price for ‘progress’.

**Turner, L. (2001) “Frantz Fanon’s phenomenology of the black mind”,
Philosophy Today, 45.5: 99-104.**

A key figure in the anti-colonist movement was Frantz Fanon, as, not only was he extremely articulate, but he had also experienced colonialism first-hand as a young, Black man, growing up in the New World colony of Martinique. His views, therefore, are much more relevant than those of his ‘white’ colleagues. Turner has brought together a series of Fanon’s works which look at the effects of colonialism on the native people. Fanon argues that, even after independence, they were not yet truly free. The reason for this was primarily down to the native bourgeoisie who, instead of aspiring to create a new history for their peoples, sought to replicate the bourgeoisie of the country that colonised them. As a result, no progress was made and the outcome is an underdeveloped middle class. The only way for true independence, true liberation, claims Fanon, is to reclaim and reconstruct one’s own history and reject all influence of the colonial past.

A study of Fanon’s work was essential for the thesis, as his is the voice of the colonised man and it is that voice that the thesis is eager to bring to the fore. It is all well and good to read the analysis of any historian and expert in the field, but the true experience, the true legacy, lies in those who lived through it, who are still living through it. This research shows how many Moroccans did exactly as Fanon feared and continue to do so, replicating themselves in the guise of their former occupier, speaking their language still, instead of rejecting the colonial ties. The research interviews shed some light on why many Moroccans continue to cling to this past.

Sartre, J.P. (1964), *Situations V: Colonialisme et Néo-Colonialism*.

Editions Gallimard: Paris.

A study of French colonialism would not be complete without reading the works of Sartre, one of France's most influential francophone thinkers and activists. *Situations V* is a collection of articles written by Sartre about Algeria's occupation by France and its struggle for independence. Sartre describes the brutality of French colonialism and how it completely went against France's revolutionary ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. A leading advocate of existential phenomenology, Sartre believed in freedom of the will, regardless of other people's attempts to influence and coerce our beliefs and decisions. Sartre describes how colonialism stifles the individual's freedom and, therefore, must be brought to an end at all costs. Reading this work was an insight. It was published in the early 1960s when colonialism was still seen as one of France's greatest hours. Therefore, Sartre publishing material criticising this time could well have spelled the end of his career. What this did, at a time when most anti-colonial movement was still underground, was to bring the issue to the fore.

The contradictions of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, is one of the points that this thesis explores. How, on the one hand, France came to 'liberate' Morocco from its medieval past, yet the only way it could be 'freed' from this, as one research interviewee put it, is: "being forced to live in another man's shoes".⁸ The thesis seeks to discover what the Moroccans thought about the *mission civilisatrice*, and its legacy and whether or not they believed it was for their own good.

⁸ Research Interview 38.

Ennaji, M. (2005) *Multilingualism, Cultural Identity and Education in Morocco*. Springer Press: New York.

The final chapters of the thesis examine the role French played in cultural expression via literature and the media and how this has impacted on the Moroccan national identity. Moha Ennaji's *Multilingualism and Cultural Identity in Morocco* is one of the most up-to-date works on the impact of multilingualism on cultural identity. Ennaji debates how education and language planning policies in Morocco, since independence, have resulted in contradictory attitudes towards both French and Arabic in Morocco. The research took this further and, with the aid of research interviews, examined how the Moroccan perceives his own identity and looks at whether both French and Arabic, Western and Eastern cultures could fit into one. The chapter also looks into greater detail at the role of the Moroccan media in the transmission of Western culture via music, television and film and looks at the new role being played by the internet and social networking sites in perpetuating this influence.

1:4 Methodology

The majority of the research carried out for the thesis is qualitative in nature. The historical aspects were gained using both secondary data (literature and data sources) along with my own primary data consisting research of interviews. The quality of the literature being reviewed was carefully assessed. Not all published information is the result of good research; however, this type of secondary research became extremely helpful in

guiding the direction of the project. The research for the thesis was primarily exploratory in nature, allowing concepts to grow and develop. There are, however, drawbacks to this method:

Although the results of qualitative research can give some indication as to the 'why', 'how' and 'when' something occurs, it cannot tell us 'how often' or 'how many'. In other words, the results can neither be generalised; nor are they representative of the whole population being studied.

Alder, 2003: 497

The methodology followed was that of Grounded Theory. With exploratory research, the emphasis is naturally on discovery, but there is also a need to approach any research performed without any pre-conceived ideas from previous research.⁹ As more data was collected, key concepts and areas of study were developed. Grounded Theory is a useful means of research, as it can be applied to all manner of data collection methods, such as interviews and observation, as well as various types of data, from interview transcripts to texts. Also, as the name suggests, the explanations are grounded in reality:

Concepts and theories are developed with constant reference to the empirical data and this means that, unlike with speculative, abstract theory, they are built on a sound foundation of evidence.

Denscombe, 2003: 127

⁹ Denscombe, 2003: 113

Katchy Charmaz explains how intensive qualitative interviewing fits grounded theory particularly well. Both grounded theory methods and intensive interview are “open-ended yet directed, sharp yet emergent and paced yet unrestricted”.¹⁰ This, therefore, allows the researcher to use other methods whilst conducting interviews, such as observations, surveys and research participants’ written accounts – something that is perfect when documenting oral history, as each individual participant may have their own preferred method for recounting events from the past.

Charmaz also notes that grounded theory in qualitative interviewing also provides an open-ended, in-depth exploration of an aspect of life about which the interviewee has substantial experience, often combined with considerable insight.¹¹ For the collection of data for this thesis, this is invaluable; at it is the legacy of the interviewees that is being recorded here, so any method that can glean the most information is essential:

*The interview can elicit views of this person’s subjective world. Interviewers sketch the outline of these by delineating the topics and drafting the questions. Interviewing is a flexible, emergent technique; ideas and issues emerge during the interview and interviewers can immediately pursue these leads.*¹²

¹⁰ Charmaz, 2006: 28.

¹¹ Charmaz, 2006: 29.

¹² *Ibid.*

Grounded theory methods, therefore, allow for both flexibility and control in in-depth interviewing. This flexibility is particularly beneficial in the sampling and the analysis of the data. It creates an interesting platform for the sampling process, as by its very nature, the sampling technique changes constantly as the research develops.

Interviews were key to the data collection process; in order to select participants, a host of sampling techniques were implemented. The main sample of interviewees covered all ages and races of Moroccans – living both in Morocco and Europe. To find the best sample, non-probability sampling techniques were used. This method was favoured by Glazer and Strauss (1967) who argued that, for qualitative research, non-probability sampling techniques were more suited to a research process, where the goal was discovery, rather than the testing of a hypothesis. Initially, the sampling process used for the interviewees was 'convenience sampling'. Participants were selected on the basis of accessibility. J.M. Morse explains how this method of sampling is used at the beginning of a project to identify the scope, major components and trajectory of the overall process.¹³

In this regard, the first round of interviews performed was with contacts already available in Morocco (i.e family, friends or acquaintances). It was important to pick from this sample participants who would have had the most knowledge and experience of the topic; it was during these initial interviews

¹³ The SAGE Handbook of Grounded Theory: Paperback Edition edited by Antony Bryant, Kathy Charmaz, 235.

that core topics of the thesis were determined; the social and economic legacy.

From this primary sample of interviewees a 'snowball' or 'nominated sample' was used. The initial interviewees were asked to invite their friends and acquaintances to participate in the study. This method of sampling is known as 'purposeful sampling' and it allows for a wider range of participants to be used and a more diverse subject matter to be explored. These interviews would go on to reveal how the participants understood the implications of emerging data.

This form of sampling also allowed for more targeted research questions to be asked, relating specifically to the interviewee in terms of age, race or gender. Attempts were made to select interviewees from as wide ranging representative of people as possible. Bearing in mind the core theme of the thesis was the legacy of the French legacy, input from a host of varied experiences was essential.

While it cannot be said that this sample accurately represents all Moroccan opinion (unlike a questionnaire where more samples can be sought and therefore a more overall option can be seen) this method allows for the detail that such a project needs – the palette is greater and can be compared with more accuracy to the literature that has already been produced around

the field. It also allows for the researcher to see the bigger picture and understand the issues rather than merely hypothesising; they are in themselves a unique historical document, as with any oral history, because when a person shuffles off their mortal coil so too goes with them their lives lived. Recording these memories is vital for future generations to know where they have come from, but from the perspective of their ancestors, rather than foreign historians that have, for so long, been the main chroniclers of Morocco's history. In researching for the thesis, there was barely any literature available which spoke in detail about the ideas and feelings of Moroccan's about the French Protectorate as articulated by themselves – whether that was from the older generation who lived under French rule or those who came after, living with its legacy. This work, therefore, is important as it has become a way of enabling, at least some, Moroccan's to share their stories, to give them an opportunity to communicate their thoughts. With these oral histories, the thesis gained what is often missing from history books – perspective. The interviewees give the historian a personal perspective, allowing us to connect to and make more sense of the past; historians become active participants in history, rather than just consumers of it. These interviewees are also important because, they cause historians to re-evaluate what they know. This data, linked with documented history, gives the historian the bigger story. This is the main thrust behind this thesis and, what it brings to the fore.

It is key to again note here that the interviewees were to be at the core of the thesis; it was their experiences and opinions that would determine the

direction the thesis would take. This was their platform to speak, their chance for their voice to be heard and so, while it may be argued that purposeful sampling only works according to the needs of the work to be the greatest weakness of qualitative inquiry, its biased nature is essential for this thesis:

We are solving problems detective-style, looking for clues, sifting and sorting and creating a plausible case. Analysis is an active process of constantly asking questions. There may be blind alleys and mistakes, but once significance is recognised, data may be reorganised, resorted and categories renamed and such problems resolved.

Kathy Charmaz, 2012: 238

Keeping the above mentioned in mind, I proceeded to the design of my interviews. When devising my questions, it was considered whether to use closed or open-ended questions. Closed questions are quicker to complete for the respondent, but they are more difficult to write since the answers must be anticipated. Open-ended questions were ultimately chosen because, although they can also present some significant problems when trying to code and analyse the information resulting from them, open questions allow the respondent to answer in their own words. They also allow the researcher to obtain other themes and identify other issues that might not have been considered when the research questions were being developed, but may arise during the interview.

As previously mentioned, Interviews were a key feature to the data collection. This method was used to draw on peoples' experiences and feelings, rather than pure factual matters which can be obtained from documented data sources. The topic covered is also quite sensitive (people living under foreign rule in their own country) and, therefore, required due care and respect when asking certain, more probing questions.

Therefore the next consideration was the wording of the questions:

Words are extremely powerful and we react instinctively to their underlying meanings. Knowing how to word questions in a neutral yet effective manner is an art which is vital to learn.

Alder, 2003: 254

Loaded words, or words that stir up immediate positive or negative feelings, were avoided. When loaded words are used, respondents react more to the word itself than to the issue at hand. In dealing with the issue of colonialism, a delicate subject, it was crucial that no bias was shown in the wording of the question. Leading questions also had to be avoided, along with questions that suggest socially acceptable answers, or, in some way, reflect the viewpoint held by the researcher, which can lead respondents to answer in a way that does not reflect their true feelings or thoughts. Questions that were too vague, which could leave the interviewee free to ramble and wander off topic, also had to be avoided.

The type of research interview used was a semi-structured interview. This method seemed most appropriate in relation to the research question, as a response cannot always be anticipated. As a result, a semi-structured interview allowed broader questions to be asked, thus making it possible to put forward new questions during the interview. A semi-structured interview is, therefore, a relatively informal, relaxed discussion, which also allows the interviewee to express their opinions, concerns and feelings. The flexibility of the semi-structured interview was essential, as the diverse nature of the participants meant that not all interviews were structured in the same in terms of questions asked to the participants. If it was an older interviewee participating for example, questions around what they remember from the time or the years after independence were asked, whereas a younger participant was asked questions with a view to ascertain what they had learned about the French Protectorate and how they felt its legacy had impacted them. If, for example, an interviewee came from the countryside or had knowledge of farming or agriculture, then questions suited to land reform and distribution would have been asked, whereas someone from the city or with a background in business would be inquired as to Moroccan trade and the economy. Questions of identity, however, could have been asked universally – how they define themselves, their culture within the context on modern-day Morocco.

In recording the interviews, a combination of hand-written notes, as well as audio tape recording, were used. Permission was, of course, sought from those who were recorded, as some participants might have been shy and

nervous. The interviewees were assured that what was said would be kept in the strictest confidence and only the interviewer would have access to them, once they had been completed.

Whilst transcribing all the recordings, any handwritten notes about observations made during the interview, (be they body gestures made by the interviewee, outside interferences or perhaps long silences), were noted alongside the interviewees' words.

As a high level of detail was sought from the time spent with the participants, a fixed time limit was not set for each interview, although a morning or an afternoon usually sufficed.

Forty interviews in all were conducted, with as large a variety of representatives in terms of age, class, gender and region as possible, contacted within the time and budget available. From this sample, twenty-four were male and sixteen female. In categorising the age range I followed Erik Erikson's stages of human development model: A young/prime adult, according to Erikson, is generally a person in the age range of 20 to 39. A person in the middle adulthood stage ages from 40 to 64. In maturity, a person is 65 years old or older.¹⁴ In my study, there were twelve interviewees in the young adult range, seventeen in the middle adulthood

¹⁴ From: Dunkel, C.S. & Sefcek J.A, (2009) Eriksonian lifespan theory and life history theory: An intergration using the example of identity formation. *Review of General Psychology*, 13(1), 13-23.

stage and eleven in the maturity age range. In terms of ethnicity, twenty-three defined themselves as being Arabs, thirteen as Berber and four as mixed-race.

Forty interviews in all were conducted with as large a variety of representatives in terms of age, class, gender and region as possible contacted within the time and budget available. With hindsight, in any potential future study, it would be of benefit to get more opinion from a working-class background as well as those from Moroccans who have left their homeland to seek a livelihood elsewhere; did the French Protectorate play a part in the need for many to leave Morocco's shores to look for work elsewhere because employment could not be found at home? What part did the Protectorate have in the mass emigration of Moroccans to the Metropole and beyond? These are questions that potentially could be answered by those from a working-class background, those from the middle classes who are well educated enough not to need to emigrate to find better employment.

Chapter Two: Land Policy and Employment in Agriculture

*Long before French colonial administration, North Africa held a special place in the imaginations of most Europeans as a region of legendary natural fertility. Within the first two decades of the French occupation of the Maghreb, beginning with the invasion of Algeria in 1830, an environmental narrative developed from this imagery which would have a profound impact on colonization efforts in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. This narrative, which later would become the most common environmental history of North Africa, was composed of two primary parts. Informed largely by familiar French readings of classical texts such as Pliny, Strabo, Herodotus, and Ptolemy, North Africa was interpreted as formerly being: "the most fertile region in the world". Not limited to romantic writers, journalists, or historians, this long-standing interpretation was formalised by the official, government-sponsored, *Exploration Scientifique de l'Algérie* of the 1830s and 1840s. One of its authors proclaimed in 1847 that: "this land, once the object of intense cultivation, was neither deforested nor depopulated as today ... it was the abundant granary of Rome". This particular quote reveals the new colonial half of the narrative, that of decline.*

Davis, 2007: 16-17

In his work on the Maghreb, Abdallah Laroui wrote that: “in colonial history one should judge only results, never intentions”. He went on to say that: “beyond the motives and justifications of the colonisers and colonised alike, it is the logic of the world market that makes colonial history understandable, a particular colonial society may be more or less integrated, but at the time the same laws are at work”.¹⁵ Consequently, the demands of the world economy would go on to dictate colonial policy, rather than any ideological justifications. This continuity was seen, not in the media, nor through grand speeches made in Parliament, but by the behaviour of the bureaucracy, which remained unchanged throughout France’s occupation of the Maghreb – wherever there was land from which wealth could be made, then it was there for the taking.

This chapter looks at employment in Morocco’s agricultural sector; how the ownership of the most fertile land in Morocco was settled during the Protectorate period and the large role that European settler colonialism played in it. It also looks at how new technologies would see Morocco’s agricultural potential soar, but to the detriment of the local communities, causing a dualism within the Moroccan agricultural economy. Interviewees were asked how their families were affected by what one participant described as a: “massive land-grab, a free-for-all”¹⁶

¹⁵ Laroui, 1977: 293

¹⁶ Research Interview 39

2:1 Land Tenure in the Colonial Maghreb

In the Maghreb as a whole, the French had in place quite an impressive program of *la réforme agraire*; in both Algeria and Tunisia, land had been transformed from small peasant holdings to large, highly profitable, commercialised agriculture. “At first glance”, notes one interviewee, “this program of land reform seemed quite palatable – our farming techniques would certainly benefit from modernisation. However, we Moroccans would quickly learn, like our Algerian and Tunisian neighbours before, that new technologies were not always there for the benefit of us!”¹⁷ Many Algerians could concur with that. The first European settlers arriving in Algeria had been encouraged to acquire, by any means, more and more land for *la gestion foncière*, so-called ‘land management’. By the mid-nineteenth century, such was the rate of ‘land-grab’ in Algeria, that the government passed the *Senatus Consult* laws in the hope of curbing the rapid expansion of European settlements. However, though rigorously applied, they proved insufficient.¹⁸ Instead of attempting to uphold these new laws, in 1873, the infamous Warnier Law (amended in 1887 and 1897) was passed, providing legal means of dispossessing Algerian landowners. The system was described as such:

¹⁷ Research Interview 38

¹⁸ The two laws voted by the senate on 22 April 1863 and 14 July 1865, known as the ‘Senatus-Consult’, defended first, the natives’ land rights and, second, granted them the right to citizenship. However, in their application, the Senatus-Consult laws ended up discriminating against Arabs and Berbers. In formalising land rights, the courts reduced traditional land-holdings precipitately. Intended to grant citizenship by a ‘well-meaning Emperor’, the second Senatus-Consult allowed Algerians to apply for French nationality, but only if they allowed their Statut Personnel to be French, so subjecting themselves to French courts in such matters as marriage and inheritance. See James Heartfield, J. 2002. The ‘Death of the Subject Explained’, *France History Archive*, [online] Available at <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/defeat-french-humanism.htm> [Accessed 12 June, 2011]

Any colon or speculator who managed, by whatever means, to lay hands on even an infinitesimal part of a jointly-owned piece of land, was permitted by law to call an auction, which resulted, inevitably in ruining all the joint owners and enabled him to buy the land for a song.

Bernard, 1930: 401

Though widely deplored, this abuse continued until the end of the century. From 1871 to 1900, 687,000 hectares were ceded 'gratuitously' to Europeans; from 1880 to 1908, 450,000 hectares passed from Algerian to European hands under more 'dubious circumstances'. After a momentary halt during the First World War, when colonisation came to a standstill, the movement resumed and, by 1930, Europeans owned a total of 2,350,000 hectares in Algeria.¹⁹

The methods developed in Algeria served in Tunisia and Morocco. In Morocco, one of the first *dahirs*²⁰ passed by the new government introduced land registration (August 12, 1913). This saw the occupation of 30,000 hectares of land in the regions of Oujda and Casablanca during the military operations of 1907-1912. In 1916 a colonisation commission was set up which would go on to be charged with inquiry into public lands. Essentially,

¹⁹ The figures expressing the development of European colonisation vary from author to author: some consider the land area taken away from Maghrebis for purposes of colonisation, others the land actually colonised at a given moment. Private colonisation varied from year to year according to the positive or negative balance in the land transactions between Frenchmen and Maghrebis in the free market. The French administration sometimes padded the figures in order to encourage immigration or influence parliament and sometimes minimised them in response to the criticism of the nationalists or anticolonialist liberals.

²⁰ A *dahir* is essentially a law. In Morocco it is known as the King's decree.

this would be a more indirect and less visible way of confiscating lands that had been cultivated for generations by communities serving the *Makhzen*. The *dahir* of 27 April, 1919, authorised a survey of collective lands (lands that belonged to tribes) with a view to leasing them to Europeans.²¹ As in Algeria, Europeans soon infringed on the private holdings of the local population.²² In Morocco, from 1927 on, the *mulk* (privately owned) lands were expropriated (62,000 hectares in the Tadla region in two years) and ceded to Europeans. In the Maghreb as a whole, 3,800,000 hectares – roughly a third of the land under actual cultivation – had, by 1930, passed into the hands of Europeans, who at no time made up more than a seventh of the total population.²³

The first section of this chapter, with the quite blunt responses from the research interviewees, examines the legacy of the changes made to land ownership under the Protectorate and what impact that had on employment and the economy of the region.

²¹ Contrary to its professed aim - 'to hold that the authors of the *dahir* acted in good faith, one would have to suppose that they were unaware of the consequences of Napoleon III's pro-Arab policy in Algeria, which is unthinkable'. Laroui, 1977: 331

²² Since it was necessary to move fast in order to catch up with the head start gained in Algeria and Tunisia, measures were taken to encourage agricultural colonisation. These included subsidies for clearing land (which often did not need to be cleared), tax exemptions, loans and the establishment of cooperatives to provide equipment. As a result of these measures, calculated to prevent periodic crises from which Algerian colonisation had suffered, the Europeans quickly extended their land holdings. By 1932, free and official colonisation accounted for roughly 837,000 hectares. Despois, 1964: 34.

²³ By 1950 this figure had risen to 4,500,000 hectares. Despois, 1964: 35.

2:2 Land Ownership and Distribution

In Morocco, land is one of the most important assets a man can possess. It is, explains one research interviewee: “more precious than gold.” For Moroccans it was not simply a means of growing food, but the measure of a man’s wealth which was defended and passed down through generations. Many interviewees described how, for a Moroccan at that time, to lose his land, was as if a part of himself had been cut off:

Your land was a part of you; nobody had the right to take it, not a politician or king, no-one! Drill down as deep as you like and every particle would be yours. But then the French came and brought their European laws, taking our land and giving it to those who could afford to buy it or ‘improve’ it.

Research Interview 14

This interviewee reflects the general betrayal that many Moroccans felt at the takeover of their country; that somehow, because they were modest farmers who did not have fancy modern machinery, that made it acceptable for their land to be taken from them.

Land ownership would become one of the most crucial, yet complex, issues facing the Protectorate. Resident-General Lyautey would have to satisfy the needs of the newly-arriving Europeans with those of the local population; this would prove difficult. If Lyautey wanted to make space for the Europeans, it would mean breaking up and reducing land owned by the Moroccans: “The

problem”, notes Bidwell, “was made more difficult by the fact that Europeans had means of influencing decisions which the average Moroccan could not hope to make”.²⁴ Algeria had faced a similar situation with the expropriation of its land. Ruedy notes that, by the last years of the nineteenth century, the taking of Algerian land and property had: “accelerated the disarticulation of the native economy and the progressive impoverishment of Algerian society”.²⁵ By the last years of the century, economic disarticulation was one of the most important of several factors which lead to the destruction of an Algerian society which had, up to that point, largely maintained its traditional systems and relationships.²⁶ The situation in Algeria, however, was different from that of Morocco; Algeria was a part of France, subject to French law²⁷. Morocco was meant to be, in theory at least, a Protectorate; to be protected and looked after, not ruled. Many Moroccans would soon realise that theory was one thing, reality was another:

The title ‘protectorate’ was an indication of the confusing nature of the body that we were put under: the new rulers of Morocco’s future did not ‘occupy us’, but supposedly ‘protected’ us; from what, is unclear. Moroccans soon found out that the reality was different - far from having our land protected, it was, in fact, taken.

Research Interview 34

²⁴ Bidwell, 1973: 199.

²⁵ Ruedy, 1967: 177

²⁶ Many observers in France, including a number of influential politicians like Jules Ferry and Jules Cambon, were becoming alarmed at the destructive effects unbridled colonialism was having upon a people who, against their will, had been ‘forced into French tutelage’. Pickles, 1963: 21

²⁷ Between 1877 and 1920, the Warnier Law began a process of Gallicisation of property by subjecting all transactions between Europeans and Muslims to French law, as well as transactions between natives when these took place on land previously subjected to cantonnement or to inventory of the Senatus-Consult. It also abrogated the instructions for implementation of the 1863 law, so that the goal of the statute was now explicitly the dismemberment rather than protection of native properties.

Prior to 1912, all land, in theory, belonged to the Sultan as a representative of the nation. This concept was recognised in the Treaty of Madrid of 1880, which made his consent for any sale of land to a European obligatory.²⁸ However, many of the properties that belonged to the individual farmer were extremely small and fragmented. Lacouture cites an example of a man in Taza: “whose property of 59 acres consisted of 391 separate parcels of land”.²⁹

Situations, like that of Taza, often arose as a result of inheritance. A piece of land belonging to a parent would be divided among his, or her, children, which was then divided amongst their children and so on. The end result would be a patchwork of land which, although in essence belonging to the same family, was split amongst individuals, each of whom knew where their patch began and ended: “Here in Morocco, land is passed down through the generations – everybody had their share and everyone knew where their land started and finished. We didn’t need a piece of paper”.³⁰ It was, however, the

²⁸ Land-ownership could be put into five categories. Bidwell gives a concise summary of them: **The *Makhzen*** (government) land that belonged to the State was actually indistinguishable from property owned by the Sultan in his personal capacity. Some of this land (*azib*) was given by the Sultan to important tribal leaders for their maintenance and that of the religious institutions that they controlled. *Azib* often comprised whole villages over which the recipient exercised all the rights of the Sultan, including those of collection of taxes and administration of justice.

Habous lands (private) – these belonged to religious foundations and were considered inalienable, although they could be exchanged for others of equal value.

Guich lands (state-owned) - the use of these had been granted indefinitely to certain tribes in return for the performance of military service.

Collective lands - which belonged to a tribe as a whole and were mainly used for pasture, but parts of which were distributed among the tribesmen for cultivation.

Mulk lands – these belonged to the individuals and were usually to be found in and around the towns. Some of the *mulk* properties were divided among many owners, but these must be distinguished from collective lands which belonged to the tribe as a whole. Bidwell, 1973: 200-201

²⁹ Lacouture, 1961: 26

³⁰ Research Interview 8

lack of pieces of paper or title deeds that made it so easy for the French to take what land they could, as nobody could prove what land was theirs.

Prior to the Protectorate, Europeans had been granted the right to acquire land in Morocco by the Conference of Madrid in 1880, but *only with the consent of the sultan*.³¹ In 1906, the Act of Algeciras relinquished the need for the Sultan's approval. By the time the Protectorate had been established in 1912, the number of Europeans looking to obtain land in Morocco had increased rapidly. As land in Morocco was not registered, it was almost impossible to prove who owned what. This gave the new administration a perfect excuse to introduce the registration of land under a European system of law. *Dahirs* of 1913 and 1915 introduced a new land ownership policy; if a Moroccan land-owner wanted to register his land in order to keep it, he was required to produce proof of ownership which was 'certified by publication'.³² But the costs of doing so meant that, even if the land-owner could be made to see the advantages of registration, the expense involved was often a deterrent. One interviewee describes how such a scheme was underhand:

³¹ Because the Sultan hardly ever approved such transactions, foreign ownership of Moroccan land was rare. Not to be outdone by this, however, some Europeans came up with an ingenious idea of associating with Moroccans - known as *protégés* - in the holdings of private lands. *Protégés* acted as assistants to the European merchants, helping them with trade in the ports and cities of the interior. The status of *protégé* in Morocco originated with the Franco-Moroccan commercial treaty of 1767. Owing to their privileged position, Moroccan *protégés* soon developed into a bourgeoisie that differed from the indigenous one in important respects, most notably in the guaranteed durability of its fortune and its access to the European money market. Such an occupation was alluring to a Moroccan, as *protégés* were exempt from taxation. So, while land was, by name, under Moroccan ownership, it was often, at least in part, controlled by foreigners. This had not gone unnoticed by some Moroccans: *Even before they occupied us they had already begun encroaching on our land and started to bring certain Moroccans on-side*. Research Interview 12

³² Under the Protectorate, no *dahir* was issued without the approval of the Resident-General. In fact, most *dahirs* were initiated by the French authorities and later signed by the Sovereign Stewart, 1964: 218

It was a sneaky system, and the French knew this. Either you could prove that the land was yours, spending a fortune along the way, so that you could sell it to some European for less than its worth OR you could have no proof and wait for the French to seize it themselves.

Research Interview 9

Such policies did nothing to help ease relations between the Moroccans and the French. This new land policy proved to be one of the many government plans that were carried out with little knowledge of the culture they were dealing with.³³ Scham notes that: “Islam is a communal religion and so, in theory at least, newly-acquired land became the property, not of the individual, family or tribe, but of the Muslim community as a whole”.³⁴ The absence of any real understanding on the part of the French as to how aspects of Moroccan culture worked left many Moroccans incensed:

I think that’s one of the things that irked me the most about the French, that they just came to our country with no real knowledge or understanding of our culture, no real respect for it either...assuming that theirs was superior and obviously we would want to embrace it!

