

Erasmus School of
History, Culture and
Communication

Enrique Solé León

Student No. 512633

enrique.soleleon@gmail.com

Supervisor: Dr. Liesbeth Rosen Jacobson

Second Reader: Dr. Alex van Stipriaan Luiscius

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE
DECOLONISATION OF THE SPANISH
PROTECTORATE IN MOROCCO AND THE
FRUSTRATED ATTEMPT IN WESTERN
SAHARA (1945-1976): CULTURAL CLASH,
INHABITANTS AND ADMINISTRATION



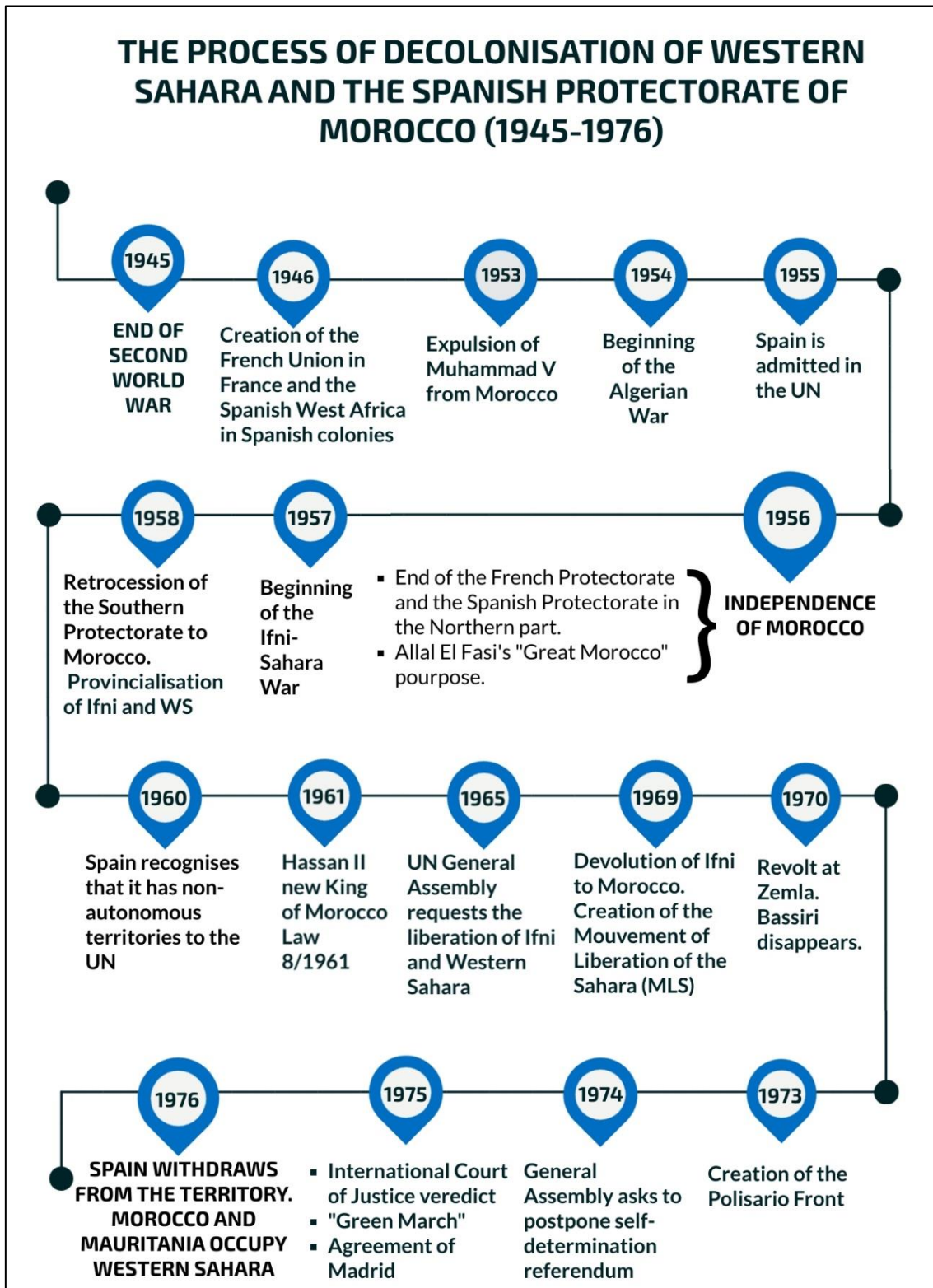
Front page: Actress Carmen Sevilla supporting to the Spanish troops at the Ifni-Sahara War during the New Year's Eve 1958. Source: Pinterest
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/354728908144892167/> Accessed May 27th, 2019.

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Timeline



Source: Own work

CHAPTER 1: General introduction

1.1 Setting the context: a common process of decolonisation in Morocco versus a unique situation in Western Sahara

This research compares two different processes of withdrawal of the same colonial power from two similar African and Arabic territories in the Maghreb. The cases that are compared are the process of decolonisation of the Spanish Protectorate in Morocco and how Western Sahara tried to obtain its independence in a similar way. The period of this research begins in 1945 given that after the Second World War the colonial powers got aware that the end of colonialism was near¹ and it ends in 1976 when Spain withdrew from Western Sahara.²

This investigation aims to bring light over the reasons that drove these territories towards independence from Spain, as it is striking that the Spanish Protectorate already obtained its independence in 1956, before the big wave of decolonisation of Africa during the 1960s, but Western Sahara was only freed from European control in 1976. However, the Saharan movements for independence did not succeed and after the European rule, the territory did not turn into a State as happened in many other cases in the continent and it is still an occupied territory nowadays.³

These remarkable differences are important enough to deserve a comparative analysis. The process of the withdrawal of Spain from this territory may have some answers about the origins of this exceptional situation in a world where colonialism seems to be ideologically overtaken. Thus, the main research question of this master thesis is to find out why the decolonisation of the Spanish protectorate in Morocco was so soon while the decolonisation of Western Sahara has not been fulfilled yet.

For understanding the exceptional nature of this situation, it is required to make a summarised introduction to the political framework of both territories for contextualising the research.

1.1.1 Protectorate of Morocco

In the context of the scramble for Africa, thirteen western powers agreed on establishing a protectorate over the Sharifian Empire (Morocco) in the Treaty of Algeciras of 1906. According to this, France and Spain were named the protecting powers over the territory.⁴ The opposition

¹ Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the politics of difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 410-415.

² Jaime de Piniés, *La descolonización del Sáhara: un tema sin concluir*. [*The decolonisation of the Sahara: an unfinished topic*] (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1990), 230.

³ *Ibidem*, 11.

⁴ María Concepción Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb* [*Spain and the decolonisation of the Maghreb*] (Madrid: UNED, 1998), 25-26.

against settling France as the single protector was headed by Great Britain, that did not want this country to have a hegemonic power just in front of its colony of Gibraltar, especially after the experiences that faced these powers before regarding colonisation like the incident in Fashoda of 1898.⁵

The effective establishment in the country of the French Protectorate was delayed until March 1912, when France signed a treaty with Morocco known as Treaty of Fez.⁶ Spain did not take part in this signature, but there was a clause that obliged France to sign an agreement with Spain for settling its own Protectorate. Thus, in November of that same year Spain and France signed another agreement where it was specified the delimitation of the Spanish zone.⁷

In all this process, Spain was only following what the main powers (France and Great Britain) were agreeing between them. For this reason, the distribution of the protected areas assigned was quite disadvantageous for it.⁸ The territories assigned to Spain were not contiguous but split into two parts separated by the 900 km that the French Protectorate took up itself (Illustration 1).

The Northern part – also called Rif – was made up of the poorest and most mountainous territories among the Northern areas of Morocco, without interesting opportunities for European investment.⁹ The Southern part was even less profitable. It was composed of a strip of land at the South of the French Protectorate called Tekna by the locals or Tarfaya or Cabo Juby by the Spanish.

Other Spanish territories that were close to the Protectorate but did not belong to it despite their proximity were Ifni and Western Sahara. However, Tangier was established as an international city after an agreement signed by France, Great Britain, and Spain in 1923.¹⁰

The colonisation gave room to different clashes between colonisers and colonised people, but the relations between them improved during the 1950s. This was probably considered a sign of

⁵ María Rosa de Madariaga, “Confrontation in the Spanish zone (1945-1956): Franco, the nationalists, and the post-war politics of decolonisation”, *The Journal of North African Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 4, (2014), 490-491.

⁶ Madariaga, “Confrontation in the Spanish zone (1945-1956)”, 491.

⁷ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 26-27.

⁸ Ibidem, 27-28.

⁹ Mimoun Aziza, “La sociedad marroquí bajo el Protectorado español (1912-1956)” in *El Protectorado español en Marruecos: La Historia trascendida. Vol. 1*. Dir. Manuel Aragón Reyes, Ed. & coord. Manuel Gahete Jurado (Bilbao: Iberdrola, 2012), 129.

¹⁰ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 28-30.

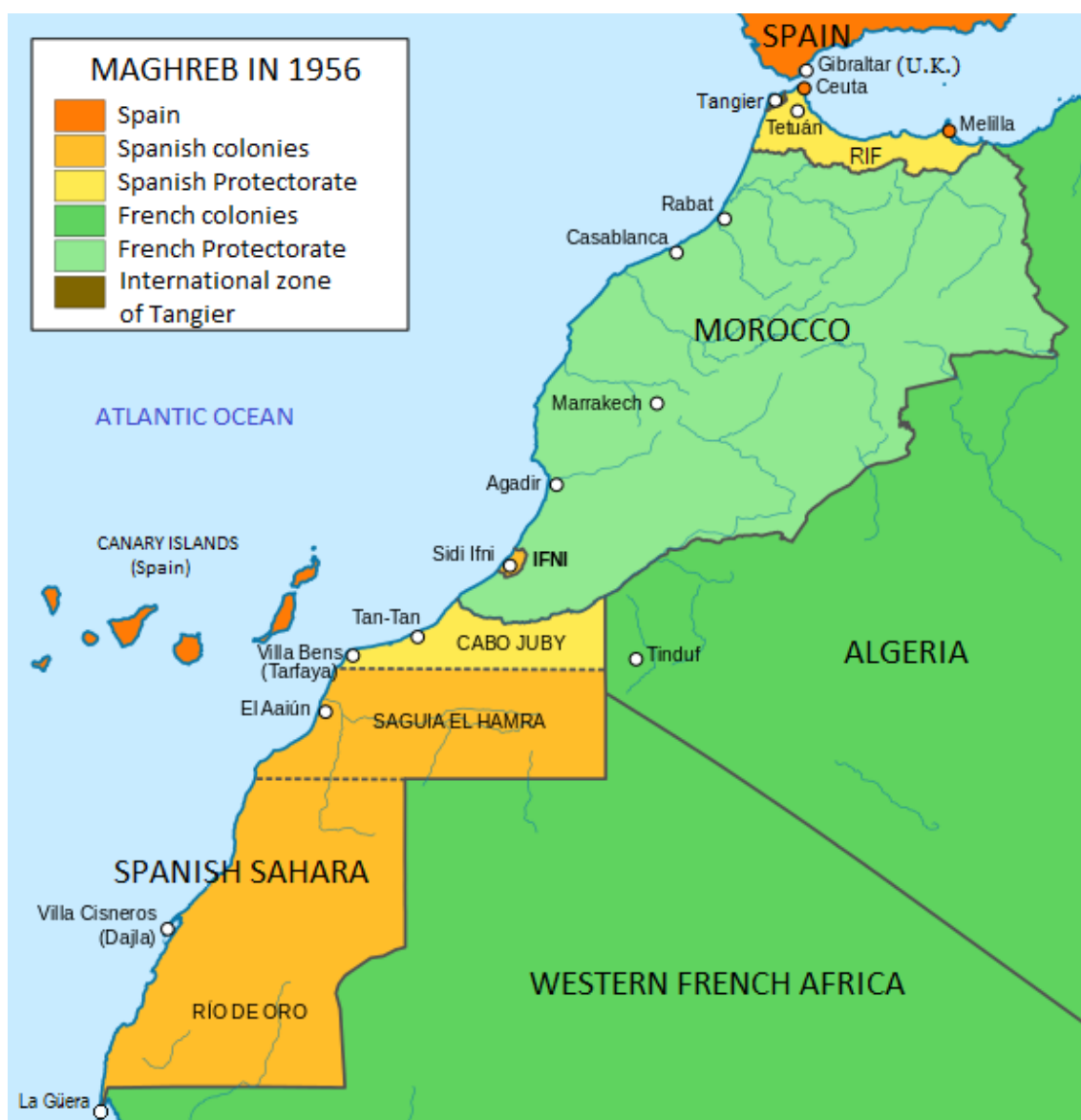


Illustration 1: Maghreb in 1956. Own work based on Wikimedia Commons. 2015. "Mapa del Magreb (1956)" Wikimedia Commons. Accessed January 8, 2019. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mapa_del_Magreb_\(1956\).svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mapa_del_Magreb_(1956).svg)

gratitude by the support that the Spanish Protectorate showed to General Franco during the Spanish Civil War.¹¹ Mimoun Aziza describes the social changes of the colonisation as "limited" although he underlines the cultural impact of the colonisation, as the Spanish language was more spoken than the French language in its counterpart due to what the author defines as "colonisation of the poor people" as most of the settlers were soldiers and Spanish peasants in rural areas that shared the same public spaces alongside Moroccans.¹² These differences in the colonisation were also remarked by Spanish authors like Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, who

¹¹Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 30.

¹² Aziza, "La sociedad marroquí bajo el Protectorado español (1912-1956)", 146.

remarks the “French-like and developed aspect of the French zone and the Moroccan-like and provincial look of the Spanish part”.¹³

Morocco achieved before many other African countries a historical goal. It was decolonised in 1956 after the French rulers decided to grant independence to their own Protectorate in the Southern part of the country.¹⁴ France preferred to focus on Algeria, where the Independence War began in 1954 and was considered more important for French interests than the Protectorate.¹⁵ Moreover, the French government was receiving international pressures from different actors, like the United States, for decolonising the Protectorate in Morocco.¹⁶

The Spanish rulers were forced to follow the same policy as France in their part of the country because the Protectorate existed as an agreement between France and Spain in which Morocco had no chance to intervene. Thus, when the French part withdrew, the Spanish part should do the same, so in April 1956 the Spanish Protectorate came to an end.¹⁷ However, Spain did not cede the Southern part of the Protectorate alleging lacking control by the government of the new state.¹⁸ This territory was ceded two years later, and the then isolated territory of Ifni was returned to Morocco in 1969.¹⁹ The International zone of Tangier lost its condition and was returned to the newly independent country of Morocco in October 1956.²⁰

1.1.2 Western Sahara

With the rise of colonialism in the nineteenth century, the interest of Spain about the African continent awakened and with it its historical interest in the African coast.²¹ Thus, in 1883 the Spanish Society of Africanists and Colonialists was founded. It sought to encourage the Spanish policy in colonial matters.²² Emilio Bonelli, member of this Society went to Río de Oro in 1884, became the first coloniser of the zone.²³ During the first years of the twentieth century, Spain acquired more than 265 000 square km. among the territories of Saguia el Hamra and Río de Oro after signing different agreements with France. However, Spain limited to establish itself at

¹³ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 33.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 17-18.

¹⁵ Nevill Barbour, L. Carl Brown, Susan Gilson Miller, “Morocco”, in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, accessed January 3, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Morocco/The-French-Zone>

¹⁶ Emilio Marín Ferrer, *Ifni, Sáhara, Guinea: Últimas colonias*, (Madrid: Susaeta, 2014), 52-53.

¹⁷ Marín Ferrer, *Ifni, Sáhara, Guinea: Últimas colonias*, 52-53.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, 53.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, 160-161.

²⁰ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 282-283.

²¹ Pablo-Ignacio de Dalmasas y de Olabarría, “El Sáhara Occidental en la bibliografía española y el discurso colonial” [“Western Sahara in the Spanish bibliography and the colonial rhetoric”] (PhD. diss., Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, 2013), 84-92.

²² *Ibidem*, 92-93.

²³ *Ibidem*, 159-160.

Villa Cisneros and two other coastal settlements founded in 1916 and 1920. It was not until 1934 when it began to care about the control of the hinterland.²⁴

The end of the colonial rule in Western Sahara did not follow the same scheme as the Moroccan. Since the independence of Morocco in 1956, the nationalist leader Allal El Fassi exposed his idea of an irredentist “Greater Morocco” that occupied parts of Algeria, Mali and Senegal and the entire territories of Mauritania and Western Sahara (Illustration 2). These ideas were spread in Mauritania by Horma Ould Babana.²⁵

Therefore, Mauritania – as a new State born in 1960 – was afraid of its own durability due to the Moroccan claims and the spreading of these annexationist ideas in its own territory. Thus, Mauritania supported the creation of an independent state in Western Sahara that could separate itself from Morocco or, at least, to control part of that territory for assuring its own stability²⁶.

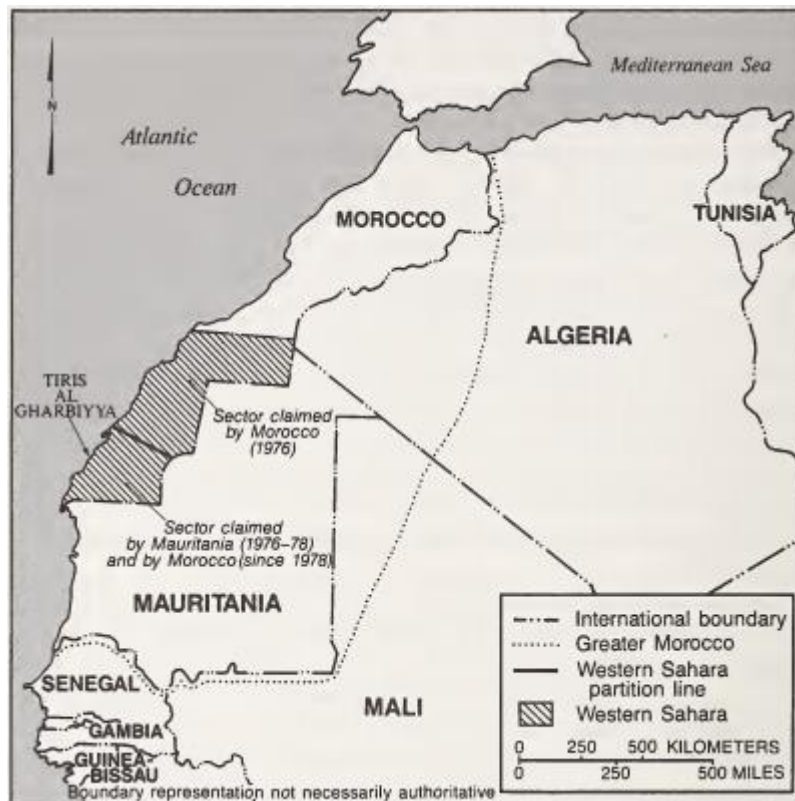
Some years later, in 1969, the Movement for the Liberation of Sahara (MLS) appeared in Western Sahara. It was headed by the student and pacifist leader Mohamed uld El Hadj Brahim uld Lebsir, known as Bassiri, for achieving the independence of the territory. The disappearance of Bassiri after his arrest for being in a demonstration in 1970 radicalised this pro-independence movement giving room to the Polisario Front, created by Saharan students in 1973. This organisation had a more remarkable military and political activity than the MLS.²⁷

²⁴ Tony Hodges, *Western Sahara. The Roots of a Dessert War* (Westport, Connecticut: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1983), 49.

²⁵ Ahmed Baba Miské, *Front Polisario: L'âme d'un peuple*. (Paris : Éditions Rupture, 1978), 51-52.

²⁶ Rachel Warner, “Chapter 1. Historical Setting”, in *Mauritania: A Country Study*, ed. Robert Earl Handloff and Library of Congress. Federal Research Division (Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1990), 26-30.

²⁷ Mohamed-Fadel Ould Ismail Ould Es-Sweyih, “El primer Estado del Sáhara Occidental”, Translated by Nathnaël Raballand and Carmen Astiaso. (Paris: Arso, 2001), 14-15.



*Illustration 2: Situation of Greater Morocco, neighbouring countries and partition of Western Sahara after the "Agreement of Madrid". Source: Rachel Warner in *Mauritania: A Country Study*, 28. (Washington D.C., 1990). Based on information from Alasdair Drysdale and Gerald H. Blake, *The Middle East and North Africa*, New York, 1985.*

Being aware of the internal and external pressures that it had to face, Spain assumed that the end of its colonial rule was near, and it began the process of decolonisation of the territory. It was not doing something extraordinary, because since 1947 all United Nations (UN) member States were obligated to inform about the situation of their non-autonomous territories. Thus, Spain was doing so since 1960, five years after its accession to the UN.²⁸ The UN had a very active role in the last years of the colonialism since its foundation the 24th of October 1945 and helped to encourage a sense of community of the colonised nations. It did it by becoming an organisation where the lesser nations could influence in world-level decisions and face the two-pole world system between the USSR and the USA that the end of the Second World War brought.²⁹

In 1965, the General Assembly of the UN recognised that Spain was the administering power of Western Sahara and the right of Saharan people to self-determination in the Resolution 2072.

²⁸ Piniés, de, *La descolonización del Sáhara: un tema sin concluir*, 13-14.

²⁹ Raymond F. Betts, *Decolonization*, (New York: Routledge, 2004), 42.

Spain postponed the calls of the UN for holding a referendum of self-determination until 1974 when a referendum was scheduled for the following year.³⁰

When Spain announced its intention to hold this referendum, all the Moroccan irredentist ambitions exploded, and King Hassan II of Morocco did not accept it, as it was easier to annex a colony rather than a future sovereign state. Mauritania was forced to follow the same policy as Morocco for avoiding endangering its own sovereignty. Thus, in 1974 the General Assembly asked Spain to postpone the referendum and asked the International Court of Justice (ICJ) if Moroccan and Mauritanian demands over the territory had a juridical and historical basis. The ICJ declared unanimously in October 1975 that none of the studied demands sustained, so Western Sahara had the right to self-determination.³¹

As a response to the blow that this resolution meant to the Moroccan nationalist ambitions, Hassan II organised a march of 350,000 Moroccans for occupying the Spanish colony since the 31st October 1975 (officially it began on the 6th November) known as “Green March”.³² High-position policy-makers of the Spanish government did not know how to react, as the Moroccan act had the tacit support of France and the United States, which were afraid of a disorganised process of decolonisation.³³

For unblocking this situation, the governments of Spain, Morocco and Mauritania met in Madrid on 14th November 1975 for establishing a temporary tripartite administration over Western Sahara. In April 1976, the temporality of the previous agreement came to an end when the African countries distributed the territory between them. The two thirds of the North went to Morocco and the Southern third to Mauritania (Illustration 2).³⁴

The Agreement of Madrid was considered illegal according to the International Law and it did not transfer the sovereignty of the territory to the other two new administrators.³⁵ Moreover, the administration could have been transferred to the UN, as the General Secretary of the moment had already drawn a plan after consulting the Security Council.³⁶

³⁰ Sidi M. Omar, “The right to self-determination and the indigenous people of Western Sahara”, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* Vol. 21, No.1 (March 2008): 46-47.

³¹ Sidi M. Omar, “The right to self-determination and the indigenous people of Western Sahara”, 47-48.

³² *Ibidem*, 48-49.

³³ Jordi Vaquer i Fanés, “España y el Sáhara Occidental: la dimensión partidista”. *Revista CIDOB d’Afers Internacionals* No. 79/80. (December 2007), 127.

³⁴ Sidi M. Omar, “The right to self-determination and the indigenous people of Western Sahara”, 49.

³⁵ Sidi M. Omar, “The right to self-determination and the indigenous people of Western Sahara”, 50.

³⁶ Jaime de Piniés, *La descolonización del Sáhara: un tema sin concluir*, 12.

The background of the Agreements of Madrid was marked by the very sensitive moment that the Spanish politics were going through. The ruling dictator of the country for almost forty years, Francisco Franco, was about to pass away, which caused much uncertainty in the country. In fact, he died six days after the signature of the Agreement.

Spanish withdrawal of the political scenario was the opportunity that the Polisario Front took for declaring the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) supported by Algeria. This situation gave room to a military confrontation that finished on 10th July 1978, when Mauritania rejected to continue administering the Southern part of Western Sahara due to a military coup in its own country. Therefore, Morocco began to administer the whole Saharan territory.³⁷

1.2 Research question and sub-questions

After sketching the historical background, it is required to explain the goal of this investigation. The research question that will be answered is: “Why was the decolonisation of the Spanish protectorate in Morocco so soon and the decolonisation of Western Sahara has not been fulfilled yet?”. The timespan covered in this research starts from 1945 until 1976. As this question is broad, it is accompanied by three other sub-questions:

- Which status did these territories and its inhabitants have during the Spanish rule?
- Which socio-political situations did these territories lead to independence from their colonial power and what did happen when it withdrew from the area?
- What did happen with the indigenous and Spanish inhabitants of these territories when the Spanish left and how did they experience this process of decolonisation?

These sub-questions are guiding the narrative throughout the whole research and they will help the reader to understand better the background of the process studied.

The first sub-question makes an ideological approach to Spanish colonialism, that had remarkable differences from the colonialism of other European powers, especially in the way of “othering” and orientalisating to the Maghrebi peoples, the status of their citizenship and, of course, the administrative situation of the territories within Spain. This introduction is considered important because for properly understanding the process of decolonisation it is essential to understand the previous colonisation. Hence, this sub-question is answered in chapters 2 and 3 of this research.

³⁷ Mohamed Daadaoui, “The Western Sahara conflict: towards a constructivist approach to self-determination”, *The Journal of North African Studies*, 13:2, (May 2008): 148-149.

The second sub-question is answered by explaining the events that lead these territories towards independence, how the national identity was born and how it evolved during the time span of this research. This sub-question is answered in chapter 4.

Finally, the third sub-question explains what happened with the Spanish settlers that lived there. Did they stay, or did they return to their home country? And what happened with the indigenous peoples? How did their lives change from living under a colonial state to a free state in the Moroccan case or from a European power to the occupation of another power, like happened in Western Sahara? How do they recall the colonial times? These queries are responded in chapter 5.

1.3 Scientific relevance of this topic and innovative aspects

This investigation seeks to fill the gaps in the academic literature of two territories that have in common not only the presence of Spain as a colonial power, but also the fact that they are both Arabic territories, i.e. they share a common cultural and historical background and the striking fact that one former colony (Morocco) colonised a territory (Western Sahara) that belonged to one of its former colonial powers (Spain). This causes the fact that Western Sahara still remains the only African territory in the United Nation's list of Non-Self-Governing territories.³⁸

Moreover, the objective of this master thesis is to explain the origins of the conflict in Western Sahara, that is still open nowadays but providing new perspectives about how indigenous people and settlers experienced this shock. As the frustrated attempt of decolonisation of this territory is remarkable for its exceptionality in the History of decolonisation, it is important to bear in mind a process of successful decolonisation that took place in another Arabic and African territory that was colonised by the same power. That is why the Protectorate of Morocco has been considered ideal. Furthermore, the Protectorate experienced an interesting decolonisation process that can provide more scientific information.

The timespan chosen (1945-1976) can provide new perspectives of the uniqueness of this situation. It sheds light on the decision of Morocco to occupy Western Sahara and how both processes of decolonisation or attempt of decolonisation are intertwined.

The literature about Western Sahara focuses on the attempt of decolonisation but omits to address the lives of the settlers and the living conditions of the Saharan people during the

³⁸ "Non-Self-Governing Territories" The United Nations and Decolonisation, United Nations, accessed January 16, 2019. <http://www.un.org/en/decolonization/nonselvgovterritories.shtml#foot1>

Spanish colonial rule.³⁹ On the contrary, the process of decolonisation in Morocco seems to be slightly forgotten by the academic literature while the years of colonisation are deeply researched.⁴⁰ Thus, this investigation seeks to fill in this gap in current scholarship. Moreover, the process of decolonisation in Morocco influenced the attempt of decolonisation in Western Sahara. Thus, comparing both processes can bring to light how both processes were interconnected.

Finally, this research has a special commitment with the perspectives and vision of the indigenous populations for providing the most cross-sectional point of view as possible. Therefore, Maghrebi sources are used as much as possible given that this sensitive process can be seen differently from the side of the coloniser and from the side of the colonised.

1.4 Main theoretical concepts with a brief explanation

Due to the fact that this master thesis is concerned with a specific type of colonialism, it is required to define this concept in the first place for defining later some terms related to it. According to the Oxford Dictionary of Human Geography, colonialism is:

“The control over one territory and its peoples by another, and the ideologies of superiority and racism often associated with such domination.”⁴¹

The term “Colonialism” is the most accurate for describing the relation – not the administration – between Spain and the Protectorate of Morocco and Western Sahara from 1912 to 1956 and from 1884 to 1976 respectively.

