

IVAN URETA (ed.)

MEDIA, MIGRATION AND PUBLIC OPINION

Myths, Prejudices and the Challenge of
Attaining Mutual Understanding between
Europe and North Africa

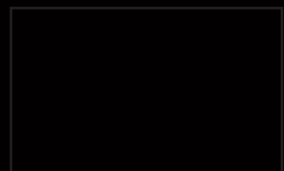


Peter Lang

Sensitive issues like migration and human mobility provoke paradigms and prejudices in public opinion. *Media, Migration and Public Opinion* is a collective effort of academic criticism to overcome these myths.

The main motive of this book is linked to the fact that migration, media and public opinion related issues focusing on North Africa have not been addressed properly by available literature. Against this background, the objective of *Media, Migration and Public Opinion* pursues three aims: Firstly, it fills a gap in the scholarly literature regarding media, political communication and migration by shifting the focus to the North African countries Morocco, Algeria and Libya. Secondly, it assesses to what extent the paradigms of the "other" and its characterization as a source of problems established in receiving countries are also present in sending and transit countries. Thirdly, the book puts North African issues in relation to European countries by presenting case-studies focused on Spain, Malta and Switzerland in order to raise commonalities and differences.

Ivan Ureta is a formerly Senior Researcher at the Institute for Mediterranean Studies, University of Lugano. Currently he works as a Teaching and Research Fellow at the Middle East and Mediterranean Studies Program, King's College London, as a Research Fellow at the World Habitat Research Centre, University of Applied Sciences of Southern Switzerland and as an Associate Professor at the Geneva School of Diplomacy.



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*Dedicated to all of us:
weak victims and merciless hangmen of myths and prejudices.*

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Introduction

In 2008 the Institute for Mediterranean Studies (IMS, University of Lugano, Switzerland) and the Mediterranean Academy for Diplomatic Studies (MEDAC, University of Malta) strengthened academic and institutional links in order to jointly assess strategic and key issues affecting the Euro-Mediterranean region as a whole. They did so with the commitment of doing the analysis from a southern point of view: where scholars from North Africa would lead the singer's voice.

In 2008 the IMS and the MEDAC celebrated a conference in Malta on Migration, Development and Diplomacy. The result of this event crystallized in a book titled: *Migration, Development and Diplomacy: Perspectives From the Southern Mediterranean* (Ureta and Lutterbeck, 2010).

Immediately after this experience, which involved a number of North African and European scholars, both IMS and MEDAC started to design a new conference devoted to the in depth analysis of a complementary topic: the influence and the impact of the Media on the perception of migrants in receiving and transit countries from both shores of the Mediterranean. This conference was held in Lugano in June 2009. Within this book the link between media and migration has been explored using a comparative approach. We have been conscious to apply a sort of common template that would allow the reading public to detect commonalities and differences among the selected case-studies.

A collective book like this, aims at being considered a collective effort of academic criticism against established paradigms, myths and prejudices that wraps around public opinion regarding sensitive issues such as migration and human mobility. It is true, that, the media given its massive developments over the last decades, has impacted notably on our societies regardless of the degree of economic, political and social development. As has been noted by Meyer, it is difficult to imagine another phenomenon shaping societies in such a profound, irreversible and intensive way (Meyer, 2007). How this literature has addressed these connections – media and its impacts on socio-political issues so far? According to available literature, it would be possible to classify these studies in three main dimensions. The

first dimension involves the ways the public sphere has been impacted and transformed by the evolution of the media and ICTs (Internet and Communication Technologies); this is how public communication has been affected by the influence of the media (Dahlgren and Sparks, 1991; Curran and Seaton, 1998). The second dimension would address the connections between the political sphere and the media. In this dimension, the media is not just the interpretation of the political realm. The media can define a particular political image according to party or ideological interests (Dahlgren and Sparks, 1991; Herman and Chomsky, 1988; Graber, McQuail and Norris, 1998; Perse, 2001). Some other studies regarding the impact of the media on shaping the political sphere constitute a third identifiable dimension. They contribute to understanding relationships between media and politics. These studies cover a topic that can be described as media democracy (Stanton, 1994; Meyer, 2007). Within these fields, the United States and Europe have been leading the scholar discourse and have achieved important outcomes and levels of conceptualization regarding the impact of the media on public life, generally speaking.

In the United States, for instance, Cook considers that media might be considered a political institution (Cook, 2005). It is a short step from affirming this to saying that the media could have the faculty of governing. Surely, these forms of governing, while being very efficient, go beyond the traditional way of ruling. Following with the same rationale, Graber, McQuail and Norris do not find deep differences between the politics of news and the news of politics (McQuail and Norris, 2009). At a pragmatic level, these spheres, politics and media, are playing together as agent and shadow and vice-versa.

Entman's work assesses how the media have played a fundamental role in the projection of power within US foreign policy (Entman, 2003). Andersen studies the relation between the media and war during the 20th Century (Andersen, 2006). Traditional experts on the impact of the media on public opinion have set their sights on "protecting" the citizenry from these trends (Iyengar and McGrady, 2006). By quoting those examples and accepting the connections between media and politics, it seems clear that governing might be the action of creating images and illusions. As Bennet stressed, news is the politics of illusion (Bennet, 2008).

Very similar theoretical approaches can be found in Europe. For instance, Statham (2010) demonstrated that media communication and political communication have been a central argument in making the

European Union's scope of legitimacy understandable. Remaining on the subject of the European Union, similar lines of research have been recently developed by Triandafyllidou, Wodala and Krzyzowski (2009). They demonstrate the intimate connection between the role of the media and political communication and the construction of a European public sphere. In the Russian case, the media impact on changing social values was studied (Rosenholm, Nordenstreng and Trutina, 2010)

Western Europe is a case that deserves particular attention. Southern European countries, such as Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Malta and Greece, have to deal with a number of problems related to international migration flows from the southern Mediterranean. In the early 1990s, some groups studied the existence of "media politics" in Western Europe (Siune and Treutzschler, 1992). Recent studies regarding the same area have demonstrated that far-right parties from these countries are using the media to spread extremist, nationalistic and racist discourses (Ellinas, 2010).

In acknowledging that the media impacts increasingly on socio-economic and political process, over the years, our societies are witnessing the importance and impact of migration and mobility related issues. Actually, migration related issues have topped political agendas from 1999 onward and with more intensity since 9/11. That is why, over the last decade, the ground has been – naturally or artificially – very fertile for the development of these interdisciplinary studies. Probably the media entail and evidence the very essence of globalization by breaking and trespassing mental and physical boundaries. But at the same time, this openness and ease to go beyond traditional national boundaries, has endangered an imaginary and real world which is not still ready for thinking in terms of solid and consistent multiculturalism – *tout court* – and internationalism.

The main contribution of this book is linked to the fact that media and migration related issues focusing on North Africa have not been addressed properly by available literature. Scholarly efforts linking media and migration have been concentrated in more industrialised countries or continents, such as the United States and Europe. "Peripheral" zones have not developed in such detail these kind of studies.

Media influence on public opinion regarding sensitive issues such as migration and security in the Euro-Mediterranean area has been studied focusing on North Africa and central Europe (Ureta, 2010 c), specifically on Spain (Zapata, 2008; Lorite, 2002 a, 2002 b, 2006) France (Tailleur, 2002; Blion, 2008) or Malta (Sammut, 2007). More generally, although

still roughly addressing these issues, I would like to underline the pioneering work edited by King and Wood (2001). More recently, a collection of essays gathered by Sabry (2004) continues the precedent line of research. We should also note Matterlart's research on media, migration and transnationalism (Matterlart, 2007). By accepting a bidirectional correlation between politics and media, we can carefully analyse ideas, values, myths, beliefs, images and stereotypes.

This is the construction ground of the social imaginary which has been defined by Taylor (2004)

as the way ordinary people imagine their social surroundings, a way of thinking that is carried in images, stories and legends, which is shared by large groups of people and which makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy.

Social imaginary is very dynamic, in constant evolution and contexts can surely provoke easily distortions and changes: for good or for bad. Actually if we consider these issues from the perspectives of the social psychology, it is clear that the use of the language is very much relying on the socio-cultural, political and economic context/s (Van Dijk, 1981). Hence, relations between language and context are interdependent and mutually influenced. Political communication and public discourse, by deploying a populist dimension may impact on context's construction and deconstruction. To certain degrees and depending on the use of the language for political purposes, we agree on what Aron, Minkowsky or Gabel would call schizophrenic language. Currently, in some European countries – The Netherlands, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, etc. –, taking advantage of the economic downturn, political communication and media have used intensively – by developing propagandist methods – images and a rhetoric in which migrants have been placed at the centre of the public discourse, being characterized as elements of danger and menaces. This is not new.

Both Iyengar and Kinder (1982) agree with Lipman's (1922) suspicions regarding the role of the media in providing compelling descriptions of a sort of public world which is completely different from people's direct experiences. The initial research regarding the potential role of propaganda on public opinion was conducted by a pair of American social scientists (Katz and Feldman, 1962). Their findings were pretty unexpected: they discovered that public opinion was quite immune to political persuasion and propaganda.

Hence, these first findings demonstrated a ‘minimal effect’ of propaganda on public opinion, due to the fact that propaganda just reinforces public preferences. This ‘minimal effect’ could be interestingly controversial. If those preferences are reinforced by propaganda, the question is when and by whom were those sets of preferences established?

Coming back to the initial point, since the beginning of the 1990s, some of the most important “seasonal products” or fruits have been international migration, human mobility, security, Islam, terrorism and economic crises. It is here where I will anticipate that we are crossing into a period in which the whole international situation – when paradoxical concepts such as globalization and freedom seem to define a consented common language – is dominated by the extensive and massive use of ‘branded concepts’ in the media and public discourse by the public relations industry (Chomsky, 1992). Yet these studies have been developed in the USA and Europe.

Against this background the objective of this book is threefold. First the book aims at covering an important gap in the scholarly literature regarding media, political communication and migration by focusing mainly in North Africa. Second, to assess to what extent the paradigms that are operating in receiving countries related to the image of the “other” and its characterization as a source of problems and dangers, are present as well in sending and transit countries. Three, to present some case-studies focused on European countries in order to raise commonalities and differences with North Africa.

This book has been split into two parts. The first part, the more extensive, entails a number of chapters dealing with North African countries such as: Algeria, Morocco and Libya. The second one offers analysis on Spain, Malta and Switzerland. Within this volume, chapters’ weights between North African and European issues have been deliberately unbalanced; the presence of chapters regarding North Africa doubles that of the Europeans. The methodological reason behind this decision is justifiable due to the scarcity of these kinds of studies focusing on North Africa if we compare them with Europe. Exactly here lies one of the most interesting contributions of this book.

Within the first part, North Africa, in chapter one, Vicken Cheterian develops the idea that the mass media in the Maghreb region can be described as the most dynamic sector and vanguard of civil liberties and democratization efforts in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. In a context of

general weakness of political institutions, political parties, and civil society, journalists do not only struggle for the freedom of expression, but play a role larger than that, and with consequences that impacts the entire political culture. In spite of common historic roots, language, colonial past, and languages used, it should be underlined that the mass media in the three countries have evolved in the last few decades in very particular contexts making the media institutions and their traditions individual experiences and essentially different from each other: Algerian media is just emerging from the trauma of the civil war; Moroccan media is in dynamic development yet conditioned by a context of poor socio-economic conditions, while in Tunisia the media is trying to salvage the few liberties surviving from the period of Bourqiba. Under these circumstances, the media of the Maghreb has to face the challenge of globalization of media in the time of technological revolution.

After laying the first conceptual bricks, it is still necessary to complete this introductory section by offering a global overview on the interconnections between media and migration in North Africa. In so doing, chapter two, written by Davide Vignati offers a broad view about the role of the media and its influence on migration policies in the Maghreb. Given that his assessment goes beyond the classical case-study approach, Vignati's work will permit the reader to have a very good introduction to better understand the philosophy behind this book and specially those chapters focusing on North Africa. The author, since the beginning of his chapter acknowledges that migration very easily raises controversial and emotive public debates, because the subject polarizes society and constantly places the capacity of governance in doubt. This happens evidently in destination countries, and it happens as well in sending and transit countries alike. After describing the origins and characteristics of irregular migration in the Maghreb (which is at the core of the growing Africa migratory flows pushing forward) Vignati continues analysing the existing challenges related to regional governance and humanitarian issues. Once he concludes this section, the author starts to develop the central point of this chapter aiming at giving an answer to the following questions.

How does the public opinion react to the dramatic images of migrants risking their lives to get to Europe? Do the local media report this news or instead does public opinion rely only on European and pan-Arab media? If migration issues are debated in the local media, how do they depict the migrants? What is the impact on public opinion and would-be migrants?