Research Interview 29

³³ Land-holding and ownership is different throughout the world. Private ownership of land is much more common in Western Europe than public or state ownership and, in such cases where public ownership of land or property does occur, such as hospitals and schools, the maintenance and funding of such institutions differs greatly from those employed in an Islamic society. Scham, 1970: 83

³⁴ *Ibid.*

It was this basic lack of knowledge of land and property ownership in Morocco that made property registration a complex and costly business, especially for the Moroccan. Attempts were made by Lyautey to try and protect some of the native lands by making them inalienable. *Habous, guich* and collective lands were all made so, meaning that they could only be bought or sold with the approval of the local governors or judges.³⁵ Because it was only the French officials who could decide who could buy or sell them, the majority of these lands were eventually used for colonisation: “It was always the best land, land that had once been banned from any transfer of ownership, that suddenly wound up in the hands of the Europeans.”³⁶ Célérier called it a: “transaction where one side’s actions were to the detriment of the other’s”. Indeed, despite the fact that: “Many Europeans complained that they did not have enough land, some French officials felt that they had gained too much”.³⁷ The *Contrôleur Civil*, Philippe Boniface, wrote in the *Bulletin Economique* how the Beni Mtir tribe had all their rich plains taken from them and were left with only barren mountains: “we have forgotten our promises made to them!”, he declared.³⁸ That sense of betrayal ran deep in many Moroccans who lost not only their land but their livelihoods. One interviewee recounts how their father would later explain how deep that betrayal ran:

³⁵ Stewart, 1964: 72

³⁶ Research Interview 38

³⁷ Célérier, 1936: 219

³⁸ Boniface quoted in *Bulletin Economique*, October 1935. The Beni Mtir had happily accepted the appropriation of much of their land, regarding it as abundant and apparently of little value. This was until they found that they could sell the remainder for more money than they had ever seen. Bidwell, 1973: 208.

My father, like many others, was told that our land was of little worth, and they [the French] advised us all to sell it and get 'compensation.' What a con! It was not until later on that he found out how much they sold it on for; double, triple the amount he and his neighbours got, sometimes more! In a matter of years they reduced our tribe from being proud, independent shepherds, to a poor working-class desperate enough to seek unskilled jobs on estates that we had once owned. It affected my father deeply and stayed with him all his life; can you imagine the humiliation he must have felt? It breaks my heart and fills me with rage!

Research Interview 39

Anger is a common emotion that features in many of the interviews when the matter of the appropriation of land is mentioned, even with those who do not remember the Protectorate period. Land is not just a measure of a man's wealth, but a reminder of where he came from, his ancestry. Even today, with vast numbers of Moroccans living in the cities, many of them still have strong ties to the *bled*.³⁹

I was born in the city, I grew up here, but I always know that I have land to go back to, my own land on which I can grow and build whatever I want. That is peace of mind that no amount of money can buy.

Research Interview 40

³⁹ In Arabic *bled* means land. In Morocco it is used to mean not only one's land, but where one's roots are from. In essence, the land is your heritage, your identity – take that away from you and “you are as nothing”. Research Interview 1.

The confusion of land registration and how it could be sold and who could sell it led to the expropriation of thousands of acres of Moroccan land into European hands (the effects of which are still with Moroccans today) which will be explored later on in the thesis.

It would not be long before all types of landholdings (*mulk, habous, guich* and so forth) were brought under the control of the French authorities, enabling them to move in any direction in order to settle Europeans.

2:3 European Colonisation of Morocco

The only way to guide the Moroccan peasant towards progress is to place before his eyes the example of success through less primitive means than his own. For this he must see land cultivated by Europeans. Thus, colonisation will make Morocco prosper, first in augmenting the production of its soil, then in the serving as an example to the native, perfecting him little by little through contact.

Kann, 1921: 174

Arthur Girault⁴⁰ had the same grandiose views as Kann.⁴¹ He wrote how the installing of French colonists in Morocco: “conforms both with the framework

⁴⁰ Girault was a lecturer and professor of public law and was Dean of the Faculty of Law of Poitiers from 1923 to 1931. In 1894 he published: *Les Principes de colonisation et de législation coloniale* in which he wrote how colonies are ‘considered as a simple prolongation of the soil of the mother country’, merely as ‘*départements* more distant than the rest’. The goal is ‘the progressive creation of veritable French *départements*’. To Girault, ‘The principal result and visible sign of assimilation’ is the representation of the colony in the legislature of the mother country. Such beliefs contradicted

of interests of the Protectorate and with that of the native population". He believed that a substantial number of French colonists: "are necessary in order to constitute the armature upon which the action of the Protectorate is based" and to: "make French influence dominant in this country". He was, however, quite adamant that the native population had nothing to fear, that European colonisation would: "not risk developing into an invasion". As previously mentioned, unlike many of the countries in the French Empire, Morocco was not a colony but a Protectorate. Nevertheless, because of the political and economic aspirations of France, the colonisation of the country was inevitable. Lyautey, however, did not wish to see the mass immigration that had taken place in Algeria and Tunisia; he was wary of what type of European came to settle in Morocco.⁴² While Lyautey acknowledged that some colonisation was necessary, it would not be to the detriment of Moroccans. Instead: "only colonists who were prepared with the knowledge or the capital needed for agricultural work would be encouraged to come".⁴³ Unlike Algeria, where infinite expanses of uninhabited and unclaimed land could be found, any land of value in Morocco was already held by the tribes, the *habous*, the state or individuals. With this in mind, there was only one outcome – somebody had to lose. This would only add to the resentment already felt:

the principles of a Protectorate and did little to put at ease the Moroccans under it. See *Principes de colonisation et de législation coloniale*, Larousse, 1^{re} édition, Paris, 1895, p 95

⁴¹ Reginald Kann was a French correspondent who had fought on the Boer side in South Africa and became a war correspondent in Cuba, Manchuria and Morocco.

⁴² Lyautey loathed the French peasants who settled in Algeria: 'The mentality of Huns', he once said, 'they have neither humanity nor intelligence. If allowed in Morocco, they would undermine the Protectorate.' Lyautey, 1927: 135

⁴³ Scham, 1970: 133

Every piece of land that was worth something was taken. They called it a Protectorate, but they didn't protect, they stole. I mean, we'd have no problem with a Frenchman moving in next door, buying land, farming it, being a part of a community. But no, they occupied us and took it [the land] all away.

Research Interview 11

Another interviewee described it in a more striking way:

It's like my neighbour asking me for help because he's facing hard times, and instead of my loaning him some money or something ,he moves into my house, wears my clothes, eats my food and lives off my income!

Research Interview 40

A little dramatic, perhaps, but it certainly conveys many interviewees' feelings of utter desperation as they saw their heritage being passed into strangers' hands. It was this sense of despair that Lyautey had so deeply wanted to avoid. Attempts were made by him to try and avoid a free-for-all by making it obligatory for all land to be paid for. Nevertheless, during his time in Morocco, Lyautey never fully regulated immigration and, by 1913, as many as 29,000 Europeans had arrived in Morocco to settle.⁴⁴ This swift influx certainly caught Lyautey off guard:

⁴⁴ Bidwell, 1973: 171

But when it is a question of such a numerous and rapid immigration as that which Morocco attracts, how does one discern, how can one distinguish at first glance - in this influx of arrivals in which the older established colonists are lost among the newcomers – when the adventurers are not distinguishable from the real workers?

Lyautey, 1927: 121

Once again, lack of planning and foresight led to a situation in which many Moroccans felt betrayed:

I could compare the situation to one of more recent times when the West decided to invade Iraq in 2003. They didn't plan things properly, they just went in there, all guns blazing, and thought it would be over in no time...they thought the Iraqi people would rejoice at these 'heroes' bringing them 'democracy'. The same happened in Morocco; France smugly assumed that we would embrace them and their 'civilisation' their 'modern ways' – they weren't ready for our resistance!

Research Interview 17

The French were lucky in that the expanse of land most perfectly suited to European settlement (the comparatively flat and well watered region to the northwest of Morocco) was also the land that was most perfectly suited to

military conquest.⁴⁵ Lyautey named this region *le Maroc utile*.⁴⁶ By 1913, with almost 29,000 settlers to accommodate, 73,000 hectares had already been sold for European cultivation, three-quarters of which were to be found in the most fertile region.⁴⁷ Lyautey's desire that only big companies that could boost the Moroccan economy and provide employment should be the principal land-owners was not fulfilled, as, before long, 31% of all settlers were farming less than ten hectares each.⁴⁸ One interviewee describes this time as a black period in Morocco's history:

We were promised any land taken would be used to improve and benefit us, the Moroccans, through employment opportunities. What actually happened was that, in many cases, smaller pieces of land were sold to individual Europeans who would then make their own private profit from it. It was a kick in the teeth to all of us.

Research Interview 39

French penetration into the countryside drastically affected the economic structure of those who worked the land for a living. Laroui describes how:

“these people were losing their land and, at the same time, continuing to pay

⁴⁵ Stewart, 1964: 75

⁴⁶ Lyautey was full of confidence in the early years of the Protectorate and believed that in three years he could achieve the ‘total submission of Morocco, leaving no areas of dissidence’ (Rivet, 1988: 2:63). However, the coming of the First World War had meant that the French government were short of money and troops and needed to spend what little they had on the occupation of the Rhineland. As a result, Lyautey was forced to bring under control the areas of Morocco that would be the most profitable in terms of the economy, i.e. *le Maroc utile* – ‘useful Morocco’.

⁴⁷ Fazy, 1948: 62 Lyautey, intent on encouraging only those who could invest in large-scale farming rather than *la petite colonisation*, made sure that no single grant was less than one hundred and fifty hectares. Despite Lyautey's best efforts, however, as the years passed and the Resident-Generals changed, more and more Moroccan land passed into European hands. By 1953, nearly one million hectares were being cultivated by Europeans. Stewart, 1964: 77

⁴⁸ Stewart, 1964: 77-78

heavy taxes”.⁴⁹ The situation for Moroccan farmers would only deteriorate on Lyautey’s departure as Resident-General in 1925; there came what Berque termed as ‘the Golden Age for the broker and the lawyer’, in which many Moroccans were tricked out of their land by ‘exemples scandaleux’⁵⁰ or land-grabbing. Such cases in which con-men bought land at a pittance and sold it for profit, only further fuelled the resentment felt by Moroccans towards the Europeans:

It was painful to see this land that you had been told to sell because it was valueless, suddenly being farmed in such a way that it could produce rich crops. The humiliation you felt was huge. Humiliation that has lasted with most Moroccans from that time to this very day.

Research Interview 32

The ‘psychological humiliation’ of the colonial system is a condition that theorist Frantz Fanon mentions frequently in his work: “Take away a man’s livelihood and his ability to feed his family and you leave him feeling worthless”.⁵¹ There were many cases such as these where Europeans successfully ‘worked’ the system. Lamazière describes cases where Europeans behaved like: “bandits, claiming compensation for cattle falsely declared to have been stolen” and: “squeezing the heirs of dead tribesmen for imaginary debts”.⁵² Captain Effroy described how a company based in

⁴⁹ Laroui, 1977: 352.

⁵⁰ Berque & Couleau, 1945: 42

⁵¹ *For a colonised people the most essential value, the most concrete, is first and foremost the land. The land which brings them bread and above all, dignity.* Fanon, 1968: 44.

⁵² Bidwell, 1973: 213

Marrakesh: “ruthlessly exploited the fellahin at Amizmin”⁵³, while the officer was powerless to intervene because the peasants were: “too frightened to complain”.⁵⁴ It is this reckless disregard for others, these, ‘wheelings and dealings’, that led many Moroccans to question what was going on in their country and the so-called ‘modernising’ mission the French were conducting.⁵⁵ One interviewee questioned whether some Frenchmen even thought that the Moroccans were human:

So many Moroccans were treated with utter disdain, worse than animals! My father knew a European who made millions from selling olives from the groves in the Rif Mountains to markets in Europe, but he wouldn't dream of spending a centime on improving the living conditions of his workers.

Research Interview 1

It was not just crop farmers who bore the brunt of land being taken from them. Pastoral tribes who had once had free range over the countryside were suddenly confronted with huge estates which they were not allowed to cross. Navigating around them was so difficult, that many herdsmen had to reduce their flocks, which were their main source of income. In 1937, Capitaine Flye Sainte Marie of the *Service des Affaires Indigènes*⁵⁶ wrote that: “the

⁵³ *Fellah* was the name for a Moroccan farmer.

⁵⁴ Pascon, 1986: 348

⁵⁵ With *la mission civilisatrice*, the French sought to export the ideals of the French revolution of the eighteenth century. In that, ‘dignities’ (in the sense of aristocratic privileges) were extended to every citizen by the Declaration of the rights of Man and the Citizen. However, as they saw their heritage passed into the hands of foreigners, Moroccans felt that their rights and human dignity had been by-passed completely.

⁵⁶ Along with the Algerian *Bureaux Arabes*, the Tunisian *Service des Renseignements*, the *Service des Affaires Indigènes* was one of the only purely military administrations of indigenous populations in the colonial world.

continuing colonisation is growing at such an alarming rate that it is threatening to end the transhumance completely!"⁵⁷. While the one million hectares under European ownership may only have accounted for 6.5% of agricultural land in Morocco, it was the most productive. Stuart notes how European holdings included 10% of the total crop land, 23% of the orchards and vineyards, and 4% of the fallow and range land.⁵⁸ Some historians have commented that these figures were modest. Alan Scham, for example, writes that the percentage of land expropriated by the French for colonisation, in contrast to that which was purchased privately from the Moroccans, was small. However, what Scham fails to note is that these one million hectares owned by the Europeans related to about 1% of the rural population. By 1956, this 1% was responsible for 80% of the wine and citrus fruits, 33% of vegetables and 15% of cereals.⁵⁹ Such unequal distribution did not go unnoticed.

I must say, it was the con of the decade, kidding us into thinking that they had only taken a small percentage of land in Morocco, yet failing to note that it was the best! My family lost acres of land which we never saw again. Instead we were left with rocky hillsides that we were supposed to 'develop' with the help of the French farmers.

Research Interview 15

⁵⁷ Transhumance was the seasonal migration of livestock to summer pastures. Sainte-Marie, 1937: 124

⁵⁸ Stewart, 1964: 77

⁵⁹ Waterston, 1962: 4. According to a local newspaper which claimed that its estimates were based on official figures, 28% of the value of agricultural land and 29% of the value of all agricultural land, buildings, equipment and livestock were represented by European holdings. (Le Petit Casablancais, 1956: 1)

This was the big flaw in France's plan to help the Moroccans, and another example of its wishful thinking. The modern techniques that the French employed on their land increased productivity more than ever before and it was hoped that this fortune could be passed onto the Moroccan farmer, despite his smaller land-holding. The influence of the European in the countryside, it was thought, would help increase the Moroccan farmer's yield. However, as Page notes, the creation of 'perimeters of colonisation', where only European farmers were allowed: "largely prevented any peeks over the shoulder". He went on to say that, even if they could have done so, the Moroccan farmer could rarely afford the technology to match the European method. Indeed: "the geographic distribution indicates much more a juxtaposition than an interpenetration of two economies".⁶⁰ For Bidwell, the Protectorate under Lyautey tried to be: "fair to both sides, but the result was a series of compromises which satisfied neither; the Europeans complained that their enterprise was shackled, while the Moroccans saw their best land pass into foreign ownership". History, concludes Bidwell, suggests that European colonisation can only really be permanent and successful when, as in the United States, the original population is 'practically exterminated'.⁶¹ The French had no desire to wipe out the population, even if it had been possible. Few French officials doubted that a large number of Europeans was both desirable and inevitable. General Bugeaud, who was Governor-General of Algeria during the mid-nineteenth century, had said that: "conquest without colonisation left no more a lasting mark on the land than does the wake of a

⁶⁰ Page, 1954: 22

⁶¹ Bidwell, 1973: 199. In America this was even a matter of pride, for many followed Theodore Roosevelt in believing that, 'This great Continent could have been kept as nothing but a game reserve for squalid savages.' Roosevelt, 1889: 90

ship on the sea”.⁶² In other words, they had no choice but to populate foreign lands. Léon Baréty, a minister and the leader of the Moroccan Lobby, wrote that, in populating their colonies: “there is the fundamental base for the success and the longevity of our work in Morocco, it is there where France’s population must grow”.⁶³ Lieutenant Kuntz spoke for many of the officers who fought in the country when he demanded:

The willpower to develop European colonisation must be relentless. Progress; the future is in the hands of the European. The Arab is now a symbol of the past and of decadence...no land which comes into the possession of a European should ever be allowed to return to the native.

Kuntz, 1913: 257

The Europeans would help, argued Kuntz, to raise the standards of the local people by the example of their skilled farming and would be the missionaries of French culture in Morocco. It would be the French who would bring Morocco storming into the twentieth century.⁶⁴ There were those Moroccans who understood that their country was not as developed as France, especially in agriculture and, as a result, saw the benefits of the French presence in their country:

There was no doubt that our country needed a kick-start. Our economy had been ignored and we were heavily in debt, which is why we ended up as a

⁶² Ringel, 1903, 109

⁶³ Baréty, 1932: 231

⁶⁴ Kuntz, 1913: 258

Protectorate in the first place. So, any investment made was welcome. However, any progress came with sacrifices that we, as Moroccans, had to swallow.

Research Interview 28

In the early years of the Protectorate, it was believed that the Moroccan farmer needed to be guided towards progress and the only way to do this was: “to place before his eyes the example of success through less primitive means than his own”. For this, he must see land cultivated by Europeans. The subsequent thinking, therefore, was that: “colonisation will make Morocco prosper” - firstly by: “augmenting the production of its soil” and, secondly by: “serving as an example to the native, perfecting him little by little through contact”.⁶⁵

The reason why such a belief was held was, once again, down to poor research on the part of the French. They believed that the countryside was not so heavily populated and that there were gaps in agrarian Morocco that colonisation would fill. They were wrong. Morocco was heavily rural and all the best land was already taken. As a result, a new form of colonial doctrine formed, one that went even further than before. It stated that due to: “the

⁶⁵ Kann, 1921: 174

superior needs of colonisation”, this land needed to be put into French care:

“In taking the land from the natives, we are assisting them”.⁶⁶

It became part of colonial faith, almost, that there were too few of us [Moroccans] sufficiently civilised to exploit our best resources without intervention by the Europeans.

Research Interview 26

There was, however, some truth in the fact that Morocco had never fully realised the potential of its land and had never been truly sure of how to feed itself. The next section looks at some of the changes made to Moroccan agricultural development in relation to the Gharb Plain and Rif Mountains, what gains were made and where the French fell short.

⁶⁶ Bondis, 1932: 9

2:4 Case Study: The Gharb Plain and the Rif Mountains



Image from Swearingen, 1986: 9

The Gharb is a coastal lowland plain situated in the northwest of Morocco, which extends about 50 miles along the Atlantic coast and reaches some 70 miles inland. Due to the number of rivers that flow through the Gharb, its lowland area bordered by the Rif Mountains to the northeast, has gradually been silted up by alluvial deposits from a seasonal watercourse, leaving a surface suitable for agriculture. It is a major citrus-growing region.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2009. *Gharb*. [Online] available at: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/501033/Gharb> [Accessed on 20 December 2009]

During the winter of 1829-30, a party of explorers led by the British Consul in Tangier, Sir Edward Drummond-Hay, set out across Morocco to research its geography. A Scottish aristocrat, Drummond-Hay found the Moroccan countryside striking and sometimes overwhelming.⁶⁸ His journal describes Nature run riot:

Plain, fine rich soil covered with marigolds, thistles, artichokes, palmetto - and enamelled with white and blue small flowers, which a night's rain had brought forth in great beauty...Here and there patches of cultivation.

Bodleian MS Eng. Hist. e. 349, 445

It was the reports from expeditions made by men such as Drummond-Hay that gave the French a head start in planning which areas would be financially beneficial for France - the Gharb plain proved to be one of the key agricultural regions the French needed to secure. Over the years, the many rivers that flowed through the plain had left behind sediment brought down from both the Rif and Atlantic mountains. As a result it came to be known as one of the most fertile regions of Morocco: "Our country's bread basket".

⁶⁸ Drummond-Hay's party made their way along the Atlantic coast, through the Gharb plain where they encountered fennel "higher than a man". They continued eastwards following the river Sebou which was: "littered with so many round bitter gourds men could play ball with them". The rivers were full of fish where they met the Atlantic: "*shebel* and mullet were landed from boats and, further up the coast, in freshwater lakes, fishermen speared large and very tasty eels". Moving further inland towards the foothills of the Rif, the group came across more settled agriculture, where irrigation was more feasible, due to the more reliable flow of water in the river valleys. The Atlantic rain and snow melt that fuelled the region's rivers made the foothills so fertile that it could sometimes produce two crops a year of citrus fruits, vegetables and cereals See Bodleian MS Eng. Hist. e. 346-8, Swearingen, 1987:8 & Pennell, 2000:4.

2:4:1 Irrigation in the Gharb Plain

The firm and patient will of France to progressively bring wellbeing to the backward populations of Morocco while making them enter, almost despite themselves, a stage of civilisation that turns them away from nomadism and fixes them to a soil rendered productive by the effects of our technicians.

Sermaye, 1938: 251

The only irrigation to be found in Morocco prior to the Protectorate was located in the Haouz Plain around Marrakesh and in the valleys of the High Atlas.⁶⁹ The French, however, recognised the great potential in this region; if this idea could be fulfilled, then not only could capitalist agriculture flourish in this region, but the local farmer could now settle in one place.⁷⁰ This ‘potential’ of this ‘mission for good’ was seen by some of the interviewees as a positive thing and could indicate why, perhaps, their forefathers did not resist the move straightaway.

There was, among some Moroccans at least, some hope that despite the occupation, some good could come of it, not least in agricultural development, because whatever people may say, we desperately needed it.

Research Interview 13

⁶⁹ However, even with irrigation: “the assurance of a subsistence crop was no stronger than the run-off, which was extremely variable from one year to the next.” The majority of northwest Morocco was left un-irrigated and instead, the land was used for dry farming and pasturing. Stewart, 1964: 111

⁷⁰ Stewart, 1964: 111-112.

With such wealth just waiting to be accessed, European farmers pressured the government to invest heavily in the development of a modern irrigation system. Yet despite all this potential, Lyautey did not pursue his irrigation policy to its fullest potential, instead leaving any development of the region in the hands of the private firms who had bought the land.⁷¹ This decision proved effective, as large companies could invest for the long-term in the country.⁷² An interviewee remembers one such businessman as his neighbour:

Monsieur Clott – that’s the name I remember of one of the major French farmers near where I lived. The land he got was in the foothills of the Rif on the banks of the river Ouerrha. The Ouerrha, unlike the Sebou - which had been polluted by the waters from the tanneries by the time it had passed through Fez – was, and still is, one of the most crystal clear rivers in Morocco making the crops the most lush in the region. Clott’s farm and many like it were built on such a huge scale – we weren’t used to so much land belonging to just one person - it was quite impressive, so much produced on such a high commercial level...but there was a tinge of sadness and resentment about it as that was our land and it took a foreigner to bring it to its full potential.

Research Interview 10

⁷¹ Bernard, 1932: 222

⁷² A company bought 1000 hectares near Casablanca in 1912 for 200,000 francs and then spent 800,000 francs in preparing it for vines and cereals. The estate produced nothing for five years, but was bringing in 500,000 francs a year by 1920. Bidwell, 1973: 20

Lyautey's resolve made sure that, during his tenure, agricultural development was only encouraged if it did not prevent local farmers from supporting themselves. However, his successor, Théodore Steeg (1925-29), did not share this view.⁷³ Steeg actively encouraged the colonisation of Morocco, especially in the Gharb plain, settling almost the same number of Europeans in three years as Lyautey had done in thirteen.⁷⁴ Irrigation on a greater scale would, Steeg believed, stimulate and sustain colonisation (the exact opposite to Lyautey's goals). If irrigated plots were smaller it would make them more manageable and therefore more efficient, so permitting more Europeans to settle in one area. Steeg's initiatives would represent 'an important new thrust'; previous government efforts had focused primarily on 'improving' existing irrigation, that is, on 'trying to liberate water from traditional systems for the benefit of the settlers'.⁷⁵

And what of these settlers? How were their 'benefits' perceived through the eyes of the interviewees? Well, mostly negatively, with one interviewee bluntly describing it as: "overt racism".⁷⁶ However, there were some who saw the benefits the Europeans could bring in terms of employment and new

⁷³ While French colonisation in North Africa always pursued the twin goals of *mise en valeur* (development) and *peuplement* (settlement), there were shifting degrees of emphasis depending on the administration. Throughout the long period of his residency, Lyautey emphasised *mise en valeur*, and preferred leaving this task to the well-financed private firms and an elite group of colonists. The opposite was true of Steeg, whose views on North Africa were moulded while he served as governor general of Algeria and whose political leanings decidedly favoured the European settler, not the Moroccan native. Swearingen, 1987: 51.

⁷⁴ From 1912 to 1925, 690 official Europeans were settlers. All but the last few months of this period were during Lyautey's Residency. From 1926-1928, the major parts of the Steeg Residency, 572 official Europeans were settled. (Hoffherr, 1932: 129)

⁷⁵ Swearingen, 1987: 53

⁷⁶ *If you were white you got the land and the funding to develop it. If you were brown your land was taken and your got told, like a kid, to: "watch the white man and maybe one day you'll learn and be as worthy as him".* Research Interview 28.

skills. One of these areas in the Gharb that saw great employment was thanks to the dam building schemes that Steeg implemented; the first which saw completion under his Residency was the dam at El Kansera on the Oued Beth.⁷⁷ The work created by the construction of the dams was most welcome to a local community in which jobs were scarce; men were needed to not only clear the land that had been removed by dynamite, but also to build the roads that would transport machinery and manpower. One interviewee fondly recalls their grandfather doing such work:

My grandfather drove one of the trucks that shifted the earth. Back in those days, being able to drive was reserved for a privileged few. If you got a job in construction, the French would teach men how to drive and operate modern machinery, skills which benefited them in years to come.

Research Interview 11

The dams would also provide fresh running water and electricity to many homes in the area; no small feat by any means. This positive legacy is still felt in the region today. However, there were still those who felt rather aggrieved by the construction of the dams like the one in El Kansera:

⁷⁷ *Oued*, being the Arabic for river. Steeg hoped that this project would create a 'perimeter of colonisation in the Gharb. Steeg quoted in *Recherche Colonial*, 1926: 562. While Governor-General of Algeria, Steeg had launched a major irrigation program that had earned him the nickname, 'Le Gouverneur de l'Eau' (Steeg, 1926: 121). El Kansera was to serve around the area of Sidi Slimane (a small city situated in the west of Morocco between the two major cities of Kenitra and Meknes). The engineers who built the dam calculated that the Beth's winter floods led to the creation of much of the un-irrigable marshlands in the region, so that draining them would create farmland ideal for large-scale colonisation. In the summer, the water that had been held back and stored in El Kansera's limestone walls would allow some 30,000 hectares to be irrigated. Célérier and Charton, 1925: 78-79.

The construction of these dams meant that, well, firstly, some of our land had to be flooded for the reservoir. Remuneration was given, but, really, how are you to compensate for land that had been passed down through generations, how do you compensate for the living it has given and would continue to give?! Secondly, the marshland that was made good for farming was quickly taken over by the Protectorate government and sold to Europeans...we were, effectively, fired off our land!

Research Interview 4

Instead, because the traditional water rights upstream from the dam were left alone, the Moroccan farmers continued to use the long-established irrigation techniques so fuelling the resentment felt amongst them.

While the European farmer irrigated and ploughed huge areas of the land, we continued to cultivate our land using animal-drawn ploughs; we continued to herd our animals in the same way and grew traditional crops. We were in competition and we could never hope to match them, even if we could secure loans to invest in new crops and tools.

Research Interview 10

The dams also saw much grazing land being flooded. In the nineteenth century, the Marmouch tribe of Fez had herded some 120,000 sheep into the plains around the city; by 1931 they were only able to take 37,000.⁷⁸

It was getting harder and harder for us to make a living in the traditional ways. More and more of us were forced to move to less fertile regions or less hospitable climates.

Research Interview 15

It was not just the foothills of the Rif that provided fertile growing grounds; the hills too had great potential. Pacification of this area had proved extremely difficult. It took the combined forces of both the French and Spanish armies, plus the dropping of chemical warfare agents,⁷⁹ to bring the region into the Protectorate's fold:

They were a resilient bunch – freedom fighters are what you call them today, that, or insurgents; I suppose it depends whose side you are on. My uncle would regale us with stories of the battles he fought in, waving about his right hand which was missing two fingers: “Son”, he would say: “If you are not willing to fight and die for your people, your land, your faith...then you have

⁷⁸ During his Residency, Lyautey did establish the *Société de Prévoyance*, which provided credit at low interest, but the numbers offered were too small to make much difference. Moroccan farmers had to increase cereal production because they were caught in a vicious circle. They grew crops that were not so dependent on irrigation and relied on uncertain rainfall. However, such crops yielded low returns, and with lower returns they had little or no capital to invest in modernisation and, therefore, paid a higher *tartib* (tax) than the European farmers. See Pennell, 2000:201 & Belguendouz, 1978: 151

⁷⁹ These attacks in 1924 marked the first time mustard gas was dropped by airplanes, a year before the Geneva Protocol for "the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare" was signed.

nothing". These words stay with you your whole life and you are left wondering, "what if".

Research Interview 19

In 1927, this was the last region to fall to French control in Morocco. Because of the great resilience it showed, many more garrisons were established in these regions:

I'm from the village of Teroual, high up in the Rif...it is a very remote region but, if you come to visit us, you will see how many of the old French villas still remain...and the old garrison you can see across the valley...it may, for some, be strange that such a remote place would have such importance in the French scheme of things...but we were a rebellious bunch, and the French needed to keep an eye on us!

Research Interview 1

The hills surrounding Teroual had some of the most abundant olive trees in the region and, because the army needed to be there for 'security reasons', they built (or had built) *L'Huilerie de Teroual*, the first such oil press in the area.



L'Huilerie de Teroual

Wheat was also a harvest that was in abundance in the region. The hills and the climate suited its production perfectly:

The Rif is ideal for harvesting good yields...the hills are not too steep but provide perfect drainage, so the crops never flood or suffer from mould. We catch the first of the rain and, should there not be much rain one season, we have the first of the snow melt. The summer heat is not that burning, dry heat they get further south and we do not get the salt-sea winds that can ruin a harvest; that can happen near the coast. You can see why we fought so hard to defend our land.

