



THE POSITION OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO ON THE WESTERN SAHARA ISSUE 1956-1974- A HISTORICAL STUDY

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Article history:	Abstract:
<p>Received: 10th May 2024 Accepted: 7th June 2024</p>	<p>There is no doubt that the Western Sahara issue is a negative result of the European (Spanish-French) colonial policies planned in the region, especially as the emergence of this issue coincided with the intensified competition among European colonial powers and the escalating conflict with Arab countries at the end of the nineteenth century. This was when Morocco faced attempts of colonial hegemony, through which these powers sought to carve out significant parts of its territory and exploit its strategic coastal borders towards different regions of the world, to serve their colonial interests in future stages. This led Spain and France to set aside their differences and divide the farthest regions of Morocco into spheres of influence and protection, enabling Spain to annex the Western Sahara due to its significant southern coastal presence on the Atlantic Ocean.</p> <p>Issue of the Research: There is no doubt that the Western Sahara region is an Arab issue due to a set of factors and motivations that have led to the inability to find suitable solutions for it, and the impactful repercussions it has on both the Arab and international situations. It has remained and continues to be a focal point of conflict among many of the Arab Maghreb countries due to the multiplicity of parties involved in the conflict. This has led us to choose the topic "The Position of the Kingdom of Morocco on the Western Sahara Issue 1956-1974", as the first period represents the position of the Kingdom of Morocco on the Western Sahara following its independence from Spanish-French protection, while the second period represents the decision of the International Court of Justice to determine the identity of the Western Sahara.</p> <p>The research is divided into three axes. The first axis provides a historical overview of the Western Sahara, while the second axis explains the Moroccan-Spanish conflict over the Western Sahara from 1956 to 1974. The third axis addresses the position of Moroccan political parties and blocs on the Western Sahara.</p>

Keywords: Western Sahara, Morocco, Spain, political parties.

FIRST: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF WESTERN SAHARA:

The origins and affiliations of the Berber tribes in Western Sahara can be traced back to Arab-Hamitic roots that migrated from the Arabian Peninsula and the Fertile Crescent to North Africa, where they settled due to environmental similarities with the Arabian Peninsula .⁽¹⁾

Islamic conquests from the Arabian Peninsula towards Africa and Europe reached the Arab Maghreb in 662 AD, led by the Arab commander Uqba ibn Nafi al-Fihri, who spread Islamic principles through various routes among these tribes. In 681 AD, Uqba ibn Nafi al-Fihri entered Western Sahara after conquering the Draa Valley and extending to the lands of the Red Hamra Oases (2), where he reached its water springs, and one of his descendants established a line of water wells stretching from Western Sahara to Mauritania (3).

The Islamic conquest of Morocco was not a military or economic colonization but rather a civilizational transformation (4), marking a turning point in the region's history and portraying a progressive image. This period witnessed the development of political, economic, and cultural relationships, as the components of society, including Arabs and Berbers, exercised their sovereignty over the region and established modern Islamic states such as the Almoravids and the Almohads between 1091-1223 AD, an extension of the Saadi state that preceded them in formation. These states were characterized by expansive political boundaries, organized commercial economy(5), transportation

routes, a strong defensive army, and internal political and economic life organization, The Western Sahara has been a subject of research as it is part of those countries that enjoy the role of a commercial passage and a caravan station that starts its movement from the south, passing through the desert and the coasts of the Atlantic Ocean, reaching the Draa Valley to the north of Morocco and Al-Andalus. Islamic modern cities were established along these routes, which became capitals of those countries, such as Fez, Constantine, and Kairouan (6), serving as nuclei for thought and culture across the vast territory stretching from Senegal to Al-Andalus. During the succession of ruling dynasties in Morocco, the Western Sahara remained a Moroccan region linked to the authorities in Morocco, which exercised their central authority over it, especially during times of war (7)

Morocco remained independent from Ottoman rule in neighboring Algeria, exercising strong influence over their territories from their sultans in Marrakech, which caused concern among the Europeans who sought to appease them against the Ottoman state. They prepared military campaigns to secure their borders and protect their trade routes across the Western Sahara and the Mediterranean coast. Sultan Al-Hasan I of Marrakech launched two military campaigns in 1882 and 1886 towards the Western Sahara coast, driving out the Europeans who had been making trade agreements with some Sahrawi tribal leaders and leaving a military garrison upon his return (8). European countries engaged in agreements with the sultan as the legitimate authority over all parts of his state (9). There was no political unity in the Western Sahara under the central authority of Morocco before the French-Spanish occupation of Morocco (10), and even after the Spanish occupation of the Western Sahara after 1884, the sultans of Marrakech supported the resistance movement against the occupation in the Western Sahara (11).

