

The Impacts of the Western Sahara Issue on the Algeria-Morocco Relation and the Maghreb 2010-2015

أ. ياسمين أعراب، باحثة دكتوراه بجامعة الجزائر-3-

arab_yasmine@outlook.fr

ملخص :

تعتبر قضية الصحراء الغربية، إحدى أبرز مبررات غياب منظومة تكاملية مغاربية، إذ عدا هذا الواقع أحد المخرجات السياسية للنزاع، إذ أنها تعتبر السبب الرئيسي لتدهور العلاقات بين أكبر دولتين في النسق الإقليمي، الجزائر والمغرب، وبتأثيرها على هذه العلاقات فإنها تؤثر على النسق أجمع، تستعرض هذه الدراسة الخلفيات التاريخية للقضية، وتبحث في جذور الخلاف الجزائري المغربي حولها، من خلال تبيان الأهمية الجيوسياسية للصحراء الغربية، واستعراض العوامل المؤدية لإطالة عمر النزاع كالموارد والسكان، ثم محركات الاهتمام الجزائري والمغربي بها باعتبارها تستهدف الإجابة على السؤال الآتي : إلى أي مدى تؤثر قضية الصحراء الغربية على العلاقات الجزائرية المغربية ومن خلالها على احتمال قيام الوحدة المغربية؟ وتقوم الدراسة على افتراض أن قضية الصحراء الغربية، تؤثر على علاقات البلدين على جميع الأصعدة : سياسيا، أمنيا، اقتصاديا واجتماعيا، وحتى قيميا ، كما تفترض أيضا أن قضية الصحراء الغربية هي المعيق الرئيسي لاتحاد المغرب العربي، وتعتبر ذلك أحد الآثار السياسية للنزاع على العلاقات الجزائرية المغربية.

الكلمات المفتاحية : الصحراء الغربية، العلاقات الجزائرية المغربية، المغرب العربي.

Abstract:

The Western Sahara issue is considered, as one of the main arguments for the absence of a Maghreb region integration organism, as this fact became one of the political outcomes of the conflict, that is viewed as the fundamental reason of the deteriorated relationship between the two biggest states of the regional system, and as it affects these two countries, it affects the whole region. The study explores the historical background of the conflict, and investigates the roots of Algerian-Moroccan disagreement over it, through the description of the geopolitical importance of the Sahrawi territories, and the demonstration of the factors contributing to the extension of the conflict duration such as the resources and the population, then the Algerian and the Moroccan motivations shaping their positions toward the issue. The paper attempts to answer the following question: To what extent does the Western Sahara issue affect the relationship between Algiers and Rabat? And how does that affect the Maghreb region integration process? It assumes that the Western Sahara Issue is affecting the two countries relations on several aspects: Political, Security, Socio-economic and even affecting their societal scale of value and by doing so, it is the main disruptive to the Arab Maghreb Union, and considers that as one of the political impacts of the issue.

Key words: Western Sahara Issue, Algeria- Morocco Relations, Arab Maghreb.

Introduction:

From November 05th, 1975 to November 05th, 2016; 41 years have passed since the Moroccan king Hassan II launched the so-called "the Green March": a massive popular demonstration in which he invaded the newly independent territory of "Western sahara". Today, these territories remain the last colony in the African continent. The conflict seems to be neglected by the international community; giving somehow a chance to the Moroccan government to advertise that the United-States; Europe and other major players in the international scene are supporting his hypothesis claiming the Sahrawi territories as a part of the historical grand morocco¹.

In addition to the two main opponents: Morocco and Western Sahara; the majority of lectures and scholars assume that Algeria is the third part of the conflict; although it does not have any territorial claims. In fact, there is a hidden rivalry over the supremacy over the Maghreb region between Algeria and Morocco (Jacob MUNDI); mainly the issue is affecting the relationship between the two countries on political, economic and military cooperation levels; by doing so; it has also curbed the process of the regional integration process UMA since 1989.

However, Problems between the "Brothers – enemies" started before the invasion of the Western Sahara; exactly in 1963; one year after the Algerian independence with the sand war; caused by the Moroccan territorial claims in Algeria. Which lead us to ask: To what extent does the Western Sahara issue affect the relationship between Algiers and Rabat? Is it really the unique factor that determines the nature of this relationship? And what are the real motivations of both countries toward this issue?

- *The Western Sahara issue: a historical back ground.*

✓ **The geopolitical importance of the Western Sahara territories.**

In order to understand any interaction within the International system; we need to place it inside its historical and geographic context. Thus the paper tries to dismantle the issue by using the historical and geopolitical approaches, to clarify the importance of its territories and the historical roots of the conflicts; besides using the juridical approach to test the justice of the Sahraouian claims for auto-determination.