Research Interview 8

2:5 General Conclusions

More than any other country, Morocco lends itself to fruitful development; it is a country with a future. It possesses great wealth, which, for the most part, has not yet been developed and is, thus, capable of offering real hopes for our national activity. But let us not forget that it is definitely not a 'bled' yet to be discovered; that has already been done;. It has been inhabited and cultivated for many centuries and we must not think that, on arriving there, we have only to set up a tent, purchase some land and begin some sort of business or farm in order to realise appreciable profits. In reality it is quite different. The future colon will have to act cautiously, making a thorough study of the situation, as a necessary first step.

Comte de la Revelière quoted in Les énergies françaises au Maroc, 1917

In most colonial histories, economic and technological achievements tend to be regarded as more important than social ones. At the time of Moroccan independence, this bias may seem to have found justification in the fact the new government took over the economic heritage of the foreign colony unchanged, without stopping to think of the social costs of such actions on the Moroccan people. During the Protectorate, the section of the population that had suffered most from colonisation was the peasantry of the arable plains and mountains. These people were losing their lands and, at the same time, continuing to pay heavy taxes. This development went hand in hand with the consolidation of a middle class of Moroccan landowners, openly

encouraged by the French administration and bound by no customary obligation to the dispossessed peasantry. Moroccans who collaborated with the civil or military authorities were rewarded with large tracts of land. In a sense, this class was a successor to the landed aristocracy which made its appearance in the eighteenth century, but, in 1900 conditions were more favourable for its development and it gained unprecedented influence.

In Morocco, where Lyautey did everything on a large scale, the collective lands and *habus* lands, which supposedly belonged to the state, were divided among the large European land- owners and *Qaids*. In 1933, a third of the population was estimated to consist of landless peasants.⁸⁰ The big landowners, who were always favoured by the colonial government, whether or not they controlled the local administrations, were the chief instruments of the colonial authority in the rural districts. They even managed to divert the new reforms introduced by the French, such as the rural cooperatives (like the *Société de Prévoyance*, established in Morocco in 1921) and the Land Bank (*Crédit Foncier*), from their original purpose and turn them to their own advantage. It was these circumstances that, for a long time, favoured the big landowners and enabled them to get rich quickly.

The majority of the interviewees strongly criticised the rule of their country by the French. It seems that many of them felt that the Protectorate was far too busy giving the go-ahead for the appropriation of Moroccan land by

⁸⁰ Berque, 1967: 123

Europeans, all of which was later written in stone with the various *dahirs* released. As with any events in history, truth and fiction often merge. As was stated at the start of this section, one of the principal reasons for France's venture into Morocco was to increase her wealth and power. In order to achieve this, the Protectorate went to great lengths to colonise the country. However, in the early days under Lyautey, this was not entirely the case. It was quite clear that Lyautey was fervently averse to any large-scale land seizure and colonisation. As Poncet notes, Lyautey feared above all the 'speculative colonisation' as found in Tunisia:

Strong companies in the 1880s had resulted in the first French colons being speculators or an aristocracy of absentee landowners and of large, indirect developers rather than farmers working their own land.

Poncet, 1962: 141

In Morocco's case, the first official colonisation policy did not begin until after the First World War. During his Residency in Morocco, the question of land was the one that would trouble Lyautey the most. In Algeria it had all been so simple – the land was declared the property of the State and given to the Europeans for free. When Lyautey arrived in Morocco, such was his conviction, that it was not until the arrival of Steeg that the demands of the Europeans were fully met:

You cannot please all of the people all of the time...and even if Lyautey had a real desire to protect our interests, he was there as a representative of the

French and it was their interests that came before those of the Moroccan people.

Research Interview 1

Steeg was very much a career politician, so did not hesitate in paying great attention to the most vocal group of farmers in Morocco – the Europeans. As a result, it was to be in the most heavily colonised areas where the greatest economic changes in agriculture occurred, that is the northeast. These regions would go on to produce yields per man per hectare that were incredibly impressive by North African standards. However, for many Moroccans, both inside and outside this select perimeter, the reverse was true. In a sense, this is a reality for any country seeking to build an Empire – regard for others is often simpler in theory than it is in practice. At the same time, there was still a strong belief that Moroccans would benefit from the French colonial settlements and, in some cases, they did in the long run. However, Morocco would have to pay for these benefits by being placed under foreign rule and having the majority of their most fertile and important pastoral land taken over for colonisation:

Oh, they compensated us, but money is not going to make up for the effects of the loss of pasture land which meant that we had to keep smaller flocks. Money didn't cover the loss of income because of smaller harvests!

Research Interview 1

It has been said that France is the birthplace of dreams and ideals. Lyautey was an idealist; he was not a power-hungry politician so he did much to try and protect the Moroccans from the greed of the politicians in France; a greed they would feel more harshly once Lyautey was gone. However, as Stewart notes, by the time the French-controlled government was forced to turn its attention to the Moroccan farmer, the problems of the latter: “long neglected, had assumed vast proportions”. Stewart concludes by saying that perhaps the: “piecemeal, ad hoc, and long-range measures” which the government was prepared to offer, would have had a tangible effect had they come earlier. As it was, however, they were a poor substitute for: “the bold, broad programme required by the circumstances”.⁸¹

⁸¹ Stewart, 1964: 115.

Chapter Three: Agricultural Trade

In 1912, Morocco's only real industrial activity was to be found in artisan products (handmade leather goods and pottery) – agricultural trade was virtually non-existent. The Protectorate government was to change that with the development of a modern industrial sector which: “although relatively small, was a far from negligible force in the economic life of Morocco”.⁸² However, as has been seen in the previous chapter, any progress in Morocco was usually felt by the European tradesman rather than the Moroccan one:

The development was, of course, animated from the outside - mainly from France; and its direction reflected, not so much the needs of Morocco, as all the vicissitudes of France and all the hopes and fears of Frenchmen.

Stewart, 1964: 116.

Investment to Morocco, after 1912, soared as more and more European businesses hedged their bets on the future of a country where taxes were kept at a minimum, interest rates were high and the police and army were all French.⁸³

⁸² Stewart, 1964: 116.

⁸³ Much of the early inflow went into speculation rather than productive use; nevertheless, a beginning was made on investment in industrial plants and equipment. The Protectorate government did much to encourage such investment, which it viewed as a necessary supplement to populating the countryside with Europeans. To promote the formation of enterprises which were considered 'indispensable' to the country, subsidies were granted, government credits were extended at low cost and private loans were guaranteed by the State. See Stewart, 1964: 116 and Jean Chardonnet, 'l'expansion industrielle du Maroc', *Bulletin de la Société Royale de Géographie d'Égypte*, XXIV (November, 1951), 168.

This section, therefore, will look at the development of agricultural trade under the Protectorate. Research interviews will look at the impact of the economic life on the Moroccan and how mass migration to the cities changed the social make-up of Morocco completely.

3:1 Foreign Trade

Morocco's isolationist policies in the nineteenth century had severely hampered her trade with foreign countries.⁸⁴ The country had some business with Europe, mainly Britain, to whom she sold cereals, wool, hides and, even sometimes, eggs.⁸⁵ The remainder of her trade was with her traditional Arab neighbours in North Africa, to whom she exported clothing, shoes and silk goods. Her main imports were cloth, sugar, tea, glassware and hardware.⁸⁶ The establishment of the Protectorate would see a dramatic change in all that. A rush of capital would flow into the country; the economic exploitation of Morocco was now underway:

We were, in essence, France's playground. The westerners who came here were promised no government interference, a free and open market place and low taxes and low labour costs. Can you imagine that? They were making HUGE profits off our back!

Research Interview 38

Lyautey, however, was more hopeful than that. He believed that the effects of French investment would trickle down to reach the 'ordinary Moroccan.'⁸⁷ As

⁸⁴ During the reign of Moulay Slimane (1792-1822), the experience of the Napoleonic wars demonstrated the military might of the European powers and the weakness of Morocco. As a result, the sultan began a purely defensive, isolationist policy that sought to sever all of the country's ties to Europe and, at the same time, to curtail any possible provocations (for example, he forbade any further activity by Moroccan corsairs). This isolationism was characteristic of Morocco for the rest of the 19th century.

⁸⁵ Trafalgar, the Continental Blockade and, later, the internal upheavals in Europe during the 19th century, left Britain with an undisputed lead in trade with Morocco. Also, British products, especially wool, were much cheaper than those from France or Spain (Stewart, 1964: 37)

⁸⁶ Boutin, 1928: 12-13

⁸⁷ Lyautey, 1920: 25

a result, he encouraged much investment in the newly emerging industries in the country. He also hoped that it would prevent the over-colonisation of the countryside with Europeans. However, as was noted earlier on in the thesis, the *dahirs* passed, which were meant to protect the inalienable *habous* and collective lands, failed in their duty, passing much of the tenure of these lands to the state.⁸⁸

Lyautey may have set out to do the 'right thing' by us, but in the end he and his economic advisors would have the final say in who got what and what was grown where.

Research Interview 14

Vast colonialisation companies, such as the *Compagnie Marocaine*, bought up huge estates in the Chaouia and Gharb plains. In 1920, Eugène Regnault⁸⁹ went into partnership with Moulay Abderahman al-Kbir and, in 1925, Regnault set up the *Compagnie Marocaine d'Exploitation Fermière Agricole* to develop the lands of Moulay al-Kbir. Such programs were on a scale the like of which had not been witnessed before –one interviewee recalls how such a transformation of the Moroccan countryside left many Moroccans in awe:

⁸⁸ Wright, 1991: 64

⁸⁹ Eugène Regnault had been a well-known diplomat before the Protectorate. He became the controller of the Public debt in 1904 and principal financial advisor to the *Makhzan* prior to 1906. From 1909 to 1912 he was the French minister at Tangier. It was in that capacity that he intervened with Moulay Hafid to restore the sovereign's brother, Moulay Abderahman al-Kbir, to his rightful position.

Suddenly seeing industrialisation move into our area, well I guess it was quite exciting for a while...industrial tractors, irrigation on such a grand magnitude...we had not seen anything like it.

Research Interview 11

True to his word, Lyautey made sure there was plenty of work to be had for the locals on the new estates: clearing, irrigating, tilling and sowing, then harvesting the crops. With such a well-oiled machine in place, agricultural exports from the whole of Morocco to France boomed from 31 million francs, in 1914, to 114 million in 1918.⁹⁰ Other light industry began to develop across the country, such as the canning of vegetables and fish, and the bottling of olive oil:

My uncle worked at one of the many huileries being built around the area near Ouezzane. In the winter, the farmers would harvest the olives by shaking the trees and then they would be brought to the huilerie to be pressed, bottled and sent to market. The main one in Ouezzane is still there today and exports to all over the world, even England!

Research Interview 22

Whatever the faults of the Protectorate in terms of its economic ventures in Morocco, it did promote the country's food, to the extent that, in today's society, Moroccan cuisine is highly rated. The Protectorate also gave

⁹⁰ Stewart, 1964, 38-9

Morocco her trademark 'Maroc' label, which first made an appearance in 1932 with the establishment of the *Office Chérifien de Contrôle et d'Éxportation*, whose job - apart from research and education - was marketing: "It would inspect fruit and vegetables for export, and only pass products of the highest quality, which it would advertise abroad".⁹¹ The 'Maroc' label was the seal of approval, one which you can still find today. Go into any supermarket in the country and it is more than likely you will find an orange with a black diamond-shaped sticker attached, which has 'Maroc' written on it in golden font. This Protectorate policy was principally, of course, to benefit the Europeans, who had planted over 2000 hectares of citrus trees between 1929 and 1931.⁹² However, the effects of this policy are still with Morocco today, making it one of the world's largest exporters of citrus fruits. However beneficial this boom was to the economy of the country, not everyone felt it - and while the big businesses grew ever-more wealthy from the Moroccan land, the small farmer continued to struggle, emphasising the dual economy of Morocco under the Protectorate.⁹³ Expansion and progress, from old to new, is an essential part of any economic change if a country wishes to develop. But any benefits felt from such change can only be far-reaching if *everyone* moves from the old system to the new. Stewart notes that at least two things are essential for such change: capital and mobility,

⁹¹ Pennell: 2000: 224

⁹² Swearingen: 1987: 73-74

⁹³ *The coming of the French brought about a dualism in the Moroccan economy and the rules of plural society served, in large measure, to maintain it during the Protectorate. The goat-hair tent and the villa in living quarters, the six-by-eight cubicle and the Galeries Lafayette in commerce, the ancient oil-press and the modern factory in industry, the plodding donkey and the sleek American car in transport - all were manifestations of different functions by the various segments of the plural society in Moroccan economic life. Nowhere was the dual economy more evident than in agriculture.* Stewart, 1964: 71.

both of which: “many Moroccan farmers were signally lacking”.⁹⁴ Little was done for the average Moroccan to help him try and ‘catch up with the big boys’⁹⁵. With no hope of ever matching the profits of the ‘big-boys’, many Moroccan farmers had no other option but to sell their land and head for the cities to join the rest of the unemployed workforce in the urban *bidonvilles*⁹⁶, their once-useful skills going to waste in the modern European economy.

I remember the day so clearly when my father and his brothers left for the city; my mother and grandma were in tears. Part of me was excited for them, but I guess I was just a kid at the time and so didn't really fully understand what was going on. With age and hindsight, I see much more clearly – a foreign man came and took our land and means to feed ourselves. He then lured us to the cities, in promise of work, but instead left us to rot...

Research Interview 22

This powerful account is another reminder of Abdallah Laroui's belief that, in colonial history, one can only judge results, not intentions. The result was the creation of modern cities in which the European, despite being in the minority, was the dominant force.

⁹⁴ Stewart: 1964, 135

⁹⁵ Research Interview 1

⁹⁶ Shanty towns

3:2 Migration to the cities

Wherever there were political decisions to be made, new business deals to be negotiated, or new factories to be built, you would find a European in charge; a European who was well educated and well versed in the 'modern economy'. The migrants who came from the countryside were usually unskilled and illiterate, so had little hope of reaching such dizzy heights.

The dream that my grandfather had of a place where the streets were lined with gold was soon shattered. He had no city skills, no savoir faire of the men from the metropolis – instead, he and his friends cleaned the toilets of the politicians and worked night-shifts in the factories. A once proud man who owned his own land, he was reduced to this...

Research Interview 7

Talking to the interviewees about this period brought up one word more than most 'humiliation'. As the above quote explains, for the men who left for the 'big city lights' this would be their last hope of finding a means to support their family. They had already lost their land, but now, to come to the city and be forced to do such menial work, well, that just compounded the humiliation they felt further:

Men are far more proud and stubborn than we women are, especially when it comes to work. In many cultures around the world, the man is seen as the main bread winner – sole breadwinner in some cases – so, for him not to be able to do that, well, you can imagine the humiliation. This is what the French

did for us – you ask me about their legacy, well they took away our pride and our ability to fend for ourselves.

Research Interview 22

Migration to Morocco's major cities from the immediate countryside increased rapidly as more and more farmers were forced off their land by colonisation, population pressures, or both. The dual economy would soon be reflected in the social order of the cities and this un-regulated influx would, before long, produce a chronic unemployment problem that has bedevilled Morocco ever since.

Many of the men in my family went to the big cities looking for work. So desperate many of them were that they would apply for unskilled jobs in industry or transportation, or perform any of a wide variety of menial services required of them. You couldn't be picky, as fair-paying jobs were hard to come by.

Research Interview 38

The plight of the Moroccan in the cities was nowhere better highlighted than in his housing. The development of housing could not keep pace with the influx of Moroccans arriving in the cities. In addition, the newcomers did not have the necessary capital to build permanent housing and adequate

government assistance was not forthcoming.⁹⁷ The inevitable result of this was an overcrowding of the *medinas* and the subsequent emergence of shanty-towns (*bidonvilles*) on the outskirts of town. The *bidonvilles* were poor, but chances of employment were still greater than in the countryside. In 1931, Henri Prost, the *éminence grise* of urban planning, declared the *bidonvilles* to be the greatest problem besetting planners. Rabat-Salé increased in size from about 80,000 to about 115,000 people between 1931 and 1936:⁹⁸

Some of my family settled in the huge bidonvilles outside Rabat called Douar Jdid. They had no legal title and rents were extortionately high. They survived by keeping chickens, cattle and goats, or by cultivating the ground. Some people were so poor, my aunt once told me, that their home was a makeshift tent of sacks. One thing it did do, though, was it made for a sort of war-time spirit, everyone pulling in the same direction to try and better the lives of their families. Also, you mixed with people from all over Morocco - people from the Gharb, Sahara and Chaouia, were socialising with each other for the first time; this broke down many of the prejudices that had previously been held.

Research Interview 26

Migration to the cities would have a profound effect on the countryside too:

My father and my uncle would go to the cities to work in construction during the winter months, then they would return home at harvest time and in the

⁹⁷ Stewart, 1964: 141

⁹⁸ Gallisot, 1990: 74

sowing season; commuting on a rather large scale, but for very little pay...this left many of the women in my family quite vulnerable at times, however, it did teach them to become more self-sufficient, something that wouldn't have happened otherwise.

Research Interview 11

As Morocco had essentially been an agricultural economy before the Protectorate, there was little for the Moroccan to lose, but plenty for the French to gain. While there was an opportunity for those in the countryside to try and make a new life for themselves in the cities, if you did not have the modern skills, or learn them quickly, you would soon fall behind:

It was a hand-to-mouth existence for many...you had to be sharp and streetwise. If you didn't know what you were doing, you could quickly get lost in the vastness of it all, it could be quite overwhelming for some. There wasn't the peace and neighbourliness of the countryside; it was every man for himself.

Research Interview 40

Had the French planned modern Morocco better, had they foreseen the mass migration to the cities and met the demands for employment, then their scheme may well have worked. What actually happened was that the rich got richer, locking themselves away in their villas in *les villes nouvelles*, and the poor were left to fend for themselves.

Chapter Four: The Moroccan Economy after Independence

It is a question of the Third World starting a history of Man, a history which will have regard to the sometimes prodigious theses which Europe has put forward, but which will also not forget Europe's crimes, of which the most horrible was committed in the heart of Man, and consisted of the pathological tearing apart of his functions and the crumbling away of his unity...On the immense scale of humanity, there were racial hatreds, slavery exploitation and, above all, the bloodless genocide which consisted in the setting aside of fifteen thousand millions of men...Humanity is waiting for something other from us than such imitation, which would be an almost obscene caricature.

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, published in 1967

Writing from Algeria in 1963, the psychiatrist, Frantz Fanon, wrote his manifesto of liberation. In it he attacked European colonialism, calling upon the newly independent countries to make their own way in the world and casting aside the ideologies that had held them hostage for so long. Such political independence, however, can only be achieved alongside economic independence – for Morocco, this meant breaking away from being so dependent on France for financial development and aid. Additionally, subsequent economic programmes would have to ensure Morocco would not become dependent on other countries in the future.

This chapter, then, is concerned with Morocco's economic development after 1956. Research interviews will be looked at in more depth in this chapter, to see how Moroccans themselves feel their country has fared since independence.

4:1 Agrarian Reform and Development

The agrarian revolution required two centuries in Western Europe; it cost eight million deaths in the Soviet Union. We do not want to wait so long, nor wait so brutally.

Mehdi ben Barka quoted in Zarman, 1964: 118

With independence in 1956, came a predicament that would trouble Morocco for decades: the great gulf between its modern and traditional agricultural sectors. The French geographer, Fernand Joly, remarked that: “the net effect of colonisation has been to juxtapose a modern mechanised economy against a preserved archaic economy.”⁹⁹ France had rushed ahead with the development of the most lucrative areas of Morocco, while leaving those in the most unprofitable regions lagging behind. Was this a: “malicious attempt at dividing and controlling the country,”¹⁰⁰ as one interviewee put it? Perhaps this is a little strong; after all, France believed that it would be there for years to come, where would be the sense in failing one part of the country? However, we must not forget Abdullah Laroui’s adage that it is not intentions that we should judge but results. If this is the case, then France’s agricultural policy left glaring inequalities once independence was established.

French colonial theory divided the world between those who were ‘modern’ and ‘developed’ and those who were not. Morocco, in its eyes, was decisively

⁹⁹ Joly, 1948: 97.

¹⁰⁰ Research Interview 15.

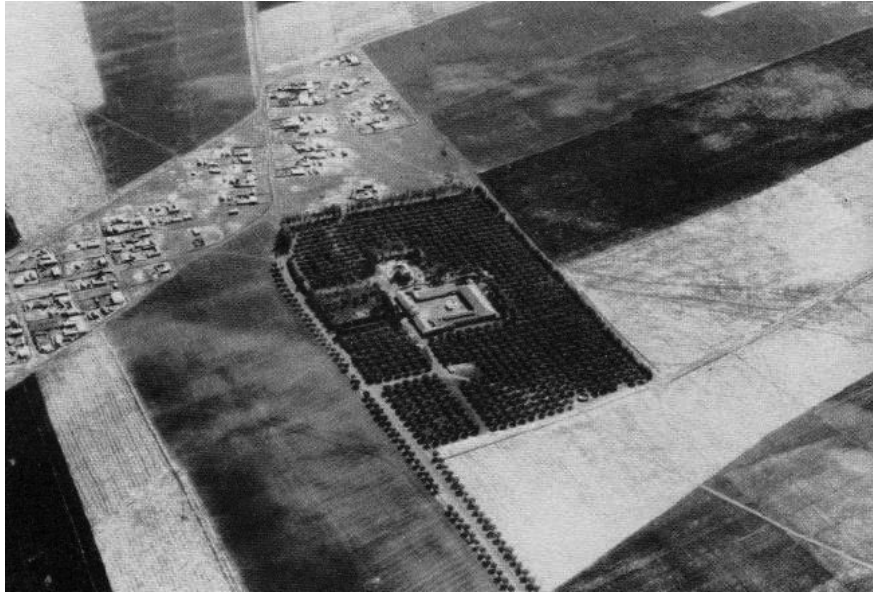
not.¹⁰¹ By 1956, the newly-independent government had now to decide what mode to use for their development: would the Western experience be their path to a prosperous economy, or would Morocco's diverse cultural heritage take the leading role? In his Speech from the Throne, two days after his return from exile, Muhammad V proclaimed that: "the farmer remains an object of constant concern for us."¹⁰² Concern, however, was not enough – immediate action was required, not least in tackling the enormous dualism that had appeared in the countryside. As Lyautey had discovered forty-four years earlier, land distribution was to be the most difficult and controversial question the newly-independent government had to face. Colonisation had left such unequal land distribution that, by 1956, some 1.5 million hectares of Morocco's best land was in the possession of 5,900 Europeans and 1,700 Moroccan elites who had: "enriched themselves more rapaciously than the Europeans."¹⁰³ The reverse of this saw around 6.5 million hectares in the traditional sector shared by 1.4 million Moroccan families, with the average holding fewer than 5 hectares.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Under the Protectorate, development was understood and practised by the French as a dual policy: civilisation and development. The idea was to emancipate the Moroccans from their primitive condition and exploit colonial resources for the benefit of humankind. McMichael, 2000: 23

¹⁰² Quoted in Agnouche, 1987: 310

¹⁰³ Zartman, 1964: 119

¹⁰⁴ Figures from Bénier, 1957: 181-182



Gharb village dispossessed by colonisation (left). Settler residence (centre) is surrounded by orange orchard and settler fields.¹⁰⁵

With such discrepancies, many Moroccans thought there would be a settling of accounts at independence. Interviewees who remember 1956, talk of the euphoria of the moment and all the hopes and aspirations of the newly-independent people:

I remember my grandfather rushing up to me, pointing at the fields around us, shouting: “all this will be ours now!” All that land that the French had taken, all that wealth in those huge estates, now returned to us!

Research Interview 10

¹⁰⁵ Illustration from Swearingen, 1987

For some, the Protectorate was all they had ever known and the prospect of living as 'free' citizens was an overwhelming one:

I was 22 at the time. I was born during the Protectorate; it was all I'd ever known. I'd lived my whole life as a second-class citizen in my own country...suddenly, I was experiencing freedom, that all that land fenced off with wire and glass that I had walked by for so many years, I would now have a share of.

Research Interview 11

Some interviewees were a little more cautious – half a century of foreign rule and false promises had taught them that all that glitters is not necessarily gold:

For half a century, our livelihoods and way of life had been taken away from us, for the 'greater good'. With independence came a wave of optimism that anything was possible and that, if every Moroccan got his land back, that bit that was rightfully his, the country could emerge from these torrid years stronger than ever. We hoped, rather than believed it to be true.

Research Interview 15

For others, the sudden change to the status-quo was a daunting prospect:

I can see my father's face right now, it didn't show the jubilation that others around us had, but was more sombre. I asked him what was wrong and he

answered: “what do I know of tilling this land? I did not grow up with any, and your grandfather is too old now to show us the ways of the fellahin...we do not have the European experience of exploiting resources and labour on such a scale. How are we to match this when we only know how to dig earth with our simple tools? Giving us our land back, well, you might as well give a diamond to a chicken...”

Research Interview 38

Giving a diamond to a chicken is a Moroccan metaphor describing how, if you give something valuable to someone who does not know its worth, or how to look after it, he will just peck away at it until it breaks.

Many Moroccans believed that de-colonisation and, with it, self-government, would, somehow, lead to paradise overnight. The king and his new government, however, realised that dreams were one thing, reality was another. They had to make sure that, in meeting the needs of the people, they did not pull the plug on Morocco’s economy. This was due to the fact that it was still three-fifths owned by Europeans (mainly French) so, any attempts to nationalise the land holdings might have halted economic growth, as the government were fearful that any favourable trade with France could be lost if it were seen that they were: “sending the French back home”.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ During the Protectorate, it was the large foreign holdings, bringing considerable wealth to Moroccan agriculture, that received the most governmental help. With such funding it was able to employ modern methods, sow the most up-to-date crop varieties which produced much higher yields – often double for cereal crops - and harvested them with the latest machinery. Such

One such sector of the economy that would have been at risk was Morocco's citrus fruit trade, one of its top exports, alongside high-value irrigated vegetables; they provided approximately 20 percent of Morocco's foreign revenue in 1955.¹⁰⁷ There were some Moroccans who understood this dilemma and were willing to give the new government the benefit of the doubt:

The orange groves were on an impressive scale, the like of which Morocco had never seen before, and the revenue they brought to the economy was crucial...however much we wanted to reclaim our land, there was risk of there being great economic disruption should all the French expertise suddenly leave.

Research Interview 32

While it was agreed by everyone that land reform was required, the size and speed at which such reform should take place caused considerable debate. In the cities, the push for land distribution found a voice among the working classes. The National Council of the Resistance called for:

Reform of the agricultural system, including distribution of the lands of the Moroccan elites and big landowners to the fellahin, the disinherited and the needy, and the restitution of stolen lands, and the rationalisation of tribal and

productiveness resulted in this modern sector accounting for most of Morocco's agricultural exports. Swearingen, 1987: 145

¹⁰⁷ *Annuaire Statistique du Maroc*, 1958: 98

*public lands under an obligatory cooperative regime as well as development and mechanisation.*¹⁰⁸

Demands for even greater land redistribution were made by The National Council of the Moroccan Labour Union (UMT), who called for: “agrarian reform, and the exploitation of tribal and public land through cooperatives!”¹⁰⁹ Despite their wishes for the confiscation of land and agrarian reform, as well as the overwhelming will of the people for change, the Agricultural Sub-Commission’s report presented in Congress in December 1955, had no mention of agrarian reform. The cause, it seems, could be found in the composition of the newly independent government – many of whom were rural notables who were among the largest landowners in Morocco. For one interviewee who remembered the period, it felt like the Protectorate had not ended, but was simply passed on, as if hereditary, from father to son:

Those wealthy few [Moroccans] who had lorded it during the Protectorate certainly didn’t want to give up the good life they had grown used to...no, there was no need for agrarian reform or land redistribution in their eyes...the system was fine. What could we mere peasants do with no investment or technical skills anyway?! Hmmm...

Research Interview 11

It is hard to change fifty years of policy instantaneously, but the king realised that some land reform had to be achieved, no matter how modest, so that the

¹⁰⁸ Editorial in *Al-Istiqlal*, August 24, 1956.

¹⁰⁹ *Al-Istiqlal*, 24 August, 1956. The Communist party also asked for expropriation and limitation of holdings during 1956. Zartman, 1964: 120

rapture did not turn into revolt. To this end, in the summer of 1956, the king along with the minister of agriculture, devised a plan that they hoped would be an appealing compromise:

Under the Napoleonic Code,¹¹⁰ variable marshes (merja) belonged to the state. Drainage of some of those lands was located in the Gharb and had long been discussed; some of the land was colonised and other plots were cultivated by bordering tribes, despite the recurrent danger of disastrous floods. The area in question was small compared to the possible scope of full agrarian reform, but, when it had been presented to the king, it caught his interest as it symbolised the hopes for land reform and headed off the pressure for a more radical programme. The king appointed an inter-ministerial commission to investigate the availability of land appropriated for distribution, and the Council of Ministers approved a dahir, setting forth the principles of distribution.¹¹¹

Zartman, 1964: 121

In September 1956, the king distributed 125 plots to the members of the Mnsara tribe living on the land. The idea was that the *fellahin* were to rent for

¹¹⁰ The Napoleonic Code — or Code Napoléon (originally, the Code civil des Français) — is the French civil code, established under Napoléon I in 1804. The code forbade privileges based on birth, allowed freedom of religion, and specified that government jobs go to the most qualified. It became the rule of law in Morocco during the early years of the Protectorate.