The European colonial attempts began to turn towards the countries of the Maghreb and North Africa in the period preceding the Muslims' departure from Andalusia in 1492 (12). This phase marked the beginning of the Arab-European conflict, which laid out its plans and policies for the post-reconquest phase of Andalusia, where its primary objectives focused on cutting off supplies and aid reaching Muslims from North Africa and occupying the coastal regions, which represented the Arab-Islamic leap towards Europe to secure European approaches from the danger of the Arabs returning to Spain (13), and for the purpose of controlling the Arab Maghreb countries with their strategic location and dominating their economic resources and natural wealth, which sustain capitalist industrial production activity, ensuring its continuity and development, and fragmenting the Arab unity of the Maghreb countries.

The Arab Mediterranean and Atlantic shores thus became the primary target for the ambitions of Spain, Portugal, France, Britain, and Italy. The beginning of this direction was Portugal's occupation of the Moroccan city of Ceuta in 1415, which served as the base from which the Muslims crossed the Strait of Gibraltar towards Europe in the Arab-Islamic conquests (14), subsequently, Spain turned to the occupation of the Canary Islands in 1476, making them a maritime launching point for its fleets off the front coasts of Western Sahara. The Portuguese arrived in the geographical exploration movement in 1436 to the shores of the Western Sahara and established points for movement towards the African depth in search of the slave trade, gold, and ivory. The Spanish joined them in descending on the Saharan coasts and establishing similar coastal centers, but they were not stable due to the changing regions they dealt with in their trade (15).

After the Muslim Arabs left Spain, the Spanish expanded their control over Melilla in 1497, Al-Araish, Al-Maamoura, and the island of Badis in 1507 (16). Portuguese and Spanish interests intersected in the regions of influence in Morocco and the Sahara, leading to agreement and understanding in the treaties of Alcáçovas in 1479 and the Treaty of Cintra in 1508, through which Spain obtained Ceuta and the Canary Islands in exchange for releasing Portugal's hand in occupying the shores of the Atlantic Morocco and the shores of Guinea, except for the region of Agadir, which Spain made a coastal station (17).

The Arab-European struggle continued until the 19th century when the French colonialism managed to occupy important parts of the Arab world. This included Algeria in 1830 and Tunisia in 1882. Competition intensified between the colonial powers in the Arab Maghreb, where Spanish forces landed in the Western Sahara region in 1887 to ensure their control of the territory. The Berlin Conference of 1884 granted Spain the colonization of the Western Sahara, while France secured control over Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania (18).

The Spanish presence in the Western Sahara remained limited to coastal areas due to the strong resistance from the Sahara inhabitants and their disputes with France, which expanded its influence from Senegal in the south to Morocco in the north through the Western Sahara. This led to numerous confrontations between the Spanish and the French, resulting in a series of bilateral agreements that defined the political borders of the Western Sahara (19).