What does the audience think about the European tendentious and discriminatory reports on migrants? What are the Maghrebi governments' attitudes towards media in regards to migration issues?

After these two introductory chapters the book offers five case study which focus on Algeria, Morocco and Libya.

Chapter three centers its attention on Algeria and has been written by Assia Kaced. Her study is based on news analysis and the research questions she is addressing through this chapter are strictly bounded up with the treatment of local newspapers of issues such Algerian clandestine migration. Through her analysis the reader will find answer to the next questions: what is the position of the media towards the illegal immigrant as an individual? In other words, how does the media represent the illegal immigrant for its readership? Is the harraga a hero to be admired or a victim to be pitied? To what extent do media representations of the harraga reinforce or change current national perceptions as well as social attitudes and values?

Methodologically speaking, Kaced have identified and analyzed the main narratives and themes found in two Algerian dailies. She has concentrated on the representation of the would-be illegal immigrants in both *El Chourouk* and *El Watan*. Her choice of the two dailies has been based, on the one hand on the fact that they are the two top publications in Algeria, and on the other hand, on the fact that one is in Arabic (*El Chourouk*) and the other in French (*El Watan*), thus covering almost 90 percent of the literate population in the country. For the two newspapers, she has chosen the main articles covering the year 2008 and the first term of 2009 that makes a total of 119 articles.

Chapter four is devoted to Algeria as well and Hocine Labdeloui has been the author. His chapter follows the methodology used by Assia Kaced in the previous study. Labdeloui acknowledges that migration related issues are very widely and commonly treated by the Algerian press. Algerian clandestine immigration is known as harraga and those called harragas identify the actors. By analyzing the Algerian press, illegal immigration of African or Asian nationals and the professional and social success of those Algerians living abroad, are the themes that arouse more attention and interest. Labdeloui's objective aims at testing the validity of his hypothesis. A research question that is very much related to the elements intervening in the construction of the social imaginary. Hence by highlighting the success of Algerians living abroad, the Algerian press might encourage

in certain ways immigration by illegal means, and, conversely, at the same time, a totally opposite and paradoxal public discourse is done when the Algerian press condemn those harragas who are trying to flee from their country.

Traveling now to Morocco, Moha Ennaji in chapter five aims to explore the symbolic dimensions of migration and the impact of media on both sides of the Mediterranean on Moroccans by investigating the relationship between young Moroccans' long-term consumption of Western media texts, other communicative channels included, and their mental and physical emigrations to the West. Enaji is interested in studying the ways migrant families rely on the media of both their home and their host countries and the ways the media shape migrants and youth attitudes toward migration and both Muslim and Western cultures. The role of the media and communication, either as "a bridge to homeland" or more recently as a link between the home and the receiving country, has been increasingly vital in diasporas experiences. The chapter also deals with the way the media have contributed to the migration culture which has been developing among Maghrebis since the 1970s.

Following some of the hypothesis presented in the preceding case study, Ivan Ureta develops in chapter six (through a quantitative and qualitative methodology) an assessment on the impact and influence of ICTs and the media in 'migratory contexts'. It only considers sending and transit countries.¹ 'Migratory contexts' mean those places where migratory pressure is high, whether they are receiving, transit or destination countries, and where a practical and ideal social imaginary 'lives' and 'operates' beyond occlusive boundaries, geographically, socially, politically and culturally speaking. These limitations quickly fall away when a user logs onto the Internet. This connection permits, in a way, an "on-site migration". This concept will be a cornerstone for understanding our statements regarding relations among ICTs, migratory intentions and socio-economic performance.

In drawing this conceptual framework, the research focuses on North Africa, especially Morocco, although Tunisia and Algeria are considered as well. This context offers a privileged panorama to do this kind of research

1 Although Maghreb countries are mainly sending and transit countries it is necessary to specify that these countries are destination countries as well. But for this research they will be considered sending and transit countries.

because migration rates are very high, there is an important colonial past and the development of ICTs are among the highest in Africa and the whole Arab world.

Chapter seven closes this first block of North African chapters. Taieb Elbahloul's chapter offer a rare and unique perspective from one of the most unknown and most criticised countries of the Maghreb, Libya. It is not common in this kind of book to find a chapter written by a Libyan and on Libya. Elbahloul recognises that the media as well as modern information technologies are considered nowadays as the most prominent achievement of modern science techniques and Libya is not an exception. Their impact on the form and substance of the individual and group has become clear and recognizable. This chapter, therefore, will touch upon the values associated with the use of these means of information. Moreover, it will focus on discussing the role that media can play in the development of various sectors in Libya such as education, training, commerce, health, government, and social matters. However, since migration became a world problem, the paper will also explore the ways and means the media can play in fighting the forces behind migration and marginalization in Africa such as poverty, corruption and drug trafficking that affects Libyan society. Finally his analysis will put forward a number of recommendations that might help in solving the problem of migration by suggesting for example the narrowing of the gap between those who possess and control information technology and those who have not yet moved beyond the traditional social stage.

By crossing now the Gibraltar strait, Spain is not only the first country with which the reader meets, it is also a very interesting case study regarding migration and media issues. In considering some northern Mediterranean countries such as Spain, Italy, France, Malta or Greece, we can observe that the growth of international immigrants as a percentage of the population has been much more dramatic in Spain than in the other mentioned countries. From 2000 to 2010 this figure has shifted from a mere 4 percent to a staggering 14 percent. This indicator is a sufficient and justified cause to choose Spain as an important case study.

Taking up the Spanish case, in chapter eight, Nicolás Lorite, assesses the informative treatment of immigration and intercultural dinamization of Spanish mass media. Lorite's main research questions are as follows: Do Spanish media play an integrative role or do they lean towards discriminatory models? Do they foment miscegenation? Do they produce racist ef-

fects? Do they treat immigration in a good or bad way? Do they tackle migratory realities with informative, quality criteria or do they produce and reproduce sensational discourses? Do they dynamise interculturality or only intraculturality?

This kind of analysis should be done avoiding rhetorical or emotive points of view. That is why the author, by developing a strong methodological approach which combines qualitative and quantitative data, tries to answer these questions by referring to the migratory processes and socio-communicative transformations which Spanish society has undergone since the middle of the '90s. In that sense, his analysis is very valuable for understanding in greater depth these issues that should go beyond the limits of a politically correct public discourse.

Selecting the second case study has not been difficult. Chapter nine brings the reading public to Malta, one of the most affected countries in the Mediterranean by illegal inflows of immigrants. Carmen Sammut states that journalism does not merely observe and report immigration issues in a detached way. As observed by many media scholars, journalism also has a strong potential to set agendas, to construct and to reinforce social realities. In their role as public intellectuals journalists can help foster community deliberation about a workable and realistic management of migratory flows in receiving countries. This chapter focuses on journalism in the Maltese islands, which presents a particularly interesting case study. The islands are placed at the heart of the EuroMed region; throughout their history the sea relatively isolated them while it also served as a crossing that totally immersed them in regional events. The Maltese media began to report the arrival of boatfuls of irregular sub-Saharan African immigrants at the beginning of the millennium.

Her study empirically explores how the complex unfolding scenario brought new dilemmas for journalists: a) as they struggled to draw a line between clear public anxieties and the rise of racist paranoia that led to xenophobic attitudes; b) to determine the space and visibility given to the views of far-right and anti-immigrant groups; c) to mediate immigrant interests and perspectives. It is argued that media practices and journalists' lived experience can only partly help us understand immigrant representations in media content. News discourse is not merely influenced by journalistic professional ideology, by personal attitudes towards immigration or by the news audiences' wants and needs. We need to look beyond professional and cultural explanations to take account of political and economic

considerations that may influence ways in which media representations of immigration and news texts are constructed.

Chapter ten is the last of this series. It has been jointly written by Ivan Ureta and Annemarie Profanter. To close this book, we wanted to discuss how public discourse has fuelled in Switzerland a visceral political campaign banning the construction of new minarets. Ureta and Profanter recognize that the Swiss controversy has surely alerted western societies regarding to what extent, in contemporary, developed and democratic countries, political discourse can provoke serious damages to unsuspected levels. This case study reveals first of all, how the political discourse can take advantage of the international context to promote an initiative against groups perfectly integrated in hosting societies. Second, it will show how the results of this referendum are not an isolated event. Over the past years and especially from 2006 onwards, the current first Swiss political force, started to promote a number a populist political campaigns using, irresponsibly, threatening images regarding foreign communities. It will be demonstrated as well that beyond the degree of education, economic development and social 'engagement', a properly orchestrated populist and simplistic discourse can achieve notable results. This is even more shocking in a 'neutral' country with a long-standing tradition of humanitarian aid and multiculturalism. Finally this success can legitimize and enhance extremist political discourses in neighbor countries like Italy, Germany, France, The Netherlands, the UK (etc.,) and, through that, promote an hostile social environment within a context of political orientation to the right-wing as was certified during the last European parliamentary elections.

Concluding this introduction, the contributors of this book, the team who was involved since the beginning in this project and myself, wish the reader good moments of reflection. We hope this book will help to erode and to undermine the hard wall that separates countries and cultures. The toughest wall, afterall, is not physical but mental.

Ivan Ureta
Lugano

North Africa

Politics of Media Management in the Three Maghreb Countries: Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia

VICKEN CHETERIAN

Introduction

“Paradoxical” is the word to describe the situation and developmental level of mass media in the three Maghreb countries: Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Causes outside the sector have pushed media and journalists to the forefront of social and political activities. In the absence of developed political institutions, such as political party systems, parliaments and civic organizations, the media have come to replace them without the qualifications nor the legitimacy to play that role. At the same time, political choices taken by the state hinder the development of the media itself: state control over electronic media, punishing journalists who go ‘too far’ in revealing taboos or outright censorship continue to be practised in the three countries, although in different degrees and manners. Yet, it is the political intervention of those in power that is the major obstacle for the development of mass media in the Maghreb. Consequently, the most dynamic media development is associated with political reforms, as it is the case in Morocco, while the most stagnating situation is in Tunisia where slow economic liberalization and privatization is accompanied by increasing political dominance over the last pockets of alternative discourse and organization.

The three Maghreb countries are in a phase of economic liberalization, under the influence of the global markets and European Union accords. This liberalization is taking place in a period when the economic model on which Western media sector was based – that is the overwhelming dependence on the publicity market – is revealing itself to be unsustainable, raising questions about the future of print press, as well as the future of journalism in general. In the Maghreb region, the relationship between the market and the media sector is somewhat different. Economic

transformation is simultaneously changing instruments of domination from statist to domination based on economic and financial means. This process is creating possibilities of competition between different oligarchic clans, and therefore the reflection of a certain pluralism in the media sector.

While talking to dozens of media professionals in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, the simultaneous feelings of potential being the forefront of political struggles and reforms and continued frustrations due to the fear of retaliation are omnipresent. In Morocco, journalists test the limits of reforms and whether they can trespass taboos, occasionally with repressive reactions. In Algeria, journalists struggle while living in haunted houses. Literally every editorial building houses the memories of assassinated colleagues, killed for being journalists during the civil war of the last decade. In Tunisia, a generation of journalists who enjoyed greater freedoms in the past fight to preserve traditions and pass them on to the new generation in increasingly hostile political conditions.

The daily struggle of journalists in the Maghreb is happening while the media, information and entertainment industries are rapidly transforming. More than in any other domain, media and communication *is* globalization. It is its driving force, its infrastructure, its (virtual) image and identity. Whether state censors like it or not, satellite TV sets, mobile phones, personal computers and internet access is already appropriated by a new generation hungry for a different life. The desperate attempts of the ruling circles to censor print press, dominate electronic media and even block access to the internet are desperate, rear-guard struggles of ageing elites unable to cope with modern times yet desiring to control it. The outcome of their instinctive actions is migration. First, physically, where a whole generation of children of independence reject the achievements of their parent's generation: the secular state that promises progress yet practices censorship and repression. Then, symbolically, by refusing the state propaganda and censored and tamed media by migrating to foreign media sources, e.g., European and Arab Gulf-based satellite TV stations and multiple sources on the internet. In a globalized media sector, censorship and repression fail to stop information from flowing and lead to only one result: to impoverish national media structures and open the national market for the intervention and influence of foreign media companies.

This study will describe the current, paradoxical state in which the media in the Maghreb finds itself. It is based on over sixty interviews I carried out with journalists and media experts in Tunisia, Algeria and

Morocco in the second half of 2007.¹ It will first look at the media sector country by country, where major differences separate media realities as much as international borders, before concluding with a comparative analysis.