¹¹¹ *Dahir* No. 1-56-127 of 27 August, 1956.

nine years, with an option to buy after three.¹¹² Asking one interviewee if his father found this reform appealing, the reply was less than enthusiastic:

Well, you tell me – does it sound ‘appealing’ to you?!! This was OUR land that we were suddenly told we could rent and then, eventually, buy back having had it stolen FROM US!!

Research Interview 1

Decidedly unappealing, then.

¹¹² The fellahin were given a book of obligations imposing conditions of tenure, including full and immediate exploitation. The king also used the occasion to define his concept of agrarian reform, which consisted of a ‘better distribution of land’ and a ‘modernisation of techniques of exploitation’ in order to ‘accelerate yield and production’. A week later, the same process was repeated in the Triffa plain in the north-east of Morocco.

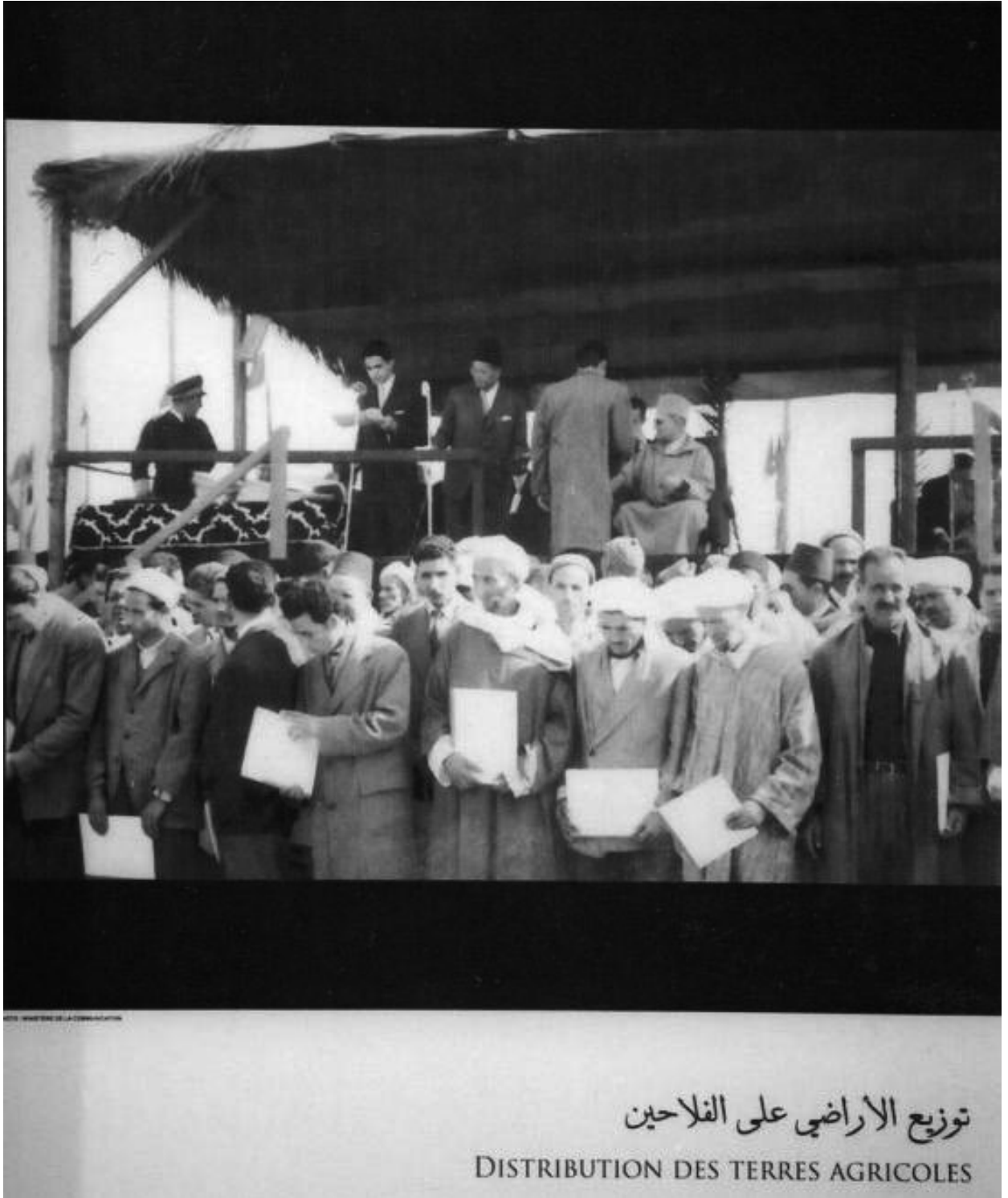


Image from the *ministère de la Communication*

While the previous interviewee was enraged by the land reform, there were those who were cautiously optimistic:

It was good to see the process of land reform moving in the right direction, however slowly...but of course, with any grand project, there was also confusion amongst the local tribes over status of ownership; they felt that the public lands on which they had always lived and worked were theirs.

Research Interview 38

You have to walk before you can run, so this distribution, however small, was a starting point for us...what I objected to, however, was that there were conditions put on the ownership of our own land.

Research Interview 15

As the previous interviewee noted, only minor land reform took place from 1956 to 1960. However, in the first years of independence, there were encouraging signs for the Moroccans as they saw some wealthy elites being made to part with their large domains. In one case, this involved an estate of 56,000 hectares.¹¹³ Along with such seizures, leases held by settlers on collective lands were annulled by legislation passed on 9 May 1959. Following this legislation, approximately 23,000 hectares were recovered from foreign owners.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Zartman, 1964: 193.

¹¹⁴ Bouderbala, 1974: 16-17

Using the recovered land, the government distributed nearly 16,000 hectares from 1956 to 1960.¹¹⁵ Each plot was approximately 9 hectares, which was fairly large: However, Griffin notes that: “these distributions, as well as the expropriations of foreign holdings, amounted to feeble political gestures”. With the average number of land reform beneficiaries numbering only three hundred per year, this amounted to less than one per cent of the annual rural exodus – “glaring disparities in land ownership persisted”.¹¹⁶

Despite independence, colonisation in rural Morocco lasted well beyond 1956. Most settlers continued farming. Mingasson explains how the: “profitability of many operations made selling out an attractive option; for an orange orchard, for example, net annual profit was roughly one-third of the market value of the land”.¹¹⁷ While Griffin notes that in this new, changing environment, there were some Europeans who: “looked to take advantage of the situation, by changing the degree of reinvestment in the land. Many settler farms became essentially ‘mining’ operations, where short-term profits were made to the long-term detriment of the land.”¹¹⁸ Such events brought a sarcastic response from one interviewee:

I remember hearing of this one case where this European, who had been given land under the Protectorate as a ‘favour’, sold it on for an extraordinary sum...you can image the delight of the Moroccan to see such a sight.

Research Interview 11

¹¹⁵ *ibid*: 409

¹¹⁶ Griffin, 1976: 91

¹¹⁷ Mingasson, 1966: 87

¹¹⁸ Griffin, 1976: 91

If sarcasm were the best medicine, then there were plenty of abuses of land reform for the Moroccan to laugh at!

To try and prevent such events, the government passed a *dahir* on 17 November 1959, making sales of colonisation land conditional upon authorisation by a minister of Agriculture, Interior or Finance.¹¹⁹ The net result of these economic and political factors was a '*politique d'attente*' – a policy of procrastination. "Indeed", notes Leveau: "the final and largest block of settler lands would not be expropriated until 1973, seventeen years after independence."¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Griffin, 1976: 101

¹²⁰ Leveau, 1985: 65

4:2 Land Ownership Today

And so, to today, what is the Moroccan opinion of land ownership? For some of the younger generation who never experienced French rule and were born long after 1956, it seems the question has never really entered their heads:

Er, well...I don't know, not something I've ever pondered...I mean we were never taught any of it at school, so I guess I've never really questioned it. I guess I see the countryside as this separate thing, like where my oranges must come from, but never really considered who owned it – the state I guess? Maybe there is a patch of land out there that I'm entitled to...that would be so cool!

Research Interview 5

Others look at the countryside in a more romantic light:

I love visiting my grandmother in the countryside; it's so beautiful and peaceful...with help from some workers, she farms a small plot. Apparently we used to have more ages ago, but, I guess, there's only so much land one person can farm...I'm a city girl at heart though, despite all my family on both sides being from the Rif, I don't think I could manage that life all year round.

Research Interview 9

This migration from the countryside to the cities was one of the most dramatic legacies of land redistribution under the Protectorate. With land

taken from them, many families had to find work in the up-and-coming towns of a rapidly urbanising country. When independence came, either they were far too entrenched in city life to move, or, because of the nature of land ownership prior to 1912, had no proof that they had rights to a certain plot of land. For many Moroccans who remember this time, the hurt and betrayal they felt at the time is still as raw as ever:

Still, today in Morocco, there is land out there which is not in the hands of the rightful owners...each day my father and I pass huge acres of orange orchards which stretch as far as the eye can see and he points out where my grandfather used to own land. But what can we do? WE have no legal documents to prove otherwise...it all got swallowed up; the French then handed it over to the state come independence...everybody used to know which bit of land belonged to whom...we didn't need maps to mark out territory or fences to keep people out...there was a respect for your neighbour because, who knows, one day you could need their help.

Research Interview 4

4:3 Globalisation: Business Politics and Trade in post-colonial Morocco

The first part of this section looks at land reforms and distribution in the years following the Protectorate. This next half examines the attempts made by the new government to achieve economic independence in the following decades.

4 :3 :1 The 1960s: Le nouveau Maroc se cherche¹²¹

The coming of independence gave rise to the most pressing question of all: where would the new government find the finance for economic development? Attempts made to answer this question would divide politicians for years to come. At the start of the decade, the then Prime Minister, Abdellah Ibrahim, introduced the Five-Year plan (1960-1964)¹²². Such a scheme relied heavily on investment of capital from private national donors, the rest covered by foreign aid. This plan called for the Moroccan bourgeoisie to *mettre la main á la pate* (pitch in) and take control of their economy which had, up to that point, been in the hands of foreign investors, mainly French. The desire was to move away from the colonial economy through agricultural development, administrative reform, the expansion of education and the development of basic industry.¹²³ Ultimately, the plan proved unsuccessful and foreign banks would continue to hold the purse strings of the Moroccan economy:

¹²¹ "A new Morocco, searching for its own identity"

¹²² Government economic plans, usually for five years, sometimes three, were often abandoned not long after they were born. Pomfret, 1987: 174-6

¹²³ Pennell, 2000: 326.

As I see it, the reason why Morocco fell at the first hurdle in terms of economic independence, is because those who came to power after independence - the bourgeoisie - those so-called 'elite' - were incompetent, both economically and politically speaking, in their attempts to take over from the foreign capitalists in our country. They remained the puppets of the old French regime and we all are paying the price for that.

Research Interview 37

This 'incompetence' caused the Moroccan economy to stagnate throughout the 1960s – it was particularly affected by a series of poor harvests that kept GDP below 4% a year.¹²⁴ Attempts were made to try and restore stability with the introduction of a Three-Year Plan (1965-1967). The economy was now to focus on industrial agricultural development as well as tourism, which Morocco's neighbours across the Straits of Gibraltar, Spain, had done. However, there was one small problem – agricultural development requires land to develop and, as has been seen earlier on in the chapter, the king was more than reluctant to implement a full-scale land redistribution programme. The reason behind the king's reluctance was due to the fact that he relied on the support from the rural notables who owned two-thirds of irrigated land. During the fight for independence the Istiqlal party,¹²⁵ who comprised some

¹²⁴ As a result of the deficit, money was borrowed, budget deficits grew, foreign exchange reserves were exhausted and a trade deficit developed. In 1964, the IMF advanced \$1.3 million, in exchange for a new Three-Year Plan. El Malki, 1990: 18.

¹²⁵ On 11th January, 1944, a group of urban commercial bourgeoisie published a manifesto of a new party to which they would give the; 'does what it says on the tin', name of *Istiqlal* meaning Independence. They no longer demanded reform of a Protectorate that had deprived Moroccans of economic and political power. Now that Moroccans had fought in the Second World War for democracy, the Atlantic Charter guaranteed them self-determination. The manifesto made four

of the urban bourgeoisie of Morocco, had supported the return of the king, Sultan Mohammed V, to power once the French had been defeated. The Istiqlal leaders had expected that, in return, the newly independent state would favour their interests, which included the establishment of a British-style constitutional monarchy with a nominal role for the king.¹²⁶ The party believed that such a system would be more democratic and represent the will of the people better. Mohammed V, however, was unwilling to relinquish his powers and, so, cultivated links to the rural notables who would support the status-quo in return for keeping their land. Such a scheme of power-politicking was seen by many as a continuation of French colonial policy, one which manipulated and favoured a few over the many:

I'm certain Morocco is not the only case where the joy of independence was so short lived. Exactly as had happened under the Protectorate, those who supported the regime received support in return – you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours type situation, leaving the rest of the country to fend for themselves. How is that fair? HOW IS THAT FAIR?! How can people allow this to happen? The greed that we had witnessed by the French had now rubbed off on the new Moroccan regime...

Research Interview 39

demands: an independent Morocco under Sultan Mohammed V, that: Sultan Mohammed V himself should negotiate independence, that: Morocco should sign the Atlantic Charter and take part in the peace conference and that: the Sultan should establish a democratic government. See Pennell, 2000: 265 & Alaoui, 1994: 86.

¹²⁶ Cammett notes that the motives for bourgeois participation in the independence movement are not necessarily so noble and that they really served their own interests, while ignoring those of the masses who constituted the base of the Istiqlal party. Kamal Mourad also argues along the same lines, noting that the alliance in the party between capital and labour consequently broke down at independence in 1956. For Mourad, Moroccan nationalism was: “no more than the march of the bourgeoisie to power”. See Cammett, 2007: 90 and Mourad, 1997: 98.

Another commercial Protectorate policy that also continued well after independence, was the establishment by France of a customs union with Morocco, so allowing free trade between the two countries: “Of course”, notes an interviewee: “this policy could only ever favour the French – sell its goods to Morocco for the best price and sell Moroccan goods – which basically belonged to the French – for the top price too”.¹²⁷ As a result, Morocco had virtually no trade or exchange rate barriers when it gained independence.¹²⁸

At the beginning of the 1960s there had been great hope that Morocco could start anew, both economically and politically speaking, however, the ‘claws’ of the old regime and its partisan ways, remained firmly entrenched in the new administration. Such conduct did little to help the stagnating economy during this decade which saw economic growth barely pass 2%.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Research Interview 30.

¹²⁸ To the delight of many commercial interests, the palace maintained the overall economic policies of the Protectorate until the early 1970s. To further consolidate elite bases of support across all sectors of the political economy, the monarchy gradually instituted a protectionist trade regime and promoted the expansion of local private enterprise. Cammett, 2007: 91. Writing in the early 1980s, Sluglett and Farouk-Sluglett observed: “in very general terms, the social and economic policies promoted by almost all post-independence governments have tended to operate primarily in the interests of the old loyalist strata in Moroccan society – particularly merchants, landowners and manufacturers – which like those of the monarchy itself, lay in the maintenance and perpetuation of the economic and social structures inherited from the protectorate.” Sluglett & Farouk-Sluglett: 1984: 84.

¹²⁹ Azam & Morrison, 1994: 68.

4 :3 :1 1970s: Moroccanisation – une lueur d’espoir s’êteint¹³⁰

This was a decade in which we believed that the Moroccan economy would take off, a decade in which we finally thought that Morocco would relinquish its ties with its old agrarian economy and progress into the twentieth century with industrialisation.¹³¹

The economic vision for this decade had already been put into motion under the government of Mohammed Benhima with the Five-Year Plan of 1968-1972. Its prime focus was agriculture (which took 22% of state investment) and irrigation.¹³² It was only with the arrival of the government lead by Ahmed Osman, the king’s brother-in-law, in November 1972, that things started to change. Osman’s Five-Year Plan (1973-1977) was judged by Benali as: “the most bold and original economic plan in Morocco’s history”.¹³³ It was also the most successful as the results show: economic growth reached around 7% per year with the establishment of a light-industry sector, most notably in textiles.

The 1970s was also the decade in which the phenomena of ‘Moroccanisation’ emerged. Much like the education system had experienced

¹³⁰ “A glimmer of hope is snuffed out”.

¹³¹ Benali, 2005: 13.

¹³² The 1968-72 plan’s wording closely followed the thinking of the World Bank mission (one of focusing on agricultural development). The plan acknowledged that, in the past, increased agricultural output in Morocco had primarily been achieved through extension of cultivation. However, the limits of the sown area had been reached. Since independence, agricultural production had grown at the feeble rate of 1.5 percent – half the annual rate of population growth. The consequences for Morocco’s trade balance were disastrous. Accelerating Morocco’s agricultural development was the: “number one imperative”. Swearingen, 1987: 162.

¹³³ Benali, 2005: 14.

Arabisation, an attempt to bring the Arab language back to the Moroccan people, Moroccanisation aimed at returning Moroccan assets to Moroccan hands; basically, a form of protectionism.¹³⁴ Some economists and politicians were worried that this new policy would just see the wealth move from the foreigner's hands into those of the elite. Writing in an editorial in 1973, Ahmed Osman attempted to quell their fears by declaring that: "This policy is not about nationalisation nor state control, but, rather, the retention of the traditional liberal business environment, while enabling Moroccans to share in the country's wealth".¹³⁵ However, despite all this euphoria and promise of growth, there were those who would lose out, because, while Moroccanisation promised the return of Morocco's wealth to its people, the laws just allowed the Moroccan elite to consolidate its holdings while the poor got poorer.¹³⁶ For those interviewees that remember this period, it would be yet another blow to the independence movement:

This is not what we fought for. We struggled so hard for independence and, when we got it, what did we find? - a Moroccan elite, well groomed by its French masters, ready to take the reins. They told us Moroccanisation would

¹³⁴ Moroccanisation was by far the most significant policy adopted during the post-Protectorate period, Ben Ali describing it as: "a fundamental measure in the definition of a new social pact". French investors retained extensive interests in Morocco long after independence in 1956. In order to, at least nominally, transfer majority ownership of French-owned companies to local private interests, the Moroccan government passed a series of laws in the early 1970s, known as the *Moroccanisation* laws, most notably the *dahir* of 2 March, 1973 and the new investment code passed in August 1973. The laws stipulated majority ownership by Moroccan nationals of companies based on Moroccan soil in the secondary and tertiary sectors, which meant that locals were required to hold at least 50 per cent of capital and managerial positions for any given commercial, financial, or industrial firm. Executive positions were reserved solely for Moroccans. See Ben Ali, 1993: 19, Cammett, 2007: 95 & El Aoufi, 1990: 13-14.

¹³⁵ Osman quoted in *Maghreb-Machrek*, July-August, 1973: 24-26.

¹³⁶ In 1973, 300,000 hectares of foreign-owned land were expropriated in order to Moroccanise the economy. But, notes Pennell, the Moroccan landlords were indistinguishable from the former French ones, except that senior army officers, politicians and urban merchants were even more likely to be absentees. Two big holding companies, jointly owned by the state and exceptionally wealthy individuals, such as the royal family, controlled 40% of the orchards and 80% of the vineyards. See Pennell, 2000: 345-6 & Swearingen, 1987: 180.

return what was rightfully ours to us; instead it just reinforced the position of the old elite and made them even more powerful.

Research Interview 25

Megalomania is a strange thing, is it not? It comes with paranoia. I think the government at the time had it, just as the French government did under the Protectorate – in fear of losing the wealth, both authorities nationalised Morocco's wealth, claiming that they would 'look after it' for us. Instead of looking after the wealth and us, they looked after themselves.

Moroccanisation allowed the already established economic elite to strengthen its holdings and make those in the upper-levels of government bureaucracy even wealthier.

Research Interview 39

Moroccanisation would be what one interviewee described as: "The Protectorate version 2.0".¹³⁷ Despite the government's declared intention of bolstering the 'nascent middle class', the laws would allow a well-connected set of elites to control vast segments of the national economy for decades to come.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Research Interview 11.

¹³⁸ Cammett, 2007: 102.

4 :4 General Conclusions: *Les Ratages de L'Histoire*

While today, Morocco's economy is growing impressively under King Muhammad VI, it took its time to get there. Towards the end of the twentieth century, economic policies had proven futile. At the beginning of the twenty-first century GDP per capita was \$1227, which was less than the previous year, and half the population lived on less than one dollar a day. Seventeen per cent of the population was officially recognised as unemployed, a figure that did not reflect reality; quite apart from the difficulties of keeping track of the inhabitants of the *bidonvilles*, in a rural economy, it was hard to determine the level of employment in the countryside.¹³⁹

The setbacks to the growth of the Moroccan economy in the years after independence stem from a reluctance from those in authority to let go of the reins.

In 1956, Morocco believed herself to be free, but, just because there was a new captain at the helm, didn't mean that the course steered would be any different. The links that tied the newly independent economy to her past were too strong to be abruptly severed.

Research Interview 3

¹³⁹ Pennell, 2003: 182

The elite fought to keep a hold of power, whilst forgetting to save a crumbling economy. Morocco did not ask the right questions at the right time; which laws best to put in place, what the economic doctrine of the day should be and how to establish the best form of economic governance. The large appetite of the elite took preference over these questions.

At the heart of this poor governance is an agricultural policy that served to benefit those in the cities rather than those in the countryside:

We seem to have forgotten that there are actual people living in the countryside...people who want to work and harvest their own land. It is these people we should be helping...we are not doing so by the construction of super-sized dams all over the countryside, flooding what little land they may have left!

Research Interview 1

One thing is clear; the Moroccans seek economic independence, which many of them do not think they have, so long as they remain reliant on Europe for favourable trade agreements, or remain in debt to world banks.

All mankind has a stake in the outcome of the fight for a better life, not only in Morocco but in all the countries similarly engaged. It may well be that the future belongs, not to the most vocal claimants in the East and West, but to the hungry two-thirds of the world. For this reason, people of goodwill everywhere and, even those simply with common sense, will wish Morocco

and others like it, every success in an endeavour worthy of the dignity of man.

Stewart, 1964: 205

The study now turns to the Social aspect of this thesis.

Chapter Five: Education under the Protectorate

A gentleman without reading is like a dog without training.

Moroccan proverb

Committed by a duty to spread *La Mission Civilisatrice*, a so-called calling that would bring: “peace, freedom and progress to those it came to, whilst at the same time respecting the traditions of those cultures it met with”, France pledged to bring a new form of education to Morocco.¹⁴⁰ Right until the end of the nineteenth century, French colonial policy had been built around the idea of ‘assimilation’, in which France believed that it was responsible for the ‘civilising’ of the people in its colonies by assimilating them economically and socially into the French *mode de vie*. A new century saw a change of theory and ‘assimilation’ became ‘association’. This new policy held that: “France’s Empire could be better served by a more flexible policy in which the colonised becomes partners with France in the colonial project.”¹⁴¹ Education would be the key to this new policy.

The ideology was supported by people from across the political spectrum – in 1912, the Socialist deputy, Maurice Viollette, addressed the French Chamber of Deputies with a speech embracing *la mission civilisatrice*, to much applause from the bench:

¹⁴⁰ Conklin, 1997: 13.

¹⁴¹ Betts, 1961: XV

*Whatever may be said, republican France has remained profoundly idealistic and if, little by little, it has been won over by the idea of a colonial policy, if it has ratified [this idea], if it is ready to boast of it, it is because, at every turn, the government has explained that such a policy serves the cause of civilization and humanity. We have made the country understand the glory that there is for a nation to undertake the education of so many peoples still immersed in barbarism. We have explained that our programme is to bring them, not in twenty-four hours, but perhaps in a century, to penetrate these populations with our spirit, to the point that they may produce men in the economic and moral sense of the word, capable of producing and integrating themselves through our intervention and under our protection.*¹⁴²

Marshal Lyautey would lead the way in the implementation of this new colonial philosophy in which French officials would work with their local counterparts. Lyautey believed that a Protectorate: “governed firmly, but indirectly by France, rather than outright colonial annexation and direct French rule”, was the: “best way to establish swift, decisive and inexpensive colonial control”.¹⁴³ Although his critics argued that leaving a native regime in power: “perpetuated abuses, encouraged double-dealing, and, at the slightest hint of French weakness, invited resistance.”¹⁴⁴ Lyautey argued the opposite:

¹⁴² Viollette quoted in Ponty, 1912: 31.

¹⁴³ Hoisington, 1995: 6

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

It comes down to this: to aim for a Protectorate and not a direct rule. Instead of abolishing the traditional systems, make use of them: Rule with the mandarin and not against him. It follows that, since we are – and are always destined to be - a very small minority here, [in Morocco], we ought not to aspire to substitute ourselves for the mandarins, but, at best, to guide and oversee them. Therefore, offend no tradition, change no custom, remind ourselves that, in all human society, there is a ruling class, born to rule, without which nothing can be done and a class to be ruled: Enlist the ruling class in our service. Once the mandarins are our friends, certain of us and needing us, they have only to say the word and the country will be pacified, and at far less cost and with greater certainty than by all the military expeditions we could send there.

Lyautey, 1894: 71

This new method of indirect rule – using the established, native ruling class as both a pawn and a shield – was the answer to Lyautey's negative impressions of his time in Algeria, where direct French rule had proved to be a bloody experience. Lyautey believed that the pacification of Morocco could not be achieved by military means alone; an educational system was required that would penetrate every corner of the country. Therefore, in September 1912, he established a commission to study educational needs for all sectors of Moroccan society and, in 1913, he created the *Service de l'Enseignement*. Rivet explains how Lyautey believed it to be essential to take the lead in educating the Moroccans before others could influence their

ideas: “the art of governing”, he once said: “ is to pre-empt the people’s needs before they look elsewhere for relief.”¹⁴⁵ However, not every Frenchman approved of an education for all Moroccans. It was feared that any Arab who could read was a danger to France. France’s colonial experience from Algeria and Tunisia showed that it was among the educated classes that the: “first stirrings of nationalism might be expected” .¹⁴⁶

One of the most conspicuous economists at the time in France was Eugene Etienne; he believed that educating the natives was not only: “dangerous but wasteful”. Etienne believed that it was: “through contact with the Europeans and by working with them, that the Moroccan would become civilised”.¹⁴⁷ For Lyautey, however, it was not up for negotiation. The military conquest of Morocco was proving to be much harder than first expected; many tribes were: “refusing to submit gracefully”, despite France’s superior weaponry and manpower. Education, therefore, was to be a way of winning the ‘hearts and minds’ battle. Lyautey described education not as an end in itself, but as a means by which the French: “must conquer the moral core of the native, and show him the better path”. Lyautey believed that an educated native: “will work harder in his factory and increase mechanisation on his farm” .¹⁴⁸ Lyautey’s educational mantra was always: “chacun chez soi”, which means that everybody knows their place in life; that there is a hierarchy within the

¹⁴⁵ Lyautey, quoted in Rivet, 1988: 1-2

¹⁴⁶ Bidwell, 1972: 237

¹⁴⁷ Etienne quoted in Azan, 1903: 29

¹⁴⁸ Lyautey, 1921:289

class system and people must stay in their own niche. He hoped to achieve this by an education specially designed for each of the Moroccan classes:

Each member of each class should be educated to fill the position into which they were born...the sons of the bourgeoisie and of the rural aristocracy should be taught so they can keep the lower classes at bay, succeed in commerce or join me [Lyautey] in ruling the country...The sons of peasants and artisans should be taught enough to become better peasants and artisans, capable of earning their living in their family trade with improved methods...

Lyautey, 1891: 449-450

The sons of the rich, therefore, must be educated so that they would not be replaced by a new generation from the lower classes who may have climbed the ranks through diplomas; the poor must be taught to work so effectively that they would have: “no time for political agitation”.¹⁴⁹ This practice had already been tried out in Algeria, where separate school paths existed for the peasantry, the working classes and the bourgeoisie. The education of both Arab and Berber children under the French schooling system would take place in what were simply termed ‘indigenous schools’; these put emphasis on basic skills and training. While children from European families were welcomed in these schools, most received instruction elsewhere where the teaching was considerably less basic.¹⁵⁰ Schools for the children of European

¹⁴⁹ Bidwell, 1973: 239

¹⁵⁰ Those who did attend such schools were often the children of European settlers living in isolated areas.

settlers were, on the whole, found in the big cities and were oriented towards academic studies rather than vocational ones. The only Moroccan children who could attend such privileged institutions were those of the Moroccan elite.¹⁵¹

To ensure that every man knew his place, Lyautey would do as had been done in Algeria and divide schooling along ethnic and social lines. Below are the four main categories that schooling was divided into:

- **Education for Moroccan Arabs**
- **Education for Europeans**
- **Education for Moroccan Jews**
- **Franco-Berber Schools**

Each category then had sub-divisions, all which will be looked at below.

¹⁵¹ The two-tiered system of colonial instruction remained intact until 1949, when a substantive reform measure was passed. On February the 13th 1949, indigenous and European school paths fused, creating common classrooms for all Algerian schoolchildren. The change was followed by the publication of a series of textbooks with a new perspective on pedagogy in the colonial world. For the first time in French Algeria, indigenous and settler children were encouraged to study an identical set of materials together. Seated at the same desks and educated in the same fashion, Muslims and Europeans would become French, authorities thought and would be more inclined to live harmoniously in Algeria. Educators believed that this measure would facilitate increased contact between settler and indigenous groups. Morocco, however, never saw such a sweeping reform in its educational system.

5:1 Education for Moroccan Arabs

Under the Protectorate, there were two types of schooling for Moroccan Arabs: one was for the working classes and the other was for the elite. In these there were many types of schooling established from *les écoles franco-musulmanes* to *les écoles coraniques*. However, the two that will be looked at in greater detail here will be *les écoles des fils de notables* and *les écoles rurales et urbaines*.