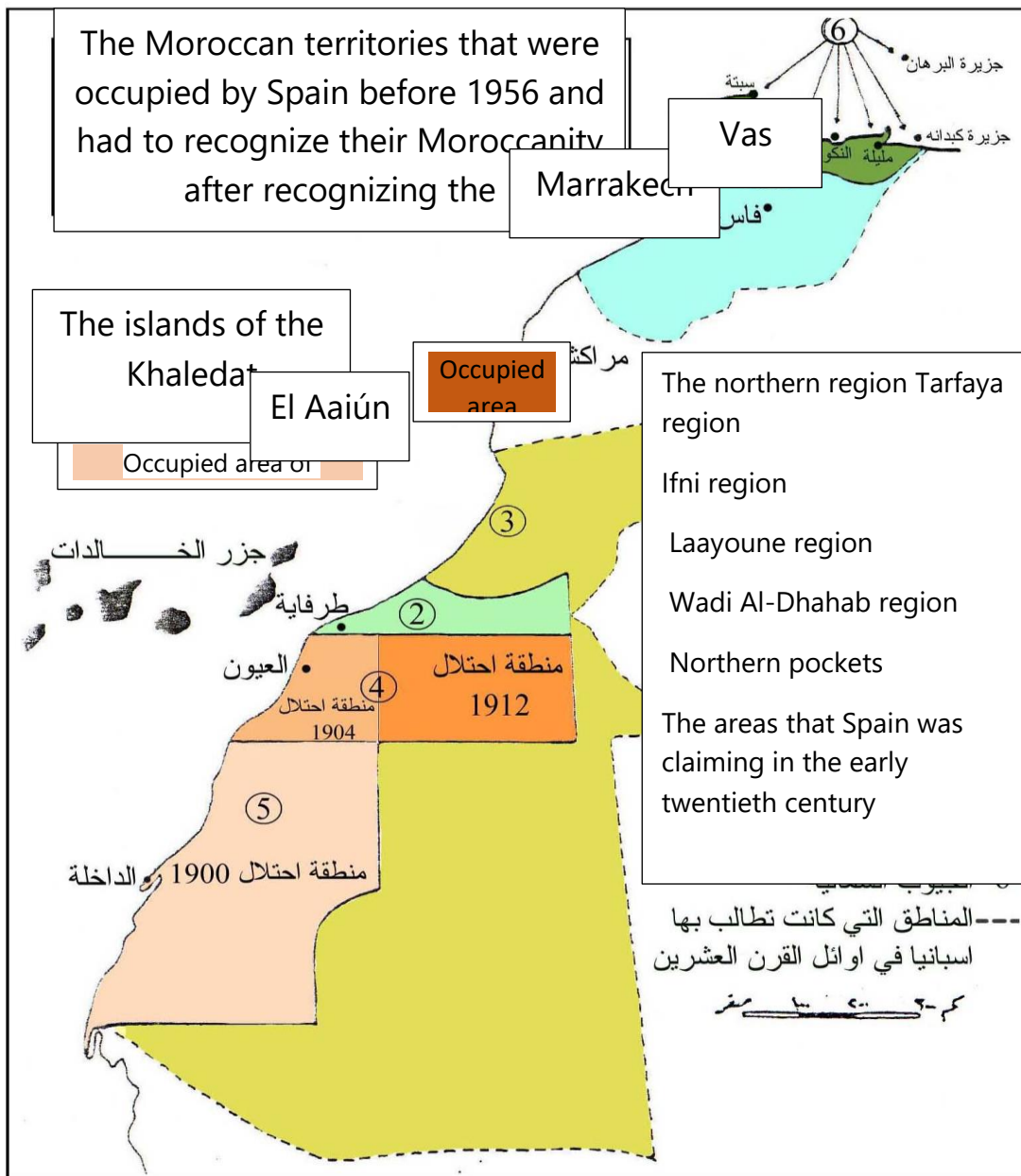
In this regard, the borders separating the Kingdom of Morocco from Western Sahara were established by a geometric line that extends straight with the lines of latitude through a desert region, based on Spanish-French agreements for the distribution of colonial spheres of influence after the Berlin Conference of 1884 (20).

The Spanish announcement at the Berlin Conference held in 1884-1885 indicated that Western Sahara would not have a distinct political existence, as Spain requested from European countries that it had carved out an area of influence on the Atlantic coast between the latitudes 15°, 20° and 8°, 6° North, without specifying the internal extent of that province, which raised the ire of France and created tension between them (21), leading to a series of agreements that designated Western Sahara as a region of Spanish influence.