Algerian Media: Criticism and its Limitations

Political Context

The Algerian press has suffered the same wounds as the rest of the society: democratization at the beginning of the '90s has led to a bloody civil war. While liberalisation offered the possibility of new experiments to the press sector, the civil war that accompanied the change has dealt a blow to the press and journalists. During the civil war, over 76 Algerian journalists were murdered, a huge figure for a country that had just started political liberalization and media pluralism. The losses have left deep traces on the psyche of media professionals, and the media sector in general. No society can replace such a loss in such a short term. At the entry of almost all editorial bureaus, one can find a monument or a plate on which several names are engraved, those of colleagues killed or assassinated for being journalists during the dark decade of the 1990s.

However, in Algeria, the media and, more particularly, the written press remain one of the most independent and free sectors and play a more significant role than the one played by traditional press elsewhere. The description of a report released a decade ago remains valid today: "In the Algerian society, the private newspapers represent today the only independent organisations, with a given force, a fair independence and a

1 This study was possible thanks to a mandate by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to study the situation of media in the Maghreb countries – Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. It is based on three missions I have carried out in Tunisia (September 2007), in Algeria (November 2007) and in Morocco (December 2007), respectively. I would like to thank SDC for allowing me to publish my findings, to Aurélie Perrin, my colleague at CIMERA, for her assistance, and the support of the Swiss Embassy in Tunis, the Swiss Cooperation Bureau in Alger and the Swiss Embassy in Rabat, which I am honoured to thank here.

weak autonomy”². In fact, the media are one of the rare domains of freedom and independence in a country still struggling with the permanent threat of violence. “The media have become, unwillingly, a centre of power. This is not a good thing in itself. It is so because other centres of power are absent”, according to Adlène Meddi, reporter at *El Watan*.³ In a context where the political parties are losing their legitimacy on the account of their alliance with the ruling circles, the print press gives the impression of taking the role left behind by the opposition parties.

The print press has played a key role in the democratisation process in Algeria in the 80s. The Algerian Journalists Movement (*Mouvement des Journalistes Algériens*), founded in 1988, has struggled for freedom of expression, democratisation and the end of the one-party monopoly. Many of those journalists were members, or former members, of the underground party *Avant Garde Socialiste* (PAGS, the former communist party). Some later benefited from the liberalisation of the press sector by launching their own papers, thus contributing to media diversification. Abdelwahab Djakoun, the current editor-in-chief of *La Nouvelle République* and a former member of the PAGS, said “It is the former Stalinists who are running the newspaper business today”, and adds, “And if they are not Stalinists, they are former members of the FLN! [Front de Liberation National, the former ruling party in Algeria]”, underlining the paradox that former supporters of one-party ideologies are today’s supporters of freedom of speech and political pluralism. Djakoun added that, in his opinion, Algerian media today enjoy large freedoms. “In terms of media freedoms, Algeria is just after Lebanon,” he concluded⁴.

During the civil war, the majority of journalists – from secular traditions – supported the militaries against the *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS)⁵. Those who had opposing positions were marginalized, on the one side, by political repression and, on the other side, by terrorism from armed Is-

2 *International Crisis Group*, “Entre Menace, Censure et Liberté, La presse privée algérienne se bat pour survivre”, Report Algeria, No. 1, April 1998.

3 Author interview with Adlène Meddi, journalist at *El Watan*, Algiers, 7th of November 2007.

4 Author interview with Abdelwahab Djakoun, editor-in-chief of *Le Nouvelle République*, Algiers, 7th of November 2007.

5 Barbara Vignaux, “Une presse libérée, mais menacée” in *Le Monde diplomatique*, March 2004. Available at: <<http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2004/03/VIGNAUX/10851>>. All URLs have been re-retrieved on the 29th of October 2010.

lamic groups. Today, it seems there is a tacit agreement among the Algerian media on the taboos they won't tackle, e.g., governmental politics towards the FIS in 1992 and the cancellation of the parliamentary elections, the civil war, missing people (over 10,000), torture in prison or corruption in public fields.

Another tacit agreement established since the start of the civil war, is how to cover the on-going, low-intensity civil war. Algerian papers publish front page articles and pictures about continuous violence perpetrated by salafi-jihadi groups. Those articles are full of detailed descriptions, such as the movement of the guerrilla groups (from village x to mountain y), their numbers, names and pseudonyms, even the armament they carry. Some of the violent attacks take place in far away provinces, but others are a mere half-hour drive from central Algiers, where the newspaper offices are concentrated. I regularly asked Algerian journalists whether they have had the experience of meeting those guerrillas their newspapers describe in such detail, but none had done so⁶. Information about Islamic guerrillas, and security in general, is the monopoly of the ruling Algerian security services and, for over a decade-and-a-half, the Algerian media has agreed to publish press releases received from the security agencies as ersatz journalism.

According to Radouane Boudjema, journalism professor at the university of Alger, the problem lies in the difficulties accessing information. In his opinion, journalists may generally criticise corruption in Algeria, for instance, but they cannot investigate about corruption or write in precise terms how corruption is practised by the state administration. He quotes the outrageous example of the bankruptcy of the al-Khalifa financial group which cost the Algerian state some 1.2 billion USD.⁷ Yet, no Algerian paper did any investigation about the background of this highly

6 For example, one article signed by Anis Rahmani refers to "*concording sources*" to describe the killing of Hareq Zuheir, known as "Sufyan Abu Haydara", in an operation carried out by a moving checkpoint of the Algerian army in the province of Titi Uzu, some 100km to the east of the capital. The article describes, in some detail, the clash between the armed group and the military which led to the death of the Islamist leader and two of his companions. See *Echourouk*, 9th of October 2007, page 3.

7 Menouar Zeid, "El Khalif Bank ou Le Scandale des Scandales", *Algeria Interface*. Available at: <<http://www.algeria-watch.org/fr/article/eco/khalifa/scandale.htm>>.

intriguing story and none was carried out by the Algerian media. In the words of Boujema: "We can criticise the ministries and the Walis (governors), but we cannot criticise those appointing the Walis and the ministries".⁸ Mohamed Mehdi, chief of bureau in Alger of the newspaper *Quotidien d'Oran*, fears that the "prohibition to investigate may start to extend to the economic sector, to Djezi [mobile phone operator] for instance,"⁹ with the increasing privatization of the economic sphere.

The Algerian Media Scene

Algerian media is experiencing a conflicting situation: a state monopoly on electronic media co-exists with privately owned print media. It is the reflection of a conflicting public policy towards the media, where the prerogative to have independent media is transcended by the wish to control and exploit the broadcasting of mass information.

The Algerian state also influences the newspaper business through its control of advertising, although the recent development of private companies (especially in the automobile retail and mobile telecommunications fields) has supplied an alternative source of advertising for the press.

After a decade of functioning under a constant emergency regime, some of the more successful newspapers are considering important investments in their infrastructure. *El-Khabar*, the leading Arabic language daily, has purchased new premises for its editorial offices as well as its printing house in the capital, in cooperation with the francophone weekly *El Watan*. These two newspapers have joined forces to develop their own distribution system. Next, *el-Khabar* invested in developing its private printing facilities in the cities of Oran and Constantine, two major cities on the Mediterranean. Similarly, the newspaper *Quotidien d'Oran* has purchased its own printing facilities. Many other leading newspapers have similar plans.

The investments mentioned above confirm what many sources in Algiers have underlined: printed media is a profitable business in Algeria

8 Author interview with Redouane Boujema, Professor in Communication Sciences at the University of Algiers, Algiers, 11th of November 2007.

9 Author interview with Mohamed Mahdi, journalist and head of the Algiers office of *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, Algiers, 11th of November 2007.

today. This could explain the reason why new titles are still being launched in a sector already overcrowded with dailies. The two Arab newspapers *al-Jazair News*¹⁰ and *Ennahar el Jadid*¹¹ are newcomers to the Algerian media scene.

The Algerian print media are the most important by size in the Maghrebi region. The total volume of newspapers printed in a single day reaches up to 1,400,000 copies, compared to only 500,000 in neighbouring Morocco. *El-Khabar*, alone, has a print-volume of almost 640,000 copies, hence greater than the aggregate volume of the papers printed in Morocco. There are over 50 newspapers in Algeria, and more than 140 titles are registered. The “number of titles, however, does not reflect a real variety; there is no partisan or specialised press in the country” according to Ali Djeri, chief editor of *el-Khabar*.¹² Abdennasser Djabi, underlines the absence of local press, important for a country’s development.¹³ Like the political and economic system, nearly all newspapers are based in the capital. Despite the abundance of newspapers, the absence of weekly publications in the Algerian media scene is symptomatic: Algerian journalism is characterised by covering immediate events, and in its incapacity to place those events in a wider context. A leftover of the early 1990s, the period in which both the modern Algerian press was born and the civil war erupted, the Algerian media give too much space to covering violence, political or otherwise, while some attention to social issues is just beginning to appear.

The weakness of the press can be explained by a total lack of structures and institutions that could supporting and assist the functioning of the media sector. Today, Algeria has no functioning journalists union, editors union, research centre producing relevant studies on social, economic or political issues or training centres for journalism and research in the media domain. In the absence of these institutions and research centres, and since government bodies have no obligation to communicate, access to information can be difficult.

10 See the web site of el-Djazair News: <www.djazairnews.info>.

11 See the website of Ennahar El-Jadid: <<http://www.ennaharonline.com/ar/>>.

12 Author interview with Ali Djeri, editor-in-chief of el-Khabar, Algiers, 5th of November 2007.

13 Author interview with Abdenasser Djabi, Professor of Sociology at the University of Algiers, Algiers, 9th of November 2007.

In a country where the exit from the one party system has led to civil war, the institutional weaknesses directly influence the quality of the media products. The content of the paper press suffers from various deficiencies. Despite having 56 newspapers currently published, out of which, over 40 are published in the capital, there is little pluralism in form and content. The printed Algerian media have little imagination and tend to copy one another. Regarding content, it is often criticised by the same journalists as over-politicized, partisan, and opinion-journalism, lacking investigation and precise information.

Legal Aspects

In 1989, constitutional amendments cancelled political domination of the media sector and confirmed the commitment of the state towards freedom of expression. The information code, enacted on 3rd of April 1990, put an end to the government monopoly over printed media. For the first time since independence, the publication of private papers and magazines was authorised. In order to foster the emergence of new publications, the state granted the equivalent of two years of wages to those journalists wishing to leave the public sector and launch their own publication. This enabled the birth of several newspapers during the 90s¹⁴.

After the declaration of a state of emergency in February 1992, a decree on terrorism and subversion, dated 30 September 1992, strengthened government control over the press, providing for incarceration of journalists and suspension of newspapers. The law prohibits the publication of all information related to national security issues without prior authorisation, or that “What concerns information related to terrorism and subversion. Mass media of all nature are obliged to spread only official communications.”¹⁵

Both the information code and the criminal code have been amended to increase press restrictions, banning the publication of articles offending

14 For more details on media laws in Algeria, see the report entitled “Algeria: Introduction/Brief History of Media Laws and Legislation”, Internews, available at: <<http://www.internews.org/regions/mena/amr/algeria.pdf>>.

15 See the document entitled “Arrete Interministeriel Relatif au Traitement de l’Informations Caractère Securitaire”, available at: <<http://www.algeria-watch.org/farticle/docu/censure.htm>>.

the President, the Parliament, the justice system, the National Popular Army or any other public institution. Similarly, criminal sanctions towards publishers, chief editors or journalists, for any violation whatsoever, have increased. In 1995, these sanctions have become an integral part of the Algerian criminal code.

Algerian law bars foreign media from printing local editions in Algeria. *El-Khabar*, which had planned to publish an Arabic supplement of the French monthly *Le Monde Diplomatique*, could not implement the project.

The circular adopted in 1993 granted ANEP (*Entreprise Nationale de communication, d'Édition et de Publicité*) a state monopoly on advertising in the public sector. This gave the state the financial means to exert pressure on public and private media.

Journalism Training

Training programmes for journalists is a major problem in Algeria. At the university level, journalism training courses exist, but only in the Arabic language, while a number of media institutions function in French. The university training programme, and its level, does not correspond to contemporary needs. Abrous Outoudert, a communication consultant says of it, “those coming out from university cannot write [...] there is a lack of training policy [in the media domain]”.¹⁶ According to Ali Djerri, of *el-Khabar*, “In the university, they train journalism technicians” and he adds, “What is lacking in Algeria is professional training”.¹⁷

Media Support Programmes

Both the EU and US state agencies like the USAID, support democracy promotion in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, which includes Algeria. Promoting independent journalism has been considered a key institution of democratic political systems. Hence, both EU and USAID, as well as other European and American foundations, have sup-

16 Author interview with Abrous Outoudert, Communication Consultant, Algiers, 6th of November 2007.

17 Author interview, *op. cit.*

ported media development programmes in Algeria. For historic and geographic reasons, the influence of the EU in this domain is highly relevant. As early as 1995, the EU proposed to its southern and Eastern Mediterranean neighbours (that is, in the Mashrek and the Maghreb countries) a 'Euro-Mediterranean partnership'. This process, known as the Barcelona Process had, besides its security cooperation and economic interests, the ambition of cultural rapprochement which included EU support to civil society in its southern-neighbouring countries.¹⁸

A number of analysts believe that the EU failed in its efforts at promoting democracy in Algeria mainly because of European political ambiguity towards Algeria. On one hand, EU rhetoric insists on democratic values, freedom of media and democratic control over the armed forces, but, on the other, it is confronted with its *realpolitik* interests in collaboration with the Algerian authorities and keeping the status quo in that important country.¹⁹ As a result, and in spite of important resources put to work, the media support programmes had difficulties taking off. One € 3 million EU project for journalist training could not be implemented on account of administrative obstacles. According to Klaus Koerner of the European Commission in Algiers, the delegation arranged visits to European capitals for Algerian journalists who specialise on European issues, as well as seminars for journalists from the Mediterranean region²⁰. The European Union adopted an ambitious project to train journalists from the South as well as Eastern Mediterranean, and from countries to the East of the EU. It is a 3-year-long programme that aims at training, as well as regular exchange between its participants.