³⁹ For the process of decolonisation, see the works of authors like de Piniés, Goytisoló or de Dalmases in Spanish. In French, the ones of Baba Miské. In English, Tony Hodges, the article by Sidi M. Omar, “The right to self-determination and the indigenous people of Western Sahara” or Thomas A. Marks’ “Spanish Sahara – Background to Conflict”. For the colonial relations between Spanish (Canarian and “Peninsulares”) and Saharan peoples see the article “On the trail of social relations in the colonial Sahara: a postcolonial reading” by Domínguez-Mújica, Andreu-Mediero and Kroudo.

⁴⁰ For the colonial period of the Spanish rule in the Protectorate in Morocco see the book of Aragón Reyes (dir.) and Manuel Gahete Jurado (ed. & coord.) *El Protectorado español en Marruecos: La Historia trascendida* (in Spanish). In this book it is possible to find one chapter in French “Le mouvement nationaliste marocain dans l'exMaroc espagnol (1930-1956)” by Abdelmajid Benjelloun. Other relevant works in Spanish are the ones of important authors like Mimoun Aziza, José María Cordero de Torres or José Luis Villanova. In English there are different works like the article “Confrontation in the Spanish zone (1945–56): Franco, the nationalists, and the post-war politics of decolonisation” by María Rosa de Madariaga or the book “Disorientations: Spanish Colonialism in Africa and the Performance of Identity” by Susan Martín-Márquez. For the process of decolonisation of the Spanish Protectorate the book “España y la descolonización del Magreb” by María Concepción Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden is strongly recommended.

⁴¹ Oxford Dictionary of Human Geography, “Colonialism”, accessed January 11, 2019. <http://www.oxfordreference.com/eur.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/acref/9780199599868.001.0001/acref-9780199599868-e-236?rskey=vHGf6V&result=1>

This colonial relation could have different legal frameworks. During the period of the colonisation of the African continent, international law distinguished three different terms for referring to the administration – not the relation, that was colonial in both areas – of the colonised territories. These were protectorate, mandate, and colony.⁴² Only two of these administrations concern this investigation, so the mandates are not explained here.

The protectorates appeared after the provisions of the art. 34 of the General Act of the Berlin Conference. This institution was only established in Africa, with the exception of the Aden Protectorate and the British Solomon Islands. This agreement awarded the protecting State with international full powers over the protected country.⁴³ This was a solution that avoided different problems that colonies had related to citizenship, law or classification of the territory within the national Administration, as the subdued State was still independent although its defence and its internal order depended on a stronger State.⁴⁴

However, the concept of colony was not that much related to international law but to internal regulations of each colonial power as municipal or constitutional law. Thus, it had different definitions depending on the country. Generally speaking, this term refers to any non-metropolitan territory of a State.⁴⁵ This system implied a direct rule of the territory and the assumption of sovereignty by the colonising power in contrast with the mandates and protectorates, that championed the preservation of the local particularities.⁴⁶

Due to its characteristics within the Spanish Administration, it is possible to say that the colonial relation of the territory of the Protectorate of Morocco gave room to an administration – as its own name indicates – under a regime of a protectorate. This affirmation is done based on the facts that the Moroccan government still existed under this colonial relation, and the administration of this territory depended on the Treaty of Fez and the Spanish-French agreement of 1912 that gave power to these countries to rule over Morocco. Moreover, it

⁴² José Luis Villanova Valero, “La organización política, administrativa y territorial del Protectorado español en Marruecos (1912-1956). El Papel de las intervenciones” [“The political, administrative and territorial organisation of the Spanish Protectorate in Morocco (1912-1956)]. The role of the ‘intervenciones’”] (PhD diss., University of Girona, 2003), 127-128.

⁴³ John P. Grant and J. Craig Barker, “Colonial Protectorate”. In *Parry and Grant Encyclopaedic Dictionary of International Law*, 3rd Edition, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 107.

⁴⁴ Antonio Manuel Carrasco González, “El ordenamiento jurídico hispano-marroquí” [“The Spanish-Moroccan legal system”], in *El Protectorado español en Marruecos: La Historia trascendida. Vol. 1*. Dir. Manuel Aragón Reyes, Ed. & coord. Manuel Gahete Jurado (Bilbao: Iberdrola, 2012), 59-60.

⁴⁵ Grant and Barker, “Colony”, In *Parry and Grant Encyclopaedic Dictionary of International Law*, 3rd Edition, 107.

⁴⁶ Villanova Valero, “La organización política, administrativa y territorial del Protectorado español en Marruecos (1912-1956). El Papel de las intervenciones” [“The political, administrative and territorial organisation of the Spanish Protectorate in Morocco (1912-1956)], 127.

cannot be a mandate as this agreement was before the First World War (1914-1918), the status of Morocco did not change after the Treaty of Versailles and any mandate was assigned to Spain in 1919.

The colonial administration of Western Sahara can be classified as a colony, as the settlement in the country did not depend on any agreement with any other State and the government of the territory was done through a direct rule of the mother country.

Regarding the philosophical motivations that encouraged this colonial relation, the sociologist Sune Qvotrup Jensen defines "Othering" as the process in which a powerful group describes its subordinate counterpart as inferior or problematic for affirming its superiority and legitimacy.⁴⁷ A consequence of othering may be racism,⁴⁸ that is the way in which colonised are depicted by the colonisers.⁴⁹ By demoting colonised until the level of considering them non-humans, colonisers can establish their privileges as a new elite within the colony.⁵⁰ A kind of othering gave room to the term "Orientalism", a concept created by the Palestinian-American author Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* (1978) that describes it as the way in which the West approached the Orient since approximately the eighteenth century for making statements about it, describing it, settling it or even ruling over it.⁵¹

Decolonisation is another term used several times in this research. It can be defined as simple as the process of achieving independence after colonisation.⁵² Nevertheless, formal decolonisation can be considered in a timespan from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in America or Australia to the 1970s in the case of Angola and Mozambique.⁵³

However, this period of time is not accurate as the United Nations is still keeping a list with territories that are not self-governed (in which Western Sahara is recorded), so it is not possible to say that the decolonisation already came to an end in certain territories of the World.

⁴⁷ Sune Qvotrup Jensen, "Othering, identity formation and agency", *Qualitative Studies*, 2(2): (2011): 65.

⁴⁸ Ibidem.

⁴⁹ Albert Memmi, *The colonizer and the colonized*, trans. Howard Greenfeld, (London: Earthscan Publication Ltd, 2003), 125.

⁵⁰ Jean-Paul Sartre, Introduction of *The colonizer and the colonized*, trans. Howard Greenfeld, (London: Earthscan Publication Ltd, 2003), 22.

⁵¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 3.

⁵² Oxford Dictionary of Human Geography, "Decolonization", accessed January 11, 2019.

<http://www.oxfordreference.com/eur.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/acref/9780199599868.001.0001/acref-9780199599868-e-357?rskey=m8XXPd&result=1>

⁵³ Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 12.

1.5 Historiography and literature report

1.5.1 Nature of the sources

This investigation is shedding light on the impact that the decolonisation had on both territories. Although it has been deeply studied in the Protectorate – especially the topics related to the relations of the colony and Spain⁵⁴ – there are not so many studies about the process of decolonisation *per se*, which represents very well the geopolitical tensions and movements that existed in the Maghreb after the Second World War. In this way, this research seeks to fill this gap in the literature about this period.⁵⁵

However, Western Sahara stands out for the opposite. Most of the literature found about this area is related to the aborted process of the Spanish withdrawal of the territory while the cultural and social heritage of the former European colonisation has not been treated in-depth. There are many questions about the former settlers, the relations between Europeans and indigenous peoples that are still unsolved.⁵⁶

In this way, this master thesis seeks to compare two territories that have a lot in common: both are Arabic and African, both were (totally or partially) colonised by the same power, their struggles for ending the colonial rule of Spain intertwined, etc. Nonetheless, there have not been so many researches comparing them, a topic that may have relevant results for understanding the current conflict between Morocco and Western Sahara.

Secondary sources tend to have a military background, especially in the Spanish case. We should bear in mind that the army had a large impact on these territories. For instance, between 1960

⁵⁴ The pro-colonial ideology that existed in Spain during the dictatorship of Francisco Franco (1936-1975) reinforced the publication of different works about the colonialism and the Castilian exploration of the Northern Mediterranean in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There are interesting Works in Spanish done by José María Cordero de Torres (“El Africanismo en la cultura hispánica contemporánea” [“The ‘Africanismo’ in the contemporary Hispanic culture”], “Balance colonial del último tercio de siglo” [“Colonial assessment of the last one-third of the century”], Tomás García Figueras (“África en la acción española” [“Africa in the Spanish action”], “Marruecos (La acción de España en el África)” [“Morocco (the action of Spain in Africa)”]) or Antonio Carro (“La descolonización del Sáhara” [“The decolonisation of the Sahara”]).

⁵⁵ A remarkable exception for this is María Concepción Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden’s book “*España y la descolonización del Maghreb*” [“Spain and the decolonisation of the Maghreb”]. Ybarra remarks in a summarised way the geopolitical struggles that surrounded the previous years of the independence and the first years of the independent Morocco.

⁵⁶ An important paper about the relations between the colonial period between colonisers and colonised in Western Sahara with an especial emphasis in the impact that it had in the Canary Islands is the article “On the trail of social relations in the colonial Sahara: a postcolonial reading” by Josefina Domínguez-Mujica, Beatriz Andreu-Mediero & Nadia Kroudo (2018) in the Journal *Social & Cultural Geography*, 19:6, 741-763. It is interesting to read the bilingual edition of the number 24-25 of the Journal “Les Cahiers d’EMAM” (2015) completely available online in Spanish and French for the Spanish colonial period in Western Saharan.

and 1970, 28% of the working population in Western Sahara were military men.⁵⁷ The researcher Francesco Correale estimates that 23 out of the 36 studies about Western Sahara or Ifni between 2001 and 2010 were performed by members or former members of the Army and only 5 out of these 23 do not refer exclusively to military history. Among the other 13 types of research performed by civilians, only 8 are of an academic nature. This preponderance is explained because traditionally soldiers affirmed to have first-hand knowledge of the historical events that were taking place in those territories.⁵⁸ Therefore, a new perspective from a civilian and academic point of view can enrich the intellectual debate regarding this process of decolonisation.

As this research does not seek to recall the military history of this period of time, most of the sources that talk about the military are not used, as they do not fit the objective of this master thesis. However, due to the large impact that the military had in the literature, some Spanish authors with military hints are used. Examples of these are Emilio Marín Ferrer, Juan Pastrana Piñero or José Carlos López-Pozas.⁵⁹

Secondary sources about the Protectorate in Morocco are very different from the ones about Western Sahara. On the one hand, the studies about the Protectorate are more descriptive. They emphasise the times of the Spanish rule or recall the cultural legacy that the Spanish presence left behind and forget about the process of decolonisation. A good example of this is “El Protectorado español de Marruecos: La historia trascendida”, an edited three-volume-book written in 2012 by Spanish and Moroccan authors for commemorating the first centenary of the settling of the Spanish Protectorate.

On the other hand, the works about the Sahara are mainly focused on the process that European rule drew to an end due to the exceptionality of this procedure in comparison with the information about the years of the colonial ruling which is less numerous. This can be explained

⁵⁷ Ramón Díaz Hernández, Josefina Domínguez Mujica and Juan Manuel Parreño Castellano, “Gestión de la Población y desarrollo urbano en el Sáhara Occidental: Un análisis comparado de la colonización española (1950-1975) y de la ocupación marroquí (1975-2013)”, *Revista electrónica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales* Vol. XVIII, No. 493 (48), (November 2014), 6.

⁵⁸ Francesco Correale, “La ‘última guerra colonial’ de España y la literatura militar entre memoria y conocimiento” [“The ‘last colonial war’ of Spain and the military literature between memory and knowledge”] (7th Congress of African Studies, Lisbon, 2010), 2-3.

⁵⁹ The main works of these authors used in this master thesis are: Emilio Marín Ferrer, *Ifni, Sáhara, Guinea: Últimas colonias [Ifni, Sahara, Guinea: Last colonies]* (Madrid: Susaeta, 2014); Juan Pastrana Piñero, *Arde el desierto. 1957: La guerra de Ifni-Sáhara y la lucha por el poder en Marruecos [Burning desert. 1957: Ifni-Sahara War and the fight for power in Morocco]* (Madrid: Ediciones Nowtilus, 2017) and José Carlos López-Pozas “África Occidental Española: La cuestión de soberanía y la retirada del Sahara” [“Spanish West Africa: The sovereign question and the withdrawal from Sahara”]. PhD diss., UNED, 2015.

because this period is more relevant from a military point of view. An example of this is the Ph.D. thesis by José Carlos López-Pozas, “África Occidental Española: La cuestión de soberanía y la retirada del Sahara.

The secondary Saharan indigenous sources are dominated by members of the Polisario Front. In this cluster, we can find with authors like Sidi M. Omar, representative of this organisation in the United Kingdom and Ireland and Kamal Fadel, idem in Australia and New Zealand.⁶⁰ The preponderance of members of the Polisario Front in academic literature may be due to its importance among the cultural Saharan elites. However, there is one remarkable exception, the poet Bahia Mahmud Awah, a Saharan scholar who wrote academic researches but who is not a member of the Polisario Front.⁶¹

The indigenous secondary sources that studied the Protectorate of Morocco are dominated by scholars, contrary to the Saharan case. The most relevant author is Mimoun Aziza, who has researched this period of the history of his country in-depth.⁶² There are other relevant authors who wrote chapters in edited books like Abdelmajid Benjelloun, M’Hammad Benaboud or Mohamed Larbi Messari.⁶³

1.5.2 The “Ifni-Sahara” War

The section 4.2 is devoted to this war. “Ifni War” is the traditional term used in Spain for referring to the conflict that put together this country and France against the Moroccan guerrillas of the

⁶⁰ These posts were occupied by these men when published the following papers: Sidi M. Omar “The right to self-determination and the indigenous people of Western Sahara” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 21:1 (2008), 41-57. Kamal Fadel, “Africa: The Decolonisation Process in Western Sahara,” *Indigenous Law Bulletin* 7, 4(23) (1999).

⁶¹ Relevant works by him are “Generaciones literarias: intelectualidad y política en el Sáhara Occidental, (1850-1975)” [“Literary generations: intellectuality and politics in Western Sahara, (1850-1975)”], *Les Cahiers d’EMAM*, (2015).

⁶² See Mimoun Aziza, “La sociedad marroquí bajo el Protectorado español (1912-1956)” [“The Moroccan society under the Spanish Protectorate (1912-1956)”]. In *El Protectorado Español en Marruecos: La historia trascendida*, directed by Manuel Aragón Reyes. Edited and coordinated by Manuel Gahete Jurado, vol. 1, 127-148. (Bilbao: Iberdrola, 2012). Another relevant works by this author is Mimoun Aziza, *La Sociedad rifeña frente al Protectorado español de Marruecos (1912-1956)* [*The Society of Rif facing the Spanish Protectorate in Morocco (1912-1956)*], (Barcelona: Edicions Bellaterra, 2003).

⁶³ Abdelmajid Benjelloun, “Le mouvement nationaliste marocain dans l’ex Maroc espagnol (1930-1956)”. In *El Protectorado Español en Marruecos: La historia trascendida*, directed by Manuel Aragón Reyes. Edited and coordinated by Manuel Gahete Jurado, vol. 3, (Bilbao: Iberdrola, 2012), 183-200.

Mohamed Larbi Messari, “Antagonismo hispano-francés con relación al Protectorado en Marruecos” [“Spanish-French antagonism regarding the Protectorate in Morocco]. In *El Protectorado Español en Marruecos: La historia trascendida*, directed by Manuel Aragón Reyes. Edited and coordinated by Manuel Gahete Jurado, vol. 3, (Bilbao: Iberdrola, 2012), 219-230.

Benaboud, M’Hammad. “La intervención española vista desde Marruecos” [“The Spanish intervention seen from Morocco”] in *España en Marruecos (1912-1956): Discursos geográficos e intervención territorial*. Dir. José Luis Villanova. (Lleida: Editorial Milenio, 1999), 159-182.

Liberation Army (LA) between November 1957 (officially August) and March 1958.⁶⁴ However, circumscribing this clash exclusively to the territory of Ifni may be an error, as it had important repercussions in the Saharan territory. Thus, modern Spanish historiography prefers the term “Ifni-Saharan War” although there is an academic debate in this regard.⁶⁵

Indigenous⁶⁶ and international⁶⁷ historiographies have not used this terminology and have circumscribed themselves to the term “Operation Ouragan” or “Operation Écouvillon”. This Spanish-French joint operation with two names began in February 1958⁶⁸ and only represents the last part of what the Spanish authors consider the whole War that began three months before. Thus, referring exclusively to the whole term with this name is not accurate as there were many other operations and battles apart from that one. For these reasons, in this research the term “Ifni-Sahara War” is used.

The initiative that encouraged the Spanish-French alliance is controversial. On the one hand, according to Baba Miské, the Spanish forces saw themselves overpassed by the army of the LA. For this reason, it agreed with France a counter-attack for eliminating it. France, in the middle of the Algeria War, did not want a new anti-colonialist agitation in its Mauritanian territory. For this reason, the commander-in-chief of French West Africa, General Bourgund organised the Operation Écouvillon, being directed from the Spanish side by General (and first Governor of the Province of Sahara) Héctor Vázquez.⁶⁹ Moreover, the attacks of the LA had launched an invasion of the Ifni since November 1957 and was attacking Spanish positions in Western Sahara since that time.⁷⁰

On the other hand, the Spanish author Juan Pastrana Piñero states that it was General Bourgund who had the initiative of operating alongside the Spanish troops for taking advantage of the vulnerable situation of the LA and avoiding any new attacks against the French Army in Mauritania as happened in 1957.⁷¹

⁶⁴ Dalmases, de, “El Sáhara Occidental en la bibliografía española y el discurso colonial”, 413.

⁶⁵ In fact, different Spanish authors like Pastrana Piñero or López-Pozas use the term “Ifni-Sahara” War although Ybarra prefers calling it “Ifni War”.

⁶⁶ It is the term used by Ismail Sayeh (nickname for Mohamed-Fadel Ould Ismail Ould Es-Sweyih). However, Baba Miské uses the term “Insurrection of 1957”.

⁶⁷ Tony Hodges or this same author alongside Anthony G. Pazzanita use these terms.

⁶⁸ Anthony G. Pazzanita and Tony Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1994), 337.

⁶⁹ Ahmed Baba Miské, *Front Polisario: l’Ame d’un Peuple*. (Paris : Éditions Rupture, 1978), 110.

⁷⁰ Pazzanita and Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, 337.

⁷¹ Juan Pastrana Piñero, “La guerra de Ifni-Sáhara y la lucha por el poder en Marruecos”, (PhD diss., University Pompeu Fabra, 2013), 310-311.

1.5.3 About the Spanish withdrawal from Sahara

One event that has created an enormous interest to the academic literature is the fact that Spain decided to delegate the management of the territory to Mauritania and Morocco instead of to the United Nations in the Agreement of Madrid in 1975. We can cluster the authors that have written about this topic in three groups: those who explain it on an international level, those who give answers on a national level and those who mix both kinds of answers.

López-Pozas belongs to the international group. According to him, in June 1975 the Secretary of State of the United States, Henry Kissinger, declared that the American country supported the Moroccan annexation of Sahara, as he did not believe in an independent Sahara that could end up being a satellite of Algeria, a pro-Soviet country. Therefore, the US preferred a solution between Spain and Morocco of the conflict, without the intermediation of third parties like the UN or Algeria.⁷²

This international point of view is supported by Pazzanita and Hodges, who stated that both France and the US wanted stability in Spain and Morocco as they did not want a repetition of the events that took place in Portugal the previous year after the end of Marcelo Caetano's rule. These authors affirm that the deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency back then, Vernon Walters, clearly expressed this message in Madrid.⁷³

The "mixing" opinions are represented by Marks. For him, the Spanish reaction responded to three causes. First of all, the internal instability of the country, as dictator Franco was about to pass away and the future regime after him was still unknown. Moreover, the pro-independence movements in the Basque Country were rising. Secondly, the isolation of Spain in relation to the rest of the European community that prevented it to be part of the NATO, which could give more support to a military confrontation against Morocco. And in the third place, Spain was not ready for a war. Although militarily speaking it was more prepared, the emotional links that had been established with the Arabic countries did not allow such confrontation.⁷⁴

M'beirik Ahmed Abdalahe also gives a mixing answer. Although he recognises that the "Green March" counted on the support of the United States and France, he reinforces the lack of

⁷² José Carlos López-Pozas Lanuza, "África Occidental Española: La cuestión de soberanía y la retirada del Sahara" ["Spanish West Africa: The sovereign question and the withdrawal from Sahara"], 113-114.

⁷³ Anthony G. Pazzanita and Tony Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1994), 263.

⁷⁴ Thomas A. Marks, "Spanish Sahara – Background to conflict", *African Affairs*, Vol. 75, No. 298 (Jan. 1976), 11.

support that the PUNS enjoyed and the pressure that the Spanish government had to face due to the existence of soldiers confined by the Polisario Front.⁷⁵

Juan Goytisolo is representing the national causes. He puts the blame of the “Green March” on the Spanish Government. He compares the situation created by Franco’s Regime to the conflict of Palestine. In this case, the Spanish Government presented Morocco as an invader to the Saharan population rather than admitting the historical, social and political realities of the region. In fact, he states that the peaceful reaction of the Spanish Army while withdrawing the territory was an example of a logical and clear reaction.⁷⁶

Goytisolo is heavily criticised by Navarra Ordoño, who can be clustered as internationalist. For him, Saharan refugees were afraid of the Moroccan Army because they were being bombed with napalm, white phosphor and grapeshot and because the Moroccan army executed prisoners with lethal injections. Moreover, for this author, a peaceful and spontaneous occupation rarely needs the support of Kissinger and the United States.⁷⁷

According to Navarra Ordoño, most of the legionnaires would have preferred to begin an armed conflict against Morocco after the “Green March” and guaranteeing a true process of decolonisation for the Saharan people rather than “finalising the shameful (for being coward and disloyal) surrender of the territory”.⁷⁸

Another two authors that give national answers to the Spanish reaction are Jaime de Piniés and Pablo-Ignacio de Dalmases. According to de Piniés, Spain could not defeat the Green March in a military way as it could have been considered a genocide.⁷⁹ In fact, he states that:

“It was a time of an exceptional dramatism; the Head of State had just passed away and Don Juan Carlos succeeded to the throne and Morocco really took advantage of the situation. Due to the weakness of the Government, it ceded in a certain moment to the Moroccan pressure instead of accepting a project of the General Secretary that would have put to an end with dignity the responsibilities of Spain as administering power.”⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Ahmed Abdalaha, “El nacionalismo saharai.”, 258, 264.

⁷⁶ Juan Goytisolo, *El problema del Sáhara*, (Barcelona: Ed. Anagrama, 1979), 45-47.

⁷⁷ Andreu Navarra Ordoño, “La arena y el remordimiento: el Sáhara Occidental en el memorialismo español contemporáneo” [“The sand and the regret: Western Sahara in the contemporary Spanish memorial”], (Conference, Casa Árabe of Madrid, 20th December 2012), 9.

http://www.africafundacion.org/IMG/pdf/Andreu_Navarra_-_La_Arena_y_el_remordimiento-2.pdf

⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, 7-8.

⁷⁹ Piniés, de, *La descolonización del Sáhara*, 166.

⁸⁰ Piniés, de, *La descolonización del Sáhara*, 180.

De Dalmases even describes how Franco ordered to declare the war to Morocco in the last cabinet of Ministries that he presided the 17th of October 1975 “even if it lasts ten years”. However, Prime Minister Arias Navarro changed the official posture of the government of support to the UN as he did not want to initiate a *casus belli* when his country was beginning a process of political transition.⁸¹

1.6 Methodology and source criticism

In order to develop this research, the use of a comparative analysis between the two territories based on a qualitative approach is considered the best option because it can answer why the decolonisation was so soon in one case and is still unsolved in the other. Furthermore, it can explain what changed internally in the colonial power and externally in the rest of the world in both processes or attempts of process of decolonisation. For these reasons, a qualitative methodology and comparison are considered the best choice for understanding these processes.

Thus, in this comparative approach, the territory of Ifni is considered Western Sahara until 1969, when it was retroceded to Morocco. The Southern zone of the Protectorate is analysed as an integral part of the Protectorate despite it was integrated within the Spanish West Africa (SWA) from 1934 to 1958.

According to A. A. van den Braembussche, there are different types of comparative analysis that can be used in history of society. The objective of the use of the comparative analyse in this master thesis is to explain the limits of the generalisation “The decolonisation of Africa gave room to different States” in the case of Western Sahara. For this reason, this exception is compared with a case where this generalisation was true, as it was the case of the Protectorate of Morocco. In this way, this comparative analysis can be catalogued as contrasting according to van den Braembussche’s classification.⁸²

Nevertheless, this contrasting comparative analysis between the Protectorate of Morocco and Western Sahara cannot explain events that happened exclusively in Spain, like the rise of the Spanish colonialism and its ideological approach. In these cases, the comparative analyses will be done with other colonial powers like France and Portugal in certain aspects, while a chronological description of the evolution of the historical events is done. This differentiation is done exclusively in the first chapter.

⁸¹ Dalmases, de *Huracán sobre el Sáhara*, 191-192.

⁸² A. A. van den Braembussche, “Historical Explanation and Comparative Method: Towards a Theory of the History of Society”, *History and Theory*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Feb. 1999), 13-14.

This study is not only focused on the vision of the colonial power, as the point of view of this research attempts to be more cross-sectional. Thus, it always bears in mind the position of the Maghrebi people, as primary or secondary sources show. Colonialism was a historical event that was originated in Europe whose consequences separated families and destroyed numerous cultural and social heritages of different communities throughout the world. In this way, the analysis of its consequences should bear in mind both sides of this historical event and do not forget about the indigenous peoples.

In every comparative analysis, the voices of the Maghrebi peoples are heard, and their sources are consulted when available. Nevertheless, there are not as many sources as desired about these peoples, so the opinions and documents of the other part that took place in colonisation are consulted too, as there are numerous testimonies about former settlers that can give very interesting answers to the origins and reasons that gave room to the colonisation.

Furthermore, the conditions of living of the settlers and their families can help us to build a full image of what colonisation was. Therefore, they have special importance when studying the Spanish point of view. Furthermore, the Spanish sources were more accessible when doing this research, so even though I am aware that the investigation may have a leaning towards the Spanish version of the historical facts, the search of the scientific objectivity has always been present.

Some of the limitations that the primary sources can bring are based on the fact that Spain was under a dictatorship ruled by General Franco in which national and catholic values were essential.⁸³ Due to the nationalistic aspects of this regime, colonialism was encouraged. In fact, during the Second World War, Franco conditioned the hypothetical Spanish participation in the conflict if Nazi Germany could assure the control of the whole Protectorate and the region of Oran in Algeria in return.⁸⁴

Thus, the works produced under this period recalled the historical presence of Spain in Northern Africa since the Medieval ages and described the Protectorate as a territory where the Spanish

⁸³ Juan P. Fusi Aizpurúa, "Francisco Franco Bahamonde", in Royal Academy of History, *Diccionario Biográfico Electrónico*, accessed January 3, 2019, <http://dbe.rah.es/biografias/9565/francisco-franco-bahamonde>

⁸⁴ María Rosa de Madariaga, "Confrontation in the Spanish zone (1945–56): Franco, the nationalists, and the post-war politics of decolonisation", *The Journal of North African Studies*, no. 19:4 (2014): 493.

presence had a historical meaning. Representatives of this period are Tomás García Figueras and José María Cordero de Torres.⁸⁵

As this research is cross sectional, as it seeks to bear in mind the point of view of the colonisers and the colonised, the vision of the indigenous must be present. Thus, the vision of the Moroccan primary sources is represented by Muhammad Ibn Azzuz Hakim, a historian that worked as a public servant during the Spanish Protectorate in relevant posts through the editing version of his personal diary that Rocío de Velasco did.⁸⁶

The Spanish vision of the attempt of decolonization in Western Sahara is represented by Jaime de Piniés. Despite some of the relevant positions that he occupied during his work life were under the dictatorship, his works do not gather the moral superiority or any kind of moral responsibility for colonising new territories that are seen in the works of Cordero de Torres or García Figueras.⁸⁷ One of the disadvantages of this book is that it does not explain how the Saharan or Spanish citizens felt about the attempt of decolonisation and latter occupation of the territory. It only explains the process of how relevant diplomats and States discussed the actions that were going on.