1- 1900 Agreement (Beginning of Division): This is a Spanish-French agreement aimed at defining Spanish areas of influence, where the southern borders were set parallel to the 20°, 21° North latitude until it intersects with the 13° West longitude (22). However, the parties were unable to agree on the northern borders, which remained limited to the southern part of the desert (Wadi Al-Dahab) from the beginning. In 1902, an agreement was reached

between France and Spain to divide the remaining Moroccan territories and annex the southern regions of Morocco up to Cape Bojador (near Agadir) to Spanish influence, but this agreement was not implemented due to rejection by the Spanish Parliament (23).

Map No. (1)



المصدر : محمد أبن عزوز حكيم ، السيادة المغربية في الاقاليم الصحراوية من خلال الوثائق المخزنية ، الجزء الاول ، الدار البيضاء ، 1981، ص 25. وكذلك جمال زكريا وصلاح العقاد ، مشكلة الصحراء الاسبانية سابقا ، الدراسات الخاصة ، المنظمة العربية للتربية والثقافة والعلوم ، معهد البحوث والدراسات العربية ، 1978 ص 365.

2-The 1904 Agreement (Expansion of Spanish Influence): France and Spain agreed to define two areas of influence for Spain in Moroccan territories, one in the north and the other in the south. This agreement designated the Ifni region of Morocco and obligated Morocco to hand it over to Spain according to the terms of the Treaty of Tétouan concluded between them in 1860. Additionally, the Spanish influence was expanded northward in the region of Saguia el-Hamra, which extends from Cape Bojador to Cape Blanc, the northern area of Western Sahara whose eastern borders end (24). In this agreement, France and Spain committed to adhere to the declaration made by Britain and France to respect the unity of Moroccan territories under the sovereignty of the Sultan and to preserve it (25).

3 - The 1912 Agreement (Division of the Moroccan Kingdom): It is the French-Spanish protection agreement signed on November 27, 1912, which imposed protection on Morocco. The agreement divided Morocco into three parts: French Morocco in the middle, Spanish Morocco in the north and south (26). Spain occupied seven Moroccan

pockets in the early twentieth century, including Ceuta, Melilla, Western Sahara, the islands of Kbdana, Badis, and Buraqan. Spain controlled these areas militarily to pressure France to obtain extensive areas of influence in Morocco (27).

Arabic sources mention that the Spanish protection areas in northern and southern Morocco remained subject to the representative of the Moroccan sultan, as the latter appointed a deputy for the Western Sahara as a Moroccan province. The first decree to this effect was issued on December 22, 1917. Western Sahara remained the southern region of the Spanish protection over the Moroccan kingdom, and Spain was required to hand it over to the Sultan of Morocco after its independence in 1956 (28).

These border treaties were not defined by agreements between the countries concerned, such as the Kingdom of Morocco and its Arab neighbors, for example, which opened the door to claims and historical rights despite being modern, but with unclear boundaries, like many other Arab borders that have led to Arab conflicts and are subject to questioning their credibility as they represent artificial divisions between entities belonging to one nation (29).

Secondly, the policy of division practiced by Spain and France in Morocco aims to fragment the fighting capacity of its people and prevent them from achieving their goals of liberation and unity, keeping them weak and subservient to colonial powers and their capitalist companies that exploit its economic potential.

Secondly: The Moroccan-Spanish conflict over Western Sahara 1956-1974:

The Kingdom of Morocco's claim to the Western Sahara region is based on a set of factors it seeks to achieve through the reclamation of the Sahrawi territory.

- 1- Confirmation of the historical rights that consider Western Sahara as part of its southern regions (30), which form its geographical unity that was divided by the Spanish and French colonization during their occupation of Morocco. Therefore, it seeks to reclaim it as part of the homeland.
- 2- The official political consensus of the Kingdom of Morocco with the political consensus of the Moroccan parties, which constitutes a consensus of the national political history that considers the issue of Western Sahara as a slogan and a goal to fight for its recovery and liberation from Spanish colonization.
- 3- Adding a strategic depth to the Kingdom of Morocco extending to its south with the coasts of the Atlantic Ocean in the depth of the African continent, forming a link between it and northern Mauritania, and connecting the Kingdom with sub-Saharan Africa.
- 4- The containment of Western Sahara with significant economic resources, especially phosphates (31), in addition to the fish wealth for which the coasts of Western Sahara are known.
- 5- The recovery of Western Sahara by the Kingdom of Morocco means an increase in the capacity to accommodate the population, as well as providing employment opportunities for the unemployed workforce, creating areas and opportunities to achieve a balance between the population of the Kingdom of Morocco and the area of the Sahara and its economic resources (32).
- 6- Stopping the Algerian aspirations to reach the coasts of the Atlantic Ocean south of the Kingdom of Morocco by establishing an independent state in the Western Sahara region, in which Algeria would have influence in exchange for its support of the Polisario Front.