1- *The Location and Natural Resources: a source of challenges and a pillar of the conflict?*

Western Sahara ; Known historically as " El Saguia Elhamra y Rio de Oro", called after the Moroccan colonization 'The Moroccan Sahara'; is located in northwestern Africa; bordered to the north by morocco; to the south by the Islamic Republic of Mauritania ; to the east by Algeria and from the west it has 1400 km² of coast on the Atlantic ocean. According to the Atlas geography, its land area is about 266.000 km² (Moroccan council 2013 report); other sources assert that its original

land area is about 364.000 Km² before the annexation of Tarfaia region to the Moroccan monarchy in 1958 (لخضر سفير). It, also, represents 17 % of the GDP of these territories and 78 % of the Moroccan fishing catches (Olivier Quarante,p.7). The Western Saharan coasts are one of the richest coasts in the world with 1 million tons of fish's capacity of production each year.

Western Sahara is rich in Phosphates qualified by Tony Hodges as the most concentrated in the world; its territory's total deposit reserves might achieve 10 Billion Tons (Tony Hogs,p.83) making it the second richest country of Phosphates and the world's second largest phosphate exporter (سليمان ولد محمد سيدنا). Unfortunately the majority of sourceès place the Western Sahara Phosphate as Moroccan and in the best cases they site "morocco and Western Sahara". It is also rich in steel: 700 million tons of steel in Zmila and Aghracha. After discovering oil in neighbor countries; Spain allowed Oil prospecting in Western Sahara for the first time in 1958. In fact, there were some very important discoveries in 2002³ in addition to two oil wells in Tarfaia found in 1970. (اتحاد الصحفيين والكتاب الصحراويين). The Western Sahara is also rich in silver; nickel; Chrome; copper and uranium. It can correspondingly be a touristic and an agriculture county thanks to its rich livestock.

On the first hand, it is deeply important to know about the natural resources, because they are one pillar of the conflict between morocco and the Polisario. All these natural gifts normally would have been a blessing for any independent country (Hoges, p.83). But instead, Morocco and several western states consider that an independent Western Sahara will constitute another weak and failed state in the Sahel region. Though, they do not see any inconvenience to explore the natural resources of the Western Sahara despite its legal status.

On another hand, it is obvious according to what have been said that the Western Sahara occupies a very strategic area, it has also a very critical location since it have been surrounded by three countries facing some serious historical problems with each other, for which Western Sahara constitutes a geographic extension. An extension of Morocco to the sub-Saharan Africa, an extension of Mauritania to the north to keep the Moroccan territorial claims away, and a window to the Atlantic ocean for Algeria upon to the Moroccan suggestion. Basically in the case of the Western Sahara the Location and the natural resources may be considered as a curse rather than a blessing.

2- ***The Population: The Other Pillar of the Conflict !***

Analyzing the population of the Western Sahara helps to understand both the justice of their issue; and the delay of its resolution. The definition of the Sahrawi population is one of the reasons that keep the conflict ongoing (عمر صدوق، ص.17). Formerly in 1975, the Spanish administration published a census of the Sahrawi Tribes; asserting that the number of Sahrawis was 73.489; the majority are living in the three main cities: El Ayun; Ras Boudjdour and Smara.⁴ Their Society is characterized by its tribes' system; each tribe is divided into groups of families or

clans; they used to move across the boundaries between Western Sahara and Mauritania (Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff p.113). While in 1980; the Sahrawi Ministry of Information; estimated the number of the Sahrawis population at 750.000 inhabitants (عمر صدوق،ص.17), in addition to 120.000 to 165.000 Sahrawis refugees living in camps of Tindouf In Algeria (Julien Denis, p.02). According to the UN Data in 2015; the population was about 584.000 inhabitants (<http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=Western%20Sahara>).

It is difficult to determine exactly the population but the issue is imperative because the population is the second pillar of the conflict. Any researcher can easily identify an obvious inconsistency of the given numbers; this discord is due mainly to the nature of the Sahrawi people tending to migrate and move in relatively small groups looking after pastures which make the census process difficult. Here the source of the statistics represents a problem, because each source supports some interests.

- ✓ **Western Sahara Issue : Real politic VS International Laws:**
1- **Western Sahara Issue : a historical background:**

The strategic location of the Western Sahara; made it in the center of the international hegemonies. The beginning was with the Crusades; and then the colonization movement after the renaissance of the European continent. The Western Sahara was colonized by the Spanish Kingdom (Claude Bontems,P. 110).