The writer Juan Goytisolo was an important intellectual of the twentieth century in Spain. One of these essays was entitled “El problema del Sáhara” and examines the situation of the country in the moment of its publication (1979).⁸⁸

The Maghrebi point of view is represented by Mohamed-Fadel Ould Ismail Ould Es-Sweyih, a militant of the Polisario Front since its origins⁸⁹ and former representative of this organisation in France and in the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).⁹⁰ This author wrote two books, the first one was written down under his pseudonym Ismail Sayeh. Ahmed Baba Miské, a Mauritanian member of the Polisario Front, is another Maghrebi author whose work is used.⁹¹

⁸⁵ Examples of works by these authors are: Tomás García Figueras, *La actualidad nacionalista marroquí*. [*The Moroccan nationalist at present*], (N.I.: self-published, 1959).

José María Cordero de Torres, *Aspectos de la Misión Universal de España*. [*Aspects of the Universal mission of Spain*], (Madrid: Vicesecretaría de Educación Popular, 1942).

⁸⁶ Rocío Velasco de Castro, *El protectorado español en Marruecos en primera persona. Muhammad Ibn Azzuz Hakin*. [*The Spanish Protectorate in person. Muhammad Ibn Azzuz Hakin*] (Cáceres: Universidad de Extremadura and Universidad de Granada, 2017).

⁸⁷ Jaime de Piniés, *La descolonización del Sáhara: un tema sin concluir*, [*The decolonisation of the Sahara: an unfinished topic*].

⁸⁸ Goytisolo. *El problema del Sáhara*, 46-47.

⁸⁹ Ismail Sayeh, *Les Sahraouis*, (Paris : L'Harmattan, 1998), back cover.

⁹⁰ Mohamed-Fadel Ould Ismail Ould Es-Sweyih, *El primer Estado del Sáhara Occidental*, [*The first State of Western Sahara*] trans. Nathnaël Raballand and Carmen Astiaso, (Paris: Arso, 2001), 4.

⁹¹ Ahmed Baba Miské, *Front Polisario: l'Ame d'un Peuple*. (Paris : Éditions Rupture, 1978).

CHAPTER 2: Ideological approach to the Spanish colonialism at the Maghreb: “Africanismo”, orientalisation and citizenship

2.1 “Africanismo”: The concept of “Moorish” and its evolution

This first chapter may surprise in a thesis whose main objective is the understanding of the process of decolonisation. However, its objective is to understand the conception that the colonisers had of the colonised. After understanding this, it will be easier to discern how impacted the process of decolonisation in the mind of the coloniser. The particularities of the Spanish colonialism may have different effects in the process of settling down in the territory. Therefore, it may have an impact on the way of withdrawal.

The traditional conception that Spain had of the Arabic and Islamic world was very negative as a result of the *Reconquista*⁹², that created different stereotypes of the so-called “Moorish”, especially from the military.⁹³ This term (or “moro” in Spanish) is an evolution of the roman term “mauri” or “maurisci” that the Romans used for referring to the Berbers from North Africa. The Spanish national identity was built over the opposition to the “Moorish”.⁹⁴ Under this traditional point of view, the colonisation of Western Sahara and the settlement of the Protectorate of Morocco took place.

The figure of the “moro” was reshaped after the occupation of Morocco for othering the indigenous Berber population and for legitimating the establishment of a colonial relation with a neighbour country.⁹⁵

This article in the journal “*España y Marruecos*” summarises very well the way in which the process of orientalising of the Maghrebi peoples was done while it describes the “Spanish Mission” in Africa while recalls the period of the *Reconquista*:

“The Moorish, when living with us, was a poet, a historian, a philosopher, an artist, a farmer, all that performed the rise and development of that Arabic Spain as a whole that they have not

⁹² Historical process that traditionally is said to have lasted from the eighth to the fifteenth centuries in which the Christian kingdoms from the North of the Iberian Peninsula recaptured territories to the different Muslim rulers that settled down in the Southern areas. This term is currently being discussed by different scholars like F. Javier Peña Pérez, who argues that the *Reconquista* is nothing but a myth created in the ninth century for justifying the clash between Christians and Muslims. See F. Javier Peña Pérez, “La sombra del Cid y de otros mitos medievales en el pensamiento franquista” [“The shadow of Cid and other Medieval myths in the Francoist thought”], *Norba. Revista de Historia*, Vol. 23 (2010): 172.

⁹³ Rocío Velasco de Castro, “La imagen del ‘moro’ en la formulación e instrumentalización del africanismo franquista” [“The image of the ‘Moorish’ in the formulation and instrumentalisation of Franco’s ‘africanismo’”], *Hispania* vol. LXXIIIV, No. 246 (January-April 2014): 209-210.

⁹⁴ Bolorinos Allard, “The Crescent and the Dagger”, 965-966.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, 966.

forgotten yet. It is necessary to analyse those programs that the masters of the Caliphate⁹⁶ followed, to search carefully for them, to bring them to light and to make of them something that does not look exotic. When having that, it will be fair to renovate it and to give it back to those who brought it up centuries ago. At least, it will be something of their own and free of foreign mystifications.”⁹⁷

This vision of the indigenous people was in line with the kind of othering that other European powers were using in their African colonies, but it had a remarkable difference: Spain could recall a common historical past. Thus, it is possible to find two different orientalist discourses that justified the colonisation of the Maghreb. On one hand, the French *mission civilisatrice* and the Spanish combination of European superiority and a so-called fraternity with the indigenous population on the other.⁹⁸ This specific Spanish type of colonial ideology is called “*Africanismo*” and had the “*moro*” as archetypic.

The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) was the historical event that changed the orientalisation of the Maghrebi peoples forever, especially for the Army. This clash began after the coup d'état of July 1936 against the legitimate government of the Spanish Republic. In this event, one of the most remarkable leaders was General Franco. As the coup did not succeed in the whole country, it gave room to a civil war.

In that confrontation, the Khalifa Muley Hassan Ben Mehdi supported the coup and supplied volunteers to the participants of the coup despite the opposition of the Sultan Muhammad V. Thus, indigenous troops were recruited, especially from the poorest parts of the Protectorate. This large number of recruits made Moroccans an essential source of men for Franco's side. Boughaleb el Attar estimates between 80.000 and 100.000 soldiers of Moroccan origin.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ The Caliphate of Cordoba (929-1031), former Muslim State in the Iberian Peninsula known for its cultural and commercial splendour.

⁹⁷ Federico Pita, “Enseñanza indígena” [“Indigenous teaching”], *España y Marruecos*, No. 4 (August 1935): 13. <http://hemerotecadigital.bne.es/issue.vm?id=0026663293&page=15&search=moro&lang=es>

⁹⁸ David Stenner, “Centring the periphery: northern Morocco as a hub of transnational anti-colonial activism, 1930-43”, *Journal of Global History*, Vol. 11, no. 3 (2016): 434. doi:10.1017/S174002281600022X.

⁹⁹ Boughaleb El Attar, “La memoria común y la participación de los marroquíes en la Guerra Civil española” [“The common memory and the participation of Moroccans in the Spanish Civil War”] in *El Protectorado español en Marruecos: La historia trascendida*, directed by Manuel Aragón Reyes, edited and coordinated by Manuel Gahete Jurado, vol. 3, 377-380. (Bilbao: Iberdrola, 2012).

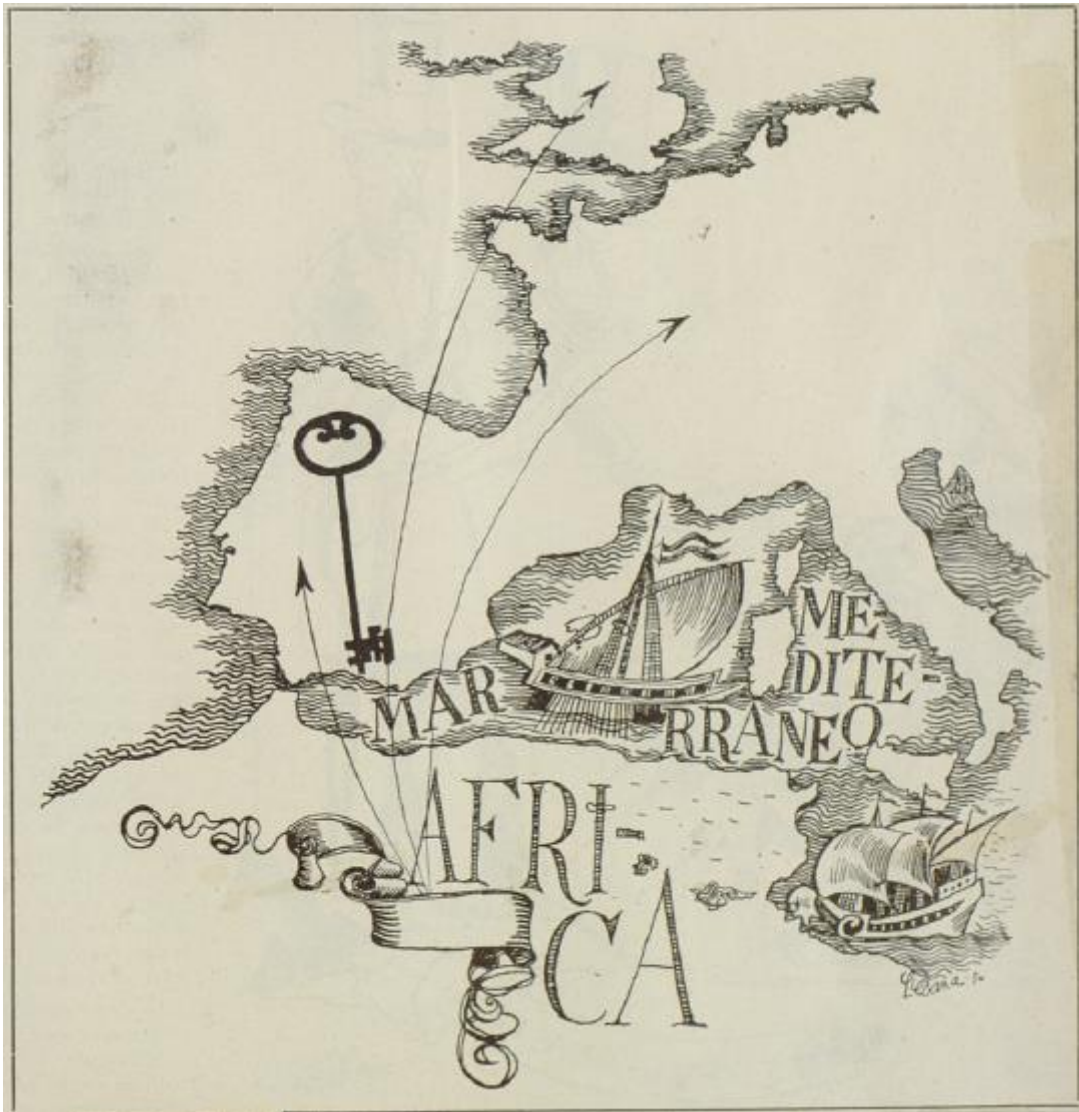


Illustration 3: "España posee las llaves del Mediterráneo", (Spain owns the keys of the Mediterranean). This illustrative image of the Spanish "Africanismo" was published in an article released in 1950 by Joaquín Arrarás. There, the author complained about the lesser power that Spain was turned into after the scramble for Africa despite the cultural and historical links that this country has with Northern Africa. Source: Abandono, tragedia y triunfo de España en Marruecos: [y otros artículos aparecidos en la prensa española en el año 1950], article entitled "África a la luz de los acontecimientos actuales". (1950).

Other authors reduce this number to a range between 75.000 and 80.000, less than ten percent of the Nationalists soldiers. Despite its small number, they were involved in the main battles of the War, were distributed throughout the whole geography and suffered more casualties than the percentage that they represented.¹⁰⁰ These recruits did not have any special attachment to Franco's fascist ideology, simply they could not rebel against the orders of the Khalifan Makhzen.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Ali Al Tuma, "The participation of Moorish Troops in the Spanish Civil War (1936-39): Military Value, Motivation and Religious Aspects", *War & Society*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (August 2011), 95-96.

¹⁰¹ El Attar, "La memoria común y la participación de los marroquíes en la Guerra Civil española", 377.

The militaries at Western Sahara and Ifni supported the coup d'état like the government delegate in Western Sahara Lt. Col. Del Oro Pulido.¹⁰² However, the recruitment was only of “hundreds” of indigenous men. During the conflict, there were no remarkable events in the territory of Sahara and Ifni.¹⁰³

These differences in men have a demographical explanation. While in 1936 there were 795.000 inhabitants in the Spanish Protectorate,¹⁰⁴ there were around 13.600 inhabitants in Western Sahara and around 38.300 in Sidi Ifni after the War, in 1950.¹⁰⁵

During the War, it was possible to see two different ways of “othering” the Maghrebi peoples in Spain. On the Republican side, the image was the traditional and historical othering against the “Moorish” while Franco’s side presented an image of brotherhood. Nevertheless, the indigenous peoples were still “othered” as unreliable people in the performers of the coup d'état side.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, this equality was more pretended than real, as the Maghrebi soldiers were used as an easily replaceable ‘cannon fodder’ and if they dared to retrocede, they were executed in the same front.¹⁰⁷

However, their orientalisation was useful among Franco’s supporters. As Bolorinos Allard exposes:

*“Nationalist representations of the Moor[ish] served as a mirror for the Nationalists, reflecting and affirming their self-constructed identity as a strong militaristic nation with an imperial destiny, while the Republican representations served as a window through which Republicans witnessed, and set themselves apart from, the betrayal and brutality of the Nationalist insurgents.”*¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² Anthony G. Pazzanita and Tony Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1994), 414.

¹⁰³ Marín Ferrer, *Ifni, Sáhara, Guinea*, 42-43.

¹⁰⁴ Mimoun Aziza, “La sociedad marroquí bajo el Protectorado español (1912-1956)” [“The Moroccan society under the Spanish Protectorate (1912-1956)”] in *El Protectorado español en Marruecos: La historia trascendida*, directed by Manuel Aragón Reyes, edited and coordinated by Manuel Gahete Jurado, vol. 1, 138. (Bilbao: Iberdrola, 2012).

¹⁰⁵ Instituto Nacional de Estadística [National Institute of Statistics], “Resumen general de la población de España y posesiones en 31 de diciembre de 1950”

<http://www.ine.es/inebaseweb/pdfDispacher.do;jsessionid=63E97803BBFAF4375BCB4CEAE1AE2C23.inebaseweb01?td=168360>

¹⁰⁶ Velasco de Castro, “La imagen del ‘moro’ en la formulación e instrumentalización del africanismo franquista”, 212.

¹⁰⁷ El Attar, “La memoria común y la participación de los marroquíes en la Guerra Civil española”, 377.

¹⁰⁸ Bolorinos Allard, “The Crescent and the Dagger”, 967.



Illustration 4: Drawings of the Moroccan soldiers (Regulares) in both sides of the front. During the Civil War, it was possible to see two different ways of othering: the ideal of brave soldier promoted in the Francoist side against the depiction as baby slayers that was encouraged by the Republicans. Notice how in both cases the artists opted for painting dark-skin Moroccans – a characteristic that is only shared by part of the Moroccan population – for emphasising the otherness of the depicted. Sources: Left: Illustration by Carlos Sáenz de Tejada for the book *Historia de la Cruzada Española [History of the Spanish Crusade]* by Joaquín Arrarás (dir.) (Madrid: Ediciones Españolas, 1939-1943), Vol.3 (8) in Elisabeth Bollorinos Allard “Masculinidad, identidad guerrera y la imagen del regular marroquí en la propaganda del bando sublevado en la Guerra Civil española.”, *Norba. Revista de Historia*. Vol. 29-30, (2016-2017):125. Right: Cartoon published the 20th of August 1936 in the Newspaper “La Voz” (Madrid, in that time in the Republican side). It is entitled “*The patriotic generals, by Echea [cartoonist]*”. The footnote says “*Don’t get scared! We’ve been brought to Spain for defending the mother country, order, religion, and family.*”

This orientalisation of the colonised people by the supporters of the Coup d’état was very similar to the conception that neighbouring Portugal – another country that lived under a dictatorship of conservative ideology – had of its own indigenous people. In fact, the dictator António de Oliveira Salazar affirmed, regarding Goa, that a Goan was “*as Portuguese as he who lives and is born in Lisbon*”¹⁰⁹, therefore “*Goans do not anywhere consider or call themselves Indians but Portuguese of Goa*”.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ António de Oliveira Salazar, “*Goa and the Indian Union: Speech Delivered through the National Broadcast by the Prime Minister Prof. Oliveira Salazar on April 12th, 1954*” (Lisbon, 1954), 17, quoted in Elizabeth Buettner, *Europe after Empire: Decolonization, Society, and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 195.

¹¹⁰ António de Oliveira Salazar, “*Goa and the Indian Union: The Portuguese View*”, *Foreign Affairs*, 34:3 (1956): 421-2 quoted in Elizabeth Buettner, *Europe after Empire: Decolonization, Society, and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 195.

In the Portuguese case, the sociologist Gilberto Freyre is considered one of the authors that best justified the colonialism that the government of the moment was carrying out.¹¹¹ Some authors state that part of Freyre's speech can be found in the *Africanista* ideas defended by the Spanish dictatorship.¹¹²

2.2 The impact of colonial othering in the citizenship

The fact that the Spanish territory in Morocco was ruled under the same conditions of protectorate as the French counterpart remarks the main difference between the indigenous people of the Protectorate and the ones from Western Sahara and Sidi Ifni. While the first ones were not Spanish citizens, the others had the same rights and duties as an ordinary citizen born in Madrid. However, for the Francoist ideology both were the same people that fought on his side during the Civil War.

In fact, the process of acquisition of the Spanish citizenship of the inhabitants of Western Sahara and Sidi Ifni is quite related to the Protectorate of Morocco. In 1956, due to the end of the Protectorate in Morocco, the Directorate-General of Morocco and Colonies ("*Dirección General de Marruecos y Colonias*") was renamed Directorate-General of the African *Plazas*¹¹³ and Provinces ("*Dirección General de Plazas y Provincias Africanas*"),¹¹⁴ considered by some authors the first step for the process of "provincialisation", as it used for the first time the term "Provinces" for referring to the Spanish territories in Africa.¹¹⁵

However, this process actually took place in 1958, when the provinces of Spanish Sahara and Ifni were created by decree.¹¹⁶ After the approval of the Law 8/1961 three years later, the "Spanish Province of Sahara" had the right to be represented at the Parliament in Madrid.¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ Buettner, *Europe after Empire*, 194.

¹¹² Josefina Domínguez-Mujica, Beatriz Andreu-Mediero and Nadia Kroudo, "On the trail of social relations in the colonial Sahara: a postcolonial Reading", *Social & Cultural Geography*, Vol. 19, No. 6, 749-750, DOI: 10.1080/14649365.2017.1304567

¹¹³ *Plazas de soberanía* (lit.: strongholds of sovereignty) are Spanish territories in the North of Morocco. Nowadays, this term is used for refereeing to the small islands and rocks in this area.

¹¹⁴ Decreto de 21 de agosto de 1956 por el que se dispone el cambio de denominación de la Dirección General de Marruecos y Colonias [Decree of the 21st August 1956 in which the change of denomination of the Directorate-General of Morocco and Colonies is stipulated].

<https://www.boe.es/datos/pdfs/BOE//1956/263/A06031-06031.pdf>

¹¹⁵ Soroeta Licerias, "La problemática de la nacionalidad de los habitantes de los territorios dependientes y el caso del Sáhara Occidental", 651.

¹¹⁶ Decreto de 10 de enero de 1958 por el que se reorganiza el Gobierno General del África Occidental Española [Decree of the 10th of January 1958 in which the General Government of the Spanish West Africa is reorganised], first article. <https://www.boe.es/datos/pdfs/BOE//1958/012/A00087-00087.pdf>

¹¹⁷ Juan Soroeta Licerias, "La problemática de la nacionalidad de los habitantes de los territorios dependientes y el caso del Sáhara Occidental" ["The problems of nationality of the inhabitants of dependent territories and the case of Western Sahara"], 651.

This provincialisation sought to deny the colonial nature of these territories. When Spain was admitted in the UN in 1955 was asked if it was controlling non-autonomous territories. The provincialisation helped to mask the colonial nature of these territories as it pretended to put them in the same level as the metropolitan provinces.¹¹⁸ This strategy was also followed by Portugal¹¹⁹ and only sought to delay the process of decolonisation.¹²⁰ This smoke screen could not last long and in 1960 Spain finally recognised to the UN that these territories were, indeed, colonies.¹²¹

Moreover, this process of provincialisation did that both Ifni and Sahara were provinces “de facto” but not “de iure”, given that they were created through a decree. The division of the Spanish territory in provinces relies on the Royal Decree-Law of 30th November 1833 and it only could be modified with another regulation of its same level of importance. This was the procedure followed, for instance, in 1927, when the province of Las Palmas was created in the Canary Islands. In the Spanish Law, the decrees are hierarchically beneath the Royal Decree-Law.¹²²

As the laws are regulations of a higher rank than the Royal Decree-Law, the Law 8/1961 solved the irregularities that the previous legislation gave room to. However, this Law only referred to the “province” of Sahara, forgetting about Ifni.¹²³ With this absent-minded attitude, Spain was sending a message to the UN: the withdrawal of Ifni was debatable while the Sahara was not. In fact, two years later Spain began to negotiate with Morocco the retrocession of Ifni.¹²⁴

Juan Soroeta Licerias recognises that since the approval of this Law the inhabitants of Sahara had the opportunity to obtain a Spanish Passport or the National ID card, what proved that they had Spanish citizenship,¹²⁵ despite the fact that no regulation explicitly granted them that right.

¹¹⁸ José Luis Rodríguez Jiménez, *Agonía, traición, huida. El final del Sáhara español [Agony, betrayal, escape. The end of the Spanish Sahara]*, (Barcelona: Crítica, 2015), chap. 1, Epub.

¹¹⁹ Ibidem.

¹²⁰ Soroeta Licerias, “La problemática de la nacionalidad de los habitantes de los territorios dependientes y el caso del Sáhara Occidental”, 650-651.

¹²¹ Piniés, de, *La descolonización del Sáhara*, 14-15.

¹²² Manuel Jorques Ortiz, “¿Fue Ifni, legalmente, una provincia española?” [“Was Ifni, legally, a Spanish province?”]. Asociación de Veteranos de Ifni del Levante español [Association of Ifni Veterans in the East of Spain]. August 30th, 2014. <http://www.avile.es/relatos-sobre-ifni-2/269-ifue-ifni-legalmente-una-provincia-espanola>

¹²³ Ley 8/1961, de 19 de abril, sobre organización y régimen jurídico de la Provincia de Sáhara [Law 8/1961, April 19th, about the organisation and the legal framework of the Province of Sahara] <https://boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-1961-7737>

¹²⁴ Juan Pastrana Piñero, “La guerra de Ifni-Sáhara y la lucha por el poder en Marruecos”, (PhD diss., University Pompeu Fabra, 2013), 443.

¹²⁵ Soroeta Licerias, “La problemática de la nacionalidad de los habitantes de los territorios dependientes y el caso del Sáhara Occidental”, 651-652.

Nevertheless, it is possible that the Saharan inhabitants were obtaining Spanish citizenship before that date. International authors like Bronwen Manby consider 1958 as the year in which all the residents were considered Spanish nationals.¹²⁶ María Concepción Ybarra dates this event two years before. For her, it was since 1956 when “all the native inhabitants of the Sahara” acquired the citizenship and all the documents for proving it.¹²⁷ However, Hossein Taleb assures to have Spanish citizenship since his birth in 1950 at Aaiun, before the provincialisation.¹²⁸

In none of the quoted regulations (Decree of 21st of August 1956, Decree of 10th of January 1958 or the Law 8/1961) specifies the citizenship of the inhabitants of Western Sahara. Thus, there is a period of about eleven years (1950-1961) in which it is not very clear what happened with the inhabitants of Western Sahara.

Due to the young age of the interviewee Hossein Taleb when the process of provincialisation of Sahara took place, it is possible that he thought that he was born with all this documentation. However, none of the academic sources consulted supports the statement that this event could have taken place before the beginning of the provincialisation, so it is possible to dismiss this option.

The year 1956 seems to be too soon for granting citizenship to all the inhabitants. First of all, in that year the retrocession of Tarfaya had not taken place yet. In any source consulted says that the inhabitants of this territory were Spanish citizens, so it is difficult to assume that there could be this differentiation between the inhabitants of the Protectorate that was coming to an end (and who had their own Moroccan citizenship) and the inhabitants of the other colonies if they were all under the same administration: the Spanish West Africa (SWA, explained in the next chapter). Moreover, the Decree of 1956 did not create any province, as it only established the change in the name of the Directorate-General of Morocco and Colonies, something that authors like Soroeta Licerias have identified as a first willing of “provincializing” the territory,¹²⁹ not as the creation of a province itself. Thus, the colonial Administration did not see any real change in their everyday life that could encourage it to grant citizenship to the indigenous people. Therefore, 1956 can be dismissed too.

¹²⁶ Bronwen Manby, *Struggles for citizenship in Africa* (New York: Zed Books Ltd., 2009), 152.

¹²⁷ María Concepción Ybarra, “Los últimos años del Protectorado de Marruecos y sus consecuencias para España” [“The last years of the Protectorate of Morocco and its consequences for Spain”] in *La Administración del Protectorado Español en Marruecos* by Javier Alvarado Planas and Juan Carlos Domínguez Nafría (Eds.) (Madrid, BOE, 2014), 364.

¹²⁸ Hossein Taleb, recorded interview, December 17, 2018.

¹²⁹ Soroeta Licerias, “La problemática de la nacionalidad de los habitantes de los territorios dependientes y el caso del Sáhara Occidental”, 651.

In this way, the remaining timespan between 1958 and 1961 seems to be the most accurate in which Spanish citizenship was granted to the inhabitants of Sahara and Ifni, but when exactly? In 1958 the term “province” was used for the first time for describing the status of Ifni and Sahara, so it seems to be an event remarkable enough for the colonial administration for beginning to grant the citizenship to the Saharan people. Moreover, the territory of Tarfaya was already returned to Morocco, so any distinction between members of the SWA (that no longer existed) was possible. However, as it is explained in a few paragraphs, the inhabitants may have citizenship before 1961.

The correct process of provincialisation of the Sahara did not give room to doubts. It was necessary to be Spanish citizen for being appointed as a member of the *Cabildo provincial* (Assembly)¹³⁰ or mayor,¹³¹ posts that were occupied by indigenous people in some cases.¹³² Moreover, it did not exist any other kind of citizenship during the colonisation (like subjects) as happened in other European colonial powers. Nonetheless, there were attempts of categorising Spanish citizens from Sahara as “indigenous Spanish” as the Sentence 1026/1998 of the Spanish Supreme Court proved, but this consideration had no legal consequences, as there was a single kind of Spanish citizenship.¹³³

¹³⁰ Ley 8/1961, de 19 de abril, sobre organización y régimen jurídico de la Provincia de Sáhara [Law 8/1961, April 19th, about the organisation and the legal framework of the Province of Sahara]. Article 12. <https://boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-1961-7737>

¹³¹ Decreto 3249/1962, de 29 de noviembre por el que se aprueba el Ordenamiento de la Administración Local para la Provincia del Sáhara [Decree 3249/1962, of 29th of November in which the Code of the Local Administration for the Province of Sahara is approved]. Article 8. <https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/1962/12/12/pdfs/A17644-17656.pdf>

¹³² Anthony G. Pazzanita and Tony Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1994), 89.