After the Kingdom of Morocco gained its independence in 1956, it expected Spain to return its occupied territories in the north, including Ceuta and Melilla, and in the south, the region of Ifni and Tarfaya, as well as Western Sahara. However, Spain continued to occupy those territories, except for the region of Tarfaya, which it handed over to Morocco, claiming that the Sahara is historically Spanish territory and that its inhabitants are Spanish, and that Morocco has no right to claim it (33).

In 1957, the Moroccan Liberation Army fought fierce battles against the Spanish in Ifni and Western Sahara supported by the Sahrawi tribes loyal to Morocco, causing the Spanish army to retreat towards the coasts after losing their bases inland (34). This almost led to strategic changes in the region if it weren't for the joint Spanish-French alliance, which deployed military forces from Mauritania and Western Sahara in a large campaign against the Moroccan Liberation Army, known as "Al-Maknasa," representing a defeat for the Liberation Army and its expulsion from Western Sahara (35). After that, Spain began to pursue a policy of annexation, known as "Hispanization" of Western Sahara, considering it a Spanish territory. It relied on a policy of displacement and migration, issuing a law in 1960 granting Spanish nationality to the inhabitants of Western Sahara and establishing residential settlements for its citizens to oppress the native population, leading to the emigration of more than 50,000 people to neighboring countries and the Canary Islands. Spain also increased its military forces to approximately 70,000 soldiers, the number of soldiers should be proportional to the population at a ratio of 1:1 according to their population statistics for the year 1974 (36).

Morocco and Spain are in a geopolitical conflict, as Spain sees the policies of the Moroccan kingdom as a threat to its colonial heritage in Morocco and its economic resources. Morocco seeks to achieve its goals in the Great Morocco project. When Spain was nearing its departure from Western Sahara, it reached an agreement with the Moroccan kingdom and Mauritania in the Madrid Treaty to divide the Sahrawi region between Morocco and Mauritania, with each claiming it in return for guaranteeing Spain's economic rights (37).

Thus, it becomes clear that the former colonial powers are clinging to their spheres of influence and their sources of funding represented by the old colonial areas.

The experience of ancient colonialism played by the old English, French, Spanish, and other empires has gone through many stages, practicing different forms of control, including
-Stage of exploration

- Stage of military occupation and looting of resources.
- Stage of economic colonization.
- Stage of military withdrawal and the cultivation of alternative represented by the governing systems associated with it.
- The policy of using the Arab nation as a dual market for raw materials and for industrial products is a continuous policy in various forms.

Thirdly: The position of Moroccan parties and political blocs on Western Sahara:

The public opinion in the Kingdom of Morocco is represented by the organizations and political parties that express the aspirations of the masses, despite the differences in ideologies, roles, and historical backgrounds of the political parties. Each party's formation is based on a specific experience that has shaped its characteristics and positions towards the political arena, especially the leading parties that were established during the colonial era and were either prohibited or semi-prohibited (38), as they worked towards independence. In general, Moroccan political parties can be classified into two categories: conservative and progressive leftist parties, as well as centrist parties. We will review their stance on the issue of Western Sahara, as it is an Arab issue before being a Moroccan one, in order to distinguish between the official Moroccan political discourse representing the government and the public opinion representing the people. The Western Sahara issue is directly related to the independence and geographical unity of Morocco, which is expressed through the Moroccan territorial integrity that emerged after the independence agreements between the Kingdom of Morocco and France in 1956, and between Spain and the Kingdom in the same year, when France, under that agreement, cut off Mauritania and the Tindouf region from the Eastern Moroccan Sahara, Spain retained its colonies in Ceuta, Melilla, the Jafar Islands in the north, Tarfaya, Ifni, the Red Hamra, and Wadi Al-Dhahab (Western Sahara) in the south, creating a clear vision and a specific political position for the national parties and forces on that issue. See Table (1).