5 :1 :1 Education for the Elite: *Les Écoles des Fils de Notables*

The first of these schools was set up in 1916 and was established for children of the upper classes. One interviewee describes how these primary schools would select children whose parents the French authorities believed to be sympathetic towards the Protectorate:

They [the French] were very clever, they knew that in order to assure the stability of the Protectorate, they would need to bring some parents into the French political fold – they would look at the political leanings of the fathers and choose from them sons who would go on to be educated like the elite in metropolitan France. From these young Moroccans a loyal class of men would emerge, who would then go on to work in the high-powered world of business and politics, serving the Protectorate.

Research Interview 40

Another research interviewee explained how essential it was for the French to have, as he described it, 'Moroccan puppets' at the forefront of their campaign in Morocco:

Socially, in order to communicate with every level of society, the French were obliged to form a generation with whom they could communicate...on their own terms, so, specific Moroccans were picked who would, if you like, conform to the French way. These were, subsequently, the spokespeople for the French. They would then be an 'example' to the rest of the Moroccans and would proclaim, 'see how we are, all developed and civilized, you can be this too!'

Research Interview 1

Once educated to as high a level as possible, these sons of the elite would not only be able to spread the French credo, but also be armed for any economic battles they might have to fight to stay in power. Roger Gaudefroy-Demombynes, a high-ranking French officer in colonial Morocco, endorsed the schools by claiming that if the elite were carefully educated by the French, then they: "won't pose any threat". He believed it would be easy to keep an eye on them because of their: "small numbers and the close relationship that we have with them". With the elite in hand, Gaudefroy-Demombynes affirmed that it: "will be easier to nip in the bud any nationalist uprisings that could stir amongst the working classes".¹⁵² By 1928, five such schools had been established in Fez, Marrakesh, Rabat, Salé and

¹⁵² Quoted in Zouggari, 2005: 455

Casablanca, catering for 575 pupils.¹⁵³ Talking with the interviewees about Gaudefroy-Demombynes' statement, one interviewee was impressed (in a "sarcastic way", as they put it) by the calculation and long-term planning that had been put in by the French:

You have to admit, to plan a system of education on such an epic scale is sort of impressive – the effort made to give the impression that we all were being educated, while just a few of us really were, really takes some doing, don't you think? It was the fact that they thought of all circumstances. For example, there might have been a negative impact on the imposition of a completely French-style system and so, as you mentioned, they brought in Islamic studies and Arabic as part of the syllabus as if to say – "look, see, we ARE here for you, we DO care about your heritage". I mean, it's brilliant, isn't it? Manipulative and calculating, sure – but bloody brilliant!

Research Interview 20

Marty notes how special attention was given to France's contribution to science and culture, as this would be a way in which to: "enter into a relationship with the French in general and facilitate the development of business between the native elite and the French".¹⁵⁴ From the French viewpoint, this association was vital; if this new generation of Moroccans was going to be France's *porte-parole*, then they needed to be well versed in the country's long history. Georges Hardy, the Director General of Public Affairs, stressed the importance of teaching the young boys history with the aim of

¹⁵³ Rivet, 1988: 245

¹⁵⁴ Marty, 1925: 72

'instilling loyalty to France'; the syllabus had to show that 'France had always fought for justice and had always been victorious'.¹⁵⁵ Robin Bidwell, however, points out that Hardy:

Did not give guidance on the worrying question of whether it was suitable to teach the story of Jeanne d'Arc to a people under foreign rule. This question, and how to present the Revolution, were matters of anxious argument throughout the Protectorate and some of the debates reached the heights of absurdity.

Bidwell, 1973: 242

For those pupils who excelled in these primary schools, a place for them in the prestigious *Les Collèges Musulmans*, would await.¹⁵⁶

Education of this sort is, of course, nothing new. In many societies, if you have money you can afford a better education. However, in this instance there was a significant difference in that a new way of thinking, behaving and communicating was also being taught. These schools gave the French a chance to shape the future of the Protectorate, by guiding those it wanted in

¹⁵⁵ Hardy, 1928: 329

¹⁵⁶ As with their primary counterpart, all students applying for admission had to be heavily examined and screened by the *autorité locale de contrôle*, in order to restrict the number of candidates, because acceptance of too many might 'lead to the formation of *declassés*'. Colliez explains how the French authorities didn't want to have on their hands too many people educated to too high a level, as there would not be enough vacancies for all the demand. Moreover, the idea was to create an elite, a small elite, that could be managed. Colliez, 1930: 274. Following graduation, some students would go overseas to pursue higher education, while others enrolled in the various *Instituts des Hautes Études* which were set up in Morocco during the early 1920s.

power how to think and act. And, for those interviewees who remember this time, it was an ominous experience:

I went to such a school towards the end of the Protectorate, when the system had been well established. I remember sitting in class and being taught to almost hate our heritage...we would have history lessons about how France 'civilised' North Africa, and how we were 'living this civilisation' and that, because of it, the world was now our oyster! It sounds so exciting as a child or even a young adult, the chance to see the world...But, as an old man, I look back on this time and in retrospect, we were all being moulded into mini Frenchmen who praised the Mother country and looked at our own history as something of a lost cause.

Research Interview 28

It was put to the interviewees that there were benefits that came from such schooling. Moroccans learnt how to engage on a more advanced political level, not just with France and Europe, but with the rest of the world:

I agree completely; diplomatic relations were no longer just confined to the Arab East. Suddenly we had the skills to communicate on a world-wide level...Our economy has benefited hugely from the fact that, under the Protectorate, we became far less insular and opened up our doors to global trade. But it came at a cost – the loss of our ways and our culture.

Research Interview 1

Development sometimes comes at a cost, whether it is the loss of rainforests or the pollution of the atmosphere – in the case of the interviewees, it was a loss of national identity.

5 :1 :2 State Schools: *Les écoles urbaines* and *les écoles rurales*

These were schools for the majority of the population: the children from the working-classes. Vocational training was the basis for these schools. The French believed that the children of the lower classes needed only basic language and arithmetic skills:

The basic aim of the French towards the working classes, as I see it, was to teach them to read and write to only the simplest level, so that they could sign their names and fill out documentation, such as tax forms or I.D. cards...deep understanding of philosophical texts was not on the agenda here.

Research Interview 23

Practical, manual work was encouraged, preparing pupils for industrial apprenticeships. *Les écoles urbaines* were technical schools, developed from the vocational training units, added to the urban primary schools, the majority of which were concerned, principally, with apprenticeship in trades, such as metalwork and woodwork.¹⁵⁷ As has been seen earlier on in the thesis, agriculture was of great importance to the Moroccan economy; as a result,

¹⁵⁷ Scham, 1970: 150

les écoles rurales were established. The schools intended to provide a general and technical education in the field of agriculture and machinery.¹⁵⁸

Bidwell explains, however, that the aim of these schools was to 'produce quantity rather than quality.'¹⁵⁹ Some of the research interviewees were equally as cynical of the motives behind these schools:

The students who went to these schools were pawns. As soon as they'd graduate, they'd be put to work in the colonial labour force, the end result, producing goods for the Motherland.

Research Interview 7

While others saw the benefits:

Look, not all of us were born with the brains to be lawyers or doctors, for many of us vocational training was ideal. Of course it was done in a way that would benefit the French; we were under their rule. They were hardly going to give us an education that would benefit us in such a way that would allow us to revolt against them! So, when under occupation you make the best of the situation given to you, we did learn new skills and tried to make the best of them.

Research Interview 27

¹⁵⁸ Both urban and rural schools of this nature were headed by French head-masters, assisted by French and Moroccan staff. In 1925, Fez had three such schools, with a total of just over 100 students. Upon completion of their work in these schools, the pupils could then go on to an *école professionnelle*, which took the vocational training learned at primary school level and developed it for future employment.

¹⁵⁹ Bidwell, 1973: 243

Political motivations were, of course, behind such schools. Louis Brunot, the first Director of Education, wrote in the *Bulletin d'Enseignement Public* (B.E.P) that:

It is not the aim of rural schools to give a blanket education to their pupils...it must relate specifically to agriculture, bringing the land back to the students. It would be dangerous from a social aspect to direct the people from the countryside towards administrative jobs in the city.

He went as far as to say that:

Those students who don't want to study agriculture, dishonour the land!

Louis Brunot Quoted Bidwell, 1973: 243

These schools (especially the rural ones) played a key role after pacification of an area. Violence, or even the threat of it, was not enough to keep people at bay; the French had to be seen to be doing something productive, something beneficial for the people, otherwise resistance to their presence would never stop. The basic aim then of these state schools was to prevent education from becoming an instrument of social unrest:

If the working classes felt they were bettering themselves under the French, then there was less chance of them rebelling against the regime. The French wanted to create an impression of social equality; education for all. However, in reality, their intention was never to release the reins entirely

Research Interview 20

5:2 Education along Ethnic lines

Described by one of the interviewees as: “one of the most divisive policies of the Protectorate”,¹⁶⁰ the schooling of Moroccan schoolchildren, based on their ethnicity, would be one of the most controversial policies of the administration. It was the desire of the French to make sure that the social hierarchy of the Moroccans was maintained and strengthened. However, it did not stop there; ethnic divisions were also to be enforced and so a European schooling structure for the French and European settlers was created and a Jewish system for the Jewish community. Also, several Franco-Berber schools for the Berber community were established.

5:2:1 Schooling for the Europeans

In the early days of the Protectorate, only education for the French and other European communities was given much attention. These schools not only needed to meet the demand in terms of numbers of European students, but, also, to meet the standard of education they received in their homelands.¹⁶¹ The primary schools played the role of a melting pot, uniting all the diverse elements of the European community; along with French pupils, the schools taught children from the Spanish, Italian, Greek and Maltese populace. They even catered for those from Morocco’s Jewish populations. Moroccan Arabs

¹⁶⁰ Research Interview 1.

¹⁶¹ by 1927, the European population had grown to over 90,000, of which more than 60,000 were French Benzakour, 2000: 38

were not allowed to attend these schools; however, exceptions were made for certain members of Morocco's Arab elite.¹⁶²

The school's programme did little to adapt its curriculum to fit in with the Moroccan environment. The European schools made hardly any attempt at teaching their students about the history of Morocco and her inhabitants; Arabic was only taught at secondary level and, then, only as a foreign language, the same status as English. Moreover, it was voluntary and usually only chosen by the Moroccan Jews.¹⁶³ Students from the schools would pursue higher education, not in Morocco, but abroad in France or Algeria. For many of the interviewees, these schools portrayed the biggest sense of 'us and them':

This was OUR country, yet we were barred from attending these schools on the basis that we weren't one of them. If the French wanted to bring us on-side, make us feel as though we were part of some French civilisation, they were going the wrong way about it with schools designed only for them and them only!

Research Interview 37

¹⁶² In 1924, L'Ecole de Taza-Haut admitted some Arab students while, during the same period, the Bugeaud school in Casablanca and the Guéliz school in Marrakech refused entry for all Arab pupils. Knibiehler et al., 1992: 225

¹⁶³ Knibiehler et al., 1992: 225

However, divisions in education did not stop along European and non-European lines; they also attempted to divide Morocco down its religious lines.

5:2:2 Franco-Jewish Schools

At the turn of the 20th century, the Jewish population in Morocco numbered 100,000. For the French, as with the Moroccan elite, the Jewish community was deemed to be the perfect community to bring on-side. Gaudefroy-Demombynes was one of the men at the forefront of the policy, constantly trying to highlight the differences between the Moroccan Jew and the rest of the country. He believed the Moroccan Jew was significantly different in terms of his language, religion, culture and degree of civility. He claimed that the Moroccan Jew was: “economically-minded and driven and, thus, would work perfectly for the French cause here in Morocco”.¹⁶⁴ These differences were given credence by Gaudefroy-Demombynes in that the Jewish community originally came from Europe. However, as one interviewee points out, what he and other Frenchmen failed to mention was that:

The Jewish community had escaped from Europe. They were being persecuted by the Spanish and Portuguese and they found refuge here in Morocco during the sixteenth century. To then see the French behave as though, suddenly, the Jew was his ‘best friend’, and that he must be ‘suffering here in Morocco’, was utterly disgusting!

Research Interview 3

¹⁶⁴ Gaudefroy-Demombynes quoted in Benzakour, 2000: 40

Jewish schools were nothing new in Morocco; by 1912 there were already twenty-seven such schools, teaching 5359 students.¹⁶⁵ These schools were set up by the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, a Paris-based institution, during the 19th century. This body funded many Jewish schools around Europe and North Africa and almost all its lessons were in French. Because of this, these schools were almost ideal for the French to take over and run. They were restructured by the French and became known as *Les Ecoles Franco-Israélites*, which conformed to the guidelines set out by Lyautey and developed by Georges Hardy, Minister of Public Education. These guidelines indicated that these schools should instruct the Jewish students in more professional vocations:

We must transform the mentality of the Moroccan Jew...we must encourage them to study the sciences, medicine and the like...we must give them an education that will see them fit for roles in commerce and management; in sum, we must prepare them for the modern sectors and help them escape poverty.

Hardy in El Gharbi, 1992

By 1945, over 17,000 students were attending such schools.¹⁶⁶ By Independence, all Jewish children in Morocco were being educated in these schools (around 25,000).¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Figures from Benzakour, 2000: 41

¹⁶⁶ Bouche, 1993: 261

¹⁶⁷ Figures from Benzakour, 2000: 41

The French shared their bed with the minorities they thought they could easily manipulate, carving borders between us, exactly as they had done with the countries in Africa and Asia – we belong on this side and you belong on the other. It was the most vile and corrosive scheme of ‘divide and conquer’ that Morocco has ever witnessed!

Research Interview 28

The last of the French schools which cut Morocco through her ethnic lines were *les écoles franco-berbères*.

5:2:3 Franco-Berber Schools

In Algeria, colonial pedagogues focused their efforts on educating Berber populations in particular. There were passed what were known as the ‘Kabyle laws’, which believed the Berbers to be ‘more assimilable’ than the Arabs. Colonna describes how the Kabyles were seen by the administration in the same vein as: “the hard-working peasants from Auvergne in central France, to whom they were sometimes compared and who could, some believed, be gradually brought closer to French cultural norms”.¹⁶⁸ This policy would be mirrored in Morocco.

The Berber school system was part of the French colonial policy presented in the *Berber Dahir* of 1914. Schools such as the *Lycée Moulay Ismail* in

¹⁶⁸ Colonna, 1975: 347.

Meknes and the *Lycée Franco-Berber* in Azrou all taught French as the first language and Berber as a second. For many Moroccans these Franco-Berber schools, in which Arabic was ignored completely, was the most blatant sign of France's intentions to 'divide and conquer'

They were not content enough just to split us down our class lines, or even to single out the Europeans and Jews as most 'intelligent and modern', they had to split us down our ethnic lines too – Berber versus Arab. Centuries we'd lived side-by-side and, in an instant, they turned neighbours on each other, not with swords, but with something more potent – education.

Research Interview 11

Maurice LeGlaz, one of the colonels in Lyautey's team of advisers on native affairs, lead the way in *les affaires berbères* and was instrumental in many of the Berber policies mentioned in the *Berber Dahir*. For LeGlaz the Berbers were: "France's natural allies if they could be weaned from Islamic fanaticism and Arab culture".¹⁶⁹ Such an overt, almost racist, policy angered many of the interviewees:

That you do not like one group of people because of the race into which they were born is bad enough – but to take that hate to the next level and demonise that race in their own country is not only racism, it's vile and inhumane.

Research Interview 17

¹⁶⁹ LeGlaz, M. (1920) *Recits marocains de la plaine et des monts*, Nancy

They weren't just 'dividing and conquering', as you put it, they were breaking up a family. You want to know about the French legacy to our country, well, there it is – we were united, despite our differences and, now, we are not.

Research Interview 24.

Education would be at the heart of the Berber policy. In the *Bulletin d'Enseignement Public*, LeGlay set out a method of using education to separate the two races of Morocco: “the conqueror”, he said: “could impose any ideas that he wished upon the total blank that was the Berber’s mind”. Young Berbers were encouraged to stay away from *jumaas* (mosques) and other centres of Islam. He went on to say that ‘It did not even matter what the Berber schools taught, provided that it was in French and not Arabic.’¹⁷⁰ The importance of lowering the prominence of Arabic among Berbers is also reflected in the following statement by Gaudefroy-Demombynes:

It is dangerous to allow the formation of a united phalanx of Moroccans having one language. We must utilize to our advantage the old dictum of 'divide and rule'. The presence of a Berber race is a useful instrument for counterbalancing the Arab race.

Quoted in Benmamoun, 2001: 100

¹⁷⁰ LeGlay, M. (1921). L'école française et la question berbère. In *Bulletin de l'Enseignement public de Maroc*

LeGlay and his officers would celebrate the success of this policy when quoting the numbers of students that had graduated from such schools. By 1955, the Lycée at Azrou (a Berber area in the Atlas mountains) had seen 1,491 students pass through its doors, 500 of whom worked in government service.¹⁷¹ Historian, Rom Landau, describes the school at Azrou and others like it as: “an instrument for the disruption of Morocco’s national unity by fostering a Berber ‘consciousness’ as a first step towards political Berberism”.¹⁷² Where some divisions may have occurred, overall, at least when speaking to the research interviewees, there is still a strong bond between Arab and Berber, both proud of their nation and religion:

The Berber Schools and the Berber Dahir were not welcomed, either by the Arab or Berber community. I myself am a Berber and my father would tell me that this decree was seen as an attack on the communities’ Muslim Identity. The Arabs, too, saw it as a threat to their bonds with the rest of the Moroccan community. We Moroccans rely on the spoken word to pass on our culture. The French occupation set out to systematically eradicate this culture by means of introducing a new language and a Western style of education.

Research Interview 4

¹⁷¹ Former students of Azrou included 176 teachers, 134 connected with the administration of justice and 22 *qaid*s, among whom figured the *Superquaid* of Casablanca. The school also specialised in preparing candidates for Dar el Beida – 98 had gone there, of whom 42 were still serving officers.¹⁷¹ These impressive figures aside, the Berber policy would fail in its main goal of creating a generation of Berber leaders who would pledge their loyalty towards France instead of Islam and the Arabs. This resistance was seen in February 1946, when the students from Azrou walked out of school in sympathy with the nationalists who were demonstrating in Fez. Nine students were imprisoned. Bidwell, 1973: 251

¹⁷² Landau, 1962: 219

However, if the French really wanted to 'counterbalance' the Arab race, they would need to do more than build separate schools; they would have to feed the French language into all levels of society.

5:3 The French Language in Education

Mazouni explains how the teaching of the French language: “constituted the focal point of the colonial educational system”. Giving the example of Algeria, he describes that how: “if the natives could speak French, the authorities thought, they would have travelled half the distance towards French identity, gained ‘half French’ status”.¹⁷³ By conquering the languages of René Descartes and Auguste Comte, they would not only become assimilated with the French but become French. Léon notes how: “colonial writings echoed belief in the transformative powers of French”. Such had been the case in Algeria where: “pedagogues believed that in fostering the French language in colonial schools, substantive change would occur”. Léon gives an example of Algerian Jews who were encouraged to abandon their maternal tongue and learn French:

The Judeo-Arabic tongue, or Judeo-Spanish, spoken in the Orient and in North Africa, keeps the Jew in a socially inferior state. Yet, from the day he first spoke French, he felt himself to be another person; he became conscious of his worth and was able to consider himself an Occidental and, still more, a bit French.

Léon, 1927: 59

The sooner all colonial populations spoke and read French, the sooner these diverse groups of people would begin to identify in some way with France.

¹⁷³ Mazouni, 1969: 15

Prior to occupation, French was not a widely studied language in Morocco.¹⁷⁴ From 1912 to 1956, French was declared as the official language of Morocco (the exception being the north, which was under Spanish rule). French acquired the same status as it had in France and became the medium through which most education was given. The role Arabic played was reduced significantly and was only used when learning the Quran, or spoken at home. The time allotted to the teaching of Arabic represented about 9% of the overall school teaching load, at a rate of two hours per week.¹⁷⁵ One language that was not stifled, however, was Amazighe, a Berber dialect. In keeping with Maurice LeGlay's comments that the Berbers were France's natural allies and that they should be weaned off Arabic and Arab culture, the Protectorate officials decided to encourage the use of Amazighe and even put it on the syllabus in many of their *écoles franco-berbères*. Whilst, on the surface, this could be seen to be a thoughtful move on the part of the French, wanting to encourage the Berber community to embrace their heritage, many interviewees were rather more sceptical:

¹⁷⁴ If French was taught at all it was usually taught privately to the Moroccan elite, who would go on to work in the foreign office as diplomats or as businessmen in Europe. The only other group that used French were those in the Jewish community. So, although French was not completely unknown, it did not play any vital role in the day-to-day life of the average Moroccan. The native languages of Arabic and Berber all had a much higher status and were much more widely used. According to a report by Leclerc (1908), in 1907-1098, there were 42 foreign schools in Morocco including:

- 3 French-run schools (2 for boys and one for girls) which catered for 180 pupils;
- 4 Franco-Arab schools (the first established in Tangier in 1885) with 217 pupils and, finally
- 18 schools established by the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* who taught 4237 pupils by 1912.

¹⁷⁵ Arabic was not certified by an examination and most of it focused on grammar and theory. The teaching of the Quran, which took place after the basic classes, was optional, while Islamic thought was taught in French for one hour per week. Ennaji, 2005: 203-204

I am Berber; I speak the language; my father spoke it to me and his father to him...we don't need some foreigner, who has no idea of our culture, to come and tell us we can learn it!

Research Interview 35

It was a sinister move by France...So many people of our community back then weren't fully educated and, so, when the French came along, praising us and our language, then it was only natural that we'd be flattered and want to join in with them. But they weren't doing it for us; they used us, manipulated us to their will...that is something I shall never forgive them for.

Research Interview 4

Despite this 'good will-gesture',¹⁷⁶ French would naturally go on to be the dominant language under the Protectorate. It served all the functions of daily life: it was the language of government and business, of the media and education. It was, in essence, the only language that would get you to the top. Even so, despite how essential the language was, when it came down to how French was taught, there were serious divisions as to who learnt it best. For the majority of Moroccans who received vocational training at the state schools, French was mainly learned 'on the job'.¹⁷⁷ The Moroccans who had contact with the Europeans spoke a very basic type of French 'for

¹⁷⁶ Research Interview 35

¹⁷⁷ Research Interview 25

communication purposes only'.¹⁷⁸ The role of the state schools to impart French to the Moroccan natives was limited, as the aim of the Protectorate authorities was only to produce a working class of labourers who would be content enough with manual labour. The authorities' efforts would lie in establishing a high-quality European-based education for the sons of the Moroccan bourgeoisie who would learn French to the highest standard possible:

The linguistic policies were, in effect, designed to leave the masses in ignorance, and those chosen to attend 'les écoles des fils de notables' in the palms of the French...to be manipulated like puppets.

Research Interview 10

By the end of the Protectorate in 1956, only 10% of Moroccan boys and 6% of girls were fully literate in French.¹⁷⁹ The French language became the tool through which all French ideals were transmitted. "Language", as the French Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, Albin Rozet, said: "is the vehicle of our growth, our hold, our influence."¹⁸⁰

Through the French language, the Protectorate managed to brainwash generations of educated Moroccans into thinking like them and wanting the things they had...they slowly caused the erosion of our mother tongue on which our culture and religion were based...they secularised our system and

¹⁷⁸ Lanly, 1970: 367

¹⁷⁹ Ennaji: 2005, 205

¹⁸⁰ Rozet, P & Carette, E, 1980: 74.

pulled us from our roots. Roots that not only went deep into the ground, but went deep back into our history.

Research Interview 20

In a country so fiercely proud of its religious heritage, the loss of Arabic, the language of the Quran, was to be deeply felt.

5:3 French and Secularism: *laïcité*

Laïcité is a French concept of a secular society, connoting the absence of religious involvement in government affairs, as well as absence of government involvement in religious affairs. It was first established in public education with the 1880s Jules Ferry laws. The French believed that God belonged in the Church, not the classroom. For Moroccans, however, religion was a central part of their daily lives:

There is a common misconception – which perhaps still exists today – that Quranic education was simply chanting and prostrating; far from it. If you were to read the Quran, you would see that, first and foremost, it repeatedly calls on the believer to seek knowledge. It constantly uses the expressions: ‘Why do they not reflect, why do they not ponder?’ It continuously encourages the use of intellect and invites people to think, investigate and analyse.

Research Interview 7

Despite promises offered with the conquest of Morocco not to interfere with Islam, or the rule of Islamic law: “the French”, says Albert Memmi: “inaugurated a conscious policy of cultural disrespect – its subtleness at times cannot lessen its repugnance – which secular schools perpetuated”.¹⁸¹ J.P Halstead notes that the French teachers: “generally regarded Moroccans and their history with contempt and considered them cowardly and ignorant”. Halstead goes on to say that, in doing so, they: “Incited students to disparage their parents and their society...this, in turn, would result in their having very negative views of their own history, language and culture”.¹⁸² One of the interviewees questioned how the French, with no knowledge of Arabic or Berber, dared attack their cultural heritage:

The French teachers had a propagandist attitude in the sense that they did not show any respect for Moroccan culture and history...they described our past as being full of bloody wars and chaos, whereas the period of French colonisation was portrayed as a period of peace, stability and social welfare...

Research Interview 2

Before 1912, Morocco, unlike the rest of the Arab world, had remained independent for more than a millennium. Damis notes how the: “sudden submission to the French language and culture came as a blow to the psyche of Moroccans, their identity was under threat”.¹⁸³ Arabic was inexorably

¹⁸¹ Memmi, 1969: 3

¹⁸² Halstead, 1967: 132

¹⁸³ Damis, 1975: 78

linked to the Moroccans' identity, not just as Muslims, but as members of a community – or as one interviewee put it earlier - “of a family”.

Arabic, when read in The Quran, or spoken in its many colloquial forms – especially when it came to transmitting culture - was the language of communication for all of us on all levels. If you take that away from one group of people, we can no longer communicate with each other and must rely on a foreigner to communicate for us.

Research Interview 32

“The Protectorate schools”, writes Damis, represented an: “implicit challenge to Islam as a belief system and an explicit challenge to Islamic culture and to the Arabic language as a vehicle of that culture”.¹⁸⁴ Many Moroccans knew that if they did not want to lose their heritage, they would have to start a movement of their own.

5:4 Nationalism and Education

C.R. Pennell notes that, while many Moroccans had: “misgivings about the French (and Spanish) rule; this hardly amounted to a nationalist movement”. Any resistance to the French presence was: “so disjointed that it was quickly stamped out”.¹⁸⁵ The burdens of the First World War were in part to blame,

¹⁸⁴ Damis, 1975: 79

¹⁸⁵ Pennell, 2000: 211.

as many Moroccans had literally given their life's blood fighting for a free Europe.¹⁸⁶ However, the 1930s saw a resurgence of nationalist fervour and political movements began to emerge, many of which sought to save the Arabic language and Islam. It seemed only natural that any nationalist movement created to preserve the national culture and identity would begin with education.

5:4:1 The Free School Movement

There were many in the nationalist movement who believed that education under the Protectorate was not only inadequate, but extremely harmful to the Moroccan culture and identity.¹⁸⁷ As a result, some of its members instigated a programme which would lead to the creation of independent schools country-wide. Funded by the Moroccan community, the schools established were called 'free schools', because they were free from government control, rather than being free from fees.¹⁸⁸ 1919 saw the opening of the first of these schools in Fez, Rabat and Tetouan.¹⁸⁹ The core aim of the Free School Movement was to re-introduce Arabic into the educational system. Language

¹⁸⁶ Moroccans were recruited by the French into her regular forces and, by November 1918, formed about a quarter of the whole army in Morocco. 34,000 of them, ill prepared and poorly led, were sent to defend the Motherland and suffered casualties far out of proportion to their numbers in some of the most terrible battles on the Somme. Usborne, 1936: 218-19

¹⁸⁷ Although the French did not ban any of the Quranic schools or even force the Moroccans to send their children to French-run schools, there was a fear, notes one of the interviewees, that for the Moroccans living during the early years of occupation, the small number of Protectorate schools was only the start of a 'whole swathe of institutions that would come and drown us in French language and culture.' Research Interview 21.

¹⁸⁸ The term 'free' is a translation of the Arabic word *h'urr*, which in this sense means private. But the term 'free school' does not apply to all private schools; it includes only those which are indigenously sponsored.

¹⁸⁹ Several more were established later on in Salé, Casablanca, Marrakesh, Safi, El-Jadida and Essaouira. The total number of students enrolled in these schools reached about 1,500 – 2000 by the mid-1920s. These figures were by no means trivial, on noting that the number of children in the colonial schools totalled only about 6,000 at this time. Rabat, 1930: 55

and identity was, after all, their *point fort*. The teaching of Islamic Thought was also high on the agenda, a subject that was more or less absent in French schools:

Independent of French control, these schools emphasised pride in an Islamic civilisation that had been denigrated by its conquerors. They taught a return to true Islamic values with a pronounced modernist tinge.

Pennell, 2000: 186

A 'modernist tinge' is what made the Free Schools different from any schooling system that Morocco had experienced before; the Quran, ethics, *hadiths* (sayings of the Prophet Mohammad, as narrated by his Companions) and Islamic history, science and maths were taught alongside modern subjects such as European history and languages. If the primary purpose of the free schools had been to fortify Islamic culture in general and 'save the Arabic language',¹⁹⁰ the more specific aim, of nearly equal importance, was to: "counteract the denigration of Morocco's recent past by which the French justified their presence in the country".¹⁹¹ If this radical new schooling system was to prove that Morocco could move ahead and be modern, without the need of French intervention, then it would have to revitalise the syllabus:

It was safe to say that Morocco's education system was not as it was in the glory days of the Islamic Empire, when Fez was one of the foremost learning

¹⁹⁰ Damis, 1975: 79

¹⁹¹ Halstead, 1964: 438

centres in the world, but that didn't mean to say we needed foreign interference to help get that back. The Free Schools were an attempt to show that the past and the present could work side by side.