¹³³ Sentence of the Spanish Supreme Court 1026/1998, Room of Civil Law, 28th October 1998, appeal No. 617/1996, 5 <http://www.poderjudicial.es/search/contenidos.action?action=contentpdf&database=TS&referen=3239644&links=%22%201026%2F1998%22&optimize=20030704&publicinterface=true>



Illustration 5: Upper left, down left and upper right: Bilingual Spanish-Arabic ID Cards (DNI in Spanish) of two Spanish citizens, ca. 1973. This documentation is the only one that can prove the Spanish citizenship besides the Passport according to the national legislation. On the left, a Spanish citizen born at the Iberian Peninsula that was doing his compulsory military service at Western Sahara. On the upper right, the same document of an indigenous man (perhaps Ahmed Mulay Ali? Ahmed Mulay Ali is the ambassador of the SADR in Mexico). Down right, the same document in that timespan but issued at metropolitan Spain. The main differences are the absence of bilingualism, the name “ESPAÑA” over the national flag rather than “SAHARA” at the upper part of the card, the national shield instead of the Saharan insignia and the colour, blue instead of red. Despite these differences, the citizenship was equally valuable independently of the colour of the card, otherwise the “white” Spanish would not have the same card as the “indigenous” Spanish. Sources: Upper left and down left: Webpage “La Mili en el Sáhara”, an association dedicated to sharing memories and experiences of former men that had to serve their compulsory military service at the Spanish Sahara during the seventies. http://web.lamilienelsahara.net/images/160714_BBA/160714_bba_01.jpg and http://web.lamilienelsahara.net/images/160714_BBA/160714_bba_02.jpg. Upper right: Lertxundi abogado, “Situaciones personales en el pueblo saharauí” <http://www.lertxundiabogado.com/situaciones-personales-en-el-pueblo-saharai/>. Down right: Office of the General-Directorate of the Police of Spain (Dirección General de la Policía), “Historia de los documentos de identidad”, <https://www.dnielectronico.es/PDFs/Historia de los documentos de identidad.pdf>

But what happened with Ifni? Were its inhabitants Spanish citizens or not? The fact that the juridical status of Sahara as a province was amended after the first legal clutter that the Decree of 1958 gave room to while the situation of Ifni was not is not a coincidence. The end of the Protectorate in 1956 and the spread of the ideas of Great Morocco did that the colonial *statu quo* in the colony began to teeter. In Ifni, while the capital remained under uncertain support to the colonial rule, the rural areas were clearly pro-Moroccan. On the contrary, the Saharan population did not have that clear Moroccan nationalist feeling.¹³⁴ After the end of the Ifni-Sahara War – that will be explained in depth later on in this research – in 1958, the territory of

¹³⁴ Pastrana Piñero, *Arde el desierto, [Burning desert. 1957: Ifni-Sahara War and the fight for power in Morocco]* (Madrid: Ediciones Nowtilus, 2017), 348-352.

the Ifni was reduced to its capital, Sidi Ifni.¹³⁵ This event, joined to the promulgation of the Decree of 1958 seem to be the milestones that the colonial administration used for granting the citizenship to the inhabitants of the colony.

What is clear is that the inhabitants of this colony had Spanish citizenship when it was retroceded to Morocco in 1969. The third article of the Treaty of Retrocession stated that:

*“With the exception of those who were bestowed on the Spanish nationality through any of the ways of granting established in the Spanish Civil Code, that will preserve it in any case, all the people born in the territory and that had benefited of the Spanish nationality until the present day of the cession, will can opt for this nationality by effecting a declaration of option in the face of the competent Spanish authorities in a timespan of three months since the present day.”*¹³⁶

What gives room to assume that there were inhabitants that already had Spanish citizenship. This right was assured by the Decree 13347/1969 of 26th of June¹³⁷ and by the press of that time.¹³⁸ According to Pablo Vázquez Ramírez, member of the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and who was born at Sidi Ifni and lived there until he turned 9 years old in 1969, most of the citizens that could have been granted with the Spanish citizenship in that span of three months did not realise about it nor could exercise that right because they were under age.¹³⁹

To sum up, 1958 seems to be the year in which the indigenous inhabitants of both Western Sahara and Ifni acquired Spanish citizenship, as it was the only process in which both territories have been gone through. In both cases the result was the same: their inhabitants had the citizenship despite not having a process of regulation like Sahara had under the Law 8/1961.

¹³⁵ Guadalupe Pérez García, “La falacia histórica sobre la historia de Ifni” [“The historical deceit of the history of Ifni”], *Historia y Comunicación Social*, No. 8 (2003), 219.

<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/38816259.pdf>

¹³⁶ Instrumento de Ratificación del Tratado por el que el Estado Español retrocede al Reino de Marruecos el territorio que éste le había previamente cedido en aplicación del artículo 8 del Tratado de Tetuán de 26 de abril de 1860, firmado en Fez el día 4 de enero de 1969.

<https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/1969/06/05/pdfs/A08805-08808.pdf>

¹³⁷ Decreto 1347/1969, de 26 de junio, por el que se reglamenta la opción de nacionalidad prevista en el Tratado sobre retrocesión del territorio de Ifni. [Decree 1347/1969, of 26th of June in which the option of nationality expected in the Treaty of retrocession of the territory of Ifni is regulated].

<https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/1969/07/03/pdfs/A10445-10445.pdf>

¹³⁸ ABC, “Ayer se verificó la retrocesión de Ifni a Marruecos.” [“Yesterday the retrocession of Ifni to Morocco was ratified.”], July 1, 1969, 33.

<http://hemeroteca.abc.es/nav/Navigate.exe/hemeroteca/madrid/abc/1969/07/01/033.html>

¹³⁹ Diana Mendoza, “Los españoles olvidados de Sidi Ifni” [“The forgotten Spaniards of Sidi Ifni”], *eldiario.es*, July 12, 2013, https://www.eldiario.es/canariasahora/internacional/espanoles-olvidados-Sidi-Ifni_0_152935598.html

This chapter about citizenship during the colonial period cannot be complete if the topic of slavery is not addressed. Historically, in Mali and Mauritania – a country with enormous cultural and ethnic links with the Saharan people – slavery was allowed.¹⁴⁰ In fact, Mauritania outlawed slavery only in 1981¹⁴¹ and according to the Global Slavery Index, around 90.000 people are currently slaves in this country (approximately 2,15% of its population, one of the highest rates in the world).¹⁴²

Although this organisation does not provide data about Western Sahara, it is known that there are reminiscences of this practices in this country in the present day,¹⁴³ so under the colonial period, this practice had to be carried out too. However, it seems that slavery was not as common in Western Sahara as it was in Mauritania or in Southern parts of Morocco, but this practice did not begin to decrease until the twentieth century.¹⁴⁴

Officially, the Spanish colonial authorities forbade this practice in 1940, although it allowed the property of the descendants of former slaves. It was not until the provincialisation in 1958 that the government did not adopt effective policies against it.¹⁴⁵ When the Spanish authorities were collecting the data for elaborating the census for the referendum of self-determination in 1974 they realised that there were more inhabitants in the nomadic camps than were told, so they had to create the term “adoptive children and poor relatives” for including the slaves. There were 3.081 people in that category: 1.411 men and 1.670 women, around 4% of the population in that census.¹⁴⁶

Previous records, like the one that Caro Baroja released in his book in 1955, stated similar rates of slavery in different tribes. For instance, among the Lebouihat, there were 6 men and 8 women

¹⁴⁰ Human Rights Watch, “Los derechos humanos en el Sáhara Occidental y los campos de refugiados de Tinduf” [“Human rights in Western Sahara and in the refugee camps in Tinduf”], (Report, Human Rights Watch, 2008), 11. <https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/wsahara1208spsumandrecs.pdf>

¹⁴¹ *The Guardian*, “The unspeakable truth about slavery in Mauritania”, June 8th 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/jun/08/the-unspeakable-truth-about-slavery-in-mauritania>

¹⁴² “Maps”, The Global Slavery Index, accessed March 14, 2019, <https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/2018/data/maps/#prevalence>

¹⁴³ Human Rights Watch, “Los derechos humanos en el Sáhara Occidental y los campos de refugiados de Tinduf”, 11.

¹⁴⁴ Pazzanita and Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, 408.

¹⁴⁵ Mariano Fernández-Aceytuno, “La esclavitud en el Sáhara” [“Slavery in the Sahara”], *La Jabar del Nómada* No. 12, (April 2004) in Pablo-Ignacio de Dalmases, *Huracán sobre el Sáhara*, (Barcelona: Editorial Base, 2010), 112-113.

¹⁴⁶ Pablo-Ignacio de Dalmases, *Huracán sobre el Sáhara*, (Barcelona: Editorial Base, 2010), 115.

slaves out of 578 and 462 men and women and 12 male and 15 female slaves out of 383 males and 323 females in the Arosien tribe.¹⁴⁷ Between 1,3 and 3,8% of the population.

Therefore, it is not possible to know the citizenship of these people, but probably it was not bestowed on them. Slavery was an underground activity as it was formally forbidden, so the owners were not expected to register their slaves as such in the face of the colonial authorities.

¹⁴⁷ Julio Caro Baroja, "La historia entre los nómadas saharianos" ["The history among the Saharan nomadic peoples"], *Archivos del Instituto de Estudios Africanos*, Vol. VIII, No. 35, (1955), 57-67. In Anthony G. Pazzanita and Tony Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1994), 408.

CHAPTER 3: Administrative inclusion of Western Sahara and the Protectorate within Spain (1945-1976)

3.1 Protectorate of Morocco

3.1.1 Internal organisation

As previously mentioned, the Spanish administration of the Protectorate of Morocco was through a system of a protectorate, but what did this mean on a practical level and applied to the concrete case studied in this research?

The Treaty of Fez signed in March 1912 between Morocco and France committed the European country to agree with Spain the “interests of this Government, originated by its geographical position and by its territorial possessions in the Moroccan coast”. Thus, six months after the signature of this Treaty France and Spain established a Spanish zone under the civil and religious authority of the Sultan. However, its administration was done through a Khalifa and with the intervention of a Spanish High Commissioner. The Sultan appointed the Khalifa among two candidates presented by the Spanish Government and he had delegations to exert Sultan’s rights. Moreover, the High Commissioner was the intermediary of foreign relations in the Spanish zone.¹⁴⁸

In this way, there was a duality in the administration in the Protectorate. On the one hand, the Moroccan administration – known as the “Khalifan Makhzen”¹⁴⁹ – and on the other hand, the Spanish one – called High Commission – whose main function was to help and to intervene in the labour of the Moroccan authorities although the Spanish authority was the only authority in matters of high relevance in practice.¹⁵⁰ The structure of the Makhzen was overlapped by another one that controlled it. Thus, the figure of the Khalifa was symbolic given that his actuaciones were intervened by the High Commissioner and because he was not a real sovereign but a delegate of the Sultan.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Article 1 of the Spanish-French treaty of the 27th November 1912 (Treaty of Fez). In José Luis Villanova Valero, “La organización política, administrativa y territorial del Protectorado español en Marruecos (1912-1956). El Papel de las intervenciones” [“The political, administrative and territorial organisation of the Spanish Protectorate in Morocco (1912-1956)]. The role of the ‘intervenciones’”] (PhD diss., University of Girona, 2003), 680.

¹⁴⁹ Being “Khalifan” the adjective for Khalifa and “Makhzen” an historical name of the Moroccan government.

¹⁵⁰ José Luis Villanova “La organización territorial del Protectorado español en Marruecos” [“The territorial organisation of the Spanish Protectorate in Morocco”], *Revista de Estudios Internacionales Mediterráneos (REIM)*, No. 9 (2010), 1. <https://revistas.uam.es/index.php/reim/article/viewFile/833/821>

¹⁵¹ Carrasco González, “El ordenamiento jurídico hispano-marroquí”, 66.

The Spanish-French agreement used the term “Zone of Spanish administration”, in any moment talked about a Protectorate for referring to the area controlled by Spain.¹⁵² This fact gave room to a debate between France and Spain that was not solved during the whole period of the Protectorate. French authors defended that their country only delegated part of their functions to Spain given that the Sultan did not intervene in how the territory was distributed, only these two European countries.¹⁵³ Moreover, for these authors, the Moroccan unity could not be infringed by the establishment of two separate equal-rank Protectorates.¹⁵⁴ The Spanish argumentation was based on the fact that the Sultan had delegated all his powers in the Khalifa and at the same time this post could only be appointed with Spanish approval. Furthermore, the Sultan approved the agreement between the two European powers on the 14th of May 1913, which proved his consent.¹⁵⁵



Illustration 6: Patio at the High Commission building in November 1948. Source: Amrani Sharif, “Tetuan – Noviembre 1948 (Alta Comisaría de España en Marruecos)”. Accessed June 6, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2KICdwAkWP8>

¹⁵² Carrasco González, “El ordenamiento jurídico hispano-marroquí”, 60.

¹⁵³ Villanova Valero, “La organización política, administrativa y territorial del Protectorado español en Marruecos (1912-1956).”, 136.

¹⁵⁴ Carrasco González, “El ordenamiento jurídico hispano-marroquí”, 60-61.

¹⁵⁵ Villanova Valero, “La organización política, administrativa y territorial del Protectorado español en Marruecos (1912-1956)”, 136-137.

Regardless of this juridical debate, on a practical level, the Spanish part always worked as an independent protectorate where France never interfered.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the *Résidence Générale* in Rabat (the equivalent of the High Commission in the French part)¹⁵⁷ – alongside other international powers – used the term “Protectorate” when addressing or referring to the Spanish institutions.¹⁵⁸ This proves the *de facto* independence of the Spanish Protectorate in relation to the French counterpart.

The High Commissioner was the main chief of the authorities and public servants in the Protectorate as main Spanish authority. He had to approve the Khalifa’s *dahirs* (decrees) through his own decrees and was the intermediary between him and the foreign governments – without any kind of French intervention.¹⁵⁹ This way of legislating caused the existence of two legal systems that overlapped.¹⁶⁰ The High Commissioner was appointed by the Spanish Prime Minister and had autonomy for managing the budget.¹⁶¹ It was always a member of the Army, mostly in the role of General.¹⁶² The High Commission was divided into delegations while the Khalifan Makhzen had a Grand Vizier – a sort of Prime Minister – and different Khalifan ministries.¹⁶³

3.1.2 Fitting the colonial administration in the mother country

Within the Spanish administration, the High Commissioner was attached to the Spanish Administration – at the moment of its decolonisation – through the Directorate-General of Morocco and Colonies (“*Dirección General de Marruecos y Colonias*”). This department depended on the Prime Minister after the Law of 15th of January 1942.¹⁶⁴ The High Commissioner had to send periodical reports about the economic situation of the Protectorate to this Directorate-General.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁶ Carrasco González, “El ordenamiento jurídico hispano-marroquí”, 61.

¹⁵⁷ Villanova Valero, “La organización política, administrativa y territorial del Protectorado español en Marruecos (1912-1956)”, 186

¹⁵⁸ Ibidem, 136

¹⁵⁹ Carrasco González, “El ordenamiento jurídico hispano-marroquí”, 69.

¹⁶⁰ Villanova Valero, “La organización política, administrativa y territorial del Protectorado español en Marruecos (1912-1956)”, 186.

¹⁶¹ Carrasco González, “El ordenamiento jurídico hispano-marroquí”, 69.

¹⁶² José María Cordero de Torres, “La descolonización, un criterio hispánico” [“Decolonisation, an Hispanic Criterion”], (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticos, 1967), 170.

¹⁶³ Villanova Valero “La organización territorial del Protectorado español en Marruecos”, 1-2.

¹⁶⁴ Villanova Valero “La organización territorial del Protectorado español en Marruecos”, 206-207.

¹⁶⁵ Ley 8 de noviembre de 1941 por la que se reorganiza la Alta Comisaría de España en Marruecos [Law of the 8th of November 1941 by which the High Commissary of Spain in Morocco is reorganised], Article 25. <https://www.boe.es/datos/pdfs/BOE/1941/347/A09702-09711.pdf>

The denomination of this department evolved in the same way as the Spanish colonialism did. In this way, it was called Directorate-General of Morocco and Colonies until 1956, of *Plazas* and African Provinces ("*Dirección General de Plazas y Provincias Africanas*") until 1968 and of Promotion of the Sahara until 1975. After this year it was renamed as the "Liquidator Commission of the Spanish interests in the Sahara" ("*Comisión Liquidadora de los intereses españoles en el Sáhara*"). Between 1944 and 1968 it was ruled by José María Díaz de Villegas y Bustamante.¹⁶⁶

3.1.3 Territorial division

The colonial authority created a centralised territorial division in the North part of the Protectorate based in essential unities called "cabilas". Each "cabila" was led by a "caid", a delegate of the Khalifa. The colonisation provoked that these delegates had more attributions than they traditionally had. This created an enormous rejection among the population. In order to solve this, the traditional "djemaas" (local councils) were encouraged although they did not recover the strength that they used to have before the arrival of the European rule.¹⁶⁷

This Moroccan administration had to be supervised by the Spanish one. Thus, a group of "cabilas" created one of the five regions in which the Rif was divided into. A regional supervisor led each region. It was appointed by the delegate of Indigenous Affairs (one of the most important delegations of the High Commission). Under these regional supervisors, there were supervisors of "cabila", that controlled the actuations of each "caid".¹⁶⁸

Regarding the Southern part of the Protectorate, the Spanish colonial actuation was minimal due to its scarce population and desert climate.¹⁶⁹ For this reason, the territorial administration depended more on the traditional "cabaes", the plural form of "cabila" according to the Arabic grammar.¹⁷⁰ In this part of the Protectorate the term "cabila" should not be considered as one of the centralised divisions of the Protectorate like in the Northern part, but as a synonym for tribe. For this reason, the traditional plural form is used.

¹⁶⁶ Sergio Suárez Blanco, "Las colonias españolas en África durante el primer franquismo (1939-1959). Algunas reflexiones" ["The Spanish colonies in Africa during the first Francoism (1939-1959). Some reflections"], *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma*, Serie V., No. 10, 1997, 319.

¹⁶⁷ Villanova Valero "La organización territorial del Protectorado español en Marruecos, 15.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, 3.

¹⁶⁹ Villanova Valero, "La organización política, administrativa y territorial del Protectorado español en Marruecos (1912-1956)", 26-27.

¹⁷⁰ Jesús Martínez-Milán, *España en el Sáhara Occidental y en la zona sur del Protectorado de Marruecos, 1885-1945* [*Spain at Western Sahara and the Southern zone of the Protectorate of Morocco, 1885-1945*] (Madrid: UNED, 2003), 173.

One remarkable event took place between 1937 and 1938 when the colonial administration issued that the *chioukh*¹⁷¹ of the “cabaal” – traditionally appointed by their own “djemaa” – had to be endorsed by the Makhzen through the delegate of the Great Vizier in the Southern part. This procedure meant in reality the intervention of the Spanish colonialists in these appointments through the Moroccan administration.¹⁷²

The general administration of the territory depended directly on the High Commissioner until 1946, when the Spanish West Africa (SWA) was established. This organisation is explained in depth in section 2.2.1, but it is important to know that since that year, the High Commissioner delegated his functions in this territory to the Governor of Western Sahara. As a consequence of this decision, the Khalifa also sent a delegation to this part of the Protectorate.¹⁷³

After 1946, the numerous links that this territory had with the SWA did that the administration of this part of the Protectorate was more related to these other territories rather than the Northern part of the Protectorate.

3.2 Western Sahara

3.2.1 Internal organisation

The main colonial ruler of Western Sahara received different names throughout the history of the colony. The first term was royal commissioner (*comisario regio*) established in 1885 and was accountable to the Ministry of Overseas Affairs. Two years later, it was renamed as politico-military sub-governor (*subgobernador politico-militar*) and it depended on the Captain General of the Canary Islands. In 1901 the post was upgraded as politico-military governor (*gobernador politico-militar*) and by 1925, the title was general governor (*gobernador general*).¹⁷⁴

The decree of the 29th of August 1934 unified the administration of the territories of Ifni and Western Sahara under the High Commissioner of the Protectorate of Morocco, who was called since then “General Governor of Ifni and Sahara”. For ruling these territories better, two government delegates (*delegados gubernativos*) were sent: one to Ifni and another one to the Spanish Sahara.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ The *chioukh* is the plural form of *cheikh*, also Romanised as *siuj*, *shaykh* or *cheick*, is the head of a religious brotherhood, tribe, fraction or sub-fraction in traditional Saharan or Southern Moroccan societies. Pazzanita and Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, 91.

¹⁷² Martínez-Milán, *España en el Sáhara Occidental y en la zona sur del Protectorado de Marruecos, 1885-1945*, 173-176.

¹⁷³ Pazzanita and Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, 112.

¹⁷⁴ Pazzanita and Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, 187.

¹⁷⁵ Pazzanita and Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, 187.

In July 1946, the Spanish Government created the Spanish Western Africa (SWA). This organisation integrated all the territories that Spain ruled in North West Africa after the Second World War.¹⁷⁶ As José Carlos López-Pozas explains:

“It is difficult to find a single term that could encompass the four territories given that Ifni was an enclave handed over in perpetuity; Cape Juby [Southern Protectorate], a protectorate within a State; Río de Oro was a protectorate at the beginning, but it was defined later as a colony, and Saguia el Hamra was a zone whose presence was agreed with France.”¹⁷⁷

Thus, the SWA solved this administrative problem by including under a single administration the territories of Ifni and the Spanish Sahara (Río de Oro and Saguia El Hamra). However, the territory of Cape Juby could not be part of the SWA as it was part of the Protectorate. For solving the logistical and administrative problems that this legal difference could bring in, the Governor of the SWA was delegated with the functions of the High Commissioner of Spain in Morocco according to the fifth article of the Decree of the 20th of July 1946.¹⁷⁸ For representing his interests, the Khalifa also sent a delegation to this part of the Protectorate.¹⁷⁹

This new regulation implied the independence of the General Governor of the SWA from the High Commissioner of the Protectorate that was established in 1934. However, there were reminiscences of the previous four territories. The General Governor was based on Sidi Ifni and appointed a sub-governor located in El Aaiun who was in charge of Saguía El Hamra and Río de Oro. Below him, there was a governmental delegate (*delegado gubernativo*) whose headquarters were in Dakhla (Villa Cisneros, back then) and controlled the zone of Río de Oro.¹⁸⁰

The SWA came to an end when the colonies of Western Sahara and Ifni were transformed into provinces after the Decree of the 10th of January 1958.¹⁸¹ This decree had not enough legal weight for modifying the provincial structure of the country, as it has been explained in section

¹⁷⁶ José Carlos López-Pozas Lanuza, “África Occidental Española: La cuestión de soberanía y la retirada del Sahara” [“Spanish West Africa: The sovereign question and the withdrawal from Sahara”] (PhD diss., UNED, 2015), 69.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, 73.

¹⁷⁸ Decreto de 20 de julio de 1946 por el que se establece el régimen de dependencia de las posesiones españolas del África Occidental [Decree of the 20th of July 1946 in which the dependence regime of the Spanish possessions in Western Africa is established]. Fifth article. <https://www.boe.es/datos/pdfs/BOE/1946/205/A05850-05850.pdf>

¹⁷⁹ Pazzanita and Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, 112.

¹⁸⁰ Pazzanita and Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, 112.

¹⁸¹ Decreto de 10 de enero de 1958 por el que se reorganiza el Gobierno General del África Occidental Española [Decree of the 10th of January 1958 in which the General Government of the Spanish West Africa is reorganised], first article. <https://www.boe.es/datos/pdfs/BOE//1958/012/A00087-00087.pdf>

2.2. The legal restructuring that supposed for the province of Sahara the passing of the Law 8/1961 implied the adoption of new institutions.

This Law established as the main ruler of the colony the General Governor and the creation of a “*cabildo provincial*”.¹⁸² This institution was equivalent to the Deputations,¹⁸³ the highest local authority within a province in Spain. In 1963, only half of the members of the *Cabildo* were of indigenous origin¹⁸⁴ in a province where approximately 82% of its inhabitants were considered “natives” in 1967.¹⁸⁵ Due to the misrepresentation that the indigenous people had, the colonial authorities created a *Djemaa* for the whole Saharan territory in 1967¹⁸⁶ using the same term as the traditional Saharan tribal councils where there were appointed 82 Maghrebi members vs. 2 European Spanish the year of its foundation.¹⁸⁷

But the decision of creating a chamber where the indigenous population had more voice was not only related to the representation. While the Law 8/1961 represented a rebellion against the process of decolonisation of Sahara, the creation of the *Djemaa* six years later represented an acceptance of it. Moreover, since 1963 the United Nations included Western Sahara in the list of non-self-governing territories.¹⁸⁸ Thus, with the creation of this institution, the Spanish government was granting any kind of autonomy to its colony before the prospective independence of the country.

¹⁸² Pazzanita and Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, 361.

¹⁸³ Cordero de Torres, “La descolonización, un criterio hispánico” [“Decolonisation, an Hispanic Criterion”], 180.

¹⁸⁴ Pazzanita and Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, 89.

¹⁸⁵ “Anuario estadístico de 1970 (Censo de Población de la provincia del Sahara de 1967)”, Instituto Nacional de Estadística [National Institute of Statistics], accessed March 19, 2019.

<https://www.ine.es/inebaseweb/pdfDispacher.do?td=183123&ext=.pdf>

¹⁸⁶ Decreto 1024/ 1967, de 11 de mayo, por el que se modifica el de 29 de noviembre de 1962 sobre Ordenamiento de la Administración Local para la provincia de Sahara, creando la Yemáa o Asamblea General [Decree 1024/1967, of the 11th of May, in which the one of 29th of November 1962 about the legislation of the Local Administration for the province of Sahara is modified creating the Djemaa or General Assembly] <https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/1967/05/20/pdfs/A06782-06783.pdf>

¹⁸⁷ Pazzanita and Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, 89.

¹⁸⁸ Omar, “The right to self-determination and the indigenous people of Western Sahara”, 46.

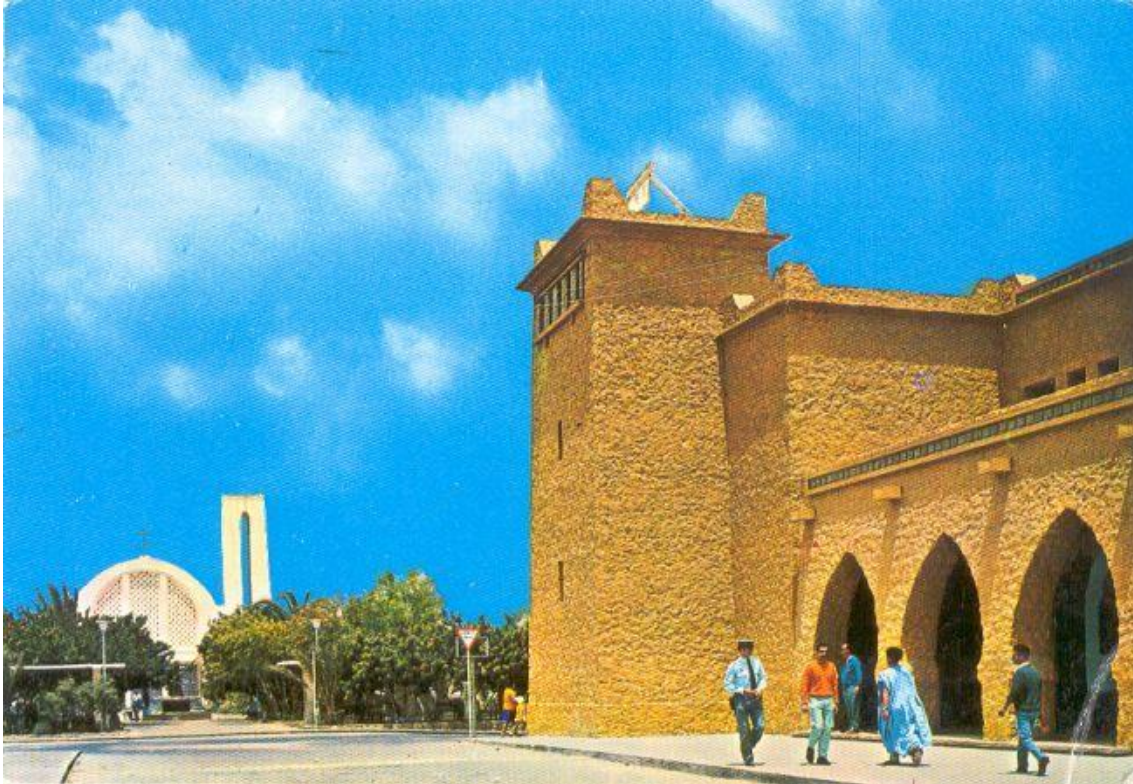


Illustration 7: This is a better image of the building of the *Djema* during the last years of the colonial rule according to the description given by José Ramón Diego Aguirre in “La verdad sobre la entrega del Sahara” [“The truth about the handover of the Sahara”], *Historia* 16, No date, No. 177, year XV, 15. http://www.lamilienelsahara.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/AP_030_LaVerdad.pdf Source: “El Aaiún,” La mili en el Sáhara, accessed June 8, 2019 <http://web.lamilienelsahara.net/imagenes/josemt/postales/aiun1.jpg>

3.2.2 Fitting the colonial administration in the mother country

According to the Decree of 1946, the Governor of the SWA had to be a member of the Army appointed by the Prime Minister. However, the government of the SWA relied on the Presidency of the Spanish Government, through the Directorate-General of Morocco and Colonies (“*Dirección General de Marruecos y Colonias*”).¹⁸⁹

In 1956, due to the end of the Protectorate in Morocco, the Directorate-General of Morocco and Colonies was renamed Directorate-General of the African *Plazas* and Provinces (“*Dirección General de Plazas y Provincias Africanas*”),¹⁹⁰ a fact that some authors interpret as a first step

¹⁸⁹ Decreto de 20 de julio de 1946 por el que se establece el régimen de dependencia de las posesiones españolas del África Occidental [Decree of the 20th of July 1946 in which the dependence regime of the Spanish possessions in Western Africa is established].