Rep	The political mass	Its position on the Western Sahara issue
1	The Independence Party	The Western Sahara is Moroccan land and Morocco's independence cannot be achieved without reclaiming it.
2	The Party of Progress and Socialism	A comprehensive liberation battle must be fought to reclaim the Western Sahara.
3	The National Union of Popular Forces	The Western Sahara is the issue of all the Moroccan people.
4	The Socialist Union of Popular Forces	The Western Sahara is part of the Moroccan national territory
5	The Moroccan left	The Sahara is an integral part of Morocco.

Table (1)

Position of Moroccan parties and political blocs on the issue of Western Sahara (39)

In light of this, there are three main goals that unite the Moroccan national movements, which are (40):

1. Achieving Moroccan unity and liberating the lands that were cut off from it during the French-Spanish occupation, including Mauritania, which was under French colonial rule, as it is a natural and historical extension of it and the Western Sahara, which was under Spanish occupation.
- 2- Achieving the unity of the Arab Maghreb.
- 3- Building a strong economy based on agriculture and industry and building true democracy.

A-The Independence Party

The Independence Party is the oldest Moroccan political party founded in 1943 during the struggle against colonization to regain Morocco's independence from French colonization (41), and to preserve Moroccan cultural and political identity, which was affected by French policies. It is a political party with an Islamic and nationalist ideology, influenced by the ideas of the Islamic Salafi leader Allal al-Fassi, who opposed the French administration's plan to divide Moroccan territory. France sought to establish an independent Berber state in the Moroccan Rif region (42). The party sought independence, liberation, and fought for the unity of Moroccan territory, supporting Arab national security policies as evident in the party's political discourse. This became clear after the independence of the Kingdom of Morocco in 1956, when the party's Secretary-General expressed that independence was incomplete until Western Sahara returned to the homeland, as well as the Moroccan-Algerian borders, especially the Tindouf region, which France separated from Morocco and annexed to Algeria (43).

The position of the Independence Party towards Western Sahara is the result of the historical background of the party, which established its organizations in Western Sahara in Tarfaya, Laayoune, Dakhla, and Smara since the 1940s. It resisted and confronted Spanish colonization when it attempted to divide Western Sahara into several regions and practice Spanish policies of assimilation and annexation, granting Spanish citizenship to the population between 1949-1950. The confrontation and resistance of the Independence Party to Spanish policies reached its peak and thwarted those plans that were part of multiple political projects witnessed by the political scene of Western Sahara in the early 1970s. This includes

1. The increase in the exploitation of mineral resources in Western Sahara by the Spanish colonialism and foreign companies, especially phosphates.
2. Spain's determination to establish an independent state in Western Sahara.
3. The emergence of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro.
4. The policy of neighboring countries towards Western Sahara, especially Algeria and Mauritania (44).

Therefore, the issue of Western Sahara became a top priority for the Independence Party in its conferences and decisions. This policy continued after the death of the party's leader, which was the non-acceptance of solutions without the return of Western Sahara to the kingdom. The issue of the referendum and self-determination for the people of the desert has surpassed history and become irrelevant (45).

The Independence Party and its leader, Allal al-Fassi, played a significant role in the Greater Morocco project, which embodies the state of Arab-Berber popular resistance to Spanish and French colonization that began with the early stages of occupation and continued until the liberation of the multi-identity Moroccan kingdom. This project was a common denominator for all political parties and their leaders. The leader of the Independence Party published this project in 1955 when he was in exile in Cairo, and its federalist

- 1- The call for unity and resistance against the fragmentation of the Arab-Asian Mashreq from the Arab-African Maghreb (46), and the establishment of a geographical unity for the Greater Arab Maghreb on the historical background of the Almoravid Empire extending from Senegal to Castile and from Barka to the Atlantic and towards the Nile Basin in Egypt (47).
- 2- Al-Alal Al-Fassi's call for unity gained a national and Islamic character calling for unity against colonialism and foreign occupation (48).
- 3- The call for unity emphasized moving away from the policy of axes and neutrality, and strengthening Arab unity without Eastern or Western blocs, as Arab-Arab conflicts are foreign conflicts in which Arabs are used (49).
- 4- The call for unification considered unity as an internal social bond to meld the components of society and create a cultural framework for them in a comprehensive view of ethnic and racial components (50), and it is a comprehensive view of the ethnic and racial components of non-Arabs such as Berbers and Blacks.
- 5- The call of Greater Morocco affirmed the reality of the union that suits the differences and characteristics that characterize the countries and the circumstances of each (51).