Research Interview 28

In addition to their action in formal schooling, the nationalists organised a series of adult literacy programmes. They set up community-based literacy learning centres in which the 'eradication of illiteracy' was seen as both a religious and nationalist mission. The nationalists viewed it as such and used it as a political investment against the coloniser and as a means to strengthen their ranks.¹⁹² The teachers were those who taught in the Mosques and Free Schools, for whom these evening classes were a supplementary source of income as well as a contribution to the nationalistic cause.

Although The Free School Movement was not entirely as successful as the founding fathers had hoped,¹⁹³ it did help strengthen the nationalists' goal of preserving Moroccan heritage, something that did not go unnoticed by many interviewees:

I was pretty young at the time I attended my Free School in Rabat. At that age, you're not so aware of the politics that were behind these schools, but,

¹⁹² Ezzaki, 1998: 7

¹⁹³ Around 1924, French authorities, claiming that politics and anti-French ideas were being taught in the free schools, decided to expand *les écoles des fils de notables*, and to increase the number of hours devoted to Arabic instruction. Brown: 417

looking back, I can see that their raison d'être was to preserve the cultural heritage of Islam, which was in danger of being lost by the French presence.

Research Interview 21

Moreover, these schools were an acknowledgement, by at least some Moroccans, that their educational system needed some modernising to be able to compete with the Western world.

5:5 General Conclusions

In his article *Francophonie: The French African*, Pierre Alexandre, notes that:

The man in the street, in any French street, is generally aware, at least in a dim, intuitive way, that language, or at any rate the French language, is a social institution...The Academie Française, for instance, is, theoretically, an administrative body of experts appointed to advise the government on linguistic matters.

Alexandre, 1969:118-19

Alexandre goes on to note that even the most popular French newspapers have a regular grammar column and there have been quite serious proposals to: “punish public solecisms and barbarisms as misdemeanors, in the same class as traffic violations”. The French have, in short, ‘a messianic attitude’ concerning their language. It was around this mind-set that France’s colonial education policy in Morocco was based; little would be left for the native languages, as France saw to extend her social influence ever further. The French language was taught, not simply as a means of communication, but as a key to a new way of life.

The outcome of France’s work in the field of education could seem to be slightly disappointing, when one looks at the impact it had on how poorly the native Arab population was taught: “By 1956 the entire European population

was educated (i.e. could read and write) as was 80% of the Jewish Population. Compare this to only 13% of the Arab population.”¹⁹⁴

Lyautey took charge of what he believed to be a ‘backward country’, and imposed on it an educational policy that raised the elite and gave restricted education to the masses, believing that, if you can keep the elite on your side, the neglect of the masses would not be politically dangerous. However, the French were far too naïve and unaware of the complexities of Morocco’s social environment. France was unable to shrug off its paternalistic instincts which led her to take complete control of social matters, without worrying too much about the opinion of those concerned. As one of my interviewees put it: ‘did they think the Moroccans even had an opinion!’¹⁹⁵

The basic aim of any colonial power is to take charge of the economy and community, and one of the most obvious means of doing so is in education. Moreover, if within the educational system you can further divide the country through ethnic lines, the better the colonisers’ chance at total domination:

For centuries Arabs, Berbers and Jews have lived side by side, peacefully in Morocco. Then, along come the French and divide us all between our ethnic lines...no regard for the consequences that would result from this. We are a country based on and proud of our different cultural and religious backgrounds. Sure, there are differences, but we held together – Arab,

¹⁹⁴ Zougari, 5005: 453

¹⁹⁵ Research Interview 38

Berber and Jew – we are all Moroccans. Then along came the French and pigeonhole us. I'm still not sure if we, as a nation, have ever recovered from that.

Research Interview 19

Even if educational reform was something that Morocco needed, it could not be achieved within the colonial context. Only the abolition of colonialism could necessitate real reform.

Chapter Six: Education After Independence: Arabisation.

The only person who is educated is the one who had learned how to learn...and change.

Carl Rogers, *On Becoming a Person*: 1961

For the Moroccan king, Muhammad V, the education of his newly-independent country was to be of the utmost importance. He had become heavily involved in the nationalist movement during the latter years of the Protectorate and had encouraged the establishment of the *Free Schools* shortly before his exile to Madagascar in 1953. On his return from exile in 1955, he called on the Moroccan masses to fight: “the struggle against illiteracy and ignorance”. A year later, in his *Speech from the Throne*, he set out his guidelines for the future of the Moroccan educational system.¹⁹⁶

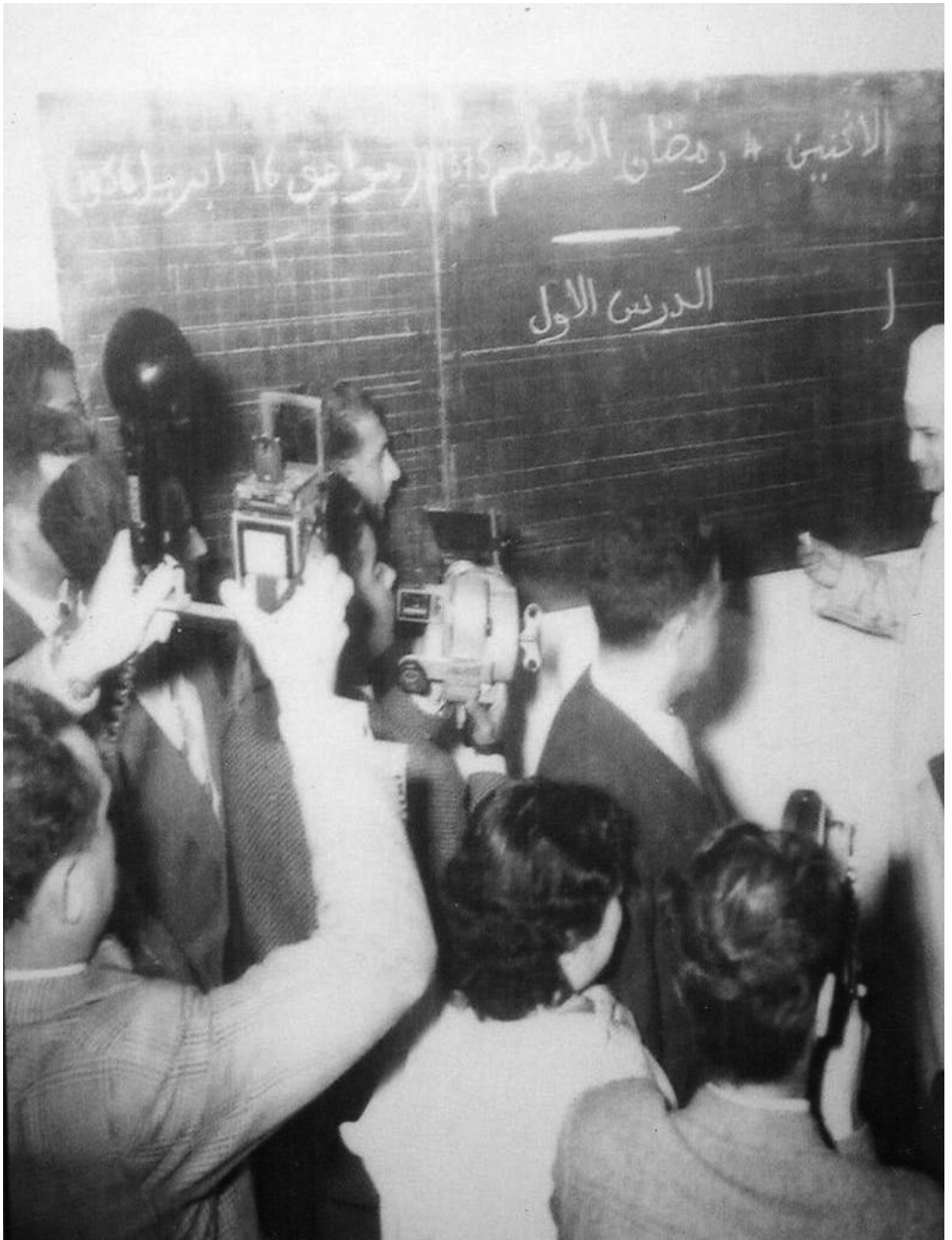
*In the educational domain, our efforts will consist of intensifying the schooling of children and increasing the number of students, of founding a University, of pursuing the effort of Arabising and generalising education... of creating an educational system that is Moroccan in its thinking, Arabic in its language and Muslim in its spirit.*¹⁹⁷

Thinking and spirit is one matter, actual implementation is another. This chapter looks at the Arabisation process and how, although Arabic was re-

¹⁹⁶ Quoted in Zartman, 1964: 155

¹⁹⁷ Muhammad V, ‘The first anniversary of the King’s return to Morocco’ (Speech of November 18 1956) .

instated as the official language of Morocco, the newly-independent state had to contend with a colonial heritage of half a century, in which French had become the official tongue through which all mainstream education was taught. It also looks at how the shortage of Arabic teachers in Morocco at the time was so dire that the new government had to recruit Quranic teachers for primary education, as most of the Moroccan teachers and administrators at that time were educated in French only. The experience of the Research Interviewees during this time explores the Arabisation policy in more depth and what real changes were needed to the educational system at the time.



King Muhammad V (far left), initiating his program against illiteracy.

6:1 Attitudes towards Arabisation

Despite its demotion on Independence, French lost none of its prestige. For the nationalist movement, which had fought so hard for independence, this was wholly inadequate. They argued that a continuation of the status quo in relation to French would undermine the self-respect of the Moroccan people and that the use of: “a foreign language is a symbol of slavery”.¹⁹⁸

I mean, it was just unfathomable that French would play even a small role in Morocco's new future...there was huge uproar against any proposal of French being used because it had been such a divisive force under the Protectorate!

Research Interview 38

The ‘foreign language’, in fact, created two nations: the nationalist paper, Al Hayat, claimed the French language had created a small minority educated in French: “attached to the ruling class and the illiterate masses”. It claimed that these groups were: “segregated and isolated from each other, with little mutual comprehension and empathy”. Freedom, claimed the editorial: “could only be achieved if the French language were to be banished, just as the Protectorate authorities were banished”. It argued that the French language had: “stifled the Moroccan identity and that it was time to regain it”.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ Editorial “Al-Istiqlal” No 59: 1958. The maintenance of French, the nationalists believed, meant the maintenance of cultural colonialisation, a less-than-perfect independence, in fact, a direct dependence on the former colonial power; Arabisation meant joining the Arab brothers and other people ‘in love with liberty’, as the phrase went, and liberation from the yoke of colonialism. Zartman, 1964: 159.

¹⁹⁹ Al Hayat, January 1957

Education through the native language would be the surest way to regain that lost identity. Bentahila notes that the consequence of learning through an alien language resulted in a: “strenuous burdening of the memory” and a: “sacrifice of the faculty of independent thinking, and a blunting of the intellect”.²⁰⁰ For the nationalists, therefore, the Arabisation of the whole education system was key; if Morocco was to achieve its autonomy. If the nationalists believed that the above provided compelling reasons for the Arabisation process, there were, points out Kamal Salhi, equally powerful points that: “supported, if not the complete maintenance of the status quo, at least the continuing importance of French”.²⁰¹ Some of the interviewees sided with Salhi’s reasoning:

It was all very well saying that we had to relinquish all our ties with France and the French language, but for many people, especially those in privileged social and economic places, it was their knowledge of French that had got them to the top in the first place. They were hardly likely to let go of that easily.

Research Interview 17

Salhi describes this as the: “delicate power of inertia, the persistence of things already in existence”²⁰² - nearly half a century of work cannot be undone in an instant. Salhi goes on to explain how, because both Arabic and Berber had been left to stagnate for so long, they had not: “adequately

²⁰⁰ Bentahila, 1983: 129

²⁰¹ Salhi, 2002: 326

²⁰² *Ibid.*

developed terminology for the purposes of education at all levels and administration”.²⁰³ Modernisation was the key aim of the newly-independent state; however, in order to modernise, the state must have access to modern science and technology. But all modern science and technology literature was in the French language.²⁰⁴ Albert Hourani explains how Moroccans faced such a problem because, unlike British colonies where: “subjects were taught English on a need-to-know basis”, the French system of rule would introduce a: “large population which controlled government and economy and lead to the penetration of a knowledge of French to a lower level of society than in the Arab east; the independent governments, while emphasising the importance of Arabic, regarded bilingualism as part of their cultural capital”.²⁰⁵ One research interviewee gave an interesting reply to Hourani’s analysis:

I think he [Hourani] makes a very good point; we weren’t just occupied physically – our land being taken from us and so forth – but psychologically also. The French didn’t want to just take our wealth, they wanted to take our identity too and replace it with that of a Frenchmen. And what a marvellous job they made of it...

Research Interview 12

²⁰³ Salhi notes how there is one other factor that drastically reduced the chances of local languages achieving positions of prominence: the requirements of science, technology and international communication. 2002: 326-327.

²⁰⁴ Ezzaki and Wagner, 1992: 216 The nationalists argued that Arabic was spoken elsewhere in the world and that Morocco should look to her Arab brothers in the Middle East. But here, English was the dominant language in academic research and economic development.

²⁰⁵ In some universities, efforts were made to teach all subjects in Arabic, including the natural sciences, but this raised difficulties: textbooks in Arabic could be produced, but a student who could not read scholarly or scientific works in the main languages of higher learning, was at a disadvantage. Many thousands of students were sent abroad to study on government scholarships and they needed to go with a foreign language thoroughly learnt. Hourani, 2002: 391-92.

While the nationalists were determined that total Arabisation would be the only way forward, another group who emerged from the independence movement, the Modernists, who while acknowledging that some form of Arabisation was needed, believed this should not be to the detriment of how students were taught.²⁰⁶ The modernist vision of progress was via industrialisation and an education system fit for all – the nationalists’ “emotional attachment to a cultural image of Morocco” was putting their hearts before their heads.²⁰⁷

*We [the modernist movement] intend to conserve the use of French, not so much for love of France, but the necessity of having an opening into the West...We are firmly decided to go ahead with Arabisation...and to affirm our Islamic culture by using French as a complementary language...so as not to remain in asphyxiating isolation.*²⁰⁸

While many of the interviewees were highly critical of the hesitancy shown over Arabisation, some understood that immediate change might have had a negative impact on learning:

Of course we were happy for our language to regain the prestige it had lost during all those decades of occupation, but counterbalancing that was the

²⁰⁶ Since the Moroccan educational system had to prepare its students for a role in a world of modern skills, the Modernists argued that it was more important to teach the pupils the skills in French, a language in which there were adequate texts, than it was to entrust schooling to the underdeveloped scientific and technical vocabularies of the Arabic language. The development of the nation’s culture to fit its vocation could follow the primary task of training the youth. See Zartman, 1964: 158 & Faure, 1960: 31.

²⁰⁷ Zartman, 1964: 158.

²⁰⁸ Editorial by Mehdi ben Barka writing in Al-‘Alam, May 15, 1957. Ben Barka was a leading figure in the nationalist movement and would become the spokesman for modernism after independence.

immediate need for children to be educated; we didn't have the resources to change over right away; if we had, it would have been to the detriment of their education.

Research Interview 36

Muhammad Tahiri, a prominent economist during the late 1950s and former Undersecretary of State in the Educational Ministry, had been a leading proponent of this group and claimed that hurried and total Arabisation would impede economic progress:

The hasty Arabisation which caused the resignation of several hundred qualified French instructors is deplorable. Technical Arabic is made at the crucible of the shop; it does not enter the shop by way of translation.

Tahiri in Zartman, 1964: 159

As a result, in the name of achieving modernity, French continued to be the language of education, from primary school to university. Arabic, on the other hand, was taught as a foreign language. On the rare occasions it was used to teach, it was only for Islamic studies. The teaching and the study of French thus continued, more or less, as it had done under the Protectorate, always modelling itself on the national curriculum in France. School books printed in Paris were shipped to Morocco, which included the literary works of France's great writers and guides for teachers on how to teach the history of French civilization. Just as before its independence, the goals were more

about the study of the culture of the foreign language, rather than being able to speak it fluently. One interviewee who went through the system did not find that it gave them the skills for the modern world; it simply gave them the ability to “philosophise” about the old world:

It wasn't about being able to communicate one's own opinions or intellectual facts, it was more what you knew about the poets of France and her 'glorious' past.

Research interview 2

This ideal continued throughout the 1960s, as this article released in the *Nouvelles Instructions Officielles*, by the Ministry of Education shows:

The texts chosen are those from the sixteenth century right through to the present day... it is, without doubt, correct that the true knowledge of a language is not complete without the major works which educate us about the century in which they were written. It is, thus, through these that the student will learn about the seminal moments in French thought (humanism, classicism, the Enlightenment, romanticism and naturalism...)

Moroccan Ministry of National Education, 1969: 163

Moreover, the study of such texts was seen as:

A means to instil morals within the pupils...and hope that they can achieve something great in their lifetime.

Moroccan Ministry of National Education, 1969: 174-175

Each lesson was moulded around the language and the culture of France.

One interviewee commented on how such a policy, rather than enabling them to become better thinkers, turned them into philosophers of French literature:

I went to school in the late 50s and 60s, yet, I still remember my timetable...we had a lesson called 'conversation' which, as the name suggests, was an oral class. However, we would only talk about banal things like a cinema show we may have seen – which were all in French anyway – we never learnt how to debate politically about our own culture. Then there were French grammar and vocabulary lessons and then there were lessons on how to summarise texts and construct essays...all in French, of course. We became francophones, even though we'd never left Morocco in our lives!

Research Interview 7

Some enjoyed the experience of learning a foreign language, even if it was not of much use to them in the future:

Literature was the class I remember best; perhaps it's because of our teacher, Monsieur Dauphin, he scared me! But he was a good teacher, and I quite enjoyed some of the texts we read, 'Thérèse Desquéroux' by Mauriac, 'Le Grand Meaulnes' by Fournier and 'Phèdre' were some of those which we took to pieces. I've never had any reason to use the information that I learned about them, but, I suppose the skill is there...

Research Interview 27

Others, however, are more critical of their education:

'French Society' – there was a class I never understood. Why not Moroccan society? Sure, it was interesting, I guess, to know about French unemployment, the party politics of France, the French peasantry and the working class movement in France – but, of what use is that to a group of Moroccan school kids, who would probably never be able to afford to visit France in their lifetime!

Research Interview 15

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, if Moroccans wanted to give their children the best education, it was only available in the French language. As higher education in the sciences required students to go abroad to study, in either France or Belgium, knowledge of French was essential – this had many of the interviewees wondering whether Morocco was truly independent or not:

I understand that, in the early days, total Arabisation would have been unfeasible – but for French to continue, decades later – as if you could only be thought of as educated if you spoke someone else's language - well, what sort of freedom is that?

Research Interview 11

Attempts were made, during the 1960s, at Arabising some areas of education. The Royal Commission for Education set about recruiting Arabic

teachers from the Middle East to make up for the shortage in Morocco.²⁰⁹

Critics, however, would go on to argue that the process had not been thought out properly; that it had been implemented too quickly to try and appease the popular feeling of the time, rather than bring about any meaningful change to the education system²¹⁰ – many of the interviewees tended to agree:

It was all too hastily done – the outcome was this mediocrity, where children could not speak Arabic or French fluently. As a result, the teaching of ALL subjects was affected and standards dropped. Standards which even today have not be fully regained.

Research Interview 7.

Asking the interviewees if they thought that Arabisation should not have been implemented, their powerful response was as follows:

It's not about being for or against something, it's a matter of when you decide to implement a policy, implement it properly or not at all. What the government did, instead, was to try and please all the people – but you cannot please all of the people all of the time. The government wanted to keep all the people happy while, at the same time, keeping those happy who ensured they remained in power; those Moroccans who were educated in French and wanted it to stay. French maintained its status then and still

²⁰⁹ A bilingual policy was adopted, during which students were given 15 hours of Arabic lessons and 15 hours of French per week (progressing in later years to 20 hours a week of Arabic and only 10 of French) and where elementary natural science and arithmetic were taught in Arabic. Al-Alam, Vol 58 September: 1960.

²¹⁰ Muhammad Benhima, who was Minister of Education during the late 1960s, said, in 1966, that Arabisation in Morocco failed to improve the standards; he argued that French should be kept for 'instrumental purposes to meet the needs of modernity, science and technology.' Rouchdy, 2002: 74

maintains it today. Although its role is one which not everyone is ready to admit to, it is undoubtedly the preferred language of the Moroccan elite; one of the keys to the 'inner club', because it was the language its 'members' were educated in. A good knowledge of French is essential if you want to go on to higher education and it certainly improves your chances of promotion in a job.

Research Interview 13

The confusion and complication that had been caused by this indecision resulted in the Arabisation process being halted until the late 1970s, when the new Minister for Education, Azzeddine Laraki, reintroduced it. He called on all Moroccans to: "Arabise as a matter of duty; *nous sommes condamnés à Arabiser*, went the cry."²¹¹ His determination was such, that, by the late 1980s, Arabisation was completed for all primary and secondary levels in the state schools. Along with the state schools, however, there were private schools.²¹² The other private European schools which had been preserved were now organised by the *Mission Universitaire Culturelle Française*. In these European schools, Arabic was introduced into the curricula, and taught as a foreign language.²¹³

²¹¹ Grandguillaume, 1983: 86

²¹² These included the original schools created by the Nationalists during the Protectorate, which had now adapted their programmes to correspond to those of the state schools.

²¹³ Krikez, 2005: 68

6:2 The Present Educational System

The process of Arabisation has still not been fully completed. There are important areas of the education system, particularly in the domain of science and at the more advanced levels, where French continues as an important medium of instruction. The university level has not been Arabised and it is still compulsory to be able to speak French if you want to attend. Three main factors determine why this is the case:

- All the major references and textbooks at the universities (in the fields of medicine, engineering, science, technology, business and management) are still in French or English;
- Morocco lacks the university teachers and professionals who have a mastery of the Arabic language;
- The socioeconomic environment requires the maintaining of French. Today, in Morocco, most international trade and cultural activities continue to be undertaken with France (60% of Morocco's trade is with France).

Today, French still plays a big part in the socioeconomic life of Morocco, because, notes Ennaji, officials accept, somewhat apprehensively, that linguistic isolation, resulting from total Arabisation, would have a negative consequence on the country's socioeconomic growth.²¹⁴

²¹⁴ Ennaji, 1988: 10

According to the Moroccan daily paper, *Al Assabah*, Morocco has become almost lazy in relying on French, giving the excuse that French is a more advanced language and gives the country greater access to the modern world of science and technology. This attitude, *Al Assabah* says, has made Arabisation increasingly harder to achieve:

...no significant changes will happen, until the social, economic, and political foundations make French language education inappropriate for the real life of the country. Inconsistencies in policy, inadequacy in planning by the Ministry of Education, as well as lack of coordination among the offices and public administrations, have been the biggest problems for efficient language planning in education.

The paper later went on to say in 2006 that:

Little effort seems to have been made to consult ordinary, non-political Moroccans for their views on Arabisation, or professional educators and specialists in areas such as education, sociology, etc. who have a working knowledge of the system.

Al Assabah, February, 2006

This constant starting and stopping of the Arabisation process has resulted in a French-Arabic bilingualism being chosen as the best linguistic option for the country. According to Lakhdar-Ghazal, bilingualism is the best option and essential for the promotion of Arabic as a modern language. Ideally,

therefore, Arabic should be modeled on French and follow its example as a language of modernity.²¹⁵ As one of my research interviewees notes:

The surest way to modernisation is by being bilingual and, instead of having a superficial level of understanding of either language, to have a solid grasp of both. In time, the mother language can be re-instated as the main language. Because, if nothing is done, there is a real risk of you having no real language, or, worse, a foreign language takes precedence and, through it, major decisions are made.

Research Interview 17

There remain many in Morocco who continue to call for the total exclusion of French from all sectors of Moroccan life. The debate has its roots in the Protectorate era, when Arabic was used as a crucial weapon, along with Islam, to rally the masses in the fight against colonisation. In 1991, the Arabic daily *Al-Alam* claimed in an editorial that the presence of French is a: “colonial linguistic invasion and that a secret war is waged against Arabic, the language of the holy Quran.”²¹⁶

There is a continual dominance of the French language and it is dangerous. Not because we don't want French, or that we're being chauvinistic, but, if we want to have some form of national identity, we need something that's our own. We have a past, a rich heritage and this heritage is in Arabic. So, if tomorrow, we adopt French, or we choose to lose all our knowledge of

²¹⁵ Lakhdar-Ghazal A. 1976. *Méthodologie Générale de L'Arabisation de Niveau*. Rabat: IERA

²¹⁶ *Al-Alam*. 1991. 18 August

Arabic, all our past history will become foreign to us. It is essential to regain our language. But, for that, we have to make an effort.

Research Interview 21

Within these two groups of Moroccans, individuals do not always maintain a consistent attitude towards Arabisation. An editorial in *Le Maroc Hebdo* illustrated this point quite alarmingly, when it published a list of members of the government directly involved in decisions to promote Arabisation, who, nevertheless, send their own children to French schools, while preaching Arabisation as best for the masses.²¹⁷ While such people may publicly express support for the teaching of traditional culture in schools, they are, at the same time, reluctant to abandon the advantages of knowledge of the French language and culture for their own children. Several teachers were interviewed for this thesis in Morocco and many of them understood why, if you could afford it, you would send your children to a French-run school:

Our education system hasn't evolved in a way that we had hoped for, that we were promised. Despite the investment, in my opinion, it's a failure. The private schools get the funding and the training from abroad. The biggest irony is that, instead of their (the French) presence being lessened since their departure over 50 years ago, it has become more evident.

Research Interview 1

²¹⁷ Maroc Hebdo Press, January 2004.

Although the status of French in Morocco is officially that of a foreign language, despite many attempts to get rid of it since Independence, it continues to enjoy a privileged place in Moroccan society. This bias is demonstrated most strikingly by the fact that, not only is French used in higher education, particularly the sciences, but it is also favoured for official documents published, not only by the government, but also by big business - Abdelkader Fassi Fehri notes that:

Official documents and correspondence are written in French more and more, while their Arab versions, although available, are barely comprehensible. Add to this the fact that all the sciences are taught in French, especially at university level, and Morocco finds itself further than ever from completing the Arabisation process.

Fassi Fehri, 2003: 13

In addition, the Moroccan government announced in 2005 that it wanted all pupils to start learning French at the age of 8. So, it is clear to see that French, for now, is here to stay:

Generations of Moroccans who never experienced the Protectorate are still acting and thinking like Frenchmen. So long as there remain in Morocco rich, private schools, dedicated to the French language and way of life and seeing Arabic as just an addition, then we, in this country, will never truly be free from our former occupier.

Research Interview 40

Chapter Seven: The French Language and Cultural Expression

Literature is something that is immensely important in the formation of imperial attitudes, references and experiences. Stories are at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about “strange” regions of the world; they also become the method colonised people use to assert their own identity and existence of their own history. The main battle in imperialism is over land, of course; but when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future – these issues, were reflected, contested and even for a time decided in narrative. The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism and constitutes one of the main connections between them. Most important, are the grand narratives of emancipation and enlightenment that mobilised people in the colonial world to rise up and throw off imperial subjection.²¹⁸

In his introduction to *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said wrote how the age-old adage, that the pen is mightier than the sword, is more than accurate. This chapter looks at the social impact the French language has had on the day-to-day living of Moroccans, from the literature read in schools, to how they surf the world-wide web.

²¹⁸ Edward Said, 1994: xii-xiii

7:1 Literature and the Protectorate

When Islam arrived in Morocco during the seventh century, it brought with it a writing culture in Arabic, enriching the already flourishing literary tradition that had grown under the Berbers.²¹⁹ The Muslim schools (madrassas) that subsequently emerged, promoted intellectual and cultural expression through the written word. Njoku notes how some of the most prominent Arabic scholars were to be found in Morocco; they included Ibn Ajarrum, Abu'l-Hassan and Abu Abdallah Ibn Battuta, who is known for the account of his travels and excursions called the *Rihla*.²²⁰ Many foreign scholars, including Leo Africanus and Ibn Khaldun, found great inspiration when visiting Morocco. The historic cities of Tangier, Fes and Casablanca were popular for hosting world-class writers and poets. Njoku writes how when one talks about the literary traditions of Morocco in the pre-colonial era, it must be emphasized that: “this was a long historical practice comprising Middle East, European, Jewish and indigenous Berber-African input”.²²¹

This rich literary history would be, as one interviewee put it: “left out in the cold to rot”²²² with the arrival of the Protectorate. Via the educational system, the Protectorate was able to immerse the young Moroccan in French culture

²¹⁹ Arabic language promoted creative enterprise through a successful education system based on the Quran. The theologian, Abdallah Ibn Yasin established the al-Murabitun (Almoravid) movement which set up a centre for prayer and Islamic instruction in the eleventh century. Also, the establishment of numerous institutions of higher learning (madrassas) in Morocco - especially in the dynastic periods of the Merinids (1146-1546) and the Wattasids (1465-1549), attests to the success of Islamic education in the Maghreb. The madrassas in Morocco were particularly popular for their cosmopolitan outlook. The Muslim scholars and teachers (ulama) of this generation dedicated time to learning and writing in Islamic culture. Njoku, 2005: 24.

²²⁰ Njoku, 2005: 24.

²²¹ Njoku, 2005: 44.