Many international NGOs arrange seminars on media, or *ad hoc* training for journalists, under the media perspective as elements of a global democratisation programme. Among the organisations active in Algeria, we may cite the Friedrich Ebert foundation, with offices in Algiers and the National Democratic Institute, which has no representative bureau in the country.

18 For more information see the official site of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/euromed/index_en.htm>.

19 Aylın Güney and Aslıhan Celenk, "The European Union's Democracy Promotion Policies in Algeria: Success or Failure?", *The Journal of North African Studies*, Vol. 12, Issue 1, March 2007, page 120 (pp. 109–128).

20 Author interview with Klaus Koerner, European Commission delegation to Algeria, Algiers, 6th of November 2007.

Morocco Cycle: Reform, Criticism, Repression

Political Context

The press in Morocco mirrors the paradoxes of a country in transition. The questions are how to consolidate the acquired freedom and, mainly, how to use the existing press freedom? While the majority of journalists focus on existing taboos and denounce the authorities, the state pressures or the financial manipulations of the state as means by which to control the free space and the independent media sector, the real problems are probably elsewhere. The most crucial issue is defining the media role and professional journalistic criteria in the present-day Morocco. Without a social role, the press will become a tool of the privileged elite, not rooted in the population and, therefore, they shall not be able to become a 'fourth power'. An independent press can only be constituted reflecting the interests and concerns of the public opinion from the society which it mirrors. Today, the Moroccan press sector still needs time and evolution in order to support the democratisation process in Morocco and the greater Arab world.

Considering the existing freedom of expression and the challenges it must cope with, the media sector is highly dynamic and is undergoing the most interesting evolution in the entire Arab World. On one side, the press is in a phase of rapid development thanks to the political opening of the country. Its major challenge today is not just to fight for freedom of expression, but to also define the best way to use this recently acquired freedom. The potential of the Moroccan media today is in their capacity to inform and engage, rather than to continue tearing down walls and unearthing scoops.

In the majority of interviews that I carried out, after piling up critics on the status of the media in their country, the journalists and publishers concluded "It is true that Morocco is the country enjoying the greatest space of press freedom in the Arab world, except may be for Lebanon". This media opening gives room to experimentations. Journalists constantly try to break taboos and further push the limits of ruling authorities' tolerances, publishing articles often 'provocative' towards the monarch, the religion, the armed forces and opening debates concerning the question of 'territorial integrity' or the status of the Western Sahara. These experimentations

often lead to conflict between journalists and their editors on the one side, and the authorities on the other. It is not unusual that court cases against journalists incur heavy fines, leading to the closing of newspapers and, in some cases, even the exile of media professionals in order to escape imprisonment.²¹ Moroccan press also innovates its form. *Nichane*, for instance, an Arab version of the weekly paper *TelQuel*, is published in an Arabic language close to Moroccan vernacular (*darej*) instead of the standard Arabic language (*fish'a*), an experimentation we had not seen in the Arab world since the '70s.

While newspapers challenge the existing political taboos (the monarch, religion and territorial integrity), it is often confronted by a largely conservative public opinion. After *Le Journal Hebdomadaire* published caricatures of the prophet Mohammed, an angry crowd attacked its offices in retaliation (13th–14th of February 2006). A newspaper in Arabic, launched in 2006, *al-Massae*, has built its success capitalising on conservative public opinion.²²

The state employs various means of pressure on the media to keep journalists in line. One of the means, often mentioned during my interviews, is financial pressure. The very coercive *al-Makhzan*, an informal circle of powerful men close to the king, has great influence on the private economy and cuts the advertising revenues of publications annoying the monarch²³. Other means of pressure are the closing of newspapers and trials condemning them to excessive fines. Aboubakr Jamai, founder of the *Journal Hebdomadaire*, was condemned, along with one of his colleagues, to pay a fine equal to three million dirham (approximately € 290,000) for libel towards Claude Moniquet, a researcher based in Brussels, over a report on the West Sahara. Aboubakr Jamai was forced to leave Morocco and currently lives in the United States. Otherwise, the authori-

21 For instance, *Nichane* a weekly magazine in the Arabic language was suspended for having “insulted” Islam and the newspaper *TelQuel* was ordered to pay a fine of dirham 500,000. The *Journal Hebdomadaire* was ordered to pay a fine of dirham 3,100,000 for its article on Western Sahara, compelling its editor to leave the country.

22 *Al-Massae* was heavily fined nearly 700 thousand USD for “defamation” against public officials in a series of articles published in 2007 concerning a presumed “gay marriage” in al-Kasr al-Kabir. See Khalil bin al-Shahb, “Morocco’s Daily *al-Massae* Faces Closure After Court Levies \$ 700 Thousand Fine”, *Menassat*, 10th of November 2008. Available at: <<http://www.menassat.com/?q=en/news-articles/5123-moroccos-daily-al-masa-faces-closure-after-court-levies-700-thousand-fine>>.

23 See C. R. Pennell, *Morocco since 1830: A History*, Hurst, London, 2001.

ties were entitled to seize ownership of the newspaper. There are increasing signs that the Makhzan is using its financial clout to gain influence within the emerging independent media sector. According to recent press reports, Prince Mawlai Hisham was close to buying *Le Journal Hebdomadaire* – the flagship of Moroccan press freedom – in 2004.²⁴

Moroccan Media Scenario

Moroccan press has traditionally been split between an official press, such as *Le Matin*, and a partisan press, published by the political parties in Parliament. In the last few years, a private press sector is developing in the country, introducing a new dynamism. The audio-visual sector remains under state control and the information programmes reflect the official line²⁵.

Moroccan press, like the rest of society, exists in rapid expansion. On one side, there is the pluralism of increasing freedoms and critical articles and, on the other side, weak content, characterised by a large quantity of comments and little factual material, a lack of professional criteria, poor infrastructure hindering newspaper distribution especially in the provinces, etc. Therefore, several objective elements hinder the rapid growth of the Moroccan press:

- low literacy rates: officially, 47 percent of the population is illiterate and this leads to the fact that the press market is composed of only half of the 33 million aggregate population;
- the low level of purchasing power: in a country where 19 percent of the population lives under the national poverty line and where 15 percent lives with less than € 2 per day, a newspaper, even for only 2.5 dirham (0.22 EUR), is too expensive for a great part of the population;
- difficulty of distribution: newspapers in the rural regions are hard to deliver because of under-developed roads and means of communication;
- difficulties accessing information: opaque official decision bodies make this very complicated.

24 See the interview of Ali Amar, director of *Le Journal*, in *al-Massae*, 7th of July 2009.

25 Last year a dozen of licenses were granted for opening private radio stations (mostly FM), often to people close to power.

One of the problems of the Moroccan press is its fragility. The press sector is very weak and its resources are scarce. All the freedoms are conditional on the current official policies and are not based on strong demands from the society: “If tomorrow the press freedoms were suddenly restricted and we, the journalists, take the street to protest, we would be alone and without any support of the public”, declared Khalid Belyazid, editor of the group Eco-Media²⁶. Moroccan media is essentially elitist, addressed to the urbanites and mostly financed by advertising revenues. For example, the French language newspapers have lesser circulation compared to the Arabic-language press, but it is more profitable thanks to the advertising market.

The aggregate volume of newspaper sales is approximately 400,000 copies per day. The Arabic-speaking newspapers, though they have massive distributions, house just a handful of journalists. *Al-Massae* (sale: 124,000 copies/day) employs only thirty-five journalists, *Le Journal Hebdomadaire*, fifteen, and the weekly paper *al-Watan al-Aan*, seven. There are not many trained journalists in the country, because, after having graduated in media studies at ISIC (*Institut Supérieur de l'Information et de la Communication*), they look for jobs in public administration or private companies. Work as a journalist is tiring and often underpaid. The dynamic development of the Moroccan press and the great number of publications leads to a reality whereby the existing human resources are stretched to their limit.

If we consider the complexity of the country and the distances and difficulties to accessing information, the reasons why the Moroccan press prefer commenting rather than investigating and supplying facts become evident. Paradoxically, and despite the bold positions taken and the freedom it enjoys, Moroccan press contributes very little to the societal debates. Due to a lack of traditions and qualified human resources, the press is more at ease in the role of commentator rather than researcher and investigator in contributing to a constructive debate on societal choices.

During my mission in Morocco (December 2007), the prevailing topic in the press was the feast of an allegedly homosexual marriage in Kasr al-Kabir. Video recordings of it appeared on YouTube. The editor of *al-Massae*, Rachid Nini, published several comments requesting “the restoration of the moral order”. These comments were considered the cause behind a rash of

26 Author interview with Khalid Belyazid, editor of the group Eco-Média, Casablanca, 13th of December 2007.

anti-gay riots, during which a crowd of several hundred people, after Friday prayers, marched to attack the house in which the alleged feast had taken place. This case led to a heated polemic between *al-Massae* on one side, and *TelQuel/Nichane* and the *Journal* on the other, over issues such as societal morality, the defence of individual freedoms and minority rights.

Al-Massae, launched only in 2006 by the former commentator of *al-Sabah* Rasheed Nini, became a huge success. It has become the kingdom's most important newspaper, with a printing of up to 160,000 copies and sales of approximately 124,000 copies daily. Its sales represent more than one fourth of the total of all newspapers in the country. "We have brought fifty thousand new readers to the newspapers, who have purchased a newspaper for the first time in their life", Toufik Bouachrine, chief editor of *al-Massae*, said.²⁷ The newspaper also launched a women's monthly publication *Najma*, with the intention of launching a newspaper in French titled *Maroc Soir*. Bouachrine also intends to purchase a printing house. "Our revenue is composed for 70 percent by sales and advertising just represents 30 percent", adds Bouachrine. Nonetheless, for many journalists and publishing editors, *al-Massae* is problematic. It is often perceived as a populist newspaper, mingling comments and facts, breaks solidarity among journalists and imposes a reactionary vision in the political development of Morocco.

According to Khalid Belyazid of Eco-Media, Morocco has entered the electronic communication era and digital world before consolidating its paper press. An opening process of the audio-visual market commenced last year with the granting of ten authorisations for private radio stations, mainly for entertainment programmes. Morocco also has more than 400,000 internet users, most with fast web access, albeit the information services on the web are rare, if not completely absent. Many publishing editors, like Ali Amar, of the *Journal*, are aware of this weakness and interested in developing e-pages in their newspapers.

The role of political Islam is a significant topic in the Moroccan media. The publication of a sociological study supported by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation has drawn much attention to the Moroccan media²⁸. The *Centre for Media Freedom Middle East and North Africa* (CMF MENA)

27 Author interview with Toufik Bouachrine, chief editor of *al-Massae*, Casablanca, 13th of December 2007.

28 Mohammed El Ayadi, Hassan Rachik, Mohamed Tozy, *L'islam au quotidien, Enquête sur les valeurs et les pratiques religieuses au Maroc*, Ed. Prologues, Casablanca, 207, 272 p.

published another study on the press and political Islam in Morocco, presenting the conclusions of four researchers. The number of publications reveals that, despite the fact that religion is considered taboo, there is rich and pluralistic debate on the topic. This also demonstrates the relevance of religion and political Islam in the media coverage, as well as the relevance of modern Islamic movements in Moroccan politics. One of the recent developments is the launch of the newspaper *al-Adala wa al-Tanmiya*, the newspaper of the party with the same name (Justice and Development) and the recruiting of the professional journalist Abdelhassan el Hassouni as chief editor. He intends to develop the newspaper on the basis of professional criteria.²⁹

Legal Aspects

One of the major difficulties for journalism and the daily functioning of mass media in Morocco is that the state administration has no obligation to provide the media with information. According to a report published recently,

no law, code or administrative rule has been adopted for compelling the official administrator to communicate the information in its possession. The official basks in a culture of secrecy and behaves as if he and not the public is the owner the information he holds.³⁰

The new press code under discussion does not provide any amendment to facilitate access to information. The text, which aims to improve the previous press code dating from 2003, proposes financial sanctions in lieu of the prison sentences currently in use. It further provides the creation of a national council for the press composed of 15 persons, out of which 5 editors and 5 journalists come from the largest unions – namely, the FMEJ (*Fédération marocaine des éditeurs de journaux*) and SNPM (*Syndicat national de la presse marocaine*) – as well as 5 representatives of the civil society. The members of the council will be named

29 Author interview with Abdelhassan el Hassouni, chief editor of *al-Adala wa al-Tanmiya*, Rabat, 12th of December 2007.