However, the outbreak of the Western Sahara issue led to the creation of national consensus on the completion of Moroccan territorial unity (52), which was divided by colonial occupation. This consensus gained popularity and acceptance among various segments of society, prompting the Moroccan government to accept these ideas and legitimize them in order to attract popular consensus to support the government's demand for the Moroccan territories under occupation and to form a strong state to confront European ambitions in the Arab Maghreb (53).

This government ideology is an attempt to rebuild what colonialism had divided after the state of the Almoravids, which the French and Spanish established their colonies in the North African region, including Ceuta, Melilla, Ifni, Tarfaya, Western Sahara, Mauritania, and part of Algeria and Mali, all the way to the Senegal River, a geographical unit supported by historical facts from a Moroccan government perspective that contradicted the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which ignored the unity of Moroccan territory, making this idea conflicting with the Arab, African, and global neighboring policies. On the other hand, the movement towards the convergence of the Arab Maghreb countries and their political and economic union in possible forms is considered a necessary and important issue in the future of these multiple entities, as fragmentation weakens the ability to achieve national interests, especially since the modern era is an era of economic and political blocs that have become the basic guarantees for development and for ensuring political and economic sovereignty, while at the same time being a means to ensure a policy of acceptance from abroad towards them based on mutual understanding to ensure mutual interests and to stop the policy

of greed of the colonial powers towards the small entities they imposed in the past when they implemented the well-known divide and rule policy, especially towards the Arab world.

B-The Party of Progress and Socialism

was founded in 1943 against the backdrop of the Moroccan Communist Party, and it sought to find its place within the Moroccan political landscape. It faced bans from the French colonial authorities and the Moroccan government until it was allowed to gain legitimacy in 1974 due to the Moroccan national policy regarding the completion of Moroccan territorial integrity (54).

The party is based on a broad base of workers, employees, students, farmers, and other social classes. It derives its policies from the scientific socialist ideology within the general framework of the traditions of the Moroccan people and the Arab-Islamic heritage. It aims to defend Morocco's political and economic independence, defend the unity of Moroccan territory, and achieve the unity of the Arab Maghreb, and his position on the issue of Western Sahara, after obtaining approval for open political action, he decided to use all his political efforts in the battle to liberate Moroccan territories from Spanish occupation, including Sakia El Hamra, Oued Ed-Dahab, Sebta, Melilla, and the Jafar Islands, and to stand against the attempts of colonialism to undermine the unity of Moroccan territory (55).

C-The National Union of Popular Forces

The National Union of Popular Forces was founded in 1959 after a split from the Independence Party. It went through corrective movements during its political journey, and its separation came about due to the freezing of the Moroccan Liberation Army and its disarmament, while the party believed in continuing the liberation war because its ideology aimed to defend the unity and complete independence of Moroccan territory and achieve the unity of the Arab Maghreb within the scope of Arab brotherhood⁽⁵⁶⁾.

The party is based on a popular base of farmers, workers, students, and intellectuals. The party sees the issue of the Sahara as a matter of all Moroccans and a matter of liberation from colonization, as every Moroccan adheres to the unity of their national territory, and since the Sahara is Moroccan, the most peaceful solution to that problem passes through Moroccan unity, which ends the disputes between Morocco and Algeria.