In December 26; 1884; Spain announced the invasion of the Western Sahara; which was approved by the Berlin Conference. Morocco signed an agreement signed with the Spanish Kingdom to determine the boundaries between Morocco and Seguia El hamra and Rio de Oro in 1904 (Martine de Froberville, p.25-26). According to these historical facts, the King of Morocco has always asserted that Western Sahara has never been a part of its territories, which destroy the excuse of the "Historical right" and the principle of the territorial integrity, according to the map drawn in 1955. This Map illustrating the "Grand Morocco" did not only annex also parts of Mauritania and western regions of Algeria(Martine de Froberville, p.25-26). One year after its independence; Morocco started claiming the territories of Western Sahara; but Moroccan claims were not the only one; in 1957 the Mauritanian announced territorial claims too (Khadidja Mohcen Finan, P. 7).

During the 1950's; Sahrawis being inspired by the independence movement in the region; launched their own liberation movement. But in 1958; the movement was crushed by "a joint Franco-Spanish complain"(see Hoges) The recompense was handing over Spanish south Morocco to Rabat 'region of Tarfaia'. This is why the POLISARIO "Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia Al hamra and Rio De Oro" raised in 1973. until August 20th, 1974; when Spain announced its intentions to organize a referendum on the auto-determination of the Western Sahara(Martine de Froberville, p.25-26), Morocco refused the Spanish intention and accused it of deducting its territories in order to create a functional State. King

Hassan II seized the internal situation of Spain and requested the delay of the referendum and an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice.

✓ ***The legal Status of the Western Sahara issue***

In December 1974; the General Assembly of the UN adopted the resolution n°3292 seeking the Advisory opinion of ICJ; and the delay of the referendum.⁵ In 16 October 1975, the ICJ released its advisory opinion about the Western Sahara; the court asserted that the territories were not Terra Nullius by the time of the Spanish colonization; the Advisory opinion also recognized the presence of relations between some Caids of Sahrawi tribes and Moroccan Sultan. Henceforth it denied the presence of legal ties between Morocco and Western Sahara, so the ICJ rejected both Moroccan and Mauritanian claims in Western Sahara.

According to the international regulation the Western Sahara is also concerned by the UN resolution 1514 adopted on 14 December 1960. The UN resolution 2229 asserted that the Western Sahara does not represent a part of the territorial integrity Morocco. It constitutes a non-self-governing territory that should get the right to auto-determination. The Polisario should also benefit from support; and it has the right to use any convenient tool to achieve the independence, even the use of force. However, the proclamation of the state of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic in 1976 changed the status of the Polisario as a liberation movement and may have awakened its position.

So according to the international laws the Western Sahara has a fair cause; and Morocco has been violating several international regulations and principles since 1975. Despite all these, it is obvious that some kinds of the "realism" is still ruling the world since the conflict in Western Sahara remains frozen, and neglected by the international community and countries calling for democracy and human rights such as the United States and the EU. Moreover some of these countries are signing economic agreements with Morocco to exploit Western Sahara resources; dealing with the conflict according to their interests and maintaining the Status quo.

The Algerian-Moroccan Relation and the conflict of Western Sahara

✓ ***The Moroccan Motivation to invade Western Sahara:***

The interest of Morocco in Western Sahara occurred in 1958; during a statement of the King Mohammed V; claiming the return of Moroccan's to "Their Sahara". After the succession of Hassan II; his foreign policy was based on the find of an enemy to ensure the continuity of the "Alaoui" Throne, due to a severe economic crisis (Moumen Douiri ,p. 21-32). Morocco witnessed several social demonstrations; in late 1963 and 1964, one of the solutions to face them was to turn the popular attention to Algeria as the external enemy. Then, in 1961 the Moroccan monarch

signed a convention with the Provisional Government of the Algerian republic; in which they committed to review the Borders, set according to the treaty of "Iella Meghnia", after the Independence (Edward Meric, p. 744). But President Ben Bella refused this revision (see Eric Lauret), referring to the international regulation and the principle of *Uti Possidetis*. To handle the situation; Morocco attacked Algeria in September 1963 as a way to gain the support of the Opposition; the war ended on 29-30 October 1963. More social demonstration occurred again; hence things were much more serious in the early 1970's; since Hassan II faced three military coups between 1971 and 1973 (Khadidja Mohcen Finan, P.38). The solution was to invade the Western Sahara, and by doing so giving the public opinion a new national issue. After referring to the ICJ; Morocco refused its advisory opinion and launched the so called "the Green March" to recover what it considers its territorial integrity in 5 November 1975; when 350000 Moroccan entered in the Sahrawi territories by the north; while Mauritania took over the south, after signing the treaty of Madrid in 14th November.⁶

In 1976 Spain announced its withdrawal from Western Sahara, and on February 27th, 1976 the POLISARIO proclaimed the independent State of 'Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (Yahia Zoubir, P.177), and kept resisting through the military means, Algeria was the first State to recognize it, and thus qualified as part of the conflict from a Moroccan view. In August, 5th 1979 after a military coup, Mauritania succumbed to the Polisario military resistance, and decided to withdraw from the southern regions of Western Sahara, so the war was confined between the Polisario and Morocco, until 1991; and the conflict remains unsolved. Using the support of its allies Morocco extended its economic investments to the Sahrawi territories in order to fortify its occupation (Zoubir, P.178).