<https://www.boe.es/datos/pdfs/BOE/1946/205/A05850-05850.pdf>

¹⁹⁰ Decreto de 21 de agosto de 1956 por el que se dispone el cambio de denominación de la Dirección General de Marruecos y Colonias [Decree of the 21st August 1956 in which the change of denomination of the Directorate-General of Morocco and Colonies is stipulated].

<https://www.boe.es/datos/pdfs/BOE//1956/263/A06031-06031.pdf>

for the process of “provincialisation”¹⁹¹ as used for the first time the term “Provinces” for referring to the Spanish territories in Africa.

After the provincialisation, the General Governor depended on the Prime Minister through the Directorate-General of the African *Plazas* and Provinces, renamed Directorate-General of Promotion of the Sahara (“*Dirección General de Promoción del Sáhara*”) after 1969.¹⁹²

3.2.3 Territorial division

Regarding the territorial division, it is required to bear in mind the late colonisation of the inner parts of Western Sahara (1934). For this reason, most of the society was divided into the precolonial social units: the *fakhd*, or fraction of a tribe. Each *fakhd* was ruled by a *djema* or assembly and led by a *cheikh*. This unit did not lose its importance within the Saharan society until the mid-20th century.¹⁹³ Hence, a group of *afkhad* (plural of *fakhd*) formed a tribe (also called *cabila* or *qabila*, plur.: *cabael*).¹⁹⁴ There was no supra-tribal organisation, as a State, for maintaining the order.¹⁹⁵

Until 1962, the Spanish main settlements of El Aaiun and Villa Cisneros (16.319 and 5.454 inhabitants in 1967)¹⁹⁶ were ruled by *juntas locales*, a term used for referring to the administration of small settlements.¹⁹⁷

The process of provincialisation implied a deep change in the territorial administration, especially after the approval of the Law 8/1961 and further legislation like the Decree of 29th December 1962.¹⁹⁸ This Decree divided the province into three categories depending on the demographical importance of the settlement: municipalities (*términos municipales*), lower local entities (*entidades locales menores*) and nomadic fractions (the traditional *fakhd*). Each category was ruled by a different institution: *Ayuntamientos* (City Councils), the *juntas locales* and the *djemaas*¹⁹⁹ respectively.²⁰⁰ El Aaiun and Villa Cisneros were upgraded to the category of

¹⁹¹ Soroeta Licerias, “La problemática de la nacionalidad de los habitantes de los territorios dependientes y el caso del Sáhara Occidental”, 651.

¹⁹² Pazzanita and Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, 361.

¹⁹³ *Ibidem*, 143.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, 430-431.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, 179.

¹⁹⁶ “Anuario estadístico de 1970 (Censo de Población de la provincia del Sahara de 1967)”, Instituto Nacional de Estadística [National Institute of Statistics], accessed March 19, 2019.

<https://www.ine.es/inebaseweb/pdfDispacher.do?td=183123&ext=.pdf>

¹⁹⁷ Pazzanita and Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, 242.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibidem*, 242

¹⁹⁹ These *djemaas* are related to the traditional tribal institution that should not be confused with the Saharan General Assembly established by the colonial authorities in 1967.

²⁰⁰ Decreto 3249/1962, de 29 de noviembre por el que se aprueba el Ordenamiento de la Administración Local para la Provincia del Sáhara [Decree 3249/1962, of 29th of November in which the Code of the

municipalities while Smara and La Güera were awarded the category of lower local entities.²⁰¹ The nomadic fractions were a consequence of the impossibility for dividing the whole Saharan territory into one of the two local administrations because of the nomadism of the population. In this way, the Spanish colonial administration had to adapt itself to the social reality of the colonised.²⁰²

Local Administration for the Province of Sahara is approved].

<https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/1962/12/12/pdfs/A17644-17656.pdf>

²⁰¹ Pazzanita and Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, 242-243.

²⁰² *Ibidem*, 152.

CHAPTER 4: Nationalist struggles for independence

4.1 Protectorate of Morocco

4.1.1 Nationalism in the Protectorate until the Second World War

After the Second World War, a new nationalism was gathering strength and was spreading throughout the Maghreb. This movement was taking a different shape in both parts of the Protectorate than the previous experiences that took place in the 1920s.²⁰³ Back then, the biggest concern for the two colonial powers in the country was the Berber opposition to the protectorate led by Mohammed Abd el-Krim Al-Khattabi, who even established the Republic of the Rif between 1921 and 1926.²⁰⁴

However, after the passing of the years, the social support of nationalism was not based on the popular Berber opposition to colonialism but on the intellectuals and parts of the bourgeoisie that were creating the nationalist parties.²⁰⁵ These ideas were backed up in urban areas since the 1930s, where most of these social classes lived, especially in the cities of Fez and Rabat in the French Protectorate and in Tetuan in the Spanish counterpart.²⁰⁶

The event that increased the consciousness of this nationalist identity was the promulgation of the Berber Dahir in 1930 in the French part. This decree placed Berber tribes under customary French courts instead of the traditional Islamic Law. In this way, the traditional religious supremacy of the Sultan and the qur'anic courts were abolished for the Berber-speaking population.²⁰⁷ This reform was justified by the French colonial Administration stating that before colonisation the Berber speakers were not under the control of the Sultan as they were in the territories called "Land of Dissidence" in opposition of the Arabic speaking populations that lived in the "Land of the Government".²⁰⁸

For this reason, an Arabic opposition rose for re-establishing the authority of the Sultan through Nationalist Parties. The most important was the National Party, that suffered an important scission in 1938 that gave room to the party *Al Istiqlal* four years later. This new party was headed by Allal el Fassi and was the political organisation that led the pro-independence movement in the country.²⁰⁹

²⁰³ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 85-87.

²⁰⁴ Mevliyar Er & Paul B. Rich, "Abd el-Krim's guerrilla war against Spain and France in North Africa: An adventure setting for screen melodramas", *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (2015), 497.

²⁰⁵ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 87.

²⁰⁶ Stenner, "Centring the periphery", 431.

²⁰⁷ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 87-88.

²⁰⁸ E.G.H. Joffé, "The Moroccan nationalist movement: Istiqlal, the Sultan and the country", *Journal of African History*, No. 26, (1985), 292.

²⁰⁹ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 88.

The Spanish Protectorate also lived an increment in this nationalist feeling. During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), the first nationalist parties were founded. The Party of the National Reforms (PNR) led by Abdelkhalek Torres and the Party of the Moroccan Unity (PMU). The High Commissioner back then, Juan Luis Beigbeder, allowed these organisations because the Moroccan nationalist did not oppose to the recruitment of Moroccan men for fighting in Franco's side during the clash. However, Beigbeder tried to face the PNR and the PMU for keeping the nationalist movement as much divided as possible.²¹⁰

Therefore, the basis for the independence of Morocco was settled before the Second World War. Nevertheless, during the last years and after this confrontation, the development of the historical events that resulted in the independence of Morocco increased their speed. In 1944, the leaders of *Istiqlal* – feeling confident about the support that the United States seemed to provide to the nationalists – sent a letter to the Sultan Muhammad V, the *Résidence Général* and foreign representatives in favour of the independence.²¹¹ The *Istiqlal* was, thus, favourable to the establishment of a constitutional monarchy and the alignment of the country with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).²¹² Nonetheless, Muhammad V supported more the vision of an absolute monarchy.²¹³

The nationalists of the Spanish Protectorate also sought the refuge of the American country. In April 1945, the leaders of the PNR and the PMU wrote a letter to president Roosevelt explaining the struggles of the Moroccan population.²¹⁴

The explanation of the American support to the Moroccan cause may have its origin in the Conference of Casablanca. In January 1943, the Allies met in that city for designing a military strategy for freeing Europe in the context of the Second World War. Taking advantage of the presence of President Roosevelt in Morocco, Mohammed V had the opportunity to have a meeting with him. The content of this conversation has not been clarified yet by the scientific literature, but what is true is that this encounter enhanced the confidence of the nationalists.²¹⁵

²¹⁰ Benjelloun, "Le mouvement nationaliste marocain dans l'ex Maroc espagnol (1930-1956)", 189-190.

²¹¹ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 89.

²¹² The NATO is a political and military alliance to whom the United States belongs to created after the signature of the Washington Treaty the 4th of April 1949. The alliance is based on the principle of collective defence, stated in the article 5 of this Treaty, that establishes that an attack against one or several of the members of this alliance is considered as an attack against all of them. "What is NATO?", NATO, accessed March 21, 2019, <https://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html>

²¹³ Pastrana Piñero, *Arde el desierto*, 56-57.

²¹⁴ Benjelloun, "Le mouvement nationaliste marocain dans l'ex Maroc espagnol (1930-1956)", 193.

²¹⁵ Joffé, "The Moroccan nationalist movement", 302.

However, not all the pro-independence movements were favourable to the United States. In inland Morocco, the Communist Party of Morocco was beginning its activity without having any relation with *Istiqlal*.²¹⁶ This party, at the beginning just a regional branch of the Communist Party of France, began to adopt a more Moroccan-like speech after including local workers and Jew cultural elites. Its objective was to end with the big capitalist and feudal system that the *caïds* represented. Another relevant nationalist party was the *Parti Démocratique et de l'Indépendance* (PDI).²¹⁷

Moreover, these pro-American approaches were not encouraged by the French administration, that preferred the inclusion of Morocco within the French Union.²¹⁸ The French Union was the combination of the French Republic, overseas departments or territories (previously called colonies), the associated States (former protectorates that voluntarily wanted to be part of the Union) and associated territories (like Togo or Cameroun).²¹⁹

As Morocco was a State that remained its sovereignty, there were pressure groups that wanted Morocco to join this organisation. This alternative connection with France was disliked by Spain, that would lose influence over its own Protectorate, and by the Moroccan nationalists, who did not want to collaborate with the new Empire that France was building.²²⁰

Moreover, this annexation could be considered illegal as it would represent the separation of the Spanish and French Protectorates, something that was completely illegal according to the international treaties.²²¹ This radical division could be seen as a threaten for the Sultan's sovereignty over Morocco as whole, something that was recognised by the Treaty of Fez between France and Morocco and the later agreement of division of the protected Moroccan territory between France and Spain.

4.1.2 International scenario and its impact at the Protectorate of Morocco (1945-1951). Focusing more on the Arabic world, the end of the Second World War meant that the influence that the two main colonial powers (Britain and France) were exercising over the Middle East and Maghrib was now overshadowed by the two new global powers (the United States and the USSR), that wanted to spread their influence through the whole world.²²²

²¹⁶ Pastrana Piñero, *Arde el desierto*, 60.

²¹⁷ Rivet, *Histoire du Maroc*, 325.

²¹⁸ Pastrana Piñero, *Arde el desierto*, 58-59.

²¹⁹ Encyclopedie Larousse, s.v. "Union Française", accessed February 20, 2019. https://larousse.fr/encyclopedie/divers/Union_fran%C3%A7aise/147902

²²⁰ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 90-91.

²²¹ N.B., "The Spanish Zone of Morocco," 214-215.

²²² Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arabic Peoples*, (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), Chap. 21, Epub.

France was in a more disadvantageous situation than the British for dealing with this new thread. Although it recovered Indo-China temporarily and the Maghrib, the first precedent of two independent Arabic former French colonies was set. Syria and Lebanon were completely dissociated from France after the Second World War, in contrast with Egypt and Iraq, that signed treaties with Britain that provided limited freedom but did not mean their complete independence. Thus, any new negotiation with any nationalist party about its status within France was conditioned by these events.²²³ This was one of the first moments on which France realised as a colonial power that any kind of layered sovereignty – like the French Union – or modifications of its *status quo* will not solve the maximum pro-independence aspirations of the nationalists.

These demands did not last to appear in the Maghreb, concretely in Morocco and Tunisia, where the French minority controlled the strategic sectors of the country and held the highest positions in the society, began to demand its independence as soon as the Second World War was over. The first reaction of French authorities was to repress these demands.²²⁴

4.1.3 Impact of the international situation in the Spanish Protectorate: the rule of the High Commissioner Varela (1945-1951).

In March 1945, General José Enrique Varela was appointed High Commissioner of the Spanish Protectorate. Varela had to combine the new international role of Spain with the increment of the nationalist movements in Morocco. This new international role was marked by the fact that in 1946 the General Assembly of the United Nations imposed the isolation of Franco's regime by Western democracies due to his Fascist ideas.²²⁵ In fact, the United Nations recommended the withdrawal of all ambassadors and Plenipotentiary Ministers settled in the country.²²⁶

Hence, the regime had to search new allies. At the same time, the Arab League wanted to have more contact with the nationalist movements in the North part of Morocco while avoiding any confrontation with the colonial authority. The match was ideal, although it implied that Spain should make some concessions to the nationalists.²²⁷ The Arab League was an organisation created in Cairo in 1945 for helping the Arabic countries to reach their independence from their

²²³ Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arabic Peoples*, (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), Chap. 21, Epub.

²²⁴ Ibidem.

²²⁵ Madariaga, "Confrontation in the Spanish zone (1945-56)", 493.

²²⁶ Miguel Hernando de Larramendi Martínez, "El Protectorado en Marruecos y las relaciones internacionales de España (1912-1956)" ["The Protectorate in Morocco and the international relations of Spain (1912-1956)"] in *El Protectorado español en Marruecos: La Historia trascendida. Vol. 3*. Dir. Manuel Aragón Reyes, Ed. & coord. Manuel Gahete Jurado (Bilbao: Iberdrola, 2012), 105.

²²⁷ Madariaga, "Confrontation in the Spanish zone (1945-56)", 493.

colonial powers. Since 1947, there was a permanent representation of the main nationalist parties of the Maghreb like the PNR.²²⁸

Thanks to this period of harmony with the Arabic countries, the nationalists obtained important victories like the allowance to re-found the PNR and the permission to Abdelkhalek Torres to publish his own newspaper. On his behalf, since September 1946, Varela tried to reinforce the Spanish interests by promoting the creation of a party in favour of the continuity of the Protectorate based on the 15 *caïds* that were more in favour of Franco's regime in the East part of the Rif. However, this party did not have a lot of success.²²⁹

In this context, an important event for the history of Morocco took place: the speech of the Sultan Muhammad V in Tangier in April 1947. Traditionally, the Sultan adopted a cautious attitude towards the nationalist movement and never showed any public support to this cause although he had clear sympathies for it. However, before his visit to Casablanca a riot was violently repressed by the French troops causing hundreds of casualties. This provoked the monarch to finish his speech claiming the benefits of the Protectorate as expected but with an ambiguous "*He who trusts in God will find the right path*", a sentence that could be interpreted as a call to arms. After this speech, the Sultan supported independence more openly than before, which represented an enormous victory for the nationalists.²³⁰

This event gave room to an important change in the policy followed by Varela, that turned to be more repressive and violent, especially after the appointment of Alphonse Juin as the new *Résident Général* one month after this speech. During the rule of these two officials, the cooperation between both protectorates was common. At such scale that they even coordinated policies for suppressing the nationalist movements.²³¹

But Varela's activities against the nationalists went further beyond that cooperation with France. After spending eight months in Cairo, a city that was turned into an important hub of the Maghrebi nationalism, Torres tried to reach the Spanish Protectorate through Tangier on the 5th of February 1948. In the border station, the Spanish authorities did not allow him to enter alleging the lack of safe conduct from the High Commissioner. This event provoked a protest in Tetuan three days later that resulted in one killed, numerous injured and many nationalists

²²⁸ Hernando de Larramendi Martínez, "El Protectorado en Marruecos y las relaciones internacionales de España (1912-1956)", 105-106.

²²⁹ Madariaga, "Confrontation in the Spanish zone (1945-56)", 494.

²³⁰ Joffé, "The Moroccan nationalist movement", 303-306.

²³¹ Madariaga, "Confrontation in the Spanish zone (1945-56)", 495.

under arrest and some others seeking refuge in Tangier.²³² Torres was not allowed to reach the Spanish Protectorate until the next High Commissioner, General García-Valiño, came to power in 1951.²³³

Moreover, Varela used the intelligence services for monitoring the activities of those who were under suspicion of supporting the nationalist movement.²³⁴ Another measure that he adopted for stopping the spreading of the nationalism was to satisfy the ego of the Khalifa up to the point that he considered himself independent of the decisions of the Sultan. This harmony caused the relationship between the High Commission and the Khalifa to become better than ever.²³⁵

This repression towards the nationalist movements, while the Spanish government was looking for an approach towards the Arabic countries, left it in an ambiguous situation. However, Spain did not pay dearly this contradiction. The members of the Arabic League supported at the United Nations the derogation of the resolution that was isolating Spain in 1950, when Varela's prosecution of the pro-independence movement was harder. These countries decided to look away in this regard because Spain was considered an ally in the Palestine question and a supporter of the Arabic culture. As proofs of it, it did not recognise Israel as a State when it was proclaimed two years before and implemented educative policies that encouraged the Arabic culture. For instance, the educative reform that took place in the Protectorate in 1937 included the transformation of the Spanish-Arabic Schools into Moroccan Schools. Moreover, Varela himself authorised the gathering of funds for the victims of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.²³⁶

4.1.4 Situation in the French protectorate and independence of Morocco (1951-1956). The nationalist ideas were widespread throughout the French colonies in the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia). However, there were differences between these three territories. The emotional attachment that the French people had to Algeria was larger than to the other two.²³⁷ This attachment was due to the percentage of population of European origin that lived there. One tenth of the population had European origin, not only French; but Spanish, Maltese and Italian too. Moreover, Algeria was not administratively considered a colony and even less a protectorate like Morocco and Tunisia were, as it was a constitutional part of France

²³² Madariaga, "Confrontation in the Spanish zone (1945-56)", 495.

²³³ Benjelloun, "Le mouvement nationaliste marocain dans l'ex Maroc espagnol (1930-1956)", 196.

²³⁴ Madariaga, "Confrontation in the Spanish zone (1945-56)", 496.

²³⁵ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 99.

²³⁶ Hernando de Larramendi Martínez, "El Protectorado en Marruecos y las relaciones internacionales de España (1912-1956)", 105- 108.

²³⁷ Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship, Inequality and Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 110.

since 1848. Its territory was divided into departments, similar to the divisions of metropolitan France.²³⁸

In this context, Muhammad V decided to promote independence, especially after the speech in Tangier of 1947, that represented a turning point after which his support to this movement and to the party *Istiqlal* were every time less dissimulated.²³⁹ Nonetheless, the activities of these parties were not allowed in the French protectorate, as the *Résident Général* since 1947, General Alphonse Juin, increased the repression against the independence movement and its leaders, who were mostly imprisoned or exiled at Cairo.²⁴⁰

The relationship between Juin and Muhammad V reached a point of complete unsustainability in 1951. Such was the case that Juin purposed the dethronement of the Sultan to the French government and its substitution by a more submissive monarch. The French Government did not dare to purpose such a provocative policy and decided to substitute Juin by Agustin Guillaume as new *Résident Général*. It was expected that Guillaume's profile more open to dialogue could solve the situation. However, this change did not solve the political crisis that was devastating the Protectorate with continuous attacks and conflicts.²⁴¹

Seeing the difficulties for re-establishing the order in the Protectorate, Guillaume began to support the destitution of the Sultan as well, especially after the riots that took place in Casablanca on February 1952, a good example of the escalation of the violence that the country was facing. This clash began as a demonstration against the murdered of the syndicalist leader Ferhat Hached at Tunis by a counterterrorist organisation and finished with a shooting of the colonial police against the demonstrators and killing some of them. In order to stabilise the situation, the authorities decided to dissolve *Istiqlal* and the Communist Party of Morocco.²⁴² These events worried the United Nations so much that they included the *Question of Morocco* in the agenda for the VII General Assembly of December 1952 thanks to the Arab League.²⁴³

Thus, supported by the pasha²⁴⁴ of Marrakech, Thami El Glaoui, the *Résidence Général* forced to Muhammad V to withdraw his responsibilities as Sultan of Morocco the 20th of August 1953. He and his two sons were sent first to Corsica and later to Madagascar. The post of Sultan was

²³⁸ Elizabeth Buettner, *Europe after Empire: Decolonization, Society, and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 136-137.

²³⁹ Hernando de Larramendi Martínez, "El Protectorado en Marruecos y las relaciones internacionales de España (1912-1956)", 108.

²⁴⁰ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 93.

²⁴¹ *Ibidem*, 123-124.

²⁴² Daniel Rivet, *Histoire du Maroc: de Moulay Idrîs à Mohammed VI*, (Paris: Fayard, 2012), 342.

²⁴³ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 111, 125.

²⁴⁴ Traditional title given to respected men in the former Ottoman Empire and in Northern Africa.

occupied then by his uncle Mohammed Ben Arafa.²⁴⁵ El Glaui convinced to the *Résidence Générale* and the French authorities that the members of the *Istiqlal* party that was being supported by the Sultan were in reality communists.²⁴⁶

The dethronement of Muhammad V gave room to enormous displeasure to the Moroccan population, that felt outraged because of the identification that the people had with their sovereign and identified Ben Arafa's supporters as traitors. Moreover, the terrorism began to appear in the country having as clear targets the colonial community, as it is proved by the bombs that exploded in Casablanca, at the central market the Christmas Eve of 1954 or the 14th of July 1955 causing numerous casualties.²⁴⁷ This city was, in addition, the most populated and French-like of the Protectorate that suffered most of the terrorist attacks and political assassinations.²⁴⁸ Between August 1953 and April 1956, the *Résidence Générale* recorded almost one thousand victims: 628 Muslims, 234 Europeans, and 10 Jews.²⁴⁹ Between July 1954 and June 1955, there were more than 784 terrorist attacks and 477 attacks with explosives.²⁵⁰

These events led the President of the Council of France (equivalent to a Prime Minister), Edgar Faure, to issue a summit at Aix-les-Bains (France) in August 1955 to find a solution to the conflict that prevented the return of Muhammad V.²⁵¹ The round table was formed by Faure and different members of the French government alongside numerous leaders of the nationalist parties *Istiqlal* and the *Parti Démocratique et de l'Indépendance* (PDI), different personalities of the Protectorate and a representation of the Moroccan Jewish. On the 28th of that month, the group agreed on four main topics. First, Ben Arafa had to be removed from the throne. Second, Muhammad V had to be back to Morocco in October. In the meantime, a Council of the Regency had to be established, and finally, a government composed exclusively by Moroccan members had to be formed. These terms were communicated to Muhammad V at his exile at Antsirabé (Madagascar), that accepted the Council of the Regency as a temporary solution.²⁵² The biggest ambitions of the French Government were not accomplished. The formal independence of Morocco was near.

Muhammad V signed on the 8th of November 1955 the Agreement of La Celle-Saint-Cloud, that represented the granting of independence to the country but "united to France by the

²⁴⁵ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 134-136.

²⁴⁶ Rivet, *Histoire du Maroc*, 341.

²⁴⁷ Rivet, *Histoire du Maroc*, 342.

²⁴⁸ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 116.

²⁴⁹ Rivet, *Histoire du Maroc*, 343.

²⁵⁰ Pastrana Piñero, "La guerra de Ifni-Sáhara y la lucha por el poder en Marruecos", 71.

²⁵¹ Rivet, *Histoire du Maroc*, 344.

²⁵² Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 207-208.

permanent links of an interdependence freely consent”,²⁵³ a euphemism for recognising the real independence of Morocco.

But the granting of independence to the French Protectorate cannot be explained only through its internal movements. The incoming Algerian War and the emotional attachment that the French people had to this territory influenced the French decisions on Morocco.²⁵⁴ As a proof of this, it was in 1954 (the same year that the Algerian War began) when the French policy regarding the traditional prosecution of the Moroccan nationalist movements changed and one year after the allowed the return of Mohammad V.²⁵⁵ However, the American pressures after the Bandung Conference – a summit where the known as “Third World” met in 1955 for ending colonialism – could have accelerated the process of granting the independence.²⁵⁶

Spain knew that it would not be able to remain its Protectorate after an eventual French withdrawal due to the juridical source that legitimated its Protectorate. The Treaty of Fez – a bilateral agreement between the French Republic and the Cherifian Empire (Morocco) – established in its first article that France should agree with Spain the distribution of their Protectorates, as it effectively did in November 1912. If the Treaty of Fez was rescinded, the later agreements dependent on it would be annulled too.

Even if Spain opposed to retrocede the Protectorate, it was military weaker than France and before or after the withdrawal from the territory had to happen. In fact, Spain attempted to elongate its stay in the Southern part of the Protectorate and it only provoked the rage of the Liberation Army and the arrival of the Ifni-Saharan War (explained in depth in section 4.2).²⁵⁷

Therefore, when France decided to decolonise its Protectorate Spain only could accept the *fait accompli* despite its numerous attempts to delay the independence and plans for autonomy that it had.²⁵⁸ This explains why the decolonisation of the Protectorate was so soon in comparison with Western Sahara. It was not a Spanish decision, but French, in which Spain had no influence.²⁵⁹

²⁵³ Rivet, *Histoire du Maroc*, 344.

²⁵⁴ Elizabeth Buettner, *Europe after Empire: Decolonization, Society, and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 136-137.

²⁵⁵ Albert Hourami, “A History of the Arab Peoples” (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), chap. 21, Epub.

²⁵⁶ María Concepción Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb [Spain and the decolonisation of the Maghrib]* (Madrid: UNED, 1998), 198-201.

²⁵⁷ Hernando de Larramendi Martínez, “El Protectorado en Marruecos y las relaciones internacionales de España (1912-1956)”, 110.

²⁵⁸ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 243-250.

²⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, 252.

4.1.5 Lieutenant General García-Valiño as High Commissioner (1951-1956) and the Spanish positions towards the overthrow of Muhammad V.

This section is devoted to describing how the last years of the shared Protectorate of Morocco were seen from the Spanish side. The period of Varela's rule came to an end with his death on March 1951. He was substituted by Rafael García-Valiño, who was more open to dialogue with the nationalists. This applies especially to Abdelkhalek Torres, who was allowed to return to Tetuan and to re-open the headquarters of his party. These attitudes were framed within the new Spanish policy of approach towards Arab countries, a policy that worried France. Paris saw how its colonial interests could be endangered because of the openness of its neighbour towards decolonisation movements.²⁶⁰ This approach of the Spanish Government towards the Moroccan nationalism had three motivations.

First, a period of political distancing from France. Spanish Republicans exiled in metropolitan France were carrying out activities against Franco's regime through the borderline between the two countries against.²⁶¹ Moreover, García-Valiño had an evident aversion to France and what it represented.²⁶² If this was not enough, the dethronement of Muhammad V took place without the consultation of Spain, an attitude that was considered a disdain by the Spanish authorities.²⁶³

Second, the Spanish government believed that in a prospective independent Morocco Spain could be considered a better European partner on top of France if it was recalled as the one that first supported independence.²⁶⁴

Finally, Spain still needed the votes of the Arabic countries for being accepted at the UN and it was not until 1955 when it achieved this goal, so the policy of rapprochement to them was still in law.²⁶⁵

For these reasons, the Spanish government decided to give hopes to the nationalists of the Spanish zone pretending that more autonomy could be granted to them.²⁶⁶ In a first attempt, the nationalists at the Spanish Protectorate were pleased by the autonomy, as it was preferred than the plausible civil war that part of the population feared.²⁶⁷ However, none of these plans came into effect as the independence came earlier.

²⁶⁰ Madariaga, "Confrontation in the Spanish zone (1945-56)", 497.

²⁶¹ Madariaga, "Confrontation in the Spanish zone (1945-56)", 498.

²⁶² Pastrana Piñero, *Arde el desierto*, 61-63.

²⁶³ Madariaga, "Confrontation in the Spanish zone (1945-56)", 498.

²⁶⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁶⁵ Hernando de Larramendi Martínez, "El Protectorado en Marruecos y las relaciones internacionales de España (1912-1956)", 109.

²⁶⁶ Madariaga, "Confrontation in the Spanish zone (1945-56)", 498.

²⁶⁷ Benjelloun, "Le mouvement nationaliste marocain dans l'ex Maroc espagnol (1930-1956)", 196.