30 “Secret d’état, Administration et journaliste au Maroc, le défi du droit à l’information”, *Centre for Media Freedom Middle East and North Africa* (CMF MENA), Casablanca, Mai 2007, page 3.

upon proposal of the competent governmental authority and professional organisations, i. e. FMEJ and the union, which, with the ministry, are going to agree upon a list of 10 names. As to the 5 representatives of the civil society, they will be appointed by His Majesty.³¹

The code also requests that each administration designates an interlocutor for the press. The new structure should also be in charge of drawing up of an ethical chart. Eventually, the code provides for severe sanctions against journalists harming the reverence due to the King or to the members of the royal Sharifian family, religion or the territorial integrity – the three taboos of the political system in Morocco.

Journalists Training

The *Institut Supérieur de l'Information et de la Communication* (ISIC) in Rabat is the main university institute offering journalism training in Morocco. It offers a 'Licence' or Bachelor's degree composed of a four-year, full-time programme. On the fourth year, the students spend two days per week in a media setting. Post-graduate studies last two years plus two months of professional training in a media enterprise for practical experience. The ISIC is a well-established body, whose offices are located in a splendid building in the Rabat suburbs, which gives an impression of its financial capacities. It cooperates with an important network of international organisations and donors.

Paul Daudin Clavaud, a French journalist based in Casablanca has set up the *Médias Training Centre, sàrl*. According to its brochure, the centre offers "trainings and counsels addressed to press and communication professions", and "proposes on-hand and tailored training programmes to media professionals".³²

The group Eco-Médias has set up a private institute for training journalists in Casablanca: the *Ecole Supérieure de Journalisme et de Communication*. Eco-Médias Group is the main media holding in Morocco, owner

31 Houda Filali-Ansary, "Divergences sur le nouveau code de la presse marocaine", *La Vie Eco*, 27th of March 2007. Available at: <<http://www.yabiladi.com/article-politique-1084.html>>.

32 Upon my short visit in Casablanca, I have spoken on the phone with Mr. Clavaud, but I could never meet him due to time constraints.

of *Economiste* and *Assabah*, as well as *Radio Atlantic*. The *Ecole* aims at training young journalists recruited by the holding.

Media Support Programmes

Several international organisations support media development projects in Morocco, but they are mainly punctual projects. Of these projects, we should mention the Ebert Foundation, financing seminars and studies, the Dutch NGO PressNow, supporting projects of enquiry journalism, Internews, cooperating with ISIC and, lastly, the American organisation IREX financing studies on the Moroccan media, helping to develop media laws and organizing conferences to promote “free and professional media”.³³

Tunisia: Repression, Self-Censorship, and a Circle of Dissidents

Political Context

The official politics of Tunisian authorities leave a rigidly narrow margin to exercise what could be identified as journalism, that is, mass writing based on research in the daily social realities of the country. The authorities require journalists’ total loyalties, punishing or continuously harassing any independent initiative. The result of decades-long policies of repression is rather worrying: a largely passive media sector, where the press agencies and newspapers faithfully reproduce the official statements or the minutes of meetings from the various ministries without making any effort to research, verify or comment on the official documents. The media status reflects the situation of Tunisian society in general; the Tunisian state tries to stifle all independent activity, including those of political parties, independent associations, lawyers defending human rights violations, university professors and students and, finally, the media.

33 On May 2005 IREX organized a conference in Morocco entitled “International Media Conference in Morocco Promotes Free and Professional Media” where more than 130 journalists from 40 countries took part. The endeavor was funded by the USAID. Available at: <http://www.irex.org/newsroom/news/2005/0524_mdd.asp>.

The authorities insist that the formal norms in the country provide for independent media. Tunisia has a liberal law on media, which boasts 265 newspapers (out of which 9 are daily papers) published and that there are almost 9,000 associations throughout the country³⁴. However, the state has developed “extra-legal” means to control media and censure journalists. The first mechanism is economic pressure. All public-domain advertising is concentrated in the hands of one agency (*Agence Tunisienne de Communications Externes*), acting more as a coercive body rather than an agency for economic promotion. It is employed as a means of pressure to keep the newspapers within the limits of the official discourse, otherwise running the risk of cutbacks in their advertising revenues.

Tunisian media has experienced censorship for so long that they have developed its own instinctual self-censorship. In Switzerland, the public was shocked to see censorship in practice when the president of the Swiss Confederation, Mr. Samuel Schmidt, had his official speech censored on Tunisian television after he criticised some UN member states for imprisoning citizens over their dissenting views on the Internet or in the press. For Tunisian journalists, censorship takes a much harsher form: the Tunisian attorney Mohammad Abbou regained his freedom in 2007 after being convicted in 2005 for publishing an article on the practice of torture in his country’s prisons. Official and private press is subject to censorship by chief editors who are wary of official backlash. The same occurs on the Internet; several websites are blocked in Tunisia. Some foreign journals, such as *al-Sharq al-Awsat* (Pan-Arab, Saoudian, published in London) as well as *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Le Monde Diplomatique*, are marketed in Tunisia, but they are confiscated if they contain articles criticising the Tunisian situation. Other newspapers, such as *Libération*, *l’Humanité* or *al-Hayat* and *al-Quds al-Arabi* (two Pan-Arab papers also published in London) are simply forbidden.

The media sector reform in Tunisia requires deep changes in the political system. Development of Tunisian media will face difficulties as a result of a police state that does not tolerate any critical view, independent thinking, organization or action. “The journalists have become public servants, they have no more editorial power or independence. It is the administration which decides instead of the editorial body”, according to Lutfi

34 For the official statistics on media, see “The Press in Tunisia: Facts and Figures”. Available at: <<http://www.tunisiaonline.com/media/>>.

Hajji, correspondent for *al-Jazeera* and editor of the Tunisian Independent Journalists Union. “[As a result] we do not have the means any more to discuss the pressing issues of our society”, he added.³⁵ Many media professionals in Tunisia talk about ‘media migration’ towards pan-Arab satellite television stations or to internet sites. Another consequence is a decrease in press sales, for instance, the 50 percent fall over 20 years for *al-Sabah*³⁶. The censored media are no longer interesting to the public, which has easy access to other information sources. The official policy of subjugating the media has emptied the Tunisian media sector of their resources and has disarmed the national industry, opening doors for regional and foreign competitors. The censorship politics begin to press heavily on the media sector. “We are not only late in respect of the international standards, but also in respect to the Arab media: Lebanon, Egyptian and even Moroccan”, says Rachid Khachanneh, chief editor for *al-Maoukif*.³⁷

The Tunisian Media Scenario

There are three categories of media in Tunisia. The official media, which are owned by the state, private media and the opposition media, owned by opposition political parties with parliamentary representation giving them the right to own their party organs. The official press includes newspapers such as *al-Sahifa*, *La Presse*³⁸ or *al-Hurriya*, the press organs of the party in power, Rassemblement Constitutionnel Démocratique (RCD). There are two private media holdings: Dar al-Sabah, publishing *al-Sabah* and *Le Temps* (newspapers, in Arabic and French, respectively); and al-Anwar, publishing the newspapers *El Chourouk* and *Le Quotidien*.

The officially recognised opposition parties have their own publications, such as the *Parti Démocratique Progressiste* (PDP) which has the weekly *al-Maoukif*, with a circulation of 10,000 copies. It should be noted that the authorities regularly hinder the distribution of this weekly. For example, on 14th of March 2008, plain clothed policemen seized the journal

35 Author interview with Lotfi Hajji, correspondent of *al-Jazeera*, Tunis, 3rd of September 2007.

36 <<http://www.assabah.com.tn/>>.

37 Author interview with Rachid Khachanneh, chief editor for *al-Maoukif*, Tunis, 4th of September 2007.

38 See the official web-site of La Presse: <<http://www.lapresse.tn/>>.

from kiosks throughout the country, which, according to the editor-in-chief of the weekly, was to hinder the PDP presidential candidate from campaigning. Another weekly publication, *al-Mouatinoun*, is the organ of the Democratic Forum for Labour and Freedoms; and the *al-Tariq al-Jadida* is a monthly magazine with a printing of 3,000 copies and a press organ of *al-Tariq al-Jadida* (ex-communist party). These three publications, fragile structures and partisan press form the few islands of critical journalism and expression of pluralism in a country where free space is being increasingly restricted. The trade unions also publish *al-Chaab*, which has lost a great deal of popularity, but is still an interesting newspaper.

On 10th of December 1987, Salah Fourti applied for the authorisation to open an independent radio station he named *Radio 7*. President Ben Ali had just come to power “and I hoped a new period had started, that it was time for change”, he said. Fourti was a student in France in 1981 “and [he] lived under Mitterrand the evolution and change of the radio sector there.”³⁹ Yet, he has still not received permission. The initial official answer was that the radio sector was a state monopoly, yet this argument does not hold any longer since the state has distributed a number of licences to private radio and television stations. With six other persons, he founded the Tunisian Association of Free Radios to fight for this authorisation. Since 2005, new television channels such as *Hannibal TV*, and radio stations such as *Radio Mosaique* have started to operate. These new media concessions were given to people close to the president, yet another sign that there will be no rapid liberalization of the sector. On 13th of September 2007, upon order of President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, the radio channel *Ezzeitouna* started to broadcast religious programmes. *Mohamed Sakhr Materi*, husband of the president’s daughter, manages *Ezzeitouna*. Launching a religious radio station is an attempt to limit the influence of Islamic televisions broadcasting from the Arabo-Persian Gulf. It reflects the progression of the cultural Islamization in Tunisia, as well as elsewhere in the Arab world.

Despite the importance of the regional developments for Tunisia, and despite space reserved in Tunisian media for Arabic and international news, the Tunisian newspapers and radio and television stations have no correspondents of their own abroad.

39 Author interview with Salah Fourti, founder of Syndicat Tunisien des Radios Libres, Tunis, 3rd of September 2007.

The media situation in Tunisia is certainly going to evolve on account of two external factors:

- new technologies like satellite television stations and Internet;
- agreements with the EU, whose article 2 deals with respect for Human Rights and which exercises some external pressures, as well as expectations inside the country for more freedom⁴⁰.

Legal Aspects

The Tunisian constitution guarantees freedom of expression and pluralism of media. The state provides financial aid to newspapers belonging to political parties represented in the parliament, including those of the opposition parties (60 percent of a paper's costs are taken care of).⁴¹ Furthermore, the state allocates annual aid of 120,000 Dinar (approximately 110,000 CHF) for newspapers and weekly publications of political parties and 30,000 Dinar (approximately 27,000 CHF) for other publications.

As underlined above, behind this legal facade of state policies supporting media diversity the Tunisian regime practices a policy of censorship and constant harassment of media outside its complete control. For example, the Tunisian authorities do not give press accreditation to a number of journalists, including Lotfi Hajji, President of the unrecognised Union of Independent Tunisian journalists and correspondent for *al-Jazeera*; it censors certain foreign media and websites and hassles independent journalists.

Journalists Training

The Press and Information Science Institute of Tunis University is the main structure for the journalism studies in Tunisia. A semi-official structure, the *Centre Africain de Perfectionnement des Journalistes et des Communicateurs* (CAPJC), offers a vocational training programme for journalists.

40 See the text of the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement in *Official Journal of the European Communities* on establishing an association between the EU countries and Tunisia, article 2. Available at: <http://europa.eu/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/1998/l_097/l_09719980330en00020174.pdf>.

41 <<http://www.tunisie.com/media/>> (official site), see also: <http://www.jurisitetunisie.com/tunisie/codes/constitution/const1005p.htm>>.

Media Support Programmes

The EU has supplied substantial aid for media development in Tunisia, with a budget of 2.15 million euros for 2002–2006. As partner in the project, they chose the *Centre Africain de Perfectionnement des Journalistes et des Communicateurs* (CAPJC), a ‘semi-official’ body. The CAPJC seems to be the privileged structure of the international organisations wishing to develop modules of training in Tunisia. Many interlocutors are highly critical in respect to this project. According to them, only ‘acceptable’ journalists could participate in this programme and the outcome of the trainings were consequently disappointing. The French NGO *Reporters Sans Frontières* (RSF) severely criticised the programme in 2004 and demanded the EU stop the project⁴².