The Algerian Motivation to support the independence hypothesis in Western Sahara:

Before its independence, the Algerian leaders gathered in Tripoli, to write the first Algerian constitution, in which they decided that the country will be socialist. This was the first problem with Morocco which didn't accept the presence of a socialist fortress on its boundaries. Then the newly independent country faced Moroccan territorial claims in 1963. Thus the Algerian government refused to review the boundaries with the later according to the agreement signed in 1961, since it had its own view and lecture of the treaty of 'Lella Meghnia' signed with France. Algeria adopted the principle of *Uti Possidetis* until its adoption in the chart of the African Union in 1964, and devoted to help nations fighting for their independence. After the military coup of 1965, the president Boumedien launched many industrial and agricultural reforms and planned to lead the African continent which causes a serious concurrence with Morocco, according to Mohammed Harbi, Boumedien's Bismarckian sight about a unified Maghreb around Algeria as a Pivotal State. In addition to the boundary issue the Algerian-Moroccan relations were

deeply affected by the cold war circumstances due to the belonging of each one to a different block.

Actually, the Algerian motivations in Western Sahara can be resumed in three main motivations: The first one was the Moroccan territorial claims in Algeria, by signing a final treaty in 'Ifra' in June 1972 (Sliman chikh P.47-50). Accordingly, the Algerian government recognition of a Moroccan Western Sahara will be justifying and approving the Moroccan territorial claims in Tindouf, Bechar and the western regions of its territories (عبد النور بن عنتر، ص.43).

The Second motivation relays in the Algerian constitution; and the Algerian history; Algeria has always been committed to the principles of the International laws dealing with the Liberation movements; as a principle of its foreign policy; due to its heavy and glorious history fighting the French colonization.

The third one is bound with its geopolitical considerations; and the existence of a hidden rivalry between Algeria and Morocco over leadership. In addition to the lack of trust between the two countries, *i. e.*, as a response to the Algerian support to the Polisario; Morocco hosted the communication office of the 'Movement for the Liberation of Azawad' and supported the Libyan desire to establish an independent State of Touareg(Belkacem Boumahdi). Then, Morocco threatened of "hot-pursuit" against Sahrawis living in Tindouf.

The competition between the two countries over the leadership and the supremacy is illustrated through their positions toward the Western Sahara issue; and their efforts to gain the international support and alliances. This is perfectly serving the interests of the international powers competing also to take over the resources of the Maghreb region. During the years of war from 1975 till 1991; the Algerian State provided the logistic support to the Polisario using the resolutions of the international Law; and also by using the diplomatic and juridical means within the different international institution; specially the African Union; which led Morocco to suspend its membership in this organization in 1979 due to the large Algerian influence on it and on its members.

The effects of the Western Sahara issue on the Algerian-Moroccan relations 2010-2015:

✓ **The political effects of the Western Sahara Issue on the Algerian-Moroccan Relations:**

Since the issue occurred on 1975; tensions between the two countries started; with few periods of relief (late 1980s' and early 1990s'). One of the Political consequences of the issue was the situation of the Algerian-Moroccan 1559 km borders; remaining closed since 1994; because the Algerian side refuse to discuss the borders problem apart from a global solution to the issue of the Western Sahara, leading to the clod political relations and a continuous exchanging of accusations; for example in; in 2014 the Moroccan Minister of Foreign Affairs accused Algeria of curbing the process of resolving the Western Sahara Issue; and his Algerian homologue Ramtan Laamamra considered that as a serious accusation; and during the same year Morocco accused Algerian soldiers of shooting Moroccan citizens on the borders, which led the Algerian government to call in Morocco ambassador to express its malcontent of these accusations.

Both countries entered also; an interminable cold war; using Africa and the Arab world as field; for the African continent; each one of them considers itself as the vehicle of the economic prosperity and the leader of the continent; the means for this concurrence are usually economic; each one of them is trying to gain the support to its position toward the Sahrawi conflict; for example within 02 years 2012-2014; the Moroccan King Mohammed VI; held a two tours to several sub-Saharan countries ; taking advantage in 2014 of the critical situation in Algeria before the presidential elections and the sickness of the Algerian president (Michel Riche), it was also to contain the Algerian dominant security role in the region. It appears that the Moroccan succeeded to convince some African countries of the hypothesis assuming that the independence of the Western Sahara will create another failure state; and that it will motivate other ethnics group to claim independence. It was also attempting to expulse the SADR from AU; for that the King sent a delegation to Kigali at the same time of the AU summit to gather support for its return; the president of Gabon submitted a petition to the summit; signed by 28 countries to expulse the SADR; which led to a new diplomatic crisis between Morocco and Algeria that considered the ac as an unacceptable maneuver. In addition to its security efforts in Africa especially in the Sahel an Lybia ; Algeria is also playing the card of economic support; by erasing the debts of some African countries. Thus, the diplomatic relations between Algeria and Morocco are resumed in few letter exchanged occasionally.