But these projects were welcomed by the Arabic press, which was covering any information about the rapprochement between the High Commission and the Moroccan nationalists. The international community even remarked the differences between the French and the Spanish zone. Even the American agency *Associated Press* contrasted the “violent” actions that France was applying to the Spanish “pacifying” policies.²⁶⁸ As Madariaga explains:

*“To many, it was a grotesque situation: a dictator who oppressed his own people proclaiming himself as a defender of freedom and independence abroad, raising the question of how much unanimity existed within the Franco’s regime with regard to the policy of ‘rapprochement with anti-colonialism’”.*²⁶⁹

The Spanish support for the Moroccan nationalism was not only political but logistical too. Madrid turned into the operation centre where nationalist leaders designed their next movements sponsored by the Spanish authorities. But even more important, the North Protectorate turned into an important hub where arms were provided to the nationalists, both Moroccan and Algerian. The French authorities even seized Spanish rifles and were aware that García-Valiño consented this traffic.²⁷⁰

This permissive policy allowed that in the city of Nador (Spanish Protectorate) the Liberation Army of Morocco (LA) was founded in 1955.²⁷¹ This organisation began a guerrilla warfare exclusively directed against the French Protectorate, respecting the Spanish zone, as it was there where it found shelter and support.²⁷² Moreover, it was in touch with the National Liberation Army of Algeria.²⁷³ Its relationship with the *Istiqlal* was a subject of controversy at the moment. While the Spanish authorities defended that the LA and *Istiqlal* were two independent organisations but with clear bonds, France considered the LA as the militant branch of the nationalist party.²⁷⁴

This detrimental attitude of Spain – it was clear that in the long-term the violent rise of the nationalism will have negative effects in its own counterpart – can only be explained by the fact that Franco himself had assumed that the Protectorate (at least the Northern part) had to come to an end in the middle-term and the aversion that García-Valiño had for France. His

²⁶⁸ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 118, 124, 185-186.

²⁶⁹ Madariaga, “Confrontation in the Spanish zone (1945-56)”, 497.

²⁷⁰ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 230-235.

²⁷¹ Rivet, *Histoire du Maroc*, 343.

²⁷² López-Pozas “África Occidental Española: La cuestión de soberanía y la retirada del Sahara”, 81.

²⁷³ Rivet, *Histoire du Maroc*, 343.

²⁷⁴ López-Pozas “África Occidental Española: La cuestión de soberanía y la retirada del Sahara”, 83

stubbornness for destabilising the French Protectorate was so big that he even used the Spanish secret services for supporting the violent pro-independence movements.²⁷⁵

Following the pro-independence policy, the Spanish government did not recognise the authority of the new Sultan, and it kept the Khalifa as the legitimate representative of Muhammad V,²⁷⁶ now nicknamed as “sovereign”.²⁷⁷ After the return of Muhammad V, the new *Résident Général*, André-Louis Dubois, and García-Valiño had a meeting the 10th of January 1956 that served to let the Spanish authorities know that the end of the Protectorate was inevitable.²⁷⁸

In this way, on the 7th of April 1956, the Spanish government recognised the independence of the Northern part of its Protectorate. Nevertheless, Franco wanted to retain the entire SWA at all costs, and that implied keeping the Southern part of the Protectorate under the Spanish rule. This decision had a twofold motivation. On the one hand, Franco’s regime was not ideologically prepared to abandon the Spanish colonial mission in Africa.²⁷⁹ His regime expected that the rapprochement to the Moroccan nationalism will last longer to show its consequences. However, France decided unilaterally to liberate the country that provided him an important source of men for winning the Civil War and to which he had an especial attachment to without consulting the other colonial power in the territory. In fact, Franco felt humiliated after that snub.²⁸⁰

On the other hand, he needed a place for settling the Foreign Legion, an army deeply linked to the Spanish colonies in Northern Africa and composed of more than 175,000 men.²⁸¹ The excuse that the Government used for justifying this attitude was to state that the Moroccan government did not look very interested in recovering this territory until the irregular groups of the LA in the vicinity were put under control.²⁸²

However, this loss provided a valuable reward. The Spanish Permanent Mission at the United Nations was constituted on the 1st of April 1956, ironically six days before the retrocession of

²⁷⁵ Pastrana Piñero, “La guerra de Ifni-Sáhara y la lucha por el poder en Marruecos”, 65-67.

²⁷⁶ Hernando de Larramendi Martínez, “El Protectorado en Marruecos y las relaciones internacionales de España (1912-1956)”, 109.

²⁷⁷ Madariaga, “Confrontation in the Spanish zone (1945-56)”, 498.

²⁷⁸ Benjelloun, “Le mouvement nationaliste marocain dans l’ex Maroc espagnol (1930-1956)”, 198.

²⁷⁹ Tony Hodges, *Western Sahara. The Roots of a Desert War* (Westport, Connecticut: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1983), 74.

²⁸⁰ María Concepción Ybarra, “Los últimos años del Protectorado de Marruecos y sus consecuencias para España” [“The last years of the Protectorate of Morocco and its consequences for Spain”] in *La Administración del Protectorado Español en Marruecos* by Javier Alvarado Planas and Juan Carlos Domínguez Nafría (Eds.) (Madrid, BOE, 2014), 358.

²⁸¹ Tony Hodges, *Western Sahara. The Roots of a Desert War* (Westport, Connecticut: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1983), 74.

²⁸² Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 331.

the Northern part.²⁸³ Spain was accepted as a member of the United Nations in December 1955, after an election in which the support of the Arabic countries was crucial. One of the major goals of the Spanish international policy since the end of the Second World War was achieved.²⁸⁴

4.1.6 The situation in new-born Morocco

Colonialism left behind in Morocco a mostly unified country. Before 1912 the country was divided between the zones that recognised the authority of the Sultan and those that did not, where different tribes and guilds opposed to his rule. After colonisation, the power of the guilds was clearly diminished, and the tribal structure was overpassed by the nationalist movement. This turned out to be stronger than the feeling of belonging to a tribe, given that it was associated with the desire of creating a new independent Morocco and opposed to the colonialism.²⁸⁵

The monarchy was considered the central axis around the new state had to develop. For this reason, this institution was modernised. In the first place, the Sultan was no longer called Sultan but King, that should be exclusively addressed as Muhammad V. Previously, the use of his real name, Muhammad Ben Yusef, was also allowed. Furthermore, the country was officially renamed as Kingdom of Morocco instead of Cherifian Empire and the Prince Muley Hassan was appointed as heir to the throne.²⁸⁶

However, this stability in the organisation of the state was not applied in the whole Moroccan territory. For instance, the *Istiqlal* and its leader, Allal el Fassi, was defending the idea of Greater Morocco since the end of 1955, when el Fassi was exiled in Egypt and the country had not achieved its independence yet. These irredentist ideas were not accepted by his entire party, because a more moderate faction led by Ahmed Balafrej had a lot of power and was avoiding that el Fassi's ideas had real repercussions in the new-born country's agenda. However, eight months after the signature of the Aix-les-Bains agreement, the LA split into two: the moderate wing that supported Balafrej and the radical wing, that became adhered to el Fassi's ideas.²⁸⁷

²⁸³ Piniés, de, *La descolonización del Sáhara: un tema sin concluir*, 13.

²⁸⁴ Hernando de Larramendi Martínez, "El Protectorado en Marruecos y las relaciones internacionales de España (1912-1956)", 109.

²⁸⁵ Mourad Zarrouk, "Revisionismo y colonialismo en Marruecos: el nacimiento del nacionalismo" ["Revisionism and colonialism in Morocco: the birth of the nationalism"], in *Historia y memoria de las relaciones Hispano-Marroquíes. Un balance en el cincuentenario de la independencia de Marruecos*, ed. Bernabé López García & Miguel Hernando de Larramendi (Seville, Ediciones del Oriente y del Mediterráneo, 2007), 57-58.

²⁸⁶ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 321-322.

²⁸⁷ Juan Pastrana Piñero, "La guerra de Ifni-Sáhara y la lucha por el poder en Marruecos", (PhD diss., University Pompeu Fabra, 2013), 85-87.

Moreover, since independence, the LA was the only organisation that controlled certain areas of the country, especially parts of the South and zones that were close to the Algerian frontier. There, the King could not exercise his power, especially before the organisation of his new Royal Army, that was succeeding in integrating the most moderate members of the LA in its ranks. The activity of this organisation was not circumscribed exclusively at the Moroccan territory, as it was infiltrated in Algeria and Mauritania and was beginning to attack the French military units deployed in the areas close to the Moroccan border.²⁸⁸

4.2 The Ifni-Sahara War

4.2.1 The events

The 1st of June 1956, the French troops deployed in French West Africa and Algeria began to receive the first attacks from the LA in a systematic way. In the beginning, the attackers came from Moroccan territory, but after a while, the Spanish authorities decided to allow LA's troops to trespass Saharan territory and letting French troops do their job too. In this way, Spain remained in a neutral position.²⁸⁹ The attacks reached a new scope when the 15th of February 1957 about two hundred groups of this guerrilla warfare attacked a French patrol in Northern Mauritania killing three French officers and twenty soldiers.²⁹⁰ We must take into account that since the independence of Morocco, the LA was composed by members who had rejected to join the Royal Moroccan Army and supported Allal el Fassi's ideas of Great Morocco besides having a strong anti-colonial feeling.

On the 9th of March 1954, the Spanish Government created a new levy that taxed the cattle and basic products of the population like tea and sugar. For the indigenous people, this was the first time that they were facing a European-like tax collection. It is required to remember that an important percentage of the population in the SWA were nomads. Surprisingly, this first taxation did not represent many problems for the authorities.²⁹¹

This unstable situation seemed propitious for letting the fire of war begin, it was only lacking a match that could produce a spark. It arrived when the following year this tax was increased. The Governor of the SWA, General Ramón Pardo de Santayana, opposed to these new measures appealing even to the charity of his superiors. He was aware of the prospective negative effects

²⁸⁸ López-Pozas "África Occidental Española: La cuestión de soberanía y la retirada del Sahara", 81-82.

²⁸⁹ López-Pozas, "África Occidental Española: La cuestión de soberanía y la retirada del Sahara", 85-86.

²⁹⁰ Hodges, *Western Sahara. The Roots of a Desert War*, 76.

²⁹¹ Pastrana Piñero, "La guerra de Ifni-Sáhara y la lucha por el poder en Marruecos", 95-97.

that this increase could suppose to the population of the SWA, that lived in some cases in a state of distress.²⁹²

However, his demands were not listened and the social opposition to these new measures was enormous. Even the indigenous troops that were in charge of collecting the taxes refused to obey orders. In April 1956, the colonial authorities realised about their mistake and cancelled the collection of these taxes. However, social discontent was already tangible among indigenous society.²⁹³

And the spark burnt even brighter thanks to the fuel that was spread in the territory. Since 1956, the Spanish authorities were giving refuge to different Moroccan activists in the cities of Ifni and Villa Cisneros, where they began to disseminate their ideas on Great Morocco. In some cases, like what happened with Ben Hammu, the local authorities even received these leaders²⁹⁴ as a continuation of the policy of rapprochement to the Arabic countries.

These refugees were members of *Istiqlal* that were expelled from Morocco after the illegalisation of their party in December 1952 by the *Résident Général* Guillaume.²⁹⁵ General Pardo de Santayana, warned to the General Director of African *Plazas* and Provinces, General Díaz de Villegas, about this situation.²⁹⁶ However, the authorities in Madrid believed that this escape route for the nationalist ambitions will be transformed into a long-term aspiration rather than a *fait accompli*.²⁹⁷

The relationship between the LA and the Moroccan Army is controversial. Officially, the Government of Morocco always defended that the LA was not under its control. However, there are testimonies of different members of the Royal Army Forces that state the opposite. For instance, Kaddi Mellal, Mrabti Ansari Mohamed ben Mokhtar and El Harti Driss ben Naceur affirm to have received orders of renouncing their post in the Army for fighting alongside the LA. They were promised that they will keep their status and salary after the conflict.²⁹⁸ Moreover, Ben Hammu led LA's attacks following the orientations given by Allal el Fassi and

²⁹² Pastrana Piñero, "La guerra de Ifni-Sáhara y la lucha por el poder en Marruecos", 96-97.

²⁹³ López-Pozas, "África Occidental Española: La cuestión de soberanía y la retirada del Sahara", 84.

²⁹⁴ Dalmases, de, "El Sáhara Occidental en la bibliografía española y el discurso colonial", 416-417.

²⁹⁵ López-Pozas, "África Occidental Española: La cuestión de soberanía y la retirada del Sahara", 88.

²⁹⁶ Pardo de Santayana, Ramón, Letter to the "General Director" of African *Plazas* and Provinces, 4th June 1957 in José Carlos López Pozas, "África Occidental Española: La cuestión de soberanía y la retirada del Sahara", (PhD diss., UNED, 2015), 336.

²⁹⁷ Guadalupe Montoro, "La retrocesión de Tarfaya e Ifni" ["The retrocession of Tarfaya and Ifni"], *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma*, Series V, Theme IV (1991): 186-187.

<http://revistas.uned.es/index.php/ETfV/article/view/2733/2593>

²⁹⁸ López Pozas, "África Occidental Española: La cuestión de soberanía y la retirada del Sahara", 91.

according to General Díaz de Villegas, he even had the support of the crown prince, Muley Hassan.²⁹⁹

The LA began to attack the Spanish Army the Summer of 1957. The attack was against a patrol that was repairing the telephone cable after a cut (a traditional way of repression of the LA) the 11th of August. After that, an escalation of violence began until the 23rd of November. That day is considered the beginning of the Ifni-Saharan War, as it was then when the LA attacked the territory of Ifni. Most of the territory succumbed to the attack except the capital, Sidi Ifni.³⁰⁰ The attack began in a moment in which King Muhammad V was in New York, at the ceremony of Morocco's entry in the United Nations and the crown prince Muley Hassan was in replacing him as head of the Government of Morocco.³⁰¹

The attacks at the Spanish Sahara began two days after those in Ifni, when the LA attacked the beach of El Aaiun, the capital.³⁰² The Spanish Army focused on defending the cities of the colony: El Aaiun, Villa Cisneros, Villa Bens (Southern Protectorate) and La Güera and the protection of Cape Bojador due to its strategical position. This decision was due to a lack of European forces in the territory.³⁰³ In the Saharan territory, the most memorable event was the attack at Edchera.³⁰⁴

For putting an end to the LA, Spain and France designed a joint operation, the Operation Écouvillon. It was also named Ouragan for the French troops and Operation Teide for the Spanish army.³⁰⁵ It was a success. In Spring, the situation was more under control, but there were worries about massive attacks announced by *Istiqlal* until September 1958.³⁰⁶

4.2.2 Consequences of the War

The consequences can be classified into three groups: territorial, political and social.

On a territorial level, the War had three implications. First, the retrocession of the Southern Part of the Protectorate. Since the 27th of October 1957, King Muhammad V was demanding this, but the beginning of the Ifni-Sahara War only delayed any further negotiation.³⁰⁷ Spain was legally obliged to return this territory as the independence of Morocco finished any responsibility of

²⁹⁹ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 335-336.

³⁰⁰ López-Pozas, "África Occidental Española: La cuestión de soberanía y la retirada del Sahara", 89-92.

³⁰¹ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 339-340.

³⁰² López-Pozas, "África Occidental Española: La cuestión de soberanía y la retirada del Sahara", 94-95.

³⁰³ Pastrana Piñero, "La guerra de Ifni-Sáhara y la lucha por el poder en Marruecos", 297.

³⁰⁴ *Ibidem*, 329-330.

³⁰⁵ Pastrana Piñero, "La guerra de Ifni-Sáhara y la lucha por el poder en Marruecos", 365.

³⁰⁶ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 347.

³⁰⁷ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 351-352

agreement among both parts signed the 4th of January 1969 that stipulated that the city had to be returned on the 30th of June that same year.³¹⁴

Third, the changes in the administration of the Spanish colonial territories in the Maghreb. Although this was not a direct consequence of the War but of the access of Spain to the United Nations, the process of provincialisation of the Spanish Sahara and Ifni took place during these years as it has been previously mentioned (section 2.2 and section 3.2.1). Ifni and Sahara were considered now provinces of Spain *de iure* instead of colonies, what represented a larger opposition of the Spanish government to cede any new centimetre of its possessions in Africa.

On a political level, the results were threefold. First, it contributed to split into two the party *Istiqlal*. Their irredentist ideas had penetrated into the Moroccan society and the end of the War did not fulfil all their ambitions, which increased the pressure among its members. Together with other internal tensions, this provoked the foundation of two parties in Autumn 1958. The conservative and liberal wing supported by Allal el Fassi and Balafrej was different from the leftist and Marxist sectors of the party.³¹⁵

Second, it meant the end of the LA. The final repression was done by the Moroccan Royal Army, as most of the units remained at the territory of the former Southern part of the Protectorate.³¹⁶ It is possible to suppose that this final repression was not done to the members of the Army that were infiltrated in the LA based on the literature quoted earlier.

Third, it proved that the Saharan national identity was not clearly shaped yet. These events are better described in the next section, but the fact that some tribes declared their fidelity to Muhammad V right after the independence of Morocco³¹⁷ while others confronted the LA due to cultural and political discrepancies³¹⁸ proves that this identity experienced an evolution after this clash.

On a social level, the end of the War brought two consequences. First, the loss of lives. The balance of the War in the Spanish side was of 205 deaths, 573 injured and 166 missed people in total. On behalf of the French Army, there were 62 deaths, 50 blessed and 6 missing. For the LA, the War implied the loss of 519 lives, 76 blessed and 296 men were imprisoned.³¹⁹ Due to the humble origin of the soldiers on the side of the Spanish Army and on the LA side, this War has

³¹⁴ Pastrana Piñero, "La guerra de Ifni-Sáhara y la lucha por el poder en Marruecos", 442-446.

³¹⁵ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 356-358.

³¹⁶ Baba Miské, *Front Polisario: l'Ame d'un Peuple*, 111.

³¹⁷ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 331.

³¹⁸ Pastrana Piñero, "La guerra de Ifni-Sáhara y la lucha por el poder en Marruecos", 458.

³¹⁹ Pastrana Piñero, "La guerra de Ifni-Sáhara y la lucha por el poder en Marruecos", 466-468.

been recalled as the War of the poor.³²⁰ Moreover, different Spanish soldiers were imprisoned by the LA and they were not released until the 5th of May 1959.³²¹

Second, Spain was beginning a process of economic growth during the 1960s. This implied that its colonies could benefit from this development by investing in roads, hospitals, schools water supply and many other expenditures in the city of Sidi Ifni and Sahara.³²² These investments included the adoption of a sedentary lifestyle of the indigenous population, historically nomads. Among the different objectives of this policy was, as well, to avoid another insurrection as happened in the Ifni-Saharan War.³²³

4.3 Western Sahara

4.3.1 The first nationalist movements: the impact of the independence of Morocco in the Saharan national identity

Apart from the natural resistance to colonial domination, little movements are remarked regarding Saharan nationalism. One of those exceptions was the opposition found in the territory after the agreement of Melga Lehkama in 1934 and the Ifni-Saharan War in 1958.³²⁴ The events that led to the agreement of Melga Lehkama were related to the Saharan resistance movements that took place in the hinterland of the country – unexplored by the Spanish colonial forces that remained in the coastal strongholds – and were suppressed by a Spanish-French alliance.³²⁵

The Saharan nationalist movement did not achieve any other remarkable accomplishment until the independence of Morocco and the Ifni-Saharan War. It is undeniable that the first Saharan nationalist movements in this period were quite intertwined with the Moroccan nationalism. In April 1956, some members of the tribes of Tarfaya, Saguía El Hamra and Río de Oro expressed their fidelity to Muhammad V and committed themselves to pay him the taxes corresponding to Spain.³²⁶

³²⁰ Lorenzo M. Vidal Guardiola, *Ifni, la guerra que nunca existió*. (Málaga: Almena, 2006), 64. In Pablo-Ignacio de Dalmases y de Olabarría, “El Sáhara Occidental en la bibliografía española y el discurso colonial” [“Western Sahara in the Spanish bibliography and the colonial rhetoric”] (PhD. diss., Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, 2013), 414.

³²¹ Pastrana Piñero, “La guerra de Ifni-Sáhara y la lucha por el poder en Marruecos”, 430.

³²² Canales and del Rey, *Breve historia de la Guerra de Ifni-Sáhara*, 255.

³²³ José A. Rodríguez Esteban and Diego A. Barrado Timón, “Los procesos de urbanización en el Sáhara español (1884-1975): un componente esencial del proyecto colonial” [“The processes of urbanisation at the Spanish Sahara (1884-1975): an essential component of the colonial project”], *Les cahiers d’EMAM*, No. 24-25, (January 2015), paragraph 26, DOI: 10.4000/emam.796

³²⁴ Sayeh, *Les Saharaouis*, 37.

³²⁵ Hodges, *Western Sahara: The Roots of a Desert War*, 55.

³²⁶ Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden, *España y la descolonización del Magreb*, 331.

However, this movement was not representative of the whole Saharan society. In a first attempt, most of the Saharan society supported the uprising. Nonetheless, there was an enormous division between those who thought that Morocco was their liberator and those who worried about the way in which the collaboration with the Spanish forces could work out. Those that were in this second group feared that they could be victims of reprisal by the Moroccans after a hypothetical annexation. Usually, the final decision of supporting the LA or not depending on the position of the local *caids*.³²⁷

At Ifni, most of the *caids* supported Morocco, especially in rural areas. But in Western Sahara, this initial support to the LA turned into acceptance of the Spanish rule after certain negative attitudes of their members against the local population and the droughts that took place during the Summer of 1957.³²⁸

Thus, the Ifni-Sahara War can be seen more like a trans-national anticolonial movement than to a War of national unification. Moreover, among the members of the LA there were members of Algerian, Moroccan, Mauritanian and Saharan ascent.³²⁹

The Ifni-Saharan War proved that during the 1950s the national identity of the Saharan people was not completely defined, and that Morocco found support in the Sahara because it was seen as a way of ending with the colonial rule in the territory, but not because Saharan people had a unanimous feeling of identity and attachment to that country.

4.3.2 Social changes

For understanding the rise of the modern Saharan national movement (the one that appeared after the Ifni-Saharan War), it is required to understand the enormous social changes that happened in the Sahara after this confrontation.

Since the 1940s, Spain was aware of the potential existence of oil in its colony. However, due to economic scarcity that Spain experienced during those years and the Second World War, further researches were not allowed until 1958, when new legislation allowed foreign companies to seek for this resource. Thus, between 1960 and 1963 diverse exploratory drillings were done in the territory. The exploitation of the oil found was not considered profitable due to the low prices of the oil at the moment and the juridical instability that the territory represented (the

³²⁷ Pastrana Piñero, "La guerra de Ifni-Sáhara y la lucha por el poder en Marruecos", 455-458.

³²⁸ Ibidem, 456-458.

³²⁹ Sayeh, *Les Saharaouis*, 40-41.

UN was already doing the first calls for its decolonisation). However, the phosphates found during these drillings certainly were, especially in the zone of Bucráa.³³⁰

Thus, the Saharan society was transformed due to two factors: the exploitation of the phosphates and the sedentary lifestyle and urbanisation of society. These processes were accelerated through the already mentioned provincialisation of the colony, that eased the Spanish control over the territory.

The adoption of a sedentary way of live rocketed since the 1960s, especially after the severe droughts that took place between 1959 to 1963. The cities offered new opportunities like water supply, the exploratory drillings found new aquifers in the territory that made possible the development of agriculture in the area of Villa Cisneros;³³¹ public services like education, telephone, radio or television; and employment, especially at the phosphate mines.³³²

In order to illustrate the spectacular increase of the cities in the Sahara, in 1940 the three main settlements of Sahara (El Aaiún, Villa Cisneros and La Güera) had 143 and 86 and 23 inhabitants each.³³³ However, in 1967 these numbers were respectively 16.319, 5.454 and 750 besides the 2.130 people that lived in Smara. Hence, in 1967, 44,45% of the population lived at the four main settlements.³³⁴ This figure increased to 55% seven years later and counting only the three largest cities.³³⁵

Due to the importance of these demographic changes, it is possible to talk about a second colonisation of the Sahara after the Ifni-Sahara War.³³⁶ In this new society, the nationalist feeling had to adapt to the new times.

This new colonisation caused that indigenous Saharans had to adopt a sedentary lifestyle that enabled them to be part of the new urban petty bourgeoisie. The young Saharans that grew up in this new society had the opportunity to travel (although it was only to the Canary Islands),

³³⁰ Alicia Campos Serrano and Violeta Trasmontes, "Recursos naturales y segunda ocupación colonial del Sáhara español. 1959-1975." ["Natural resources and second colonial occupation of the Spanish Sahara. 1959-1975."], *Les Cahiers d'EMAM*, Vol. 24-25, (January 2015).

<http://journals.openedition.org/emam/819>

³³¹ Rodríguez Esteban and Barrado Timón, "Los procesos de urbanización en el Sáhara español (1884-1975)", paragraph 32.

³³² Pazzanita and Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, 404-405.

³³³ Instituto Nacional de Estadística [National Institute of Statistics], "Censo de Población de 1940 de las Posesiones del Norte y Costa Occidental de África"

<https://www.ine.es/inebaseweb/pdfDispacher.do?td=161352&ext=.pdf>

³³⁴ "Anuario estadístico de 1970 (Censo de Población de la provincia del Sahara de 1967)", Instituto Nacional de Estadística [National Institute of Statistics], accessed May 5, 2019.

<https://www.ine.es/inebaseweb/pdfDispacher.do?td=183123&ext=.pdf>

³³⁵ Pazzanita and Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, 405.

³³⁶ Campos and Trasmontes, "Recursos naturales y segunda ocupación colonial del Sáhara español."

they had access to mass-media (mainly through the radio) and they could continue their training at the mother country.³³⁷

In this context, it is normal that a broad generational gap existed between the younger members of the indigenous community and the adults. This gap was more striking in two aspects: the socio-economic development and the role of the *chioukh*, the traditional tribal leaders.³³⁸ During the decade of the 1970s, the younger generations opposed more and more to the adscription to their “cabila” and began to identify themselves with their city and neighbourhood when they were asked about their origins.³³⁹

This reaction can be explained by the discredit of the *chioukh*. They were the intermediaries that distributed the resources that the colonial administration was providing to the Saharans like housing.³⁴⁰ Thanks to this privileged position, some of them earned up to 100.000 pesetas per month,³⁴¹ a fortune just reachable by CEOs from the most productive sectors of the economy at the end of the 1970s in the mother country.³⁴²

4.3.3 The modern Saharan national movement

In this context, Mohamed uld El Hadj Brahim uld Lebsir, better known as Bassiri led the new-born nationalist organisation in 1969.³⁴³ It was officially called Advanced Organisation for the Liberation of the Sahara (OALS in Spanish) although it was better known as Movement of Liberation of the Sahara (MLS). The colonial administration called it the “Muslim party”.³⁴⁴ This organisation had pacific principles and sought for the application of the UN’s resolutions regarding the Sahara. Bassiri represented well the new generation that lived in the Sahara, as

³³⁷ Baba Miské, *Front Polisario: l’Ame d’un Peuple*, 113-114.

³³⁸ José Enrique Alonso del Barrio, *Las Tribus del Sáhara*, (El Aaiun: Servicio de Publicaciones del Gobierno del Sáhara, 1973) in Enrique Bengochea Tirado, “Políticas Imperiales y Género. La Sección Femenina en la provincia de Sahara (1961-1975)” [“Imperial policies and gender. The Women’s Section in the province of Sahara (1961-1975)”], (PhD. diss., Universidad de Valencia, 2016), 76.

³³⁹ Pablo San Martín, *Western Sahara: the refugee nation*, (Cadriff: Wales University Press, 2010), 47 in Enrique Bengochea Tirado, “Políticas Imperiales y Género. La Sección Femenina en la provincia de Sahara (1961-1975)” [“Imperial policies and gender. The Women’s Section in the province of Sahara (1961-1975)”], (PhD. diss., Universidad de Valencia, 2016), 76.

³⁴⁰ Enrique Bengochea Tirado, “Políticas Imperiales y Género”, 77.

³⁴¹ Baba Miské, *Front Polisario: l’Ame d’un Peuple*, 113-114.

³⁴² Roberto Pérez, “Cuando solo los privilegiados cobraban 100.000 pesetas al mes” [“When only the privileged ones earned 100 000 pesetas per month”], *ABC*, August 2, 2017, https://www.abc.es/espana/la-transicion-espanola/abci-cuando-solo-privilegiados-cobraban-100000-pesetas-201708020203_noticia.html

³⁴³ Mohamed-Fadel Ould Ismail Ould Es-Sweyih, “El primer Estado del Sáhara Occidental”, 14.