The U.S. State Department provides support to the Tunisian media through a project named “Middle East Partnership Initiative” (MEPI). Several interviewed journalists expressed their reluctance to take part in projects financed by Washington at the height of the Iraq war, as the U.S. had bad press in Tunisia and the Arab world in general. The MEPI project in Tunisia organised some round tables together with the press group *Dar al-Sabah*, after which the discussions were published in glossy format and distributed free of charge as newspaper supplements, to very limited impact. German foundations such as the Konrad Adenauer Foundation also launched training seminars for journalists.

Conclusions

A striking factor is the lack of media exchange and exchange between media professionals, within the Arab Maghreb countries. While Algerian-Moroccan relations are frozen and the frontier remains closed, and just as regional political institutions, such as the Arab Maghreb Union, remain paralysed, all these frustrations are reflected in the mirror of the regional

42 *Reporters Sans Frontières*, “EU Advised to Save Money by Scrapping ‘Cynical’ Aid Programme”, 4th of February 2004. Available at: <http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=9172>.

mass media. This is curious because media language – French for more prestigious publications and Arab for more popular ones – is the language that the Maghreb region has in common.

Despite the political differences in the three countries that I tried to underline above (dynamic developments in Morocco, repression and self-censorship in Tunisia and war trauma in Algeria) the three countries have more in common than a superficial look would initially suggest. The governments in the three countries continue to keep direct, and often indirect, control over electronic media, mainly on television broadcasting, which reflects continued elite uncertainty and fear from political competition. Court cases and heavy fines are used as a way to silence journalists and punish their editors. The print media in the three countries have larger margins of freedom and represent the most vibrant sector of a civil society in formation.

There are also significant differences. Next to a stagnant situation media sector in Algeria and regression in Tunisia, the recent political reforms in Morocco appeared to have had a positive impact on its media sector. Yet, even in Morocco, mass media structures remain fragile institutions, while print press is often isolated from the bulk of popular trends and seem to serve an urban, educated middle class. Therefore, existing press freedom remains vulnerable to political circumstances and any change in political orientation in Rabat could reshape the media sector in Morocco.

The weaknesses of the Maghrebi media sector has led to “media migration” in two directions. One is towards the Arab Gulf countries for information and religious programmes, and the other is to Lebanese channels for entertainment and European channels for information as well as entertainment. New technological advances and mass access to mobile communication, internet access and satellite receivers has brought globalization into every household and made state policies to impose national restrictions on mass media a senseless absurdity. Yet, political reflexes to control the information field continue to impoverish national media institutions and disarm them during fierce competition in a globalizing market.

Media's Role and Influence on Migratory Policies in the Maghreb

DAVIDE VIGNATI

Introduction

Migration is a subject that gives rise to controversial debate, polarizes society and constantly places the capacity of governance in doubt. Policy coherence is very difficult to attain because it depends on a wide array of factors: security, economic interests, demography, public opinion, regional and global governance, etc. Above all else, with the recent widespread recession and global climate of insecurity, migration has moved to the forefront of the international agenda. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the Bush administration's "global war on terror", security and migration issues have been growing ever more intertwined. The terrorist bombings of public transport systems in Madrid and London in 2004 and 2005 have sparked fears that Europe may also be breeding its own crop of indigenous jihadists. Less understandably, those events have also been conflated with the growing difficulties in handling migrants' need for better integration policies. The vast revolts of the *sans-papiers* in the French *banlieues*, the extended race riots in Northern England or the recent migrant insurrection in the Italian "detention centres" are just some examples of a widespread uneasiness among migrant communities. Together, these events are evidence that the immigration and integration policies of several European countries have failed, also contributing to further welding together security and migration (Lutterbeck, 2006)¹. Thus, migration issues have progressively

1 The 2005 civil unrest of North African and African immigrants in France was a series of riots mainly involving the burning of cars and public buildings starting on 27th of October 2005 in Clichy-sous-Bois. Events spread to poor housing projects (the cités HLM) in various parts of France. A state of emergency was declared on 8th of November and then extended for 3 months by the Parliament.

“shifted from a pure technical domain of ‘low politics’, to concerns related to national security or ‘high politics’” (Ureta-Vaquero, 2008: 3).

In this climate of global insecurity,

the dramatic images of African migrants massively crammed in small fishing boats, their more daily attempts to cross the Mediterranean sea, and their arrival on the shores of the Canary Islands and Lampedusa reinforce the general perception of a mounting African migration pressure on Europe’s south-western borders (de Haas, 2008: 11).

However, “these migrants account for only a small fraction of total undocumented irregular migration to Europe and receive a level of policy and media attention far out of proportion to their numerical significance” (Collyer, 2008: 1). In addition, irregular migration from Africa to Europe is not as new as is commonly suggested. Illegal sea crossings of the Mediterranean by North Africans have in fact been a persistent phenomenon since Italy and Spain initially introduced visa requirements in the early 1990s. “The major change has been that, particularly since 2000, sub-Saharan Africans have started to join and have now overtaken North Africans as the largest category of irregular boat migrants” (de Haas, 2006a: 2).

Data on undocumented migration inevitably remains extremely limited, but information on apprehensions is at least circulating more widely. For sure migrant flows in the Mediterranean area is increasing despite restrictive EU legislation and new security policies adopted. The number of African migrants intercepted by Spanish authorities along the country’s southern borders jumped from a mere 142 in 1996 to 8,747 in 2002 (ICMPD, 2004). By 2004, ICMPD estimated that some 100–120,000 migrants were crossing the Mediterranean from the Maghreb coasts to Italy, Spain or Malta every year, with about 80 per cent of departures from Libya (*ibid.*). The phenomenon includes economic migrants, asylum seek-

In summer 2001 in northern England took place one of the Britain’s worst outbreaks of racial violence in years. Hundreds of youths, mainly Asian immigrants, hurled bricks and firebombs at riot police in the towns of Bradford, Oldham and Burnley, that for months have been a hotbed of ethnic tensions. Similar clashes again took place in the same region in 2003 and 2007.

In February 2009, several hundred Tunisians migrants protesting expulsion orders served against them by Italian authorities clashed with police and set fires at an immigrant detention centre on the island of Lampedusa. Once they destroyed the centre, the Tunisians “occupied” the city of Lampedusa for almost 24 hours.

ers, refugees, and a growing number of environmental migrants. In this article, the term 'migrant' includes all of them, unless otherwise specified, due to the impossibility to tell them apart and have diversified data.

Relying on the premise that "there is a clear link between policies and public opinion" (Zapata-Barrero, 2008: 2), studying media representations of the growing migratory phenomenon and its impact on public opinion is decisive in understanding and explaining the decision-making process and the policies adopted. In hermeneutic terms, migration could be considered an interpretable reality where perceptions determine attitude and policies. Hence the attention on the role of the media, which is undoubtedly known to be one of the principal agents in shaping public perceptions and opinions about significant political and social issues (Wilson & Wilson, 2001). In Europe, this aspect has been debated at length, highlighting "a clear tendency towards dramatization and sensationalism in the media when it comes to migration-related events" (Tonti, 2009: 3). This tendency has contributed to depicting immigrants "as an unfair concurrence and a security and/or economic threat to Europe by certain fringes of the public opinion" (Blion 2008: 2). In this sense, "we must assume the existence of negative attitudes towards immigrants as being a semi-permanent fact of the political culture in host countries" (Zapata-Barrero, 2008: 1). However, the research papers dedicated to media representations of migration remain silent on the meaning, symbolic discourse and on the creation of a social imaginary by the media in the so-called developing countries. Indeed, to understand the migratory phenomenon across the Mediterranean, it is urgent to also look into the content produced and broadcasted by the Maghreb and pan-Arab media as well as its impact on North African public opinion and the connections with government policies.

The cue for a 'Southern Mediterranean approach' to the media and migration interweaving and its links with the policy-making processes for migration policies was taken from a recent forum organized early in 2009 by the Institute for Mediterranean Studies of Lugano in cooperation with the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies of Malta². The participants from the Maghreb region described a stunningly pervasive culture of migration spread by their national media with cooperation of local governments, which systematically influence the information processes.

2 2nd Forum on "Migration and Media", Lugano, 30th of March–1st of April 2009.

Notwithstanding authorities' policies and public statements supporting the need to oppose irregular migration and to condemn it, several North African governments seem to have little genuine interest in stopping the phenomenon because of their economies' growing dependencies on migrant labour and remittances, as well as the growing pressure of sub-Saharan migratory flows. The following article acknowledges this conflict, showing how the Maghreb countries deal with it. Due to the limited range of this work, the author decided to mainly focus his analysis on two revealing case studies: the one of Morocco, where the media are at the core of the policy-making process, encouraging migration for the benefits for the state economy; and the one of Algeria, where, on the contrary, the authorities harshly oppose the phenomenon by campaigning through the government-controlled media, with the paradoxical result of encouraging it.

Irregular Migration in Maghreb

Evolution of Regional Migration Patterns

The Maghreb (in Arabic *al-Maghrib*, the West) describes the region of northwest Africa, encompassing the coastlands and the Atlas Mountains of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. Isolated from the rest of the continent by the Sahara, the Maghreb is more closely related, in terms of climate, landforms, population, economy, and history, to more northern Mediterranean areas than to the rest of Africa. Nowadays, the political Maghreb involves a wider area since the AMU was established in 1989 to promote cooperation and integration among all the Arab states of North Africa. Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia comprise the union. Initially envisioned by Muammar al-Qaddafi as an Arab 'super state', the organization is expected to eventually function as a North African common market, although economic and political unrest, especially in Algeria, and political tensions between Algeria and Morocco over the western Sahara have hindered progress on the union's joint goals.

This region is at the core of the growing African migratory flows pushing northwards. On a weekly basis, hundreds of irregular migrants risk life and limb on leaky boats to get to Europe from the Maghreb coastlands.

Southern Europe is all-too familiar with irregular migration from North African countries. Since the early 1990s, thousands of North Africans have attempted to cross the Mediterranean to reach Spain and Italy. However, as the migration crises in Morocco's Spanish enclaves in 2005 and Spain's Canary Islands in 2006 made clear³, sub-Saharanans are increasingly migrating to North African countries, with some using the region as a point of transit to Europe (de Haas, 2008). These migrants come from an increasingly diverse array of countries and regions, such as Senegal, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Mali, the Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria as well as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Sudan, the Horn of Africa, and even Asia (IOM, 2008).

However, "it is a common misconception that all or most African migrants crossing the Sahara to North Africa would be 'in transit' to Europe" (de Haas, 2006a: 8). There are probably still more sub-Saharan Africans living in the Maghreb than in Europe. IOM estimates that only one third of these trans-Saharan migrants eventually make the sea crossing to Europe (IOM, 2008). This clearly counters views that reduce North Africa to a transit zone. "Migrants failing or not venturing to enter Europe often prefer to settle in North Africa as a second-best option than to return to their substantially poorer or unsafe origin countries" (de Haas, 2006a: 51). According to various estimates, at least 100,000 sub-Saharan migrants now live in both Mauritania and Algeria, 1.2 to 1.8 million in Libya, and anywhere between 2.2 and 4 million, mainly Sudanese, in Egypt. Tunisia and Morocco house smaller, but growing, sub-Saharan immigrant communities of several tens of thousands (Collyer, 2008; de Haas, 2006a). "Libya is definitively the leading country of destination in North Africa" in both absolute and relative terms, and "is currently considered the main transit country to Europe". Its authorities currently estimate that the African foreign population legally residing in Libya is 600,000, and that a further 750,000 to 1.2 million reside illegally. Moreover, the same authorities estimate that each year 75,000 to 100,000 sub-Saharanans enter Libya (Simon, 2006; ICMPD, 2004).

3 In September 2005 the world watched a dramatic spectacle unfolding as thousands of would-be migrants from all over Africa charged barbed wire fences surrounding the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in a desperate attempt to enter Europe. In several incidents some migrants were shot dead (Ejime, 2005).

While having deeper historical roots, this new trans-Saharan migration substantially increased in the 1990s in reaction to the 'pan-African' immigration policies pursued by Libya, combined with several civil wars and associated economic decline in West Africa, the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea), and the Democratic Republic of Congo (de Haas, 2006a). As part of his new pan-African policy, al-Qaddafi welcomed sub-Saharan Africans to work in Libya in the spirit of pan-African solidarity. Mounting sub-Saharan immigration was also part of a more general need to restructure and increase segmentation of the Libyan labour market. Since the early 1980s, the economic downturn caused by low oil prices and the UN embargo⁴ has led a call to indigenize the Libyan workforce. Libyans, however, were not willing to take up unattractive jobs. While the Gulf States have increasingly relied on Asian migrants for unskilled labour, Libya has heavily depended on sub-Saharan migrants for work in sectors such as construction and agriculture (*ibid.*).