The Second effect; is the possibility of international influence in the Maghreb, due to the absence and an efficient integration project. Any pragmatic country would have taken advantage of the situation; the international powers tend to balance the relation between Algeria and Morocco to preserve their interests in the Maghreb region; there is; according to regional experts; a hidden

competition between the USA and EU (especially France) over the Maghreb region. Thus, these countries do not to express a clear position toward the conflict in Western Sahara.

For the USA; after 2001; and as the US foreign policy is not separating energetic sources from its anti-terrorism agenda it is crucial to gain the Algerian support and Algeria became a strategic ally in the war ant-terrorism. An In order to reassure Morocco the US supported its autonomy hypothesis during the 2000s' and gave it the status of the strategic ally to the NATO in 2014.

Morocco is giving economic privileges for the European and French companies in Western Sahara to gain their support; which is apparently working so far since Paris has always supported Rabat in a way that does not upset Algiers. In fact the importance of the Algerian gas played a crucial role in neutralizing a clear pro-Moroccan European position; especially after the several gas crisis due to the Russia-Ukraine crisis. It appears that these powers prefer an integrated Maghreb to deal with the security issues and at the same time prefer to work with each country apart when it comes to the economic aspect.

The security effects of the western Sahara Issue on the the Maghreb trough Algerian-Moroccan relations :

The biggest issue facing the region of the Maghreb is the lack of trust between its two main countries because of the Western Sahara issue; actually; both countries believe that the issue is directly linked to its security; to explain that; let's try to apply Wolfers' definitions of security "**security in an objective sense; measures the absence of threats to acquired values; in a subjective sense; the absence of fear that such values will be attacked**" (Arnold Wolfers,p.485); When Morocco announced the war against Algeria and the invasion of the western Sahara it was recovering its territories, taking advantage of the weaknesses of states newly independent; but in 1975 from a subjective perspective Morocco was also protecting the Royal throne from the internal instability; it was trying to expense to ensure its survival and looking for new resources. For the Algerian side its interest to the Western Sahara issue was motivated by the fear of losing of its acquired values: its territorial integrity; Algeria was also trying to balance the power with its western neighbour. Both perspectives could be tolerable if the region of the Maghreb was not facing the security threats and challenges increasing since 2011; the region has always been exposed to several threats: terrorism; illicit trades; drogues traffic, a ' Transit Zone" for the undocumented persons to the European Dream; but the situation got worse since the so-called 'the wave of Arab Spring" that turned to an Arab disaster. As Libya went from the status of a 'rogue State" to a "Failed State", after the collapse of El Guedafi's regime military devices were everywhere; increasing the capabilities of the terrorist groups in the region of the Sahel and Algerian desert. Instead of developing a common perception to the common security threats; and a common concept of the complex regional security combined with the implementation of a common defensive organism; both

countries are still competing and proposing different projects and solution to the crisis in Mali and Libya.

Moreover, the distrust between the two countries led to a security dilemma; their military expenses are continuously increasing according to the SIPRI statistics; obviously the two countries entered the vicious circle of the arms race.

<i>Coutry</i>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Algeria	5671	8652	9326	10405	9724	10413
Morocco	3161	3343	3403	4066	4049	3268

Unit : Million Dollars.

All this money would be much more beneficial if invested in serious economic and developing projects. Another security effect related closed borders is the emergence of several security challenges such as the illicit trade; the drugs traffic Algeria steppes each year an average of 70 tonnes of drugs on its western borders; coming from Morocco (عثمان لحياني). And due to the complexity of the unconventional nature of the new security threat the Algerian government do not rule out any potential cooperation between the organized crime groups and terrorist groups.