³⁴⁴ Baba Miské, *Front Polisario: l’Ame d’un Peuple*, 122.

he had been educated at Egypt and Syria and his national identity was linked to the Saharan people.³⁴⁵

The colonial administration, being aware of the shape that the new nationalist movement was taking, decided to celebrate a festivity for claiming the traditions of the Sahara with the purpose of appearing that their rule over Sahara had a popular legitimacy. The same day that the colonial authorities organised this festivity – 17th of June 1970 – the MLS organised a counter-demonstration at the neighbourhood of Zemla (El Aaiun) for expressing an alternative to the *status quo*.³⁴⁶

This counter-demonstration was repressed violently by the colonial authorities giving room to a considerable number of casualties that have not been exactly clarified until today. Estimations are lying between two (according to the Spanish Government) and twelve people killed (Mauritanian Ministry of Information).³⁴⁷ On this same day, Bassiri was arrested and nobody saw him again.³⁴⁸ Later researches, like the one carried out by Tomás Bárbulo, confirmed that Bassiri was finally executed by members of the Spanish Army the 29th of July 1970 somewhere in the road that connects El Aaiun and the coast.³⁴⁹ According to Joaquín Portillo, an ex-legionary member of the firing squad confessed him that Bassiri was executed alongside other fellow nationalists behind a small fort where there were three fixed dunes close to El Aaiun. However, he does not provide a date.³⁵⁰

After the events that took place at Zemla, the MLS was beheaded and most of their members imprisoned or deported. Thus, the Polisario Front or “*Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía El-Hamra y Río de Oro*” was founded by young Saharans the 10th of May 1973 at the Mauritanian-Saharan borderline in a congress that appointed El-Ouali Mustapha Sayed as its leader.³⁵¹ Most of their founders were bachelor students of the Muhammad V University at Rabat that previously attended to the Moroccan school system for living in the former Southern part of the Protectorate.³⁵²

³⁴⁵ Baba Miské, *Front Polisario: l’Ame d’un Peuple*, 117.

³⁴⁶ Ibidem, 125.

³⁴⁷ Hodges, *Western Sahara*, 155.

³⁴⁸ Baba Miské, *Front Polisario: l’Ame d’un Peuple*, 127-128.

³⁴⁹ Tomás Bárbulo, *La historia prohibida del Sáhara español*, (Barcelona: Destino, 2002), 66-68 in Pablo-Ignacio de Dalmases, *Huracán sobre el Sáhara*, (Barcelona: Editorial Base, 2010), 9-11.

³⁵⁰ Joaquín Portillo Pasqual del Riquelme, “Historia de los saharauis y crónica de la agresión colonial en el Sáhara Occidental” [“History of the Saharan people and chronic of the colonial aggression in Western Sahara] (PhD diss., Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1991), 610.

³⁵¹ Pazzanita and Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, 162.

³⁵² Hodges, *Western Sahara*, 158.

The *modus operandi* of the Front between 1973 and 1975 was through a guerrilla warfare against Spanish positions like the sabotage of the stations of Fosbucráa (the public company that exploiting the mines of phosphates at Bucráa), the kidnapping of the businessman Antonio Martín or different mutinies and raids that ended, in some cases, with deaths.³⁵³

Their first armed action took place on the 20th of May 1973, with resulted in their first execution, a corporal of the Territorial Police, on the 30th of September that same year. The last remarkable violent action against the Spanish administration took place on the 21st of October 1975, when the Polisario and Spain exchanged prisoners. The two years of violent activity of the Polisario Front left behind 19 attacks (including attacks against patrols, kidnappings and sabotages), eight deaths and between 10 and 30 wounded.³⁵⁴

During this time, there were terrorist attacks performed by pro-Moroccan groups too, although they are not so well registered. Some of the reported attacks of these groups are two car bomb attacks³⁵⁵ and the killing of the son of the member of the Parliament Ahmed uld Brahim uld Bachir.³⁵⁶

4.3.4 Reactions to the modern nationalist movement: the UN, Spain, Morocco, and Mauritania

4.3.4.1 The United Nations

The 24th of February 1956, one year after of its admission to the UN, the Spanish Government received a letter from the Secretary-General of the UN requesting information about the situation of the Non-Self-Governing territories that it still owned. The 10th of November 1958 the Spanish Government replied that their territories in Africa were provinces and therefore it was not necessary to provide the required information.³⁵⁷

The 11th of November 1960, the behaviour of the Spanish changed after ceding to the international pressures. The Spanish representative began to facilitate the information required by the Secretary-General two years before. Then a new problem appeared, as it was not easy to

³⁵³ Pazzanita and Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, 163-164.

³⁵⁴ Carlos Ruiz Miguel, *El Sahara Occidental y España: Historia, Política y Derecho. Análisis crítico de la política exterior española* [Western Sahara and Spain: History, Politics and Law. Critical análisis of the Spanish foreign policy], (Madrid: Dykinson, 1995), 162-164.

³⁵⁵ Ibidem.

³⁵⁶ Dalmases, de, *Huracán sobre el Sáhara*, 154-155.

³⁵⁷ General Assembly of the UN, *Report of the Special Committee on the situation with regard to the implantation of the declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples*, Vol. III, (New York: United Nations, 1977), 26.

http://www.usc.es/export9/sites/webinstitucional/gl/institutos/ceso/descargas/A_10023_Rev1_SO_en.pdf

determine which territories were colonies and which were not, as the Ukrainian delegation wanted to include the cities of Ceuta and Melilla and the Canary Islands as colonial territories.³⁵⁸

Despite this disagreement, Spain began to provide information about Western Sahara since April 1961.³⁵⁹ Two years later, this territory was included in the list of Non-Self-Governing territories.³⁶⁰ After different debates, the Committee of Decolonisation (the organisation that supervised these processes in the UN) decided in 1964 that the Spanish colonial territories were Ifni, Sahara, and Equatorial Guinea. The General Assembly of the UN approved the resolutions regarding these three territories in 1965.³⁶¹

The resolution about Ifni and the Spanish Sahara was ambiguous, as it urgently requested “*to enter into negotiations of the problems relating to sovereignty presented by these two Territories*”.³⁶² This meant that Spanish authorities had to enter into talks with Morocco about Ifni and with both Morocco and Mauritania about Western Sahara.³⁶³

Hence, Morocco and Mauritania accepted that the Saharan people could express their position in front of the Decolonisation Committee in June 1966.³⁶⁴ Six months later, the General Assembly adopted a resolution that distinguished the procedures that should be followed in Ifni and Western Sahara. In the first case, the international organisation recommended the transference to Morocco while for the Saharan case it supported the organisation of a self-determination referendum in consultation with Morocco and Mauritania.³⁶⁵

Since the early 1960s, the UN was holding plebiscites in the colonies where there were doubts about the national wishes of the population. Thus, the UN sponsored referendums in British Togoland for joining Ghana in 1956, the unification of North Cameroon with Nigeria in 1959 and South Cameroon with Cameroon in 1961 or the association between Western Samoa and New Zealand in 1962. This was the situation of Western Sahara – given that both Morocco and Mauritania had claims over it – but not in Ifni, where its population did not have any other national identity than Moroccan. Thus, a referendum was purposed only for the former case.³⁶⁶

³⁵⁸ Piniés, de, *La descolonización del Sáhara*, 14-15.

³⁵⁹ General Assembly of the UN, *Report of the Special Committee*, 26.

³⁶⁰ Omar, “The right to self-determination and the indigenous people of Western Sahara”, 46.

³⁶¹ Piniés, de, *La descolonización del Sáhara*, 15.

³⁶² General Assembly of the UN, Resolution A/RES/2072(XX). [https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/2072\(XX\)](https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/2072(XX))

³⁶³ Hodges, *Western Sahara*, 105.

³⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, 105-106.

³⁶⁵ General Assembly of the UN, Resolution A/RES/2229 (XXI). [https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/2229\(XXI\)](https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/2229(XXI))

³⁶⁶ Hodges, *Western Sahara*, 105.

Between 1966 and 1973 the General Assembly adopted seven resolutions supporting the right of self-determination of the Saharan people that were disregarded by Spain.³⁶⁷ Among them, the most remarkable is Resolution 2983 adopted in December 1972, that explicitly recognised for the first time the right of Western Sahara to independence. Until that date, this right was only considered in the context of its right to self-determination.³⁶⁸ This Resolution was the only one that Morocco voted against at the General Assembly among all concerning the question of Western Sahara.³⁶⁹

However, the conversations for the retrocession of Ifni began in 1968, being completely successful in 1969. According to Jaime de Piniés, it was not until the retrocession of Ifni that “we focused on the Sahara”.³⁷⁰ One should keep in mind that it was this same year of 1969 when Bassiri founded the MLS, so the Saharan nationalist movement did not have experienced any relevant movement since the Ifni-Saharan war back in 1958.

From 1969 to 1973 there was a period of repression of the Saharan nationalism by the Spanish forces. The most remarkable event turned out to be the clash in Zemla and the disappearance and latter murderer of Bassiri. With this strategy, the Spanish Government simply tried to delay the decolonisation and disregarded the recommendations of the United Nations. This situation changed when Franco wrote a letter granting the autonomy to Western Sahara in 1973.

4.3.4.2 Spain

Since February 1973 the *Djema* was asking for more autonomy for Western Sahara. Although this petition was not initially welcomed by the authorities of the dictatorship, on 21st of September of that same year a surprising turning point in Franco’s policy took place.³⁷¹ In a letter addressed to the *Djema*, the dictator committed himself to provide a statute of autonomy as a next step on the road to achieve independence which was requested by the UN’s General Assembly.³⁷² This statute, finally called “Political Statute” was approved by the *Djema* in July 1974. It transformed the assembly from a mere consultative body to a legislative chamber with legislative powers. Moreover, it created a Governing Council composed of seven members and presided by the Governor. Three of them were appointed by the Governor and four by the

³⁶⁷ Omar, “The right to self-determination and the indigenous people of Western Sahara”, 46-47.

³⁶⁸ Hodges, *Western Sahara*, 106.

³⁶⁹ General Assembly of the UN, *Report of the Special Committee*, 34.

³⁷⁰ Piniés, de, *La descolonización del Sáhara*, 16-17.

³⁷¹ Hodges, *Western Sahara*, 167.

³⁷² Francisco Franco Bahamonde, Letter to the “General Assembly of the Sahara” dated the 21st of September 1973. Published at the newspaper ABC seven days later.

<http://hemeroteca.abc.es/nav/Navigate.exe/hemeroteca/madrid/abc/1973/09/28/029.html>

Djemaa. The *Djemaa* was no longer appointed by the tribes, now forty of their members were chosen by the citizens and up to twelve by the governor.³⁷³

For being prepared for the new constitutional changes, the Francoist Spain created a party, the Progressive Revolutionary Party (PRP), later recalled *Partido de la Unión Nacional Saharaui* (PUNS, Party of the Saharan National Union) in November 1974.³⁷⁴ This party was – ironically – the only legal party in Spain back then alongside *La Falange*, Franco's party. It defended the independence of Western Sahara, which included the rejection of Moroccan and Mauritanian claims, and the maintenance of a special relationship with Spain after independence. Unfortunately, the Political Statute was never effectively implemented, the referendum of self-determination that was motivating all these reforms never was held and the PUNS disintegrated itself. Thus, the only relevant political actors that remained were the Polisario Front and Morocco and Mauritania.³⁷⁵

4.3.2.3 Morocco

After the retrocession of Ifni in 1969, the Moroccan irredentism felt strong enough for asking more territories belonging to the "Great Morocco". However, these aspirations had to face new challenges. First, in Western Sahara, the historical relevance of the Sultan was not clear. Moreover, the relationship of Morocco with the United States was not as positive as in the 1950s due to the support that the Arabic country gave to Palestine during the War of Yom Kippur (1973). On the contrary, the relationship between Spain and the US was quite harmonious, given that even the Americans wanted Spain to join NATO.³⁷⁶ In addition, Spain remained very good relations with the Arabic countries.³⁷⁷

Despite this, when Spain declared in August 1974 that it was ready to hold the referendum of self-determination in Western Sahara for the next year, King Hassan II (previously known as Prince Muley Hassan, enthroned as Hassan II after the death of his father, Muhammad V, in February 1961) rejected that independence could be an option at the prospective referendum.³⁷⁸ Morocco wanted to delay as much as possible the celebration of the referendum as Hassan II expected that the Spanish Head of State – Francisco Franco – could die in the short

³⁷³ Hodges, *Western Sahara*, 169.

³⁷⁴ Pazzanita and Hodges, *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*, 342.

³⁷⁵ Hodges, *Western Sahara*, 170-172.

³⁷⁶ Francisco José Rodrigo Luelmo, "La adhesión de la España democrática a la OTAN (1982)", *CVCE.eu* (July 2016), 2. http://www.cvce.eu/obj/la_adhesion_de_espana_a_la_otan-es-831ba342-0a7c-4ead-b35f-80fd52b01de9.html

³⁷⁷ López-Pozas, "África Occidental Española", 105

³⁷⁸ Omar, "The right to self-determination and the indigenous people of Western Sahara", 47.

term due to his advanced age. This situation would leave a power vacuum that could be advantageous for Morocco.³⁷⁹

Thus, the General Assembly, encouraged by Morocco and Mauritania, asked the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in December 1974 if the territory of Western Sahara was considered *terra nullius*³⁸⁰ before the Spanish colonisation. As precautionary measures, the Assembly postponed the referendum and requested the sending of a visiting mission for reporting the situation at the Saharan territory.³⁸¹

4.3.2.4 The Visiting Mission of 1975

From the 8th of May to the 14th of June 1975 this Mission visited Madrid, Western Sahara, Morocco, Algeria, and Mauritania.³⁸² Its final report contained remarkable findings. For instance, it reported the existence of refugee camps located in the zone of the former Southern Protectorate. According to this document, the refugees came from Western Sahara and were expelled from the territory because of expressing their support for Morocco. All the people interviewed supported the reintegration of this territory in Morocco, even three men that introduced themselves as the brothers of Bassiri.³⁸³

However, the situation that the Visiting Mission found at the refugee camp in Tindouf (Algeria) was completely different. There, the refugees expressed their rejection of the union with Morocco and its support for the Polisario Front.³⁸⁴ According to Jaime de Piniés, Simeon Aké – head of the Visiting Mission – the Moroccan government previously organised the situation at the Moroccan camps. He also came into the conclusion that most of the people interviewed were Moroccan people that were passing themselves off as Saharans.³⁸⁵

During the interview with the Moroccan Government, the Mission was told that the only question that they would agree with in a prospective referendum was: “Do you want to remain under the authority of Spain or to rejoin Morocco?”³⁸⁶

³⁷⁹ Ruiz Miguel, *El Sahara Occidental y España*, 168.

³⁸⁰ “Legal term of art employed in connection with ‘occupation’ as one of the accepted legal methods of acquiring sovereignty over territory”. It comes from the Latin and means territory belonging to no-one. John P. Grant and J. Craig Barker, “Colonial Protectorate”. In *Parry and Grant Encyclopaedic Dictionary of International Law*, 3rd Edition, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 596.

³⁸¹ General Assembly of the UN, Resolution A/RES/3292 (XXIX) [https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/3292\(XXIX\)](https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/3292(XXIX))

³⁸² General Assembly of the UN, *Report of the Special Committee*, 18-24.

³⁸³ *Ibidem*, 85-86, 90-91.

³⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, 95.

³⁸⁵ Piniés, de, *La descolonización del Sáhara*, 75.

³⁸⁶ General Assembly of the UN, *Report of the Special Committee*, 85.

Regarding Spain, the interviewed members of Government gave important information to the Mission about its future movements:

*“During its second series of discussions in Madrid, the Mission was told quite frankly that, if the situation on the border deteriorated, or if internal opposition to its continued presence in the Territory became such that it could no longer administer the Territory effectively or guarantee its security, the Spanish Government might consider withdrawing completely from the Territory without waiting for the referendum.”*³⁸⁷

The Mission also noted that the territory had not entered into the phase of self-government expected to precede independence, as the rules enacted by the Political Statute had not been implemented yet. Thus, no autonomy was granted to Western Sahara during the Spanish colonial rule.³⁸⁸

In general terms, the Mission affirmed that there was an “overwhelming consensus” in favour of independence among the people of Western Sahara.³⁸⁹ Although they reported minor manifestations of wishes to join Morocco.³⁹⁰



*Illustration 9: Federico Gómez de Salazar, last governor of the Province of Sahara (left) besides Simeon Aké (right) and the rest of the Visiting Mission at Western Sahara. Source: Luis Rodríguez de Viguri, “Despedidas vergonzosas” [“Shameful farewells”], *Historia 16*, No date, No. Extra IX, 79.*

³⁸⁷ General Assembly of the UN, *Report of the Special Committee*, 78.

³⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, 44.

³⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, 59.

³⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, 64.

4.3.2.5 Mauritania

Alla El Fassi's ideas of Great Morocco were spread in Mauritania by Horma Ould Babana³⁹¹ stating that this union with Morocco could strengthen the Maures (or Moorish, the ethnical majority of Mauritania, around 70% of the population)³⁹² in relation to the black minority (30%).³⁹³

For counteracting the effects of this speech, Moktar Ould Daddah – future president of independent Mauritania – was claiming to join the Sharan territory to Mauritania since 1957 by vindicating the cultural, religious and family links that shared both territories and introduced the concept of Greater Mauritania.³⁹⁴ It was true that Maures and Saharans shared numerous bonds, the ethnicity was the same and a lot of inhabitants crossed the border settling indifferently at one side or the other.³⁹⁵

Since the independence of Mauritania in 1960, the Saharan *status quo* under a colonial regime did not bother Mauritania as it served as a buffer zone that separated this country from Morocco and its annexationist ambitions.³⁹⁶ Hence, its policy regarding this Western Sahara tried to combine its own interests against the ones of Morocco.³⁹⁷

For that reason, it is possible to identify three Mauritanian policies regarding Western Sahara during this period that sought to keep away Morocco from the Mauritanian borderline. The first one was the claiming over the territory and the concept of Greater Mauritania, the second one was the acceptance of the colonial administration and finally, the support of the Saharan self-determination referendum.³⁹⁸ This third option expected that in the prospective referendum one of the options in the ballots could be to join Mauritania. Thus, emphasising the cultural and family links that both peoples shared, Saharans will be expected to opt for that option.³⁹⁹

1974 was the year when the geopolitics in the region changed and Mauritania and Morocco shifted from enemies to friends thanks to a secret agreement between Hassan II and Moktar Ould Daddah for sharing the Sahara.⁴⁰⁰ This agreement was motivated by the Mauritanian fears

³⁹¹ Baba Miské, *Front Polisario*, 52.

³⁹² Warner, "Chapter 1. Historical Setting", 50.

³⁹³ Ibidem, 28.

³⁹⁴ Hodges, *Western Sahara*, 100-101.

³⁹⁵ Warner, "Chapter 1. Historical Setting", 29.

³⁹⁶ Hodges, *Western Sahara*, 102.

³⁹⁷ Warner, "Chapter 1. Historical Setting", 29.

³⁹⁸ Hodges, *Western Sahara*, 102.

³⁹⁹ Warner, "Chapter 1. Historical Setting", 29.

⁴⁰⁰ Baba Miské, *Front Polisario*, 168.

of a prospective Spanish-Moroccan secret agreement that could hand over the Sahara to Morocco.⁴⁰¹

4.3.5 The Green March and the Tripartite Agreements of Madrid

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) reached a verdict on the 16th October 1975 – one day after the publication of the report of the Visiting Mission – denying any sovereign link between the Saharan territory and Morocco or Mauritania. Therefore, the Saharan people had the right to self-determination. Other delegations at the UN did public declarations in the same way as the ICJ like Mali, Malaysia, Upper Volta, Sudan or Ghana.⁴⁰² The sentence was very clear:

*“The Court’s conclusion is that the materials and information presented to it do not establish any tie of territorial sovereignty between the territory of Western Sahara and the Kingdom of Morocco or the Mauritanian entity. Thus the Court has not found legal ties of such a nature as might affect the application of resolution 1514 (XV) in the decolonization of Western Sahara and, in particular, of the principle of self-determination through the free and genuine expression of the will of the peoples of the Territory”.*⁴⁰³

After these two blows (the report of the Visiting Mission and the verdict of the ICJ), the King Hassan II announced – lying – that the international court was supporting Morocco and therefore, he was proceeding to reintegrate “his” Sahara⁴⁰⁴ by claiming only the religious links, the only ones that the Court recognised but only partially and over certain tribes.⁴⁰⁵ Morocco had given up about the claims in other territories and was only focusing on Western Sahara.⁴⁰⁶

Thus, the Monarch called through a message on radio and television to 350.000 civilian volunteers to march – unarmed – into the Saharan territory.⁴⁰⁷ The mission was being prepared two months in advance,⁴⁰⁸ but it was not known by the Polisario’s secret services despite being a well-known “secret” in Morocco⁴⁰⁹ although Spain was expecting an attack since the 7th of October.⁴¹⁰ The objective of this movement was to pressure the international community and to give media coverage to the Moroccan claims.

⁴⁰¹ Ruiz Miguel, *El Sahara Occidental y España*, 149.

⁴⁰² Ould Ismail Ould Es-Sweyih, “El primer Estado del Sáhara Occidental”, 20-21.

⁴⁰³ International Court of Justice, *Western Sahara, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 1975*, p. 12., 60 (paragraph 162).

⁴⁰⁴ Baba Miské, *Front Polisario*, 191

⁴⁰⁵ Dalmases, de, *Huracán sobre el Sáhara*, 187.

⁴⁰⁶ Omar, *The right to self determination*, 49.

⁴⁰⁷ Hodges, *Western Sahara*, 211.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibidem.

⁴⁰⁹ Dalmases, de, *Huracán sobre el Sáhara*, 187.

⁴¹⁰ “Public Library of US diplomacy,” Spanish Sahara, Wikileaks, accessed June 24th, 2019 https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1975MADRID06842_b.html

The 23rd of October Hassan II did a second intervention addressing to the Saharan people encouraging them to join Morocco. Back then, more than half a million Moroccans volunteered, and the management of the operation was complex.⁴¹¹

On the 31st of October, the Moroccan Army infiltrated into the Saharan territory six days before the official beginning of the March for scouting the Saharan territory.⁴¹² This march, called Green March after the holly colour of Islam,⁴¹³ moved close to the coast, together with different media, while the Army was penetrating the hinterland confronting itself against the Polisario guerrilla. The Spanish Army withdrew and ceded to the Moroccans the strongholds of Edchera, Haysa, and Mahbes.⁴¹⁴

Before the signature of the Madrid Agreements, the Spanish men began to withdraw the troops to El Aaiun while the Polisario and the Moroccan Army began the confrontations.⁴¹⁵ The Spanish soldiers received orders to completely withdraw except for the main cities (El Aaiun, Villa Cisneros and Smara).⁴¹⁶ In some cases, the Moroccan Army lasted only three minutes for occupying the quarters that the Spanish Army had just left.⁴¹⁷

In this context, the Saharan native population exiled itself into Algeria. During the clashes, the Moroccan Army bombed civil population that at that moment were – undoubtedly – Spanish citizens. This forced them to seek refuge in Algerian territory.⁴¹⁸

Following the “*Operación Golondrina*” – which is explained more in depth in the section 5.2.2 – the men and assets of the Army were moved to Villa Cisneros and to El Aaiun for abandoning the territory.⁴¹⁹

On the 14th of November 1975, the Moroccan, Mauritanian and Spanish governments met in Madrid for signing a secret agreement in which Spain ceded the territory of Western Sahara to the two African countries. According to this agreement, there would be a transitioning period that will end up in February 1976, when Spain should completely withdraw from the Sahara.⁴²⁰

⁴¹¹ Hodges, *Western Sahara*, 212-213.

⁴¹² Omar, *The right to self determination*, 49.

⁴¹³ Hodges, *Western Sahara*, 211.

⁴¹⁴ M’Beirik Ahmed Abdalahe, “El nacionalismo saharauí. De Zemla a la organización de la Unidad Africana” [“The Saharan nationalism. From Zemla to the organisation of the African Unity”], (PhD diss., Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 2015), 258.

⁴¹⁵ Lopez Pozas, “África Occidental Española”, 255.

⁴¹⁶ Baba Miské, *Front Polisario*, 202.

⁴¹⁷ Javier Eder, “La Legión española abandona el Sahara” [“The Spanish Legion withdraws from the Sahara”], YouTube, March 16th, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhKSqwRleWw>

⁴¹⁸ Ahmed Abdalahe, “El nacionalismo saharauí.”, 259.

⁴¹⁹ Lopez Pozas, “África Occidental Española”, 256.

⁴²⁰ Baba Miské, *Front Polisario*, 196-197.

In exchange, the European country received 35% of the phosphates that were produced in its former colony.⁴²¹

This agreement was considered illegal according to the International Law and it did not transfer the sovereignty of the territory to the other two new administrators.⁴²² The later president of the General Assembly, the Spanish diplomat Jaime de Piniés, regretted that the administration was not transferred to the UN, as the General Secretary of the moment had already drawn a plan after consulting the Security Council.⁴²³

The Spanish withdrawal from the political stage was the opportunity that the Polisario Front took for declaring the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) supported by Algeria. This situation gave room to a military confrontation that was over on 10th July 1978, when Mauritania rejected to continue administering the territory assigned at the Southern part of Western Sahara due to a military coup in its own country.⁴²⁴ However, after this withdrawn Mauritania preferred to allow Morocco to extend its power in Western Sahara instead of entrusting the administration of its part to the United Nations.⁴²⁵

4.3.6 Explanations of the Spanish behaviour

Linking this part of the research with the historiographical debate introduced at section 1.5.3, this research considers that the Spanish withdrew of the Saharan territory responded mainly to internal questions, although the international background had an important relevance too.

Since 1973, when General Franco granted a Political Statute to the Saharan people, the Spanish government was giving symptoms of being tired of controlling the Sahara. Moreover, the international pressures for finishing the colonial rule were increasing day after day. This granting of autonomy represented a clear willingness to finish the colony. We must take into account the significance that this gesture had in a country where different nationalist movements were taking place.⁴²⁶ However, the regime did not accept any kind of autonomy for them as it did in the Saharan case.

The mother country did not want to have more problems regarding the administration of that colony. Franco and his fellow veterans of the Civil War had enough time to assume that the

⁴²¹ Sidi M. Omar, "The right to self-determination and the indigenous people of Western Sahara", 49.

⁴²² Ibidem, 50.

⁴²³ Jaime de Piniés, *La descolonización del Sáhara: un tema sin concluir*, 12.

⁴²⁴ Mohamed Daadaoui, "The Western Sahara conflict: towards a constructivist approach to self-determination", *The Journal of North African Studies*, 13:2, (May 2008): 148-149.

⁴²⁵ Sayeh, *Les Sahraouis*, 56.

⁴²⁶ Thomas A. Marks, "Spanish Sahara – Background to conflict", *African Affairs*, Vol. 75, No. 298 (Jan. 1976), 11.

brave soldiers that fought alongside them will no longer be Spanish. That step was already given after losing the Protectorate of Morocco and Ifni, now it only mattered to say goodbye to Western Sahara keeping the honour and with the lesser interruptions for the issues at home.⁴²⁷

However, to begin a War against Morocco when Spain was facing enormous internal incertitude after Franco's death would have been a major interruption of these issues.⁴²⁸ Thus, Spain preferred to accept the shame that the Moroccan troops were marching over its colony and simply withdrew its responsibilities. Although this decision offended the Army⁴²⁹ and discarding the military confrontation was though,⁴³⁰ Prime Minister Arias Navarro decided to choose the least bad option.⁴³¹

Nonetheless, this attitude was encouraged because Spain did not find any international support for rebelling against the attack that Morocco was carrying out. Spain would have felt more confident if it had found any kind of willingness to face Morocco at the UN.⁴³²

Even the United States, considered for a long time the defender of the decolonisation of many countries, preferred to support Morocco than the positions championed by Spain and Algeria of defending independence.⁴³³ Under the American perspective, Western Sahara was better under the rule of the more reliable Morocco than as a satellite of pro-Socialist Algeria.⁴³⁴

In this context, Spain decided to get to safety to their – white – citizens and to abandon their Maghrebi compatriots to their fate.

⁴²⁷ "Public Library of US diplomacy," Spanish plans for Sahara, Wikileaks, accessed June 24th, 2019 https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1975MADRID07027_b.html

⁴²⁸ Piniés, de, *La descolonización del Sáhara*, 180.

⁴²⁹ Navarra Ordoño, "La arena y el remordimiento", 9.

⁴³⁰ "Public Library of US diplomacy," Spanish Sahara: Moroccan communication to GOS, Wikileaks, accessed June 24th, 2019 https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1975STATE264181_b.html

⁴³¹ Dalmases, de *Huracán sobre el Sáhara*, 191-192.