²²² Research Interview 19.

through literature. Schoolbooks in Morocco talked about the Parisian home of Jeanne and Jacques, instead of Farid and Fatima. One interviewee recalls memories of learning about French culture from an early age and how alluring the draw of *la Métropole* was:

I don't remember the names of any of the novels – it was so long ago – but I remember the gist of them. They were usually about some French kids going off on an adventure, sailing the seas or helping their neighbour, whilst eating copious amounts of brioche and drinking café au lait. They were engrossing stories and, as a child who had never sailed the seas before, I wanted to join them! With hindsight, it was blatant propaganda, but as a kid you wanted to leave your shores as soon as possible!

Research Interview 35

Such propaganda was encouraged at school age in a, 'get them while they are young,' campaign. It was all very well trying to entice the adults to the French way of thinking, but, because so many of them were set in their ways, it was harder to do. Therefore, it was the future generation of Moroccans who would be most vital to the longevity of the Protectorate:

Every education system has an agenda and that of the Protectorate was no different; teach the young children how to think and act and they will follow you like the pied piper.

Research Interview 8

It is interesting to note this interviewee's perspective because, what emerges from it is the question of whether the language we speak shapes our perceptions of the world. This question about language shaping one's identity is examined further on in the thesis, but, asking the interviewees this question in relation to literature, brought up some interesting replies. Many interviewees commented that, whatever language you write in, you cannot help but communicate its culture:

When you write you have rules – language rules, grammar rules, sentence structure rules. These rules have to be followed in order to understand the language and, with that understanding, you are then transmitting that languages' ideologies and culture.

Research Interview 28

The French language is rooted in the 'white' man's society and, so, reflects their Western culture. Arabic is not – it represents OUR heritage and culture. There are words in the Arabic language that you cannot translate into French, or English, or any other European language – you would need to write a sentence to explain it. So, yes, in answer to your question, I do think language shapes your perception of the world – so any Moroccan author writing in the French language cannot help but transmit French culture, instead of his own. I personally believe that this was a negative thing, because instead of supporting your own civilisation you are supporting a foreigner's.

Research Interview 40

These responses echo Frantz Fanon's philosophy that, to speak a language means to take on its culture.²²³

From this generation of Protectorate-educated children, came a line of authors inspired to write in French.²²⁴ One of the most prominent novels to be written by a Moroccan author in French was by Ahmed Sefrioui; in 1952, his autobiographical novel, *La Boîte à merveilles* was published. Reminiscing about his childhood, Sefrioui explores Moroccan society, the way of life, traditions, rituals and the worldview at the beginning of the 20th century, in an attempt to explain what it means to be a Moroccan. These early novels from Maghrebian writers are described by Khatibi as: "ethnographic, providing the reader with a colourful account of everyday life in the French colonies".²²⁵ Sefrioui, along with authors such as Mouloud Feraoun, essentially wrote for the benefit of a French audience; novels about travelling through exotic locations were of no interest to the Moroccan reader. There were many critics of authors such as Feraoun and Sefrioui, angry that they were

²²³ *To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture. The Antilles Negro who wants to be white will be the whiter as he gains greater mastery of the cultural tool that is language. Rather more than a year ago in Lyon, I remember, in a lecture I had drawn a parallel between the Negro and European poetry and a French acquaintance told me enthusiastically: "You are a white man at heart!" The fact that I had been able to investigate so interesting a problem through the white man's language gave me honorary citizenship.* Fanon, 1967: 38.

²²⁴ Colonisation is the context within which Maghrebi literature in French emerged, since early Maghrebi authors were educated through the medium of French. Publication of texts in French written by Arab Muslim authors began in earnest in the 1920s. Some notable examples include *Ahmed Ben Mustapha, gourmier* (1920) by Ben Cherif and Abdelkader Hadj-Hamou's *Zohra, la femme du mineur* (1925). As a captain in the French army, Cherif wrote his novel in order to glorify France; the country he felt rekindled his pride. Even today, Cherif and Hadj-Hamou's novels are considered as 'assimilationist', because the contents did not address issues of independence, as was expected of the many Maghrebi texts that would be published later on in the 1950s and 1960s. Déjeux asserts that: "the years spanning from 1920s to 1950s were those of unconscious imitation and cultural integration". See Royal, 2004: 307 & Déjeux, 1993: 35.

²²⁵ Khatibi, 1969: 28.

pandering to the French cause; one interviewee even commented that such authors:

Betrayed the Moroccan identity by, not just writing in French, but by writing as if they were French, propagating the French message. Whether it was naivety, I don't know, but they were like mini spokesmen, with a romantic tinge."

Research Interview 39.

Nevertheless, another interviewee notes that they had to start somewhere:

Reading these works, I guess it's easy to portray these early Moroccan Francophone authors as being naïve – but what other choice had they? The French would certainly not fund their careers if they were seen to be against them...not every day under occupation was blood, sweat and tears.

Research Interview 15

One interviewee notes that, what was missing during these first decades of the Protectorate was a literature that: “condemned the colonial regime that Morocco was under”.²²⁶ While the literature of colonial protest was lacking during those early days of the Protectorate, it did not mean to say that it could not be found elsewhere. There was a flip side to France’s educational programme; it was not just in Morocco, where generations of students were being nurtured in the French language, it was all over its empire. Suddenly, a

²²⁶ Research Interview 38.

language that was meant to be used to keep its 'subjects' in check so they would, as a research interviewee put it earlier: "follow the French liked the pied piper", was now being used to spread the word of colonial protest all across the Empire:

I remember getting hold of a copy of the novel 'Batouala' by René Maran. He was from Martinique and had served in the French colonial administration in Africa. The novel really spoke to me; it was as if he was recalling my life and how bitter I felt about the colonial situation. The most famous line from the book I shall never forget, is where Maran talks about the French colonial metaphor, 'flambeau de civilisation', the torch of civilisation: "You are not a torch", he told the French: "but a fire - whatever you touch, you consume!" I remember cheering, and felt this great solace; we Moroccans were not alone in our fight for freedom.

Research Interview 39

Maran was one of the first Francophone authors to attempt to capture the mood and the language of someone looking at the colonial situation from the inside out. His work inspired countless writers who had lived under the French, including many Moroccan authors who would go on to write about their experiences once the Protectorate had ended.²²⁷

²²⁷ Published in 1921, *Batouala* has been described as the most innovative of dissident novels. René Maran was a black civil servant from French Guyana, who was raised to high administrative office in French Equatorial Africa. *Batouala* sparked controversy, not just because its theme was so different from most French literature, but, in writing the novel, a colonial bureaucrat damned French colonialism. It was the Preface which contained the most scathing attacks that enraged colonists the most: "Civilisation, civilisation, pride of the Europeans and burying-ground for innocents...You build

7:2 Post-Colonial Literature

The struggle for independence had been greatly aided by the spread of literacy and the concern for public affairs. With independence, came a very significant genre of literature, one in which Arab writers would explore their relations with their own society, its colonial past and its new-found freedom. One of the most famous works written about the experience of Moroccans under the Protectorate was Abdullah Laroui's *Histoire du Maghreb*. In it, Laroui attempts to win back the interpretation of Moroccan history from French writers, who, in his view, had failed to understand its essence:

We can view a long period during which the Maghreb is a pure object and can be seen only through the eyes of its foreign conquerors...the history of this period ceases to be anything more than a history of foreigners on African soil...On several occasions the social mechanisms had stopped in the Maghreb. Individuals and groups have often concluded a separate peace with destiny. What can we do to prevent this happening again, now that the end of colonisation has offered us an opportunity to make a fresh start?...What each of us wants to know today is, how to get out of ourselves, how to escape from our mountains and sand-dunes, how to define ourselves in terms of ourselves and not of someone else, how to stop being exiles in spirit.

Laroui, 1970: 15 & 353-4.

your kingdom on corpses. Whatever you may want, whatever you may do, you act with deceit. At your sight, gushing tears and screaming pain. You are the might which exceeds right. You are not a torch, but an inferno. Everything you touch you consume". See Gérard, 1986: 352, Aldrich, 1996: 243-33 & Maran, 1921: 9.

One interviewee who read this work at the time of its publication recalls how potent Laroui's message was, that dilemma that the educated Moroccan faced, torn as he was between his own inherited culture and that of Europe:

I was a teenager when this book came out and it really woke me up to how we as Moroccans related to our society, especially since we were now independent. What did this word 'independence' really mean? Because, despite it, I was still being educated in a system in which French was the most dominant language, the language in which I was and still am most comfortable – so does speaking it mean I'm less of a Moroccan? I think it's a question that many Moroccans today face, one that Laroui's work certainly highlighted for me. But, all these years later, I'm still not quite sure of the answer.

Research Interview 1

Histoire du Maghreb, as many other contemporary works, was written in French. This sparked much debate during the early years of independence as to whether or not Moroccans should continue writing in French:

I remember such heated debates in the work-places, cafés and on the street as to what we should do about the French language. Should we shun it, or embrace it? Maybe even corrupt it? There were some who argued that we had to keep it, that our whole knowledge and understanding was based around it, while others said that, in holding onto it, we were betraying our mother-tongue and risked losing our identity.

Research Interview 17

Although not an easy one, French would turn out to be the inevitable choice for Moroccan authors.²²⁸ They had been trained to think and write in French; it would take several generations and the Arabisation of the education system before Morocco could produce a great deal of novelists competent in Arabic, however unsatisfactory this was for some:

Even after the French had left, their language remained a tool of power, domination and of a way to communicate across the countries of the world...

Research Interview 29

Another of Morocco's more famous Francophile authors is Tahar Ben Jelloun. In 1987 he was named by the *Académie Goncourt*²²⁹ as its 80th laureate for his novel *La Nuit Sacrée*. European critics wrote how it: "is a significant, if not vital, component of contemporary Maghrebi literature as a whole".²³⁰ Within the Moroccan community, the optimism was somewhat more reserved - about the book, as well as the prize. Hall notes that while the novels of francophone authors may: "have helped bring about some

²²⁸ The writers of the so-called 1950s generation (Albert Memmi, Driss Charïbi and Kateb Yacine), used their mastery of French to explore problems of personal liberation and national identity. These authors were the forefathers of what has come to be known as *la littérature maghrébine francophone*. Hourani notes that, their writing in French did not mean that they were torn from their roots; it was a result of their education and the position of their communities – some of the authors were Berber and were more at home in French than in Arabic (that fact in itself shows the success of the Berber policy). Some took part in the national struggle and all were marked by it; the best known in France, Kateb Yacine, gave up writing in French after 1970- and devoted himself to producing drama in colloquial Arabic. See Hourani, 2002: 397 & Ibnlfassi & Hitchcott, 1996: 1.

²²⁹ The *Société littéraire des Goncourt* (Goncourt Literary Society), usually called the *Académie Goncourt* (Goncourt Academy), is a French literary organisation based in Paris, that was founded in 1900. Membership is reserved to writers who have produced works in the French language, but it is not limited to citizens of France. In addition to the *prix Goncourt*, which comes with a symbolic cheque of 10 Euros, the *Académie Goncourt* is also responsible for awarding four other awards for: first novel, short story, poetry and biography.

²³⁰ Hall, 1993: 1

awareness of Maghrebi literature in the West”, Moroccan critics, such as Mohammed Choukri and Abdelkebir Khatibi, have implied that there are some authors who: “write to order for a target European readership and that Maghrebi readers find their portrayal of Maghreb society shallow and superficial”, that they: “perpetuate Orientalist myths and stereotypes about Arab culture, as the authors pander to European tastes for the exotic”.²³¹

No real change from the days of Sefrioui, it seems.

In an interview with *The Middle East Report*, Ben Jelloun defended his position:

Many people, especially in the Arab world, are surprised that I don't write in Arabic. And I tell them, every time, you have to have respect for languages; just because Arabic is the language that is linked to my childhood, my family, that doesn't mean I can create a work of literature with it. So it's out of respect for Arabic that I choose to write in the language I've mastered best.

Rosen, 1990; 30

²³¹ Khatibi, who writes both in Arabic and in French, dismisses texts such as those by Ben Jelloun as: “paraliterature, a literature of folklore, false glitter and bombast, in which characters and their problems are more grounded in psycho-analysis and semiotics than in social reality”. See Hall, 1993: 2 & Abdel-Jaouad, 1990: 7.

Many research interviewees who were educated under the French system, even after independence, had a similar experience:

Although I was born in Morocco and I grew up here, I find it's easier to express myself in French. I feel at ease when I speak in French, more so than when I express myself in classical Arabic.

Research Interview 1

When asked how it made them feel, speaking a language that was not inherently theirs, their reply was extremely potent:

*We were occupied by force, we didn't have a say – everything we knew and learnt changed. For half a century it was that way; we were turned into mini Frenchmen, taught how to act and think like them. We had no choice. And then, suddenly, we **were** them...and independence couldn't change that, no matter how many so-called Arabisation polices were put in place. Do I wish I could express myself in Arabic like I do in French? OF COURSE! But you have to understand, it's not our fault. We had no choice.*

Research Interview 1

One Moroccan author who did think Moroccans had a choice, or could, at least, effect change, was Leila Abouzeid. In an interview given about Maghrebian authors, Abouzeid explains how she sees francophone writing

as: “largely inconsequential to Moroccan society and literature today”. She points out that few Moroccan writers use French today and argued that:

The current interest in francophone writing in the West is largely the result of various prizes, sponsorships and publication deals afforded by the French in defence of ‘francophonie’ in their former colonies.

Abouzeid, quoted in Hall, 1993: 3

Abouzeid’s choice to write in Arabic, stems from her fervent pride in it as the language of her religion and of her country. Her views on the use of the French language in the Moroccan context are clear:

I loathed this language. . . . That, I now know, was a divine grace that has protected me from writing in a foreign language that came to me with an army behind it. It is a natural attitude toward the language of people who had usurped my country, put my father in their prisons and practiced on him every means of torture.

Abouzeid, quoted in Hall: 4-5

For centuries, Moroccan story-tellers have passed down their tales through either written, or oral, form. Today, the novel is the most popular medium through which they explore and define their society. The question is, therefore, what language should Moroccans choose to write in that best reflects on their own identity: Arabic or French?

For Abdelkebir Khatibi, this question was not a predicament; he believed that a middle ground could be found – one where the Moroccan francophone writer could still write in French, but in such a manner as to enhance and promote his Arab/Berber heritage, not hinder it.²³² In his series of essays, *Maghreb pluriel*, Khatibi opens with chapters focused around two concepts that have become key to critics in the francophone world: *pensée-autre* [other thought] and *double critique*.²³³ While presenting his take on the ‘other-thought’, Khatibi emphasises anti-colonial theorist Franz Fanon’s call to: “find something else now that the European game has come to a close”.²³⁴ Rice comments how Khatibi appeals for: “another thought”, an “unparalleled way of conceiving difference”. But, Rice notes how he is: “careful to insist that the ambiguous European game cannot be immediately eliminated for this desire of another way of thinking”. In his view, the West has come to inhabit the Maghrebian thinker and has become part of their ‘inner being’, and all new thought must be: ‘placed in conversation with this world view’.²³⁵

²³² Born in El Jadida, Morocco, in 1938, Abdelkebir Khatibi is the author of a diverse and complex oeuvre that creatively engages with the thought of European philosophers to address the specific challenges facing postcolonial subjects from the French-speaking world. After receiving a French education in Morocco under the Protectorate, Khatibi pursued university studies in sociology at the Sorbonne in Paris. Unlike other French-speaking Moroccan writers of his generation who took up permanent residence in France, Khatibi returned to Morocco, where he taught at the University of Rabat. In his early work, he grappled with the pressing questions of language, acculturation, anti-imperialism and national belonging, in the wake of the French occupation of Morocco. Khatibi wanted to break free from French cultural hegemony, while still using the French language as a means of expression; he paradoxically sought, at once, to deconstruct European and Moroccan traditions yet remain faithful to them. Rice, 2009: 115-16

²³³ Khatibi, A. (1983), *Maghreb pluriel*, Denoel: Paris.

²³⁴ Khatibi, 1983: 11.

²³⁵ The other thought, Khatibi states is, therefore, not a return to the: “inertia of the foundations of our being” [‘inertie des fondements de notre être’] but, rather a questioning of the basis of Maghrebian societies that makes possible: “an engagement with the larger questions that make up our contemporary world”. This “other-thought”, notes Khatibi, can only occur alongside a “double-critique” that critically examines the dual inheritance of Maghrebian intellectuals: that of the West and that of: “our heritage, so theological, so charismatic, so patriarchal”. Rice notes that Khatibi refuses to fall into a “simplified Hegelianism”, as he puts it. He avoids binary oppositions and

For Khatibi, the desire was not to favour one culture over another, but find a middle ground, where Western values can work alongside traditional Moroccan ones, a sentiment that was shared by some of the interviewees:

*What you read out about Khatibi, well, I agree with him – using French is not about affirming the hegemony of Western culture and thought over the Arab/Berber one, it's about getting a balance – using both languages to their fullest potential and ensuring we get the best out of them. Far from this restricting us, it gives us **more** freedom because it opens up more windows to the world.*

Research Interview 17

Such freedom is extended further when, writing in French, Khatibi explains, since this language is not his “property”, not his “direct inheritance” but, instead, a tongue that was “imposed” upon him.²³⁶ In essence, the Moroccan author who writes in French has greater freedom than those writers of French origin, because the Moroccan is not bound by the language’s heritage, as is a Frenchman is.

advocates, instead, what he calls, “the risk of plural thought”, the only appropriate disposition for the new century. See Khatibi, 1983: 12-14 & Rice, 2009: 116.

²³⁶ Khatibi, 1971: 66. & Rice, 2009: 124.

7:3 Newspapers and Journals

7:3:1 Press under the Protectorate

The first French press in Morocco emerged towards the end of the nineteenth century. In 1883, two weekly papers were published: *Le réveil du Maroc* and *Le Maroc*.²³⁷ Both these papers were funded by the European powers who had a vested interest in Morocco; therefore, both the publications defended their right to be there. Some of the papers, established later on, became even more political. Papers such as *La Vigie Marocaine* and *Le Progrès du Maroc* were specifically aimed at furthering the cause of French influence over the region:

Newspapers are the most influential forms available of producing propaganda; they are easy to produce on a mass scale and affordable for everyone to pick up and read. Here, in Morocco, we were bombarded with propaganda through the newspapers.

Research Interview 15

It was under the Protectorate, however, that the modern Moroccan press really took off. Established by the French, the idea, of course, was to bolster the colonial administration in the eyes of the native population. One of the first such papers that set out to woo the Moroccan public was *As-Saada*

²³⁷ These were followed later on the turn of the twentieth century by *La Dépêche de Tanger* in 1905. *La Dépêche* proved to be so popular, that sister papers were established in Casablanca, Rabat and Fez.

(Good News), which was set-up by the French Consulate in Tangier, shortly before the Protectorate began. A weekly paper, it was written in Arabic with the aim to help ease the political penetration of Morocco. As more and more Europeans began to holiday in Morocco, the editor wanted to highlight the good life that they brought with them:

The Tangier we bring you today is full of all the modern amenities. Your city is now a health resort, with sea bathing on superb beaches... an artists' colony, attracting high society...Tangier today has telephone lines and an electricity system, all working side by side with the mysterious and exotic Orient. A fusion of East and West as never seen before...

Editorial of *As-Saada*, February 1912. Quoted in Aman, 1979: 196.

In 1913, the Protectorate government decided to distribute an Arabic version of their official newspaper: *Al Jarida Ar-Rasmiya* (The People's Paper). Its target audience were Moroccan Muslims, who were proving the most difficult to bring on-side.²³⁸ The real boom in French press in Morocco came in 1920, when a powerful financial group called *Les frères Mas* invested heavily in publishing daily and weekly papers. Some of their most well-read papers were *L'Echo du Maroc*, *Le Petit Marocain* and *La Vigie Marocaine*. Their main aim was, of course, to influence business decisions made by the Protectorate government, but they also wanted to sway the Moroccan mentality to the French way of thinking:

²³⁸ It would not be long before several other French-backed papers came into being in almost all of the Moroccan cities, each one praising the Protectorate's efforts in the country .

La Vigie, oh yes! I recall seeing them in the stands of the newsagents, pictures on the front of, what seemed to us, were far-off lands ,yet were really just across the Mediterranean. But you can easily see how, for young Moroccans especially, looking at these papers would make you dream of France as the land of plenty and that, surely, we could have that too, with help from the French.

Research Interview 10

It was not just the pipe-dreams of smoking Gauloises on the banks of La Seine which such newspapers promoted, but they were also a vehicle for promoting new scientific and technological advancements:

If you were, say, a [Moroccan] Banker, reading La Dépêche Marocaine, for example, you'd see all the new financial developments from the West and technologies to invest in. They were a goldmine, so to speak.

Research Interview 19

Such newspapers as La Dépêche Marocaine and La Vigie Marocaine were there, not only for the Colons living in the Moroccan cities, but also for propaganda purposes and the promotion of the French colonials' cause. These papers promised us social enlightenment and industrial booms that would put Morocco on the road to development like those in the West and, while some new advancements in the field of medicine and technology were

brought to Morocco, it was never on the scale promised, as you can see by the economic state we're in today.

Research Interview 20

Another aspect of the francophone press was to conceal any problems that the Protectorate might be facing. In his preface to *Animal Farm*, George Orwell wrote that, in free societies:

Unpopular ideas can be silenced, and inconvenient facts kept dark, without the need for any official ban. Anyone who has lived long in a foreign country will know of instances of sensational items of news — things which on their own merits would get the big headlines-being kept right out of the British press, not because the Government intervened but because of a general tacit agreement that 'it wouldn't do' to mention that particular fact.

The Times Literary Supplement, September 15, 1972 ²³⁹

One of the issues most frequently 'not mentioned' by the francophone media was the infamous *Rebellion in the Rif*. By 1920 Morocco had been largely pacified, except, that is, for the mountainous region of north Morocco. Here, in 1921, a coalition of Moroccan tribes from the region, defeated a Spanish

²³⁹ Space was allowed in the first edition of *Animal Farm* for a preface by Orwell, as the pagination of the author's proof indicates. This preface was not included and the typescript was only found years later by Ian Angus. It was published, with an introduction by Professor Bernard Crick entitled 'How the essay came to be written', in *The Times Literary Supplement*, 15 September 1972.

army at Anoula, near Melilla.²⁴⁰ This military disaster, says William Hoisington, was:

Perhaps one of the worst colonial setbacks suffered by a European nation since the Italians were routed by the Abyssinians at Adowa and far more devastating than the French defeat at El Herri.

Hoisington, 1995: 185

However, the French press at the time painted this as being no problem at all for the French. The daily paper, *L'Écho du Maroc* claimed that the Spanish had brought this calamity on themselves, proving what the French had known all along: “that the Spanish had no method to match that of the French” and that it was “Spanish failure that had created Riffi success”.²⁴¹ Hoisington remarks that: “the paper remained sure that, regardless of what the tribes did in the north, the French held all the cards they needed to keep the Protectorate safe in the south”. It took another 5 years, with the surrender of the Rif’s tribal leader Abd el-Karim in May 1926, before the Rebellion in the Rif was quelled.²⁴²

Njoku notes that, contrasting this propagandist media, another side would emerge to the new media phenomenon that was taking place in Morocco – one that would strike: “at the colonial order aggrandised by strengthening its

²⁴⁰ As an outcome of the Treaty of Fez in 1912, Spain gained possession of the lands around Melilla and Ceuta in the north of Morocco.

²⁴¹ *L'Écho du Maroc*, 20 September, 1921

²⁴² Hoisington, 1995: 125.

bureaucracy and mission schools, the Moroccans quickly picked up the rudiments of the white man's education, fashioning their newly-acquired knowledge into a weapon of combat against colonialism".²⁴³ The educated elite, who, some French feared might rebel, established nationalist newspapers, which they recognised as crucial in getting their ideology across to the masses, whose support was crucial for the achievement of the ultimate goal of independence. One of the most famous papers was *Al-Istiqlal – The Independence*. It was edited by Mehdi Ben-Barka, (one of the first Moroccan graduates of a French university in 1950) and was a vital organ for the independence party, *Istiqlal*. The paper covered all areas and brought the Moroccan viewpoint into the francophone world. Editorial titles such as *Le Protectorat est incapable de Démocratie*²⁴⁴ and *Le Conflit Franco-Marocain est Ouvert*²⁴⁵ to ones supporting fellow occupied countries, *La Voix du Peuple Tunisien doit être entendu*,²⁴⁶ opened the eyes of, not only the French in Morocco, but those back in the Motherland too:

Al Istiqlal was the Moroccan's spokesman to the world – we now had a grasp of the Westerner's tongue and we could voice our grievances and demand our freedom articulately.

Research Interview 1

In an Editorial titled *Indépendance et Interdépendance*, Ben Barka wrote that, the goal of the independence movement was simple: "Independence, total

²⁴³ Njoku, 2005: 39-40

²⁴⁴ Al Istiqlal, No 37. 12-07-1952

²⁴⁵ Al Istiqlal, No 54. 22-11-1952

²⁴⁶ Al Istiqlal, No 43. 06-09-1952

and immediate. Our actions have one sole aim: to throw the French into the sea!"²⁴⁷ The paper's ideals soon had the backing of several newspapers in France, the most prominent of which was *L'Humanité*. The paper was the PCF's (the French Communist Party) mouthpiece, and their mantra was Karl Marx's: "A people oppressed by another will never be free". *L'Humanité* appealed for the end of the: "capitalist stranglehold on Morocco" and claimed that the continuation of the Protectorate was: "only for the benefit of the wealthy classes back in France". Time and again, the paper denounced those financial groups who financed the colonial project in Morocco: *The Banque de Paris*, the Rothschild and Schneider groups and the ONA Group (Omnium Nord-Africain) which was composed of the Moroccan assets of the French bank *Paribas*. The paper urged the French proletariat to unite in solidarity with the working class in Morocco. In a publication on the 1st February 1951, a journalist for *L'Humanité*, Françoise Lescure, wrote that: "The Moroccan people must know that they have allies in the French working class and the PCF!" Lescure went on to say that: "it is the right of all nations to be able to govern themselves".²⁴⁸

²⁴⁷ Al Istiqlal, No 34. 14-06-1952

²⁴⁸ *L'Humanité*, 1 February, 1951

7:4 Independence

As has been seen with many aspects of Moroccan life, independence did not necessarily mean that all things French were expelled from the country; the French press certainly did not shift. The daily papers from the *Mas* group: *Le Petit Marocain* and *La Vigie Marocaine*, managed to keep a tight rein on the Moroccan market as well as maintaining strong ties with those in power. The editors argued that they had a right to stay in Morocco; it was, after all, the French who had established Morocco's modern press; this was their territory. There was a reluctant acceptance of this point:

The Moroccan press was not just up against an ideological battle – one where the Moroccans were still made to feel culturally inferior after years under French rule – but a practical one too: the Moroccan press as it was, was set up, run and financed by the French. They [the French] had all the expertise to run a successful newspaper business – we had not. Therefore, it was almost inevitable, some may say essential, that the French stayed on.

Research Interview 19

If the Moroccans truly wanted to own their press, then a 'Moroccanisation' of the whole system was required. However, this process was hampered by the same obstacles met by the attempts at the Arabisation of education and literature. Moroccan journalists who were opposed to the French press were, themselves, a product of the French schooling system; they therefore had little, or no, training in Arabic. Even as the original colonial press slowly began to wane, newspapers and journals in French continued to expand;

today over 50% of Morocco's printing press is in French.²⁴⁹ This figure explains why there is so much bilingualism in Morocco's modern media. There are even some papers in French, such as *L'Opinion*, that regularly include articles in Spanish and English. Moreover, the daily paper *Le Matin du Sahara*, is occasionally printed in Spanish (*La Mañana*) and is usually found in the former Spanish zones. Papers in English are also starting to appear, such as: *Morocco Today*, *Hello Morocco* and *The Messenger of Morocco*.²⁵⁰ This linguistic set-up means there is not just one language through which information can be circulated. Charnet notes how: "there are few other governments in the world that use a foreign language in the press to convey their message."²⁵¹ The use of French is not an accidental one, a result of habit, but very deliberate. The French language is no longer seen by many as the language of the 'coloniser', but as a means of communicating 'modern' ideas to a bilingual audience and there were some interviewees who did understand that:

Listen, we have to admit that Arabic alone will not move us forwards. French is one of the international languages and, by using it, I believe, we will develop further economically and socially.

Research Interview 17

²⁴⁹ OJD Maroc, 2009. *Les Chiffres* [Online] Available at: <http://www.ojd.ma/site/ma/leschiffres.php> [Accessed 9 November, 2009]

²⁵⁰ Naturally, preference is given to Arabic, the official language - indeed, the most purchased daily paper in 2008/2009 was *Al Massae*. (The Evening), an Arabic paper – yet French (the official foreign language) still holds the most privileged place. See OJD Maroc, 2009. *Les Chiffres* [as above].

²⁵¹ Charnet quoted in Hoisington, 1995: 130.

The French language is one of Morocco's most controversial yet influential cultural inheritances; it plays a major part in the socio-cultural dimension of the country. This growing trend has meant that, even some of France's most important dailies, such as *Le Monde* and *France Soir*, circulate their newspapers in Morocco's major towns and cities. Because of the great sway the papers in French have in Morocco, many of the major names in the Moroccan press publish the majority of their journals and papers in both French and Arabic.²⁵² This contradiction is something that did not go unnoticed by the interviewees:

It is strange that a nationalist paper such as Al Alam – which greatly championed Arabisation – should choose to have a sister paper in French...but such is the nature of the country, I suppose. If you want to get your voice heard by the majority, then you have to be bilingual – at least!