The socio-economic effects of the Western Sahara Issue on the Algerian-Moroccan relations:

On the social aspect; the tension between the two countries due to the western Sahara issue may be threatening the entire ethical and value scale of both societies; is solidifying a feeling of hatred between the young population that did not witness the historical relations between the two people; especially those with a low educational level; a brief look at the social media depict an ugly image of these relations; it is a sort of virtual war between youth. Moreover several Moroccan and Algerian official websites were hacked; it is clear that values of brotherhood and shared history; blood, languages and religions are deteriorating. We should emphasise the role of the propaganda (بوفلجة غياث، ص14) practiced by both Algerian and Moroccan regimes to manipulate public opinion vis à vis the western Sahara issue has its impact on the social behavior of their citizens and societies. Morocco has always blamed Algeria for its failure to develop its eastern regions because of the closure of the borders; it has also tried to convince the population that the Algerian state deprived Morocco of its territorial integrity and its natural resources in Bechar and Tindouf.

In addition to the impacts cited above; we need also to highlight the problem of hundreds of dispersed families Due to the closure of the borders since 1994.

On the economic aspect; a look at the military expenditures within the arms race, gives a grim picture of the situation of development in both "Developing countries"; and if Algeria has the advantage of being a "rentier" State; its dependence on the oil revenues is becoming a curse; any international economic or security crisis anywhere in the world; in addition to the leap of the renewable energy; will jeopardize its development plans and process, the situation for Morocco is worse; it is known that for a country that imports energetic products to cover its needs, the military expenditures will minimize the budgets allowed to the other sectors such as education and health care; it will also raise the rates of imposition paid by citizens which may threaten the internal security of the kingdom; the second option is to receive military aids, but by doing so, any developing country would be mortgaging its free political decision.

In addition to the costs of the military expenditures; Morocco is allowing 05% of its GDP for the Western Sahara; these territories costs its treasury 100 million Moroccan Dirham every day to cover the needs of its soldiers.

On another hand; the economic exchanges between the two countries and within the Maghreb Arab Union in general remains one of the weakest in the world; from 2010 to 2015; the average of the economic exchanges did not raise above 2% of the total of their international economic exchange; for example the statistics of the economic exchanges of Algeria for the last two years (2014-2015) shows that the total of the imported products from the countries of the Maghreb Arab Union were limited in 711 million USD(1.22% of its total importation expense) while the total of its exportation to these countries were 3248 Million USD (5.16% of its total exportation incomes for 2014). for the same year Morocco did not appear as one of its main suppliers; but was one of its weakest clients as the value of the Algeria exportation to Morocco were about 1381 million USD (2.19% of its total export (وزارة المالية 2014) ; While for 2015 total of the imported products from the countries of the Maghreb Arab Union were about 492 million USD (1.26% of its total importation expenses; while the total of its exportation to these countries were 1319 Million USD which represents 4.57% of its total exportation); just like the previous year Morocco did not appear as one of its main suppliers; and was one of the its weakest clients as the value of the Algeria exportation to Morocco were about 586 million USD (2.06% of its total export.(وزارة المالية 2015) and if we examine the main imported products for the Algerian state we will that agricultural goods were on the top of the list, and by examination its main exportation we will notice that Oil and energetic products were on the top of the list, and vice versa for the Moroccan State, hence both countries prefer the EU and Asia instead of dealing with each other; the national GDPs of two countries were supposed to raise by 57% for Algeria and 38% for Morocco during the period of 2005-2015 if the borders were re-opened which would have brought multiple international investments in the domain of tourism and mineral exploitation (Slimani Leila). A better economic and security cooperation within opened borders would have avoided several problems such as illicit trade; the Algerian citizen would have agricultural products

with a better price while the Moroccan would pay less for the energetic products; Instead, Morocco has signed an Agreement with Nigeria to secure its needs of natural (الجزيرة); this agreement has for a second aim the exportation of gas to Europe ; whereas the project was already existing but between Nigeria and Algeria, it seems to be a new battle field between and a new chapter of the concurrence between the two main countries of the Maghreb. Another example of the wasted capabilities; Morocco is dominating the half of the world's Phosphate reserves, in order to extract it, Morocco needs Energies; Ammoniac and sulfur; available in Algeria, but Morocco is importing these products from both India and Brazil.

Western Sahara and the Maghreb Arab Union : The Tree that covers the forest ?