In 2000, a major anti-immigrant backlash in Libya, with clashes between Libyans and African workers, generated a progressive change in the regional migration patterns. In an attempt to respond to a strong popular resentment against immigrants, al-Qaddafi instituted a number of repressive measures, e.g., arbitrary imprisonments in detention camps and forced repatriations (Hamood, 2008)⁵. This backlash incited increasing numbers of sub-Saharan migrants to move to other Maghreb countries and resulted in a partial westward shift of trans-Saharan migration routes towards Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. From there, increasing numbers have joined Maghrebis in their attempts to cross the Mediterranean. As mentioned above, contributory factors to the increasing trans-Saharan migration from the mid-1990s onward include growing instability, civil wars and economic decline in several parts of West and Central Africa. For example, the migration to Morocco gained momentum after the fall of president Mobutu in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1997 and the subse-

4 The UN Security Council imposed an air and arms embargo on Libya between 1992 and 2000.

5 Libya experienced a major anti-immigrant backlash after clashes between Libyans and African workers in January 2000 that led to the deaths of dozens of sub-Saharan migrants. Following the new repressive measures adopted by Tripoli, the Libyan government deported approximately 145,000 irregular migrants to sub-Saharan countries between 2003 and 2005.

quent war in the Great Lakes District. This was supplemented by migration from civil war-torn Sierra Leone (1991–2001) and Liberia (1989–1996 and 1999–2003) and violence in Nigeria. Recurrent warfare in the Sudan and the Horn of Africa has fuelled migration to Egypt and Libya. The outbreak of civil war in 1999 and associated economic decline in the Ivory Coast also prompted increasing numbers of West Africans to migrate to the Maghreb (Drumtra, 2003).

Regional Governance and Humanitarian Challenge

Although the EU and Member State governments frequently voice the need to invest in longer-term solutions to improve conditions in the countries of origin, “the priority and associated budgets devoted to these initiatives have been until recently relatively small”. The European response is mainly “focused on borders’ control, tackles the manifestation rather than the cause of the problem, and is particularly expensive because it has involved the deployment of semi-military and military forces” in the preventing migration by sea (Collyer, 2008: 1). The growing concern in European countries with irregular migration and trans-national crime from across the Mediterranean has not only led to increased deployment and upgrading of maritime forces to secure the EU’s southern borders, it has also prompted more restrictive EU legislation and intensified law enforcement co-operation between the countries on both shores of the Mediterranean.

Since the 1990s,

European states have attempted to externalize their control policies by pressuring certain North African countries to clamp down on irregular migration and to sign readmission agreements in exchange for aid, financial support, and work permits (de Haas, 2006a: 10).

Since 2003, Spain and Morocco, as well as Italy and Libya and, later on, France and Algeria, have started to collaborate in border patrolling. In 2006, Spain received crucial support from Frontex⁶ to patrol the routes between Senegal, Mauritania, Cape Verde, and the Canary Islands. Frontex

6 The EU agency based in Warsaw was created in 2004 to promote a pan-European model of Integrated Border Security which consists not only of common border controls, but also intelligence elements.

is also coordinating patrols involving Italy, Greece and Malta to monitor the area between Malta, the Italian island of Lampedusa and the Tunisian and Libyan coast (Lutterbeck, 2006). In 2003–2004, Morocco and Tunisia passed new immigration laws that instituted severe punishments for irregular immigration and human smuggling. Following the Dublin II Regulation, which became effective in September 2003⁷, several new readmission treaties have been concluded by the EU Member States with Maghreb countries. The latter, in turn, established new treaties with sub-Saharan countries. As part of his efforts to improve his country's standing in the international community, Libya's leader, al-Qaddafi, has collaborated more closely with the EU than any other Maghreb country in terms of border controls and the establishment of detention camps for irregular migrants. These moves were also a response to the growing anti-immigrant sentiment within Libyan public opinion (Hamood, 2008). More recently, the new 'Return Directive' adopted in 2008⁸ and the 'European Blue Card' scheme approved early this year⁹ have made EU legislation more restrictive and strengthened the current European approach focused on border control and readmission.

Owing to the gradual reinforcement of migration legislation and border controls around the Mediterranean, transit migration has tended to become *de facto* irregular migration (de Haas 2006a). As long as no more legal channels for migration are created to match the real demand for labour, and as long as large informal economies exist, it is likely that a substantial proportion of this migration will remain irregular. Needless to say, that given its clandestine nature, the magnitude of the phenomenon is difficult to assess since the only available data are border apprehensions of

7 The Dublin Regulation's purpose is to determine which State is responsible for examining an asylum application, to make sure that each claim gets a fair examination in one Member State, and to discourage persons from applying for asylum in more than one country. It applies in all EU Member States (including Denmark since 1st of April 2006), as well as in Norway, Iceland and Switzerland.

8 The 'Return Directive' is part of the Commission's common immigration and asylum policy outlined in the Hague Program in 2004, and it was adopted by the European Parliament after three years of negotiations on the 18th of June 2008. It seeks to standardize the procedures regulating the expulsion of illegal immigrants and close loopholes in national legislation. The text covers periods of custody and re-entry bans.

9 The EU's 'Blue Card' scheme aims at attracting high-skilled immigrants to Europe. Loosely based on the US 'Green Card' system, the scheme is designed to address Europe's looming demographic crisis and shortage of high-skilled workers.

the would-be immigrants. For example, in 2002, a total of some 35,000 undocumented immigrants were intercepted by Italian and Spanish authorities along their countries' southern borders. Based on these border apprehensions, the ICMPD has estimated that some 100,000 to 120,000 irregular migrants cross the Mediterranean each year, with about 35,000 coming from sub-Saharan Africa, 55,000 from the Maghreb countries, and 30,000 from other countries, e.g., mainly Asian and Middle Eastern (ICMPD, 2004).

Also the trend is difficult to assess. According to the available data, the migrant flow seems to have increased at least until 2006, despite the new restrictive EU legislation and the security controls. However, during the past two years the numbers of migrants apprehended across the Mediterranean have been falling, balanced by a significant rise in apprehensions around the Canary islands, though apprehensions around the Canaries later, also, fell in 2007 (Collyer, 2008)¹⁰.

The significant rise in apprehensions around the Canary Islands in 2006 was heralded by Frontex as a sign that the border control operation which is coordinated in the area was a success. Somewhat paradoxically, the fall in apprehensions across the straits of Gibraltar was also interpreted by the Spanish Ministry of the Interior as a sign of the success (ibid: 2).

The variety of possible, inevitably political, interpretations indicates that the data are not the most robust for scientific analysis, but they are all that is available at this scale.

Although EU countries have signed re-admission agreements with a growing number of African countries, expulsions are often difficult to implement in practice. As a result, many apprehended migrants are eventually released after the maximum detention period with a formal expulsion order. This order is generally ignored, after which they either move to other EU countries or go underground in Spain or Italy, where they can find jobs in the informal agricultural, construction and service sectors. A substantial number has obtained residency papers through marriage or regularization campaigns in Italy and Spain.

10 From January to August 2006, almost 20,000 sub-Saharan irregular migrants have reached the shores of the Canary Islands. Eleven boats have been shipwrecked, with 262 dead and 490 dying in their desperate attempt to enter Europe (de Haas, 2008: 42).

While failing to curb immigration, these policies surely have had a series of unintended side effects in the form of increasing violations of migrant rights and a diversification of trans-Saharan migration routes and attempted sea-crossing points. While thus clandestine migration across the Mediterranean, particularly through its link with cross-border crime and trans-national terrorism, has come to be framed as a security challenge by European countries, it is, however, also increasingly seen as a serious humanitarian problem. In countries on both sides of the Mediterranean, there has been growing concern with the rising number of deaths of would-be immigrants seeking to reach Europe via sea. "In countries such as Italy or Spain hardly a week goes by without reports of shipwrecks and dead bodies of migrants found in their waters and on their beaches" (Lutterbeck, 2006: 63). Each year, significant numbers die or get seriously injured while trying to enter the EU. The ICMPD has estimated that, over the last decade, a total of at least 10,000 persons have died trying to cross the Mediterranean and reach Europe's southern shores (ICMPD, 2004). The European NGO UNITED has, since 1988, been collecting all information related to death tolls across the Mediterranean from all NGOs and governmental organisations working on this issue. The result of this definitive work is impressive: about 12,000 documented (witnessed) deaths in less than 20 years (UNITED, 2008). Additionally, these figures do not take all the other mortal accidents occurred to the sub-Saharan migrants during the journey to the Maghreb into consideration.

The risks of crossing the Sahara are believed to be at least as high as the more widely media covered hazards of an undocumented crossing of the Mediterranean or the Atlantic (Collyer, 2008: 4).

All these elements strongly indicate that the current approach, which focuses on border control and readmission, is likely to meet with limited success in achieving the EU's aims of stemming the flow of irregular migrants arriving mainly from Libya into Italy and Malta and from Morocco into Spain, while protecting the human rights of those in transit and ensuring humanitarian outcomes for them.

Media and Migration in Maghreb

Policing Media

As pointed out in the introduction, overall, European media tend to depict African migrants in a negative manner. Their reports often create an apocalyptic image of an exodus of desperate Africans fleeing poverty and war at home to seek the European dream. Millions of sub-Saharan Africans are commonly believed to be waiting in North Africa to cross to Europe, which fuels the fear of a threatening invasion. These migrants are commonly seen as economic migrants, perhaps masquerading as refugees. Some work has been done over the past decade in trying to counterbalance “this persistent negative attitudes towards immigrants that has become a permanent characteristic of the political culture in Europe” (Zapata-Barrero, 2008: 3). For many years now, the media in some European countries have developed various initiatives to make ‘the other’ seen and heard, giving new visibility and attention to migrants and their realities. For example, several European public televisions have developed and broadcast specific programs devoted to immigration issues and conceived for migrant communities (Blion, 2008). Additionally, a sort of ‘ethical conduct’ for the public media has been adopted in several countries to avoid preconceived and discriminatory reporting. These codes introduced criteria for the phrasing, choice of sources, prospective of the topic, etc., when referring to migration and migratory issues (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, even if we agree that the visibility of ethnic minorities and migrant communities within European media has increased, as well as attention to migrant representations, it is regularly observed that migration is still presented today as a threat to European societies. This is the case when we look at the common journalistic practice to always mention and underline any foreign origin of a person who commits a misdemeanor, or to systematically show the arrival of irregular migrants at European borders without ever documenting their forced repatriations, or to habitually report about migrants and immigration when covering security issues, criminality, and social exclusion (Lorite, 2009).

While the connections between media and migration in Europe abound in researches and evidences, few extended analyses that permit us to outline how migration is depicted by the media on the southern side of the

Mediterranean sea exist. How does the public opinion react to the dramatic images of migrants risking their lives to get to Europe? Do the local media report this news or instead does public opinion rely only on European and pan-Arab media? If migration issues are debated in the local media, how do they depict the migrants? What is the impact on public opinion and would-be migrants? What does the audience think about the European tendentious and discriminatory reports on migrants? What are the Maghrebi governments' attitudes towards media in regards to migration issues? It is difficult to answer these and other related questions because of the serious lack of research and sources, and, moreover, because of the absence of any public debate in North African countries, which has instead taken place in Europe over the past decade. A first step to sort out the muddle is to acknowledge that there is no common reality for the media in Maghreb. Each country presents peculiar aspects linked to its specific political situation, and the content produced can differ radically from country to country. The huge diversity in terms of standards and approaches also depends tremendously on the different European influences in each country (Cheterian, 2008). Cheterian's¹¹ empirical study provides a recent first-hand view of the complex media reality in the region, which is a necessary preliminary step to understand how migrants and migration are portrayed in the two Maghreb countries chosen as revealing case studies for our analysis, namely Morocco and Algeria.

Although the regional media differ substantially from country to country, Cheterian highlights some general common characteristics. Primarily, the states tightly control electronic media, whereas there is more room to manoeuvre for written ones, which are "often the most dynamic sector of the civil society" (Cheterian, 2008: 4). Overall, the governments impose strict control on the entire media sector: directly over audio-visual media by owning the national televisions and the main radio stations; indirectly, by exerting influence over the newspapers (e.g., by controlling the publishing agencies, dispensing subventions to the political parties' papers, etc.). Another common characteristic is the low standards of reporting,

11 Mandated by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), in 2008 Cheterian conducted a study on the media reality in Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia with the purpose to ascertain the need and the possibility to set up a project of training for journalists. He conducted about seventy interviews with representatives of the media reality in those countries, and exposed the results of his study at the Forum in Lugano in March this year.

which reveal the difficulties accessing information as well as the lack of professional training of journalists. The news are rarely directly verified on the ground with original sources due to denied access by the security forces, the reluctance of the local population to interact with media seen as a government body, the simple lack of financial means and human resources, or the absence of any recognised journalistic standard. In addition to the active censorship exerted by the political authority, Cheterian also highlights a quite diffuse 'self-censorship paradigm', a spontaneous and non-written code journalists apply beforehand to avoid any sensitive issue traditionally considered taboo for the local society. Such is the case of the political responsibilities for the civil war and the basis of the reconciliation process in Algeria, the monarchy and the Western Saharan issues in Morocco, the recent new Islamic insurgency in the region, the corruption in the public sector, the respect of human rights, gender issues, etc. As will be developed in the following chapters, emigration has also been one of these taboo subjects for many years, at least in Algeria, whose government has simply denied the existence of any irregular migration flows to Europe (Labdelaoui, 2009a).