⁴³² "Public Library of US diplomacy," Spanish Sahara: Three-Way agreement reported, Wikileaks, accessed February 25, 2019, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1975MADRID07997_b.html

⁴³³ "Public Library of US diplomacy," Spanish Sahara: UN fourth committee meeting, Wikileaks, accessed June 24th, 2019 https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1975MADRID06841_b.html

⁴³⁴ José Carlos López-Pozas Lanuza, "África Occidental Española: La cuestión de soberanía y la retirada del Sahara" ["Spanish West Africa: The sovereign question and the withdrawal from Sahara"], 113-114.

CHAPTER 5: Memories of the social impact of decolonisation

5.1 Protectorate of Morocco

5.1.1 Seen by the indigenous people

This part of the research is devoted to the indigenous people and how they lived the process of turning from being under the Spanish rule to re-join their fellow nationals. Mourad Zarrouk provides a good summary of the social implications of the decolonisation when compared to the French counterpart:

“Both protectorates did not resemble each other, France was a power and Spain a semi-power, the French Protectorate was structural and well-organised as it had long-term objectives that went further beyond the independence. It is not possible to say that the Spanish Protectorate was provided by a vision since the beginning nor that it had the social structure at the spotlight. As proof of this, Spaniards did not leave in Morocco an elite for keeping their interests nor succeeded in settling the Spanish as a language of culture and schooling.”⁴³⁵

This failure in keeping the cultural links may have influenced the negative vision that the indigenous people have of the Spanish Protectorate. According to a survey taken by Abdelmajid Benjelloun in 1979 to inhabitants from the province of Nador, an 80% of surveyed people rated the Spanish colonialism and to the Spanish population in an unfavourable way, 13% had a moderate opinion and 8% rated it positively.⁴³⁶ This negative reminiscence can be explained by the existence of an institutionalised corruption and embezzlement of public money in the colony that only benefited to a privileged minority.⁴³⁷

The process of decolonisation of the Spanish part was not as studied as the French counterpart in an academic way. In fact, there is a deficit that is still present. However, the historiography from the 2000s and 2010s has done an incredible advance of the Spanish Protectorate and its postcolonial consequences, mainly in Arabic.⁴³⁸ In a broad sense, Moroccan scholars neither

⁴³⁵ Zarrouk, “Revisionismo y colonialismo en Marruecos: el nacimiento del nacionalismo, 50-51.

⁴³⁶ Abdelmajid Benjelloun, “L’image de l’Espagne et le nationalisme marocain dans le Maroc khalifien”, *Revue de la Faculté de Lettres de Tétouan*, No. 5, pp. 67-87 cited in Mimoun Aziza, “El protectorado español de marruecos (1912-1956) visto por los marroquíes” in *Ceuta y el protectorado español en Marruecos*, edited by Instituto de Estudios Ceutíes, 51-62. (Ceuta: Instituto de Estudios Ceutíes, 2009).

⁴³⁷ Madariaga, “Confrontation in the Spanish zone (1945-56)”, 499.

⁴³⁸ Mimoun Aziza, “Balance historiográfico de la bibliografía marroquí sobre la independencia de la zona norte, o Protectorado español de Marruecos” [“Historiographical assessment of the Moroccan bibliography about the independence of the North zone or Spanish Protectorate of Morocco”], in *España frente a la independencia de Marruecos*, Eloy Martín Corrales and Josep Pich i Mitjana (eds.), (Barcelona: Edicions Bellaterra, 2017), 387-389.

have a positive point of view of this period, being the most benevolent Abdelmajid Benjelloun.⁴³⁹ Although other authors like Mimoun Aziza can be considered in the same line as Benjelloun's.

According to Muhammad Ibn Azzuz Hakim – historian and witness of the Protectorate as a civil servant in different posts of the colonial administration – people did not live together during the Spanish Protectorate but lived in a “deep, healthy and with a deep correspondence way” underling the investment in infrastructures, health, and education. He remarks the efforts of Spain for Arabising the education by teaching certain subjects or allowing to choose one academic itinerary almost exclusively in that language. Moreover, he remarks the political independence that the Khalifan Makhzen enjoyed and remembers that the Northern Part was represented at the Arab League after being authorised by the Spanish Government.⁴⁴⁰

Most of the authors that have a negative point of view of the Protectorate wrote their impressions in Arabic. Examples of them are Boubakar Bouhadi, Ahmed M'hadra, Al-Marúan Mustapha or Ahmed Chaara.⁴⁴¹ A relevant institution that has produced a high number of researches about the two Protectorates that occupied Morocco under a critical perspective is the High Commissioner of Former Resistances and Members of the Liberation Army.⁴⁴²

What is clear is that after independence there was no wave of migration of the Moroccan citizens towards Spain. In fact, it was not until 1964 when the Spanish census began to record the Moroccan migration in a separate division, before that they were catalogued as “no country determined”. Despite this, the stream of people can be estimated in a few hundred people. In 1964, 410 Moroccans lived in Spain, less than 0,5% of the total foreign population.⁴⁴³

This lack of human flow towards the former mother country may be due to the little development of the former mother country in comparison to certain zones of Morocco like

⁴³⁹ Mimoun Aziza, "El protectorado español de marruecos (1912-1956) visto por los marroquíes" ["The Spanish Protectorate in Morocco (1912-1956) as seen by the Moroccans"] in *Ceuta y el protectorado español en Marruecos*, edited by Instituto de Estudios Ceutíes, (Ceuta: Instituto de Estudios Ceutíes, 2009), 51-62.

⁴⁴⁰ Muhammad Ibn Azzuz Hakim, "Reflexiones y recuerdos de la época del Protectorado" ["Reflections and memories from the Protectorate times"], in *Españoles en Marruecos 1900-2007: Historia y memoria popular de convivencia*, Oumama Aouad and Fatiha Benlabbah (coord.), (Rabat: Éditions & Impressions Bouregreg, 2008), 211-215.

⁴⁴¹ Aziza, "El protectorado español de marruecos (1912-1956) visto por los marroquíes", 51-62.

⁴⁴² Aziza, "Balance historiográfico de la bibliografía marroquí sobre la independencia de la zona norte, o Protectorado español de Marruecos", 390

It is possible to consult their webpage and their publications (in Arabic) here:

<http://www.hcar.gov.ma/publication/>

⁴⁴³ Instituto Nacional de Estadística [National Institute of Statistics], "Anuario estadístico de 1969" Extranjeros residentes en España, accessed May 25, 2019.

<http://www.ine.es/inebaseweb/pdfDispacher.do?td=181951&ext=.pdf>

Tangier, as it is explained in the next section.⁴⁴⁴ Moreover, the end of the colonial rule was not followed by a violent or unstable situation as happened in Western Sahara.

5.1.2 Seen by the Spanish people

In 1956, the year of the independence of Morocco, there were 143.412 Spanish citizens in Morocco, 63,41% of them lived in the Northern part, 2,44% at Ifni, 0,95% at the Southern part, 18,19% in the French Protectorate and 15% at the International Zone (Tangier), being approximately the 8% of the total census.⁴⁴⁵ Between 87 to 94% of them lived at the urban centres, especially in Tetuan and Larache, where they represented around one third of the population. There is little known about the origin of these settlers, although there are reports from 1942 that place their origins in Western Andalusia and the Mediterranean coast.⁴⁴⁶

Ifni is included in this section, as it was retroceded to Morocco and nowadays it is a city of this country. One year before the total retrocession of Sidi Ifni (1969), the city was composed of 5.662 indigenous people and 11.984 people catalogued as “Europeans”. Among these Europeans, most of them were related to the Spanish government being members of the Army, troops, civil servants or being the wives and children of these men. Thus, it could be concluded that most of them were Spanish citizens. The percentage of European people that did not work directly for the Government (including their wives and children) represented 5% of the European population.⁴⁴⁷

In general terms, the former residents of the Spanish Protectorate complaint about the social oblivion that their staying in Morocco seems to represent for Spanish history. This may be due to the absence of a traumatic decolonisation and independence process in Morocco given that in Spain the Protectorate was seen as a temporary situation by the Government. This pacific process – in which despite isolated cases, was driven in an ambience of total security – contrasts with the situation given in the French counterpart.⁴⁴⁸ It is required to remember that in the

⁴⁴⁴ Helena de Felipe and Fernando Rodríguez Mediano, “Españoles de Marruecos: la construcción de una identidad” [“Spaniards from Morocco: the construction of an identity”], in *Relaciones hispano-marroquíes: una vecindad en construcción*, Ana I. Planet and Fernando Ramos (eds.), (Madrid: Ediciones del Oriente y del Mediterráneo, 2006), 118-126.

⁴⁴⁵ Mohammed Dahiri, “La emigración española a Marruecos: 1836-1956” [“The Spanish emigration to Morocco: 1836-1956”] in in *El Protectorado español en Marruecos: La Historia trascendida. Vol. 1*. Dir. Manuel Aragón Reyes, Ed. & coord. Manuel Gahete Jurado (Bilbao: Iberdrola, 2012), 176.

⁴⁴⁶ Vicente González Pérez, “Descolonización y migraciones desde el África española (1956-1975)” [“Decolonisation and migrations from the Spanish Africa (1956-1975)”], *Investigaciones Geográficas*, No. 12 (1994), 70-75.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, 57-58.

⁴⁴⁸ Fernando R. Mediano and Helena de Felipe, “La memoria de los antiguos residentes españoles en el Protectorado” [“The memories of the former Spanish residents of the Protectorate”] in Fernando R. Mediano and Helena de Felipe *El protectorado español en Marruecos. Gestión colonial e identidades* (Madrid: CSIC, 2002), 219-221.

French Protectorate the LA was carrying out terrorist attacks against the colonial population at the moment of its decolonisation.

Although this was the final situation of the decolonisation, the people that experienced it did not have the same feelings. First of all, some of the Spanish settlers did not share the vision of temporality of the Protectorate and the sudden independence of Morocco was a shock for them. Others thought about the end of the Protectorate as an event that will take place in a far future. In any case, the independence gave room to a feeling of insecurity both physical and administrative.⁴⁴⁹

This situation gave room to a constant trickle of withdrawals from the territory. In 1968, there were only 44.554 Spanish citizens at the Kingdom of Morocco, dropping to 27.829 in 1970.⁴⁵⁰ Paradoxically, most of them lived in the former French Protectorate, being only 7.038 Spanish living in the former Spanish counterpart.⁴⁵¹ This remarks that most of the exodus came from the former Spanish zone. In 1970, only 14% of the Spanish citizens living in Morocco lived in Tetuan and only 9 at the recently evacuated city of Sidi Ifni. In 1980, only 10.094 Spanish people remained in Morocco as a whole, being 8.460 in 1986.⁴⁵²

The first in leaving were the civil servants, that were integrated into the Administration of the mother country.⁴⁵³ Little by little the rest of the Spaniards began to have the feeling that they had to get back to Spain and to adapt themselves to their new society.⁴⁵⁴

This returning process was encouraged by the Spanish Government, which began in 1962 to provide subsidies to the families that were leaving Morocco in what was known as “Plan Marruecos” (“Morocco Plan”). In 1963, 1.339 families demanded their repatriation, being 5.189 in 1965, when the subsidies reached their peak of 109 million pesetas. After that year, the demands of this public help decreased although they remained until 1969.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁴⁹ Mediano and de Felipe, “La memoria de los antiguos residentes españoles en el Protectorado”, 236-237.

⁴⁵⁰ Bernabé López García, “Españoles de Marruecos. Demografía de una historia compartida” [“Spaniards in Morocco. Demographics of a shared history”] in *Españoles en Marruecos 1900-2007: Historia y memoria popular de convivencia*, Oumama Aouad and Fatiha Benlabbah (coord.), (Rabat: Éditions & Impressions Bouregreg, 2008), 43-44.

⁴⁵¹ Vicente González Pérez, “Descolonización y migraciones desde el África española (1956-1975)”, 80.

⁴⁵² López García, “Españoles de Marruecos. Demografía de una historia compartida, 43-44.

⁴⁵³ Vicente González Pérez, “Descolonización y migraciones desde el África española (1956-1975)”, 77.

⁴⁵⁴ Felipe, de and Rodríguez Mediano, “Españoles de Marruecos: la construcción de una identidad”, 118.

⁴⁵⁵ Vicente González Pérez, “Descolonización y migraciones desde el África española (1956-1975)”, 79-80.

Most of the people that returned to Spain did not have where to go. Some of them went to their parent's regions, where they had some relatives, while others returned to Madrid, especially the civil servants. However, it was not normal to maintain any family link at the Iberian Peninsula.⁴⁵⁶ The integration was not easy due to the few information that most of the Spanish society had about the Protectorate and the Spaniards that lived there.⁴⁵⁷

The shock after returning to the mother country stood out for three characteristics. First, the well-being. The Protectorate did not experience the Civil War and the famines and scarcity that the post-war period brought at the mother country. Most of the Spaniards from Morocco had housekeepers and never saw the ration cards that were imposed in the mother country. Second, an open-mind vision of the world, tolerance, and respect for other cultures. For instance, it was possible to see women wearing bikinis at the beach, to drink Coca-Cola or to buy nylon-made fabrics in Tangier, something that was not common in Spain during the 1950s. Third, the feeling of uprooting, as they could not get back to the place where they were born and if they had, it would not be the same place that they left behind years ago.⁴⁵⁸

5.2 Western Sahara

5.2.1 Seen by the indigenous people

The first years after the Spanish withdrawn, Saharan memories are marked by the violations of the human rights that the Moroccan forces carried on in the territory. Attacks with napalm and white phosphor against the civil population – weapons banished by the international community – on top of the machine-gunning pushed the Saharan population to seek refuge at the Algerian territory.⁴⁵⁹

The ones that remained in Western Sahara felt constantly controlled, especially due to the constant curfews that took place. The origins of the Saharan resistance were inspired by the *Istiqlal*. The first insurrection took place in 1976, “when the last Spanish soldier left the city” and since then the resistance began.⁴⁶⁰ This period is marked by the long war that the Saharans had to fight against Morocco (1975-1991).⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁶ Mediano and de Felipe, “La memoria de los antiguos residentes españoles en el Protectorado”, 239-240.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibidem, 240.

⁴⁵⁸ Felipe, de and Rodríguez Mediano, “Españoles de Marruecos: la construcción de una identidad”, 118-126.

⁴⁵⁹ Ahmed Abdalahe, “El nacionalismo saharauí”, 279-280.

⁴⁶⁰ Claudia Barona Castañeda, “Memorias de una resistencia. La otra historia del Sáhara Occidental” [“Memories of a resistance. The other history of Western Sahara”], *Les Cahiers d’EMAM*, Vol. 24-25, (January 2015). <http://journals.openedition.org/emam/859>

⁴⁶¹ Sayeh, *Les Sahraouis*, 55-56.

For understanding how Saharan people recall the colonial period, Nadia Kroudo did fifty in-depth interviews with 50 men and woman that were born before 1965, lived alongside Spaniards in the former Spanish Saharan and were Saharan.⁴⁶² Around 33 of them defined the colonial period as “beautiful and better”. The author underlines that this statement may not have a logical sense as they lived in *jaimas* (tents) or shacks and most of the food that consumed was canned and there was a scarcity of water and fresh products. However, these living conditions could be better than the ones that enjoyed their ancestors and for that reason, they remember that past in a positive way.⁴⁶³ These affirmations remark the existing bias that all research based on oral history have. Besides this expected subjectivity, in these interviews, Kroudo herself recognises that there were Saharan nomads at the hinterland that barely had contact with the colonisers.⁴⁶⁴

In any case, Kroudo clusters the 50 interviewed in four categories. First, those who sympathise with the Spanish culture and the colonial era (18). They keep links with the former colonial power, especially through the media and the information of cultural and sports events that receive through it. Second, those who have good memories of the colonial period but decided to not pass on the Spanish language and culture to their children (15). They took this decision because they considered that under the Moroccan rule that language did not provide new career opportunities. The third group feels indifference to Spain and the colonial times (14) and sees Spain as a mere foreign country. Finally, the fourth category recalls Spain as a colonial power and therefore they feel aversion to it (3). They underlined the things that did not like about the colonisers.⁴⁶⁵

Regarding the last hours of the Spanish presence, most of the interviewees underline how the Spanish settlers turned more nervous and aggressive when the Green March was approaching and the shock that the curfew that the Spanish – and later the Moroccan – administration established produced to them.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶² Nadia Kroudo, “Al partir, un beso y una flor. La memoria de España en el Sáhara”, [“When departing, a kiss and a flower. The memory of Spain at the Sahara”], (PhD diss, Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 2015), 63.

⁴⁶³ Ibidem, 139.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibidem, 161-162.

⁴⁶⁵ Kroudo, “Al partir, un beso y una flor”, 140-143.

⁴⁶⁶ Kroudo, “Al partir, un beso y una flor”, 147-148.



Illustration 10: Drawing by Ahmed Ould Salem (12 y.o.) of the Madrid Agreements. In Djamila Olivesi, *Les enfants du Polisario* (Paris: Des Femmes, 1978).

5.2.2 Seen by the Spanish people

The census of 1970 reported 76.425 inhabitants at the Province of Western Sahara, 21,78% of them (16.648) were classified as “Europeans” that lived at the two main cities (El Aaiún or Villa Cisneros - Dakhla) in the 90% of cases.⁴⁶⁷ In 1974, this number reached 20.126 (27%) – not including the troops.⁴⁶⁸

Among this group, there were differences depending on the geographic origin, as in the people from the Canary Islands. These people occupied the lowest layers of the social hierarchy. In most of the cases they were not members of the Army, but civilians that performed unskilled jobs or ran small businesses like taxi drivers or shopkeepers. Saharans were aware of this social difference and the social interactions among these groups were more fluent and usual. They had similar occupations and lived in the same neighbourhoods at El Aaiun and Villa Cisneros and not in the houses reserved for the members of the Army (mainly Spaniards from the Iberian

⁴⁶⁷ Instituto Nacional de Estadística [National Institute of Statistics], “Anuario estadístico de 1975 (Censo de Población de la provincia del Sahara de 1970)”, accessed June 1, 2019.

<http://www.ine.es/inebaseweb/pdfDispacher.do?td=31901&ext=.pdf>

⁴⁶⁸ González Pérez, “Descolonización y migraciones desde el África española (1956-1975)”, 46.

Peninsula).⁴⁶⁹ In fact, more than one third of the Europeans that lived in 1967 in the Sahara were born in this archipelago.⁴⁷⁰

On the 13th of June 1975, the press from the Canary Islands reported the first exodus from Western Sahara due to the end of the school year and since 23rd of October, the Spanish national airline *Iberia* established two daily flights towards Madrid and Gran Canaria. The tension was every time more palpable in the territory.⁴⁷¹

On the 3rd of November – three days before the Green March began its walking – the Spanish Government introduced the *Operación Golondrina* (Operation swallow bird) that was expected to last until the 20th of that same month. Three vessels were in charge of moving people and goods daily to the harbour of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.⁴⁷² In that operation, all white Spanish civilians were obligated to abandon the territory except those working in essential services or in the phosphate industry.⁴⁷³

The civil evacuation was not considered concluded until the 14th of December, when the cadavers of the Spanish citizens buried at the cemetery of El Aaiun arrived at different harbours of the Canary Islands and the Iberian Peninsula. Some days before arrived the bodies of those who were buried at Villa Cisneros.⁴⁷⁴ Even the animals of the zoo at El Aaiun were sent to

⁴⁶⁹ Josefina Domínguez-Mujica, Beatriz Andreu-Mediero and Nadia Kroudo, “On the trail of social relations in the colonial Sahara: a postcolonial Reading”, *Social & Cultural Geography*, Vol. 19, No. 6, 750-751, DOI: 10.1080/14649365.2017.1304567.

⁴⁷⁰ González Pérez, “Descolonización y migraciones desde el África española (1956-1975)”, 48.

⁴⁷¹ Beatriz Andréu Mediero, “Presencia y retorno de canarios en el antiguo Sáhara español: 1975, la ‘Operación Golondrina’” [“Presence and return of Canarians at the former Spanish Sahara: 1975, the ‘Operation Swallow Bird’”], (XVII Conference of Canarian-American history, University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 2006), 62-63. <https://mdc.ulpgc.es/cdm/ref/collection/coloquios/id/1560>

⁴⁷² Ibidem, 63.

⁴⁷³ Hodges, *Western Sahara*, 218.

⁴⁷⁴ Andréu Mediero, “Presencia y retorno de canarios en el antiguo Sáhara español”, 65.

Almería, Andalusia.⁴⁷⁵ The *Operación Golondrina* finally came to an end the 13th of January 1976, when the last military convoy left Villa Cisneros and arrived at Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.⁴⁷⁶



El «Plus Ultra» evacua personal civil del Sáhara (noviembre de 1975)

The 14th of November, the Spanish Government passed a decree for helping economically the Spanish citizens that were abandoning the former Spanish Sahara. This subsidy included relocation allowances and assistances of 20.000 pesetas per worker and 5.000 per wife, child or dependent disable person and other measures like trip allowances.⁴⁷⁷

The returned people arrived at the Canary Islands, that were back then in a situation of numerous social and labour problems. As Carlos Ruiz Miguel explains, the shameful abandon of the Sahara gave room to a rise of the Canarian nationalism, that saw how Morocco could pressure Spain for getting the archipelago and its own State could adopt a similar withdrawal as it did in Sahara.⁴⁷⁸

Illustration 11: "Plus Ultra' evacuating civil staff from Sahara (November 1975)". Source: Luis Rodríguez de Viguri, "Despedidas vergonzosas" ["Shameful farewells"], Historia 16, No date, No. Extra IX, 79.

Moreover, the compensations lasted in

being payed and it was not until 1977 when the affected people began to receive the money or the promised social housing. Beatriz Andréu Mediero describes as an "avalanche" of Spanish

⁴⁷⁵ Hodges, *Western Sahara*, 218.

⁴⁷⁶ Andréu Mediero, "Presencia y retorno de canarios en el antiguo Sáhara español", 65.

⁴⁷⁷ Decreto 3120/1975, de 14 de noviembre, sobre medidas de ayuda a los españoles que trasladan su residencia de Sáhara al territorio nacional [Decree 3120/1975, of 26th of June about measures of help to the Spaniards that move their residence from Sahara to the national territory]

<https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/1975/11/28/pdfs/A24855-24855.pdf>

⁴⁷⁸ Ruiz Miguel, *El Sáhara Occidental y España*, 323.

people that arrived at the Canary Islands in general and at the city of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria in particular.⁴⁷⁹

However, we should take into account that there were around 76.000 white Spanish citizens at Western Sahara and probably not all of them remained at the Islands. For instance, most of them were members of the Army that came from the Iberian Peninsula, so they probably returned there.

Moreover, the census of the city of Las Palmas does not show a remarkable increase of population during the decade of the 1970s, as it went from 287.038 inhabitants in 1970 to 366.454 in 1981, continuing the normal population trend in the city.⁴⁸⁰ Of course, this enormous arrival of population could have impacted the city, but its numerical impact may be more difficult to determine.

⁴⁷⁹ Andréu Mediero, "Presencia y retorno de canarios en el antiguo Sáhara español", 67-68.

⁴⁸⁰ Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Alteraciones de los municipios en los Censos de Población desde 1842. [Alterations of the municipalities in the population census since 1842], Municipio 35016 (Palmas de Gran Canaria, Las). <http://www.ine.es/intercensal/intercensal.do>

CHAPTER 6: Conclusion

This research has explained why the decolonisation of the Spanish protectorate in Morocco was so soon in comparison with Western Sahara. This study has proved that Spain colonised *de facto* the Protectorate of Morocco a long time before the occupation of Western Sahara. Thus, while the first process began in 1912, the effective colonisation of Western Sahara took place in the 1930s.

Due to this later colonisation, the nationalist movement began earlier in Morocco as it had modern pro-independence movement since before the Second World War. In Western Sahara, this modern pro-independence movement only started in 1969. Moreover, the creation of a national identity was more complicated in Western Sahara than in Morocco due to the influence of the latter in the former.

In relation to the status of the colonies explained in the second and third chapters, it is possible to conclude that the victory of Franco's supporters after the Civil War and the way in which they used the Spanish History did that the process of *orientalisation* of the indigenous population had certain particularities. This clash broke away from the traditional way of othering that most of the European colonial powers followed and did that the Spanish *Africanismo* seemed more to the Portuguese colonial thesis.

This research has shown that the Protectorate was – as its own name indicates – a protectorate where the inhabitants did not have the Spanish but the Moroccan citizenship. Moreover, they were ruled by a dual administration in which the colonial and the indigenous administrations overlapped. In the Spanish Protectorate, at the top of this twofold system, there were respectively the High Commissioner and the Khalifa.

However, Western Sahara was ruled under a colonial administration that situated at its top a governor. This hierarchy was reinforced with the creation of the Spanish West Africa (SWA) in 1934 and deeply reformed with the provincialisation of 1958. Moreover, since that same year of 1958, Spanish citizenship was granted to all the free inhabitants of the colony (both in the province of Sahara and Sidi Ifni). This extended right allowed indigenous people to have better representation at the local and provincial institutions.

In order to better understand the socio-political situations which led these territories to independence, in the Moroccan case it is essential to take into account that a nationalist movement existed since the 1920s. However, after the Second World War – in the context of a general spreading of the pro-independence campaigns in the Maghreb countries – these demands took a new shape and larger strength. The events that were taking place in the French

colonial empire, like a prospective independence war in Algeria, favoured the independence of the French Protectorate.

Due to the international agreements that warranted the Spanish Protectorate and the general international situation, Spain could only follow the same pattern of its French counterpart. Thus, after the colonial powers withdrew from the territory in 1956, the new sovereign state of Morocco was born. Nonetheless, Spain tried to elongate its presence in the Southern part of its protectorate, but it had to return it to Morocco two years later.

The disappearance of Bassiri, a student engaged with the nationalist cause after a demonstration in 1970, is considered the main event that the modern Saharan nationalist movement had to face during its first years. These inner demands, together with the international pressures led by the United Nations, promoted the scheduling of a referendum for independence.

Nevertheless, the nationalist ambitions of the Northern neighbour of Morocco, in conjunction with the instable political situation of the mother country, provoked the Moroccan occupation of Western Sahara in 1975 with the Green March. This occupation took place first alongside Mauritania and later on only by Morocco itself and was backed by the signature of an agreement between Spain, Morocco, and Mauritania that did not fulfil the demands of the United Nations. Therefore, the end of the Spanish colonial rule gave room to a new colonisation of the territory and to an international conflict that is still unsolved.

Regarding the situation of the Spanish settlers and the indigenous population after the Spanish colonial rule, there were two different situations. In the Moroccan case, the indigenous population did not recall the Spanish rule positively. Moreover, the Spanish citizens that remained in Morocco did not have a main geographical origin and had the opportunity to gradually leave the territory.

On the contrary, the Saharan population remembers the Spanish departure as an anguished situation due to the war that broke out after the colonial withdrawal. Despite this, they see the colonial era in a positive way in general terms. The former settlers had to leave the territory hurriedly and most of them established themselves at the Canary Islands – where the majority originally came from – especially at the city of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. Those who were members of the Army or civil servants continued their careers where the Spanish Government required their services throughout the national territory.

To conclude, this research is linking two decolonisation processes that were more intertwined than initially expected. Most of the researches consulted have studied the colonial period or the decolonisation of both territories on its own. However, the main advantage of this research is that it provides a new point of comparative, an entangled view from which it is easier to realise the implications that the process of decolonisation of Morocco had in Western Sahara.

Furthermore, this master's thesis is shedding light on the situation of the indigenous people and the colonial settlers in both territories, what can provide relevant information about the differences in the conditions of living, treatment of the indigenous people and privileges of the settlers in one territory and in the other one. Given the fact that the administration of one was through a protectorate dependent on France and the other one was a colony, the implications that this legal difference had implied enormous consequences in the process of decolonisation.

There are different topics that could not been explained in this research, like the relations between colonisers and colonised, the miscegenation between the Spanish and Maghrebi culture, what happened with the population of mixed ancestry, any kind of gender analysis of the colonial settling (for instance, in Western Sahara most of the European population were member of the Army, thus, men), differences between the French and the Spanish Protectorate in Morocco among other topics. These appealing issues can be addressed by other researchers in the future.

However, this research has identified the origins of the claims that Morocco has over Western Sahara and the importance that the decolonisation had. Besides that, it lays bare that any kind of decolonisation can justify the violation of the Human Rights. The shameful withdrawn from Western Sahara still pricks the conscience of many Spaniards. That irresponsible behaviour is even more painful because it hurt its beloved Saharan people and because the aggressor that perpetrated the blow was its Moroccan brother.

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