One of the Political and economic effects of the Western Sahara issue on the Algerian-Moroccan relationship; was the fact that the contradictory positions of these two countries curbed the integration project of a 90 million Population related by blood, history, language and religion; the project was supposed to gather 05 States in addition to the "Ghost state: Western Sahara"; the attempts for Maghreb Regional integration started in fact in 1958; then due to the Western, Sahara issue, the repercussion of the Cold war and the disagreement between Algeria and Morocco, these countries have forgotten about the Maghreb dream until 1989; in order to face several economic, social and security challenges, leaders of Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya met in Algeria on July 13th 1988 ; to set up the means to achieve the integration; then in Merrakesh February 17th 1989 to announce the establishment of the Maghreb Arab Union to confirm the Algerian-Moroccan and Morocco-Libya reconciliation after Morocco accepted to hold the referendum in Western Sahara; and the Tunisia-Libya reconciliation about their borders issue (After the ICJ arbitration) مصطفى (الفيلالي، ص.41). After 1989 , Morocco refused to hold the referendum in Western Sahara and relation between Algeria and Morocco deteriorated in 1994; besides, the treaty of creation of the Maghreb Union had several legal loopholes such as the article 15 that stipulates that all countries should refrain from any activity or host any organization on its territory that might threaten the security or the territorial integrity of the other, which means that the Algerian state is not respecting that article by hosting the Polisario, according to the Moroccan point of view; but in 1989 the context was different since the international community believed that the Western Sahara issue was on the right way to be solved. The Western Sahara Issue was and still constitute a burden on the Maghreb integration process by being the main reason of the bad Algeria –Morocco relationship, while Algeria is looking for a common global security approach related to a fair solution of the Western Sahara issue; Morocco is accusing it of giving the " deaf ear" to the borders opening. But there are still other issues except for the Western Sahara that are facing the AMU, the main one is the hidden rivalry between Algeria and Morocco over hegemony in the region and the African continent, in addition to the distrust between them (actually even the AMU looks like a trick used by Morocco to implicate Algeria in an illegal action according to the article 15 of its chart), also the lack of coordination of

political positions, and the absence of the political will, in addition to the absence of strong intuitions and policies in its countries and the international interests and influence. The Maghreb countries' leaders are ignoring all economic benefits and giving priority to the political solutions.

Conclusion

As conclusion we may understand that the Realpolitik is still ruling the international relations; and that the international law depends on the will of the polities, and that the Western Sahara issue is really affecting the Algeria- Morocco relation on political, security and socio-economic aspects; but it is also related to the Algerian-Moroccan borders issue. The problem between the two courtiers is the presence of a severe situation of distrust, it is also obvious that they are competing for the supremacy of the region, and that from the other angle they are using the issue as a tool, and the real victim is the Sahrawi Population. The costs of this "Bad" relation between them are important especially on the economic aspect, according to some studies, they are wasting 02 points of development each year, because of the noncooperation; the cost of the conflict is a real burden to the socio-economic development process. They are also wasting the chance of the Maghreb integration that will help to face multiple economic and security challenges, but at this point they are using the Western Sahara Issue in order to cover the absence of the political will, and their ambitions to lead the region and the continent. The diplomatic relations between Algiers and Rabat are limited to some congratulations and greetings letter sent occasionally; but the real controversy is noticed between the political official speech emphasising the collaboration and the importance of the work on the integration, and their real political actions. One of the emergencies to be seriously considered and that need to be fixed as soon as possible, is the view of the youth of both courtiers to each other, it is a real challenge to the future of any bilateral or regional projects, both new generations of the two countries should learn more about their common history and work on real reconciliation with the regrettable episodes of their past; and understand the real challenges facing their region, in order to be ready to face the future. The region of the Maghreb can take lessons from the EU and both Algeria and Morocco may learn a lot from the France-Germany reconciliation; they may start with an economic cooperation that may lead to a potential project of integrity on the long-temp perspective.

Endnotes:

¹ According to a map of Abdelkebir El Aassi of 1955 the Grand Morocco includes the Western Sahara; some regions of the west of Algeria and Mauritania.

² With its 1400 Km cost; the Western Sahara creates 74000 job according to the economic, social and environmental

³ Specially on the Mauritanian shelf where the predictions of the reserves are about 300

million tons of oil and 30 billion m³ of gas.

⁴ The Sahrawis are a "sub-group ethno-culturally speaking; of "beidan" or "Moors" Nomads of mixt Berbers; Arab and Black African descent who speak a dialect of Arabic known as "Hassania" and live in swath of desert oued Draa in southern Morocco to the valley of Niger and the Senegal. See: Hodges ; Op.cit.p.74

⁵ The two question addressed to the ICJ were: "Was Western Sahara at the time of the colonization by Spain a territory belonging to no one – Terra Nullius-?"... "What were the legal ties between this territory and the Kingdom of Morocco and the Mauritanian entity?". Western Sahara the Advisory opinion of 16 October 1975, in: <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/61/6197.pdf>

⁶ The treaty gave Spain the right to explore 35 % of the Sarawi Phosphate.