Overall, the media in Maghreb follow, with few exceptions, the position and political line of the government. "The media agenda reflects the interests and the priorities of the state" (Labdelaoui, 2009b), and "the journalists are often incorporated in the public administration without any editorial autonomy" (Cheterian, 2008: 6)¹². Several interlocutors interviewed by Cheterian also confirmed an increasing 'journalist migration' towards the new pan-Arab satellite television stations and websites, mainly due to the choking censorship and the constant reduction of the newspapers' circulations in the region. "The national media censored have no more interest for the public, which now has easy access to other sources of information" (*ibid.*). In recent years, the region has also witnessed a decreasing circulation of foreign newspapers. Some international ones, such as the *al-Sharq al-Awsat* (Saudi pan-Arab paper published in London) or *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Le Monde Diplomatique*, are still distributed in the Maghreb. However, in Tunisia and Algeria, opies containing articles that criticise the government are systematically confiscated. Other papers, such as *Libération* or *al-*

12 This sentence is attributed to Lutfi Hajji, correspondent in Tunisia for *al-Jazeera* and director of the Tunisian Union of the Independent Journalists, which is not recognized by the government.

Hayat and *al-Quds al-Arabi* (two pan-Arab daily papers also published in London) are simply forbidden (Cheterian, 2008). During the Forum in Lugano, all participants pointed to a decreasing influence of European electronic media. The main reason behind this recent trend is the growing influence of the new pan-Arab satellite television stations from the Gulf and, additionally, increasingly difficult access to European stations. In fact, over the past few years, Maghrebi authorities have progressively blocked all televisions signals coming from Europe (except for Morocco) and only satellite dishes – still expensive for a vast majority of middle-income families in the rural areas – skirt the technical obstacle. As a result, a large portion of the population, which until few years ago could easily access European television channels, mainly French and Spanish ones, has been cut off.

It is also relevant to remark that freedom of the press in the Maghreb countries has been deeply affected in recent years. Since 2002, their ranks in the International Press Freedom Index has constantly dropped, almost reaching the bottom of the list (RWB 2008)¹³. Although it would require an entire separate study to investigate the political reasons behind this trend – common to the entire region, even if with considerable differences – it is worth at least highlighting in our analysis that the worsening situation for press freedom in North Africa has coincided with the new Islamist insurgency in the region after the 9/11 attacks. The governments' reactions to the several terrorist attacks which have marked the North African countries eventually contributed to accelerating the consolidation of the governments' control over Maghrebi societies, also including a progressive limitation of the freedoms of speech and press.

After the official end of the civil war in 2002, Algeria has continued to be marked by several bloody Islamist attacks¹⁴ that further destabilized

13 Press freedom index – Reporters Without Borders: out of 173 countries listed worldwide, in 2008 Morocco was at the 122nd position (89th in 2002); Algeria 121st (95th); Tunisia 143rd (128th); Libya 160th (129th).

14 Only in 2008, the Al-Qa'ida Organization in the Islamic Maghreb, formerly known as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, the main active Islamist armed group in Algeria, claimed responsibility for bomb attacks in Algiers in April and December and in the cities of Batna and Dellys in September, which killed at least 130 people, many of them civilians, and injured hundreds of others. Government forces killed dozens of alleged members of armed groups during search operations and in clashes (Amnesty International, 2008). In the recent years, other bloody attacks causing a death toll of hundreds of victims took place in Algiers in January 2003, June 2004, December 2006, March and April 2007.

the country and paved the way for the re-election of Abdelaziz Bouteflika in 2004, definitively crystallizing government control over Algerian society (Khabar, 2008). He was re-elected early that year by more than a 90 percent majority of votes after the parliament amended the constitution to allow his third presidential term. He was able to establish some gradual authority over the military establishment by pensioning senior officials, safeguarding the existing patronage system, with its enormous income, and the military's (as well as his own) privileges in it. The military have come to control much of Algeria's economic enterprises. Thus, long-overdue fundamental reforms have not been undertaken so as to not undermine the edifice on which the regime was built (Muhammad, 2009). The government exercises considerable control over Algeria's mass media, and harassment of the press increased following Bouteflika's re-election in 2004. The print media practice self-censorship to avoid various forms of government pressure, including defamation lawsuits and the potential withholding of state-controlled advertising. In 2004 and 2005, two newspapers were closed or suspended over debts owed to the state-owned printing company. In one notable defamation case, the managing editor of *Le Matin* began serving a two-year prison term for libel in June 2004.

Journalists in Algeria still have more freedom than their counterparts in most Arab countries, but most newspaper advertising comes from state enterprises and many journalists depended on the government for protection in the 1990s and increasingly do so today (Benhold and Mekhennet, 2007: 1).

In Morocco, the Casablanca bombings of 2003 and 2007 served as a wakeup call regarding the dangers of home-grown radical Islamist terrorism, generating harsh measures against Islamic activists as well as steps to actively engage in the religious field through a reformed Higher Ulema Council that issues legal rulings (*fatwas*). The authorities have also redoubled their efforts to oversee the country's mosques, particularly its imams, and to modernize their education. King Mohammed's crowning generated hopes within liberal circles that he would engineer more far-reaching changes in the direction of a Spanish-style constitutional monarchy (Maddy-Weitzman, 2006). The regime's guiding mantra over the past few years has been "development and *ijtihad*", which means modernization of the economy and promotion of social welfare, all legitimized and expanded upon by independent judgement as permitted by Islamic law. Nevertheless, the contemporary Moroccan state is, at best, a neo-*makhzen* entity, the tradi-

tional term for Morocco's ruling security-bureaucratic apparatus (*ibid.*). Despite talk of the need to decentralise power, the main levers of political and economic power remain in the hands of the palace and its allies in the bureaucracy, military and economic sectors. 'Islamist fear' has slowed down the first steps initiated by the new king and has instead consolidated old dynamics built during the 38-year reign of the late King Hassan. Even though the media have won some advances in the decade of King Mohammed, new forms of press freedom violations are troubling Morocco. RWB reveals that police raids and assaults are common, especially when journalists have raised the ire of the royal family, and last year the government recalled issues of two independent magazines (RWB, 2008). Also in the past four years, the number of lawsuits against newspaper editors have been steadily rising, and the exorbitant fines these lawsuits incur could have a silencing effect on the media. "The authorities are using the new press code Dahir (Royal decree) – reformed in 2001 – to restrict freedom of expression, especially on issues like the monarchy and the Western Sahara" (IFEX, 2009). The new code provides an arsenal of repressive tools, including terms of imprisonment for vaguely defined speech offences such as 'undermining' the institution of the monarchy, Islam or the country's 'territorial integrity', and 'insulting' the king, foreign heads of state or diplomats. Judges can also send journalists to jail for publishing false information 'that disturbs the public order' (HRW, 2006).

The evolution of the political situation in Tunisia is similar to the Algerian one. After the 2000 partial democratic openness, when the government began an official process leading towards a real multi-party system, the bloody bomb attack in Djerba in April 2002¹⁵ contributed to a drastically changed atmosphere in the country and to slow down any unlikely reform. President Ben Ali and his establishment further consolidated their power, and the same year the parliament adopted the necessary constitutional changes to raise the maximum age for the president and to remove the restriction of three presidential terms. In 2004, Ben Ali was re-elected by acclamation and he again won the presidential elections in

15 On 11th of April 2002, the Islamist activist H. Nouar drove a fuel-filled tanker into a synagogue on the Tunisian vacation island of Djerba, killing 14 Germans, five Tunisians and two French citizens. Later, the purported mastermind of the 9/11 terror attacks, Pakistani Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, was charged with also planning the Djerba attack.

October of this year with almost 90 percent of the votes, securing a fifth term in office after two decades in power. Under his regency “there is good reason to believe that democratic reforms and press freedom are not something coming up within the next few years” (Maddy-Weitzman, 2006: 18). The UN Human Rights Committee, which monitors the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, last year reviewed Tunisia and expressed serious concerns about the curbs on freedom of expression. In September of this year, the International Federation of Journalists protested to the Tunisian government over the police siege on the offices of the Tunisian Syndicate of Journalists which refused to publicly endorse President Ben Ali in the presidential elections (IFEX, 2009)¹⁶. In only 2009, the police have shut down the Tunis office of the independent *Radio Kalima*, obstructed the distribution of the opposition Arabic-language weekly *Al-Mawkiif*, while a court in the southern city of Gafsa seized the weekly *Al-Tariq Al-Jadid* and upheld a six-year prison sentence against the correspondent of the satellite television channel *Al-Hiwar Al-Tunisi* for “spreading materials likely to harm public order” (CPJ, 2009b: 2).

Libya should be considered a world apart. The 40-year reign of al-Qaddafi has gagged any democratic voice in the country regardless of possible recent Islamic fundamentalist threats. The uncontested ruler of Libya has built a solid regime which does not tolerate opposition at all. Political parties are illegal in Libya and the main opposition organizations are exiled in the UK. Sporadic clashes between Islamic militants and Libyan security forces occurred until the late 1990s. In 1995–97, al-Qaddafi launched a vast military offensive in Cyrenaica, the centre of much of the opposition. Since 1998, little or no evidence of any continuing Islamist insurgency has been reported. On November 2007, al-Zawahiri claimed in a 28-minute recording posted on an Islamic website that “the members

16 On the 8th of September 2009 the headquarters of the *Syndicat National des Journalistes Tunisiens* (SNJT) were surrounded by police forces after a Tunisian court ordered the officers of the union to hand over the building. The SNJT had been split following an internal dispute over the union leadership's uncompromising demands for independence and their unwillingness to publicly endorse President Ben Ali in national elections. A rival faction organised an extraordinary congress and elected new leaders, the majority of them strong supporters of the ruling RDC party and the president. The SNJT leaders who had failed to win the Court order against the rival congress planned their own meeting that was not authorized by the authorities (IFEX, 2009).

of the al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya al-Muqatila (Libyan Islamic Fighting Group) announce that they are joining the al-Qaeda group" (AFP, 2007). The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (or LIFG) first announced its presence in 1995, vowing to overthrow al-Qaddafi. As for the LIFG, some other Arab nationalist movements, as well as Islamic groups, may be operating clandestinely (Black, 2007). Al-Qaddafi's control over the country is tight. Although the law provides for freedom of speech "within limits of public interest and principles of the Revolution", the government strictly limits freedom of speech as well as freedom of the press (Gazzini, 2006: 1). The government-owned Libyan Jamahiriya Broadcasting Corporation controls the Libya's only television channel, which remains a sealed universe, broadcasting only government-sponsored information¹⁷. Apart from the *Jamahiriya* TV channel and its national news agency (JANA), Libya has only one radio station and four very thin, state-owned newspapers. The only privately owned Arabic-language newspaper allowed to cross into Libyan borders is the London-based *Al Arab*. There is no circulation whatsoever of the other well-known Arabic press, let alone foreign-language ones. The main political opposition website, UK-based <www.libya-watanona.com>, and the opposition radio, *Sawt Libya*, are censored inside the country (*ibid.*). Foreign journalists on assignment in Libya "are systematically escorted by a police officer, who more often than not prevents reporters from going to neighbourhoods or meeting people whom the government might deem politically unsafe" (Gazzini, 2006: 5). In 2007, the son of Libyan leader al-Qaddafi, Seif al-Islam, launched a number of private media outlets on his own – not owned by the state but controlled by the *Al-Ghad Foundation*, which refers to Seif al-Islam himself – in an attempt to reform the media domain with new "more outspoken and reformative" satellite TV channels and radio stations, calling for independence for all media outlets in the country. In May of this year, the Libyan government announced the nationalisation by decree of all the private media outlets belonging to the *Al-Ghad Foundation*. Reportedly, "some of those new TV

17 At the moment, Jamahiriya is Libya's only channel, but it is certainly not the only channel available to Libyans. Satellite dishes, which now can be bought in Tripoli for approximately \$ 100, blanket most rooftops. Jamahiriya television airs four daily news broadcasts in