Research Interview 29

I find it quite sad, actually, that French took hold of our way of communication in so short a space of time. Fifty-years isn't that long in the grand scheme of things...you can understand how Algeria was so immersed by French because it WAS France, but Morocco? And that we couldn't just let go? Even the papers that had fought for freedom, all those nationalists championing the cause, still not letting go of French; that is not freedom – that is a backward

²⁵² The nationalist paper *Al Alam*, which was launched in 1946, would release a French version, *L'Opinion*, some twenty years later in 1965. Similarly, the left leaning paper *Libération* (1964) would begin circulation of its paper in Arabic, *Al Bayane* (1971).

nod to your former occupier saying: “well yeh, maybe you were right all along”.

Research Interview 2

The French language in post-independent Morocco has continued to be an important tool for social expression and a crucial element of political struggles. The tension between those who prefer Arabic and those who prefer French has been ever-growing and, according to many interviewees, it shows no sign of letting up:

Today, many decades after our independence, there is still an ever-increasing need to master the French language, in order to analyse new information, events and issues...most of my colleagues can speak both Arabic and French, but always pick up a newspaper in the latter language ...for them, it seems, they still believe the information they are getting in the French language is perhaps more precise or up to date...I don't know.

Research Interview 7

Interestingly, some interviewees were quite adamant that French has to stay:

We need French. We need to be able to have a portal to the developed world so we ourselves can develop!

Research Interview 36

The economy, of course, is a specialised field and, because of its global significance, along with Morocco's close economic relations with France, it is understandable that there would be papers in French. However, what worries some of my interviewees is the division that they may cause:

If you compare French newspapers to Arabic ones, you can clearly see the divide between East and West. Where the Arabic media obviously focuses on the Arab world and reports on global affairs from an Arab perspective, the francophone media focuses on Europe and America and, as such, reports from a more Western perspective...I know that there will always be differences of opinions in countries, conservative versus liberal etc...but why can we not do it from our own cultural context instead of being told that we'll only progress if we look West.

Research Interview 1

I'm a politics student and all the major political journals are in French... TelQuel, Maroc Hebdo, Le Journal Hebdomadaire...how can I get a clear understanding of my country's political standing if it's all in a foreigner's language? How are we, as a nation, meant to progress, when we are continually looking to our former masters for inspiration?

Research Interview 5

Women's magazines, too, are produced in French, even though they are aimed entirely at a Moroccan market. Such magazines in themselves often

demonstrate a real mixture of French and Moroccan cultures. Magazines such as *Citadine* and *L'Glamour* report on the latest fashions and cultural trends from Paris, London and New York. But is this a good thing? Most of the younger female interviewees did not have particularly strong opinions about it, but those, as the interviewee below put it: “of a more ‘mature generation’, had their doubts and could: “see through the glitz and glamour of it all”

I have no objections to women's magazines, telling us about how to eat more healthily or what the new Black is...what I do object to however are articles advising our females on how to whiten their skin to make them look more European...I resent being told that my cultural heritage, my music and language, is as nothing.

Research Interview 20

7:5 Radio, Internet and Television

Radio is the means of communication that reaches the largest audience in Morocco: almost all households, in the countryside as well as the cities, own one. Historically, in Morocco, news and views were always spread orally, as literacy rates were often very low; so, the radio was quickly embraced by Moroccans from all walks of life:

We Moroccans love to talk – and even more than that, we love it when people listen to us talk. The more the merrier! Travel the country and you will always see a radio receptor on buildings and hilltops, in the middle of cities and in fields with sheep! Before televisions, radios were the must-have accessory!

Research Interview 19

The national radio station in Morocco is RTM (*Radiodiffusion Télévision Marocaine*), created in Rabat in 1956, that broadcasts its programme exclusively in French – a point that puzzled some of the interviewees:

It's quite a thing when a country gains its independence, only to have one of the major means of communication broadcasting in the language of the former coloniser, don't you think? At least show some courtesy and have one or two programmes in Arabic.

Research Interview 10

But, as with the press, the radio stations found themselves, at independence, with a workforce who only knew how to function in French. As a result, French thought continued to be transmitted over the airwaves, even when operated by a Moroccan:

I was listening to the radio the other week, 'MEDI 1', and there was this debate on how Morocco is still too reliant on French, that we should spread our wings and fly independently – the whole Arabisation debate. The thing is, the programme was going out in French! I wonder if they saw the irony in it that I did?!

Research Interview 40

MEDI 1, is an Arabic-French bilingual radio station, which was launched in Tangier in 1980. It, like its bilingual counterparts in the press, sees the use of French as being as essential as Arabic, if not more so; there were some interviewees who agreed with this standpoint:

French broadcasts on the radio and television are so important, in my opinion. Say, for example, the French President is giving a speech at the United Nations; isn't it better that we understand what he is saying directly, rather than through an interpreter? Only that way can you really know what it is he or she is trying to say – the deeper meaning, the bigger picture.

Research Interview 27

As well as the political hold French has on Moroccan radio, it also has a cultural one. Music, especially Western/European music, is finding an ever-growing market among Morocco's younger generation. As living standards in Morocco have improved and the middle class has gradually increased, more 'pocket money' has been at the finger-tips of an ever-growing, culturally-aware Moroccan youth. This influence was seen by some as a worrying trend:

Our proximity to Europe means that we can readily catch any music programme from across the continent. And, as we all know, music is one of the most influential transporters of cultural ideals. For many of our kids, the lyrics seem to resonate with them – as does the dress sense – and so you end up finding 'les petits français' or 'los chicos' strutting around town, yet having no idea about their own cultural heritage.

Research Interview 4

The dawn of the internet age has, for many, made the spread of French/Western culture more potent. Websites aimed at the young are predominantly in French, for example, *Jeunes de Maroc* and *2M en ligne*. For several of my interviewees, it only emphasises the 'coolness' that the French language has amongst the younger generation:

There is also the status that speaking French gives you. It's chic you know, to: 'parler français'; if you speak French, then, you are seen as being 'cultured', 'educated', 'civilised'. This is nonsense, but what can you do, with

all the new technologies available and means of communication, it is quite easy to brainwash a nation!

Research Interview 5

2m is the most popular station here – it was initially a television channel which you had to pay for, I guess if you want to be cultured you have to afford it! It broadcasts French serials and films, but now it's branched out into radio – which you can get online, anywhere, any time - and magazines. I'd say about 80-90% of the music played is French or European and the website is all in French, as is the magazine.

Research Interview 6

Terrestrial television, too, is flooded with French shows. Some of these are produced in Morocco and presented by Moroccans, but many are soaps and drama series that have been imported from France. The second national channel broadcasts in French 50% of the time.²⁵³ Moreover, with the advent of satellite television, most town-dwellers have access to French channels:

Most people enjoy a bit of light entertainment in the evening and television is often the easiest and most convenient way to see to that need...RTM is the national terrestrial network and, although it broadcasts a lot of programs in Arabic and Berber, it's the evening session that the majority of Moroccans tune in to...this is where the big blockbuster movies in French are shown.

²⁵³ Mansour quoted in Ennaji, 2005: 17

They get so much publicity beforehand, you almost feel obliged to tune in, even if you don't speak French!

Research Interview 2

It is the internet, however, that has really brought Western culture into young Moroccan homes. Social networking sites and music forums allow people to experience new cultures and meet new people. Online shopping means that a Moroccan girl can have the latest fashion from the streets of Paris, without even having to go there. One interviewee was not averse to experiencing different cultures from around the world, in fact they believed it would enhance their view of other people, but they did not want this immersion in the French 'scene' to be to the detriment of their Moroccan heritage:

I think it is inevitable that, as technology progresses and the world becomes smaller, more cultures interact; the internet is certainly contributing to this. There is nothing wrong with that, in fact it's what encourages respect of another way of life, but what worries me is that our Moroccan way of life is being left by the wayside for something that is deemed more 'modern'.

Research Interview 13

The part played by the media in promoting ideologies can hugely influence the way we see ourselves and other societies. And while, perhaps, over the years the clichés have changed – 'la mission civilatrice' is now 'globalisation' – the essential aim is the same:

The expansion of their Western ideals into the our non-Westerner's head, so that almost everything is a commodity and the only value is measured by cost and status.

Research Interview 8

We, in Morocco, seem to be being slowly drawn in by the West's propaganda machine and feel that the only means for progress lies by following in their wake.

Research Interview 14

In an article for the New Internationalist, John Pilger makes an interesting comment about how media in today's world has developed:

One of the most insidious myths is that we live in the 'information age'. We actually live in a media age, in which most of the available information is repetitive, politically safe (that is, it reflects the one true path) and is limited by invisible boundaries. Certainly, media technology, such as the 'digital revolution', may appear to offer more choice and greater horizons, yet the media is actually shrinking in terms of both its ownership and editorial agenda or world view, a Western world view.

John Pilger, April 2001

If the French language is the expression of French culture, then Maghrebians are exposed to it more than ever before and French cultural influence is certainly not about to decline, as long as the French language continues to be promoted as being more informative and entertaining than Arabic.

Chapter Eight: Summary and Conclusion: Colonisation and its Legacy

What we from our [European] point of view call colonization, missions to the heathen, the spreading of civilization, etc., has another face – the face of a bird of prey seeking with cruel intentness for distant quarry – a face worthy of a race of pirates and highwaymen.

Jung, 1989: 248

The military defeat of France in Indochina, following the battle of Dien Bien Phu, and its inability to achieve victory in the Algerian War, marked two particularly bloody moments in the decolonisation process. Elsewhere, as in Morocco, de-colonisation was achieved peacefully. However, the imposition of an alien social and economic culture was going to be hard for the newly independent country to shake off.

8:1 Economic Legacies of the French Protectorate

The biggest changes to the Moroccan economy under the protectorate came via the countryside in the guise of agrarian reform. France believed it could make a great profit from the Moroccan countryside, if it was farmed correctly.

In order to do this, however, it would need to be in charge of the most fertile regions and colonise them sufficiently, so it could control any revenue earned from them. Morocco was one of the few of France's colonised countries that saw European immigration on a large scale. It was France who controlled, not only finance, industry and foreign trade, but, to a large extent, the land. The Europeans of Algeria were already well established by 1914, but, in the years after the war, the French government tried to encourage further immigration and settlement of the land in Morocco. As the country was gradually brought under French control in the 1920s, state domain lands, held under collective title, were thrown open to settlers. These efforts were successful in that they led to a considerable immigration, and to an extension of the cultivated area and yield of produce. This take-over of Moroccan land in such a short amount of time was one of the major factors that still left a bitter taste amongst the older generation of the interviewees:

I'd have no qualms with somebody coming to buy areas of Moroccan land to develop, or even help us out with loans and techniques on how to produce a better yield. Give them a cut. Nobody would have objected. Nobody would have minded if the French came and lived in the house next door, got on with their life and let us get on with ours. But no, they wanted it all, they got

greedy...they wanted to try and compete with the rest of Europe 'look what we got, look at our prize'...why couldn't the Europeans just fight it out amongst themselves and leave Africa and Asia out of it?!!

Research Interview 25

*Europeans had been fighting each other for control of the world's resources for centuries and, when they had run out of ideas as to how to beat each other, they agreed to share the spoils between them!*²⁵⁴

Research Interview 40

After going through such a rigmarole to win Morocco, France could not then been seen to simply let the country get on with it. Despite Morocco being a Protectorate, France was obliged to reap any economic rewards. As a result, for the settler communities and for the French government, the use of their power to defend their own interests was paramount. However: "power is not guaranteed unless it can turn itself into legitimate authority"²⁵⁵ and the idea that they were there in order to carry out a civilising mission was strong among the French who ruled, or conducted, their business in Morocco - whether it expressed itself as the idea of a superior civilisation bringing one in a lower, or dying, state up to its own level, or the creation of justice, order

²⁵⁴ At the Paris Peace Conference on January 18, 1919, for example, the world's most powerful states convened in Paris to carve out the terms of a peace to end all wars. This peace was to be achieved by the carving up of the Middle East; France was to govern Syria and Lebanon, and Great Britain the mandates of Palestine and Iraq. There was no room for Arab self-government, ensuring that there was no peace in the Middle East.

²⁵⁵ Research Interview 30.

and prosperity, or the communication of the language and culture expressed in it. It seems, however, not many of the interviewees were convinced by this:

I guess they thought they could ease their consciences by preaching the absorption of all us Moroccans into a new, unified world of equality and prosperity. They did not realise, however, that we saw through this...we saw that their spiels contradicted their actions, as settler groups grew more rich and powerful.

Research Interview 30

There was, among many of the settlers in Morocco, an innate sense of superiority, which, they believed, gave them a right to rule. Hanotax wrote how races were great and powerful because of the: “importance and results of the tasks that have been assigned to them”:

Let me be clearly understood – this is not only a matter of a great number of conquests; it is not even a matter of increasing public and private wealth. It is a question of extending abroad to regions which, only yesterday, were still barbarian; the principles of a civilisation of which one of the oldest nations of the world has the right to be proud.

Hanotax, 1902: 365

The action of such thinking, therefore, led to the polarisation of the countryside. On one side, there were large estates of fertile and irrigated land

with modern machinery producing for export (cereals, olive oil and citrus fruits) and, on the other, small landholdings barely feeding those who owned them. This fragile economy was put under even more pressure, as the increase in the population was causing a decline in the ratio of land to labour and per income capita.²⁵⁶ One research interviewee reflected on this:

So, the French brought sanitation and healthcare to Morocco – brilliant! I applaud them for that, I really do. I think, in some ways, most French wanted us to have a better standard of living. However, they didn't think ahead, they just wanted to get short term adulation from us, rather than thinking that if everyone is living longer, then there will be more of us. And how were they going to feed all these extra mouths? We couldn't do it, as the French had taken all our best land! Nicely done, Messieurs!

Research Interview 37

The changes made by the French to the Moroccan economy would change Moroccan society completely. The knock-on effects of taking the land away from the indigenous population have proved to be particularly dramatic and quite irreversible, as one interviewee explained:

They took away our land and, with it, everything we knew. They gave us drugs to help us live longer, but they'd taken our land so we could not longer feed ourselves. They then gave us work on land we had once owned, but didn't pay us enough so we could survive and look after our ever-growing family. They then called us to the cities, the bright lights, there, we would find

²⁵⁶ Hourani, 2002: 335

success. Instead we worked for them, lining their pockets, whilst we lived like sardines in tin-cans. That is their legacy – taking a man from his land and wide-open skies to the smog-filled, noisy cities. I wish they had never come.

Research Interview 35

Not much changed with independence. The king, fearful of any economic disturbances caused by suddenly changing the status-quo, believed he had no other choice but to allow those Europeans who ran big business in Morocco to stay. Some interviewees sympathised with his decision:

In a sense his [king Muhammed V] hands were tied. The Europeans had the know-how and contacts to run a prosperous business, the average Moroccan couldn't hope to match this. What were we to do, just let Morocco crumble because we were too proud? No, any land reform had to be done slowly and cautiously.

Research Interview 36

Morocco was in dire straits when she signed the treaty of Fez in 1912. The mis-management of a series of Moroccan sultans saw the country in need of help from somewhere; that 'help' came from France. Under the Protectorate and Lyautey, a modicum of stability was achieved in the Moroccan countryside, allowing economic growth in these regions. It had not been long

since: “a man could farm only what he could defend”.²⁵⁷ Now he was able to work much larger areas of countryside.

Today, economically speaking, Morocco’s markets are still inexorably linked to France. Many French businesses take advantage of the ‘special relations’ between the two countries, getting preferential treatment and first pick at any economic enterprise. The French company, Danone, is a prime example: in 2002 they purchased a Moroccan well, Aïn Saïss and, now, bottle and sell the water back to the Moroccan people:

They’re still at it! Coming over here, buying up our natural resources and selling them back to us. OUR wealth which we should be selling to THEM!

They really can’t let go, hey!

Research Interview 4

²⁵⁷ Bidwell, 1973: 254

8:2 Social Legacies of the French Protectorate: Education and Language

Knowledge is Power

Francis Bacon, *Religious Meditations of Heresies*: 1519

Education was the key battleground for the Protectorate. The French authorities knew that, if they could influence the thoughts and actions of Morocco's future generations, teach them that they wanted to be a 'modern Monsieur', eventually the country would pacify itself. However, it realised that, in order to achieve this, it could not simply give a blanket education to all. If France were to 'enlighten' everyone, then what was to stop them taking power for themselves? The route France took, therefore, was to divide the Moroccan people down socio-ethnic lines and put them into separate groups; one was for those it knew it could bring on-side and another was for ones who could potentially cause trouble if not monitored. The result was a group of four: Education for the Europeans, Jews, Berbers and Arabs. Each system was set up in order to foster pride in their own heritage and almost learn to despise the others. In Berber schools, for example, Arabic and Islamic studies were erased from the curriculum and, instead, the Berber language was introduced. The French hoped that, in doing so, they could induce in the community a loathing towards the Arabs who had come with their 'extremist religion' to dominate Morocco. And while, in some instances, this did work and some Berber leaders were won over by the French, on the whole (as was seen in the case of the students at the Franco-Berber school in Azrou,

who went on strike in sympathy with the nationalist movement and demanded the right to pray) the Berber community were proud of their history with the Arabs and extremely defensive of Islam.

Attempts at divisions did not stop there. Within the Arab community, sides were drawn between rich and poor. The French understood the mentality of those in power, they knew about megalomania and realised that those who had been in authority before the Protectorate would be eager not to let it go. As a result, France knew that it could bring this group on-side and keep them there. For this elite few, therefore, emerged *les écoles des fils de notables*, whose students would be trained to be the Arab spokesmen of the French cause. The rest of the Arab community would have to 'make-do'²⁵⁸ with vocational training.

This division of education down social and ethnic lines was one of the most cynical legacies of the French Protectorate. Carving up communities down century-old lines and teaching them to different levels, simply because of an accident of birth, because of who they were, rather than what they could do, is a factor that angered many of the interviewees:

To be marginalised because of your identity, to be alienated in your own country is a sickening thing, I believe. Take, for example, how the French language was taught; if you wanted to advance you had to learn it, but you could only learn it if you were 'born advanced' For the rest of us, meanwhile,

²⁵⁸ Research Interview 1

we were left in limbo, speaking neither French nor Arabic sufficiently and causing a cultural catastrophe. This is STILL with us today.

Research Interview 40

This legacy left by the French language and culture will be looked at in the following sections.

8:3 Legacy of the French Language on Moroccan Culture and Identity

Language is the cornerstone of culture. Our language enables and empowers us to better comprehend ourselves, our families, our communities, and our histories. Language is the soul of a nation.

Chief Oren Lyons, Onondaga Nation, Yang Slaughter, 2007²⁵⁹

Morocco has, over the centuries, been influenced by Islamic, Arab and Berber culture. To these we may add the Hispano-Moorish and Jewish cultures, all of which have enriched dialogue between the different communities. In an interview with Touria Souaf on Morocco's main satellite network 2M, the Moroccan writer, Abdellatif Laabi said that:

The Moroccans have no identity problem...they have multiple identities characterised by the diversity of languages and cultures.

Interview with Touria Souaf, aired January 7th, 2001.

For many Moroccans, being bilingual shows signs, not of being oppressed and held back by a colonial past, but signs of a country that is progressing. In an interview for the Moroccan magazine *Aujourd'hui Le Maroc*, Hamid Barrada makes an interesting observation:

Fortunately it was France who colonised us and not we who colonised France. Not many French learned Arabic. WE, on the other hand, have

²⁵⁹ Available from <http://www.collectorsguide.com/fa/fa059.shtml> [accessed on 23 June, 2010]

conquered a foreign language, which is the goal of any nation that wants to develop itself. It was Hassan II who said that: "An illiterate isn't someone who can't speak a language; it's someone who only speaks one language". We are literate, as we are bi-lingual. We have an opening to many worlds, and that's enormous.

Barrada in *Aujourd'hui Le Maroc*, 7th April, 2006

This is a key point. Morocco, more so than any other Arab country, has the ability to speak so many languages: Arabic, Berber (and its multitude of dialects), Spanish, French and now, even English, thus helping her citizens to travel and explore the world:

I was reading a book by a Turkish author that had been translated into French but not Arabic. Had I not been bi-lingual I would have missed out on reading such a tremendous novel. It is not nothing that I understand French...I think it is everything.

Research Interview 32

Moreover, Morocco's multilingualism has encouraged tourists, who might otherwise be hesitant at visiting a 'developing country', to come and explore Morocco's diversity.

Nonetheless, it is difficult to ignore that there is a crisis of identity in Morocco today. One of Morocco's most popular bands at present is the *Hoba Hoba Spirit*. One of their most famous songs is called *Blad Schizo*²⁶⁰, and in it they sing about the extreme divisions in Moroccan society, from the aspect of wealth and cultural divides of the French-speaking *nouveau riche* and the rest of Morocco's working classes. The song is actually sung in Arabic, Berber and French, to highlight the confusion some Moroccans feel in knowing which language they should speak, or speak best. There are even one or two words sung in English, perhaps hinting at what is to come?

It is perhaps not so much the ability to speak French that worries some Moroccans, but the division that speaking it causes:

The main risk that we can see emerge is that of a detached elite that have a different reality and live in a sort of cultural bubble of a country that many of them have never even visited.

Research Interview 20

Others see it as more ominous than simply a division of a nation, but a loss of a nation's identity:

For me it is dangerous if French continues to be the dominant language. Not because we don't want to learn French, but, because, as a nation, we in Morocco have a need for something that belongs to only us. We have this

²⁶⁰ Schizophrenic country

wonderful rich and diverse history that we must guard and draw from, but that heritage is in Arabic. If we continue to idolise French in the way that we do, all our history will become foreign to us. That doesn't make sense. For us it is important to get back our language, but we have to make an effort.

Research Interview 1

This effort will be a difficult one to overcome, so long as the younger generation still look to France and French as a mode to progress:

There's this belief that, if you want a future, if you want to be somebody, you have to go to France. My generation, when you ask them what they want to do, they tell you that they want to go and live and work in France. I think that's a shame, because instead of staying here and developing their own country, they're leaving it and their roots behind.

Research Interview 9

8:4 What is the Moroccan Identity?

Language is our identity and if we forget our identity, we are as nothing.

Research Interview 14

Pluralism has been Morocco's signature for centuries. This is one of the reasons why some Moroccans do not view multilingualism and multiculturalism as a danger for national unity.

The Moroccan identity, in my opinion, is the ability to accept others. And that, for me, is the most noble, the most rich and the most significant aspect of my Moroccan identity; mosques, churches, synagogues stand side by side.

Research Interview: 26

I ask myself, am I Moroccan because I was born here? Or am I French, because I speak French, I think in French I see the world through French eyes? France has given me my opportunities in life, but Morocco forged me. And I am happy with both identities...I believe I'm more rich than a Moroccan and more rich than a French man.

Research Interview: 9

But are there sacrifices being made, so as to fit into their new identity?

Kids are quite happy to become French, to de-Arabise themselves, so that they can fit into French society. Girls will bleach their hair and whiten their skin and boys called Jamal will call themselves Jimmy. But this doesn't pay off, because these kids seem no longer Moroccan, but nor are they French.

Research Interview: 19

8:5 The future for French in Morocco

All in all, French continues to have the lion's share in the Moroccan linguistic 'market'. It dominates Arabic and Berber, being widespread in cultural, social, economic, commercial and industrial areas. And what of this? Should anything be done to change this dominance? There is no doubt that bilingualism is something extremely important to Moroccans, it is part of their multi-cultural history, as a country positioned at the cross-roads between Europe and Africa. Indeed, being bilingual opens more doors:

In the debris of colonialisation, we discovered the most marvellous tool; the French language. When one has an intimate knowledge of two languages which are so different and cover two completely different ways of thinking, like those of French and Arabic, one is well equipped for the future.

Research Interview 34

However, the question here is not, should French be learned, but who learns it and how it is used. If French is to be the language of 'progress', at least for the foreseeable future, then it is essential for every child to have the opportunity to learn it and learn it well:

During the 1970s the quality of teaching French dropped dramatically. Today, you can say that, generally, while a lot of Moroccans speak French, the majority of them speak it badly.

Research Interview 1

As for any hope of Arabic, or any of the native tongues, usurping French, well, that seems to be a rather more challenging prospect. Morocco's period of Arabisation was not taken on with much conviction. The government only Arabised at primary and secondary school level. This did more harm than good to the education system, not because Moroccans were Arabised, but because they were poorly Arabised:

Moroccan education lacks much investment and real thought; it's been a failure. That the French system continues to survive today is a sign of this failure. But the people want to learn French, they demand it. And the more this demand intensifies, the more that pressure is put on our system.

Morocco is stuck in the middle, we are neither Arabised nor are we Francofied. And what's happened is, simply put, we have lost our language. We no longer understand Arabic, nor have any desire to. Our children are being marginalised from their own culture.

Research Interview 8

So long as the middle class continue to send their children to private schools, where French is the language of education, then French will continue to dominate. The Moroccans seem almost scared of letting go of French that, somehow, by returning to Arabic, they are retreating to their 'backward' past:

The kids see their history as one of being stuck in the desert – folk riding about on camels and the like. If only they could learn how important the arrival of the Arabs was to our country, the vast wealth of knowledge they brought to us and the world. Unfortunately, they only see the state we were in

when the French came, corrupt tribal leaders fighting each other; famine and disease.

Research Interview 13

8:6 Final Thoughts

The colonial ambitions and expansionist tendencies of the countries in Europe have been with us for centuries; in some respects they are still with us today. For any budding imperialist, the experience of Morocco and other countries like it, is a stark warning; a sustained presence cannot work. For those on the receiving end it is alien and unworkable, no matter how much you try and bridge the cultural divides, no matter what the initial motivations are, it is not your country. You do not have the knowledge or power to control other people's countries, but, most importantly, you do not have the consent of the people:

It's that old saying 'well I'm doing it for your own good!' If the people aren't supporting you, you have to really question how much good you're doing. You can only cling on to power for so long, but, in the end, you'll be thrown out with little gratitude from anyone.

Research Interview 3

There is no doubt that, for some of the French who came to Morocco, their motives were positive ones. They believed that France could make a huge difference to the lives of the Moroccans – and in some instances they did. However, in the long run, it seems that this 'uninvited guest' overstayed its welcome.

The final message, therefore, is not to do it better, or more sensitively, but not to do it at all.

As for Morocco, well, it can cling to some of its colonial past, but, to become truly independent, ultimately it has to come up with its own formula:

You know when someone's been hit on the head with a blunt instrument and is still fairly dazed? I think we are still in that period.

Research Interview 24

As this thesis has explained, young Moroccans are, in the main, very much influenced by the West and all the trappings of technology and 'modern' life. However, there remains this tangible sense of *bled schizofren*; the sense that Moroccans, especially the younger generation, have no real identity of their own. There remains a group of staunch traditionalists who do not wish to lose their identity as Arabs or Berbers or, indeed, Muslims and this group attempt to hold on to their ideals, not without success. In some cases they have convinced some of the younger generation that, for all the modernisation Morocco has gone through, due, in many ways, to the French Occupation, it was not all plain sailing and that there was still some good in much of what their forefathers had, particularly in some of the traditional customs.

The resistance to change the status-quo, as regards French, seems to stem from a common condition that colonial enterprises leave behind: greed.

Those who are in power do not want to lose it and, by wiping the slate clean, by returning all the land seized by the French to its rightful owners, by making the language of education and business the language of all rather than a few,

the chances are they might lose that position of authority and the wealth that goes with it.

This insecurity boils down to one thing and perhaps the most potent legacy that the French left Morocco: lack of confidence; if a country is confident in its people and its ability, then the sky's the limit. But Morocco lacks this self-belief and, as a result, still looks to France for economic growth and social development. France is still the country to emulate, the big brother with the fast car and the lifestyle to match.

Hopefully all Moroccans, whose country, still in the process of development, will, at some point, learn that they can have both the modern and the traditional, that these two aspects of their lifestyles can live side by side.

They will at some point in the future be able to take what is good from what was left by the French Protectorate and leave the rest behind. Then and only then, will they regain their identity; be able to be proud once again of who they are and what they have achieved for themselves, with just a nod at what was left behind by the French.

Epilogue

It is at this point that I would like to thank once again all those interviewees who participated in the research – the originality of this work could not have been achieved without their time, patience and invaluable insight into a part of colonial history that sometimes gets overlooked. This was something that Abdullah Laroui noted in his seminal work *The History of the Maghreb*, in which he complained that the Maghreb suffered from:

...always having inept historians: geographers with brilliant ideas, functionaries with scientific pretensions, soldiers priding themselves on their culture, art historians who refuse to specialise and, on a higher level, historians without linguistic training or linguists and archaeologists without historical training. All these historians refer the reader back to each other and invoke each other's authority. The consequence is a conspiracy which puts the most adventurous hypotheses into circulation and ultimately imposes them as established truths.

The historians to whom Laroui refers to were not Moroccans – but Europeans or Americans writing the history of a land that was not theirs. This history, Laroui notes, should be being researched and written by the Moroccan youth from which they should learn about the legacy of their past. Instead, they are too interested in the present, in economics and modernisation and leave the story of where they came from to foreigners.

Hopefully these interviews are a small step towards changing that – a opportunity for Moroccans to have their voice heard and an incentive for

other Moroccans to speak out, to find out more about their forefathers' legacyies and what theirs might be. Identity, understanding where one comes from is a long journey we all make – this is ever more so for a population who have been subjected to colonial rule. For those generations who experienced that rule, seeing other people's accounts of it may help them understand their situation better and perhaps even give them the confidence to share their own experiences.

Finally, the interviews themselves will hopefully be of use as historical data in terms of qualitative study for future researchers who might wish to explore areas covered further.

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