Bibliography:

- 1- Arnold Wolfers, "National Nequity as an Ambiguous Symbol " in Political Science Quarterly (USA: 1952, vol 67, N°4)
- 2- Belkacem Boumahdi ; a conference about "the history of the Western Sahara Issue" ; University of Algiers 03; 2012.
- 3- Eric Lauret; Hassan II: La mémoire d'un roi (Paris:Edition Plon ;1993)
- 4- Fadila Nadia Hamour ; L'espace méditerranéen :Une Interface Nord-Sud (Paris : ellipse edition marketing ;S.a ;2004).
- 5- Jacob MUNDI ; Algeria and the Western Sahara dispute ; The Maghreb Center Journal (spring/summer 2010); https://maghrebcenter.files.wordpress.com/2011/07/maghrebcenter-journal-mundy_algeria-w-sahara.pdf
- 6- Julien Denis ; Sahara Occidental : Essai d'approche géopolitique ;(Université de Rouen :Laboratoire ailleurs ; 2007)
- 7- Khadidja Mohcen Finan ; Le Sahara Occidental : Les enjeux d'un conflit régional(Paris : CNRS edition :1997).
- 8- Khadidja Mohcen Finan; trente and de conflit au Sahara Occidental ; (Paris ;IFRIS ;2008)
- 9- Leila Slimani ; «Quand l'union pourrait faire la force » in Jeune Afrique (06-02-2010). <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/143134/politique/alg-rie-maroc-quand-l-union-pourrait-faire-la-force/>
- 10- Michel Riche ; La concurrence entre le Maroc et l'algérie dans les pays du Sahel , <http://www.jfcconseilmed.fr/files/14-03-06--Roche-concurrence-entre-Maroc-et-Algerie-dans-pays-Sahel.pdf>
- 11- Report of the Secretary General on the situation concerning Western Sahara; S2001/613 annex 02 and 03.
- 12- Olivier Quarante ; poisson ; primeurs ; phosphates exportés vers l'Europe : Si riches Riche Sahara Occidental ; Le Monde Diplomatique ; Mars 2014 ; P.07.

- 13- République Algérienne Démocratique et Populaire; Ministère des Finance (Direction Générale des Douanes) ;Statistiques du commerce extérieur de l'Algérie ; Période :2014.
- 14- République Algérienne Démocratique et Populaire; Ministère des Finance (Direction Générale des Douanes) ;Statistiques du commerce extérieur de l'Algérie ; Période : 09 mois 2015.
- 15- Richard B.Parker ; North Africa :Regional Tension and strategic concerns (New York: preager publishers C.B.C;1984-
- 16- Sliman chikh ; « Politique Africaine Algérienne in Sliman Chikh et les autres le Maghreb et l'Afrique subsaharienne (Paris : édition du centre national de la recherche scientifique ;1980)p.p.47-50.
- 17- The Moroccan constitution
The Official web site of the MAU.
<http://www.maghrebarabe.org/ar/zeralda.cfm>
- 18- Tony Hogs, the western Sahara Files in the third world quarterly ; 1984. P.83
http://libproxy.snu.ac.kr/ceb77fd/_Lib_Proxy_Url/www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01436598408419756?needAccess=true
- 19- Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff ; The Western Saharan's: background to conflict, (Newjersey: Barnes & Noble Books; 1980)p.113
- 20- Western Sahara the Advisory opinion of 16 October 1975. <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/61/6197.pdf>
- 21- Yahia Zoubir, The Western Sahara conflict in failure of Prenegotiation and Prolongation of Conflict in California western international law journal(California:Vol n°26 n°2, 1996)

- 1 اتحاد الصحفيين والكتاب الصحراويين، الدكتور غالي زبير: التب المغربي للثروات الطبيعية انتهاك ترح وواضح لحقوق الشعب الصحراوي، الصحراء الحرة، 25-05-2011.
- 2 بوقلجة غياث، الحرب النفسية وإحباطات الإنسان العربي (الجزائر: دار الغرب للنشر والتوزيع.ط.1)
- 3 عبد النور بن عنتر، البعد المتوسطي للأمن الجزائري: أوروبا والحلف الأطلسي (الجزائر: المكتبة العصرية للطباعة، 2005)
- 4 33-عودة المغرب إلى الاتحاد الإفريقي تشعل أزمة جديدة مع الجزائر
- 5 34-لخضر سفير، نبذة عن قضية الصحراء الغربية ودوافع استمرار الاحتلال المغربي ، جريدة اليوم الجزائرية،(الجزائر 29 ماي 2001) مصطفى الفيالي، آفاق اتحاد المغرب العربي في المستقبل العربي (مركز دراسات الوحدة العربية، ع.132، 1990)
- 6 35- تقرير الأمين العام لهيئة الأمم المتحدة رقم 21360 s لسنة 1990.
- 7 36-سليمان ولد محمد سيدنا، مشكل الصحراء الغربية: الأبعاد والمستقبل ، مجلة البيان (أبو ظبي، عدد.1393، 13 أكتوبر 2004)
- 8 عمر صدوق، قضية الصحراء الغربية في إطار القانون الدولي، (الجزائر: ديوان المطبوعات الجامعية، 1982)