D- The Socialist Union of Popular Forces Party

It is one of the parties that emerged from a corrective movement of the National Union of Popular Forces in 1972 to form one of the most important opposition parties in the Moroccan political arena (57), it has a history of struggle for democracy and has a broad base of educated elites in the Moroccan people who believe in the power of the working class and the transformation of workers' struggle into a revolutionary political struggle. His position on the Sahara issue is clear, as the party issued a statement in 1974 stating that an independent state should not be established on the land of the Moroccan Sahara. This requires raising public awareness and clarifying the dimensions of the Spanish occupation of Moroccan territories. The government plays a crucial role in international forums to reclaim the occupied territories and prepare for a comprehensive liberation battle, as he emphasized in subsequent conferences the unity of Moroccan territory (58).

E-The position of the Moroccan left

The position of the Moroccan political left does not differ from the general direction of Moroccan parties and political currents towards the issue of Western Sahara, despite the differences in ideology and the relationship of the parties to the authorities and the circumstances of their emergence, most of which have been subjected to corrective situations due to their positions on colonialism or the ruling system. Although public opinion remains convergent or almost takes a unified stance, the Moroccan Marxist movement believes that the entire occupied territory must be liberated, and it believes that the isolation of the Sahara from the kingdom is for the purpose of using it as a Spanish military base to strike the liberation movements in the western Mediterranean⁽⁵⁹⁾.

The Moroccan left believes that the Sahara is an integral part of Morocco, and that the history of the Sahara is inseparable from the history of Morocco, and that Spain's goal is to divide Morocco.

Through analyzing the vision of the Moroccan parties on the issue of the Sahara, we find that they have all united in various directions in the face of the issue of Western Sahara, or they have participated with the authorities in a national consensus on the annexation of Western Sahara and the completion of the Moroccan geographical unity (60).

Despite the recovery of Western Sahara, which was a fundamental political program in the programs of all components of the Moroccan national movement and in its strategic frameworks based on completing the unity of the Moroccan Kingdom, which was divided by colonization, it showed high flexibility in the mid-1970s based on diagnosing the danger it faces, as it gathered in rejecting the establishment of any separatist state in Western Sahara (61).

And what the experience of colonial countries in the Arab countries has proven is that they have developed political influence relationships with entities and political blocs operating in the Arab arena, and have been able to control different levels of the political positions of those blocs. Therefore, the issue of political democracy, which focuses on achieving the will of the people through free and fair elections that ensure the establishment of parliamentary and legislative councils, has become one of the fundamental issues that ensure sovereignty and national security, and provide an opportunity to block the pathways and outlets for hidden political influence, which plays a role in implementing colonial directives through security penetration sites of entities, parties, and political blocs.

THE CONCLUSION:

It is clear from the foregoing in this brief research that Spain's strategy aims not to have a strong Arab state with its natural and human resources next to it after the Muslims left the Iberian Peninsula. Therefore, it resorted to controlling the Kingdom of Morocco in cooperation with France during the colonial occupation of the Arab Maghreb. It

divided it into regions and turned its unity into conflicting parts, and it still controls some of its territories in Ceuta and Melilla so that it does not enjoy the advantages of its strategic location overlooking the entrances to the Mediterranean Sea. There is no doubt that the issue of Western Sahara is a European colonial legacy that has created a state of contradictions and conflicts among the countries of the Arab Maghreb to preserve Western strategic interests in the region and to entrench the state of fragmentation and prevent Arab tendencies towards any form of Arab unity.

"The vast natural resources found in Western Sahara, especially phosphates, uranium, and rich fishing waters, have given it strategic importance, making it a center of attraction for Arab and foreign powers.

The Arab conflict over Western Sahara, with Arabs fighting each other for their interests and forgetting principles, resorting to Western foreign powers, and dragging them to establish military bases and naval fleets, has turned the Arab Maghreb into a focal point of tension and a battleground for foreign powers on Arab land, which constitutes a violation and threat to Arab national security at all levels.

Meanwhile, the fate and future of the people of Western Sahara are linked to the policies of Arab ruling systems and their ideological differences. The Polisario movement, the sole representative of the people of Western Sahara, is linked to the Algerian government to affirm its allegiance and harmonize its policies and decisions with the orientations of Algeria and Libya, making the Sahrawi people victims of the conflict among Arab regimes, which have failed to resolve their differences, leaving the Sahrawi people displaced in refugee camps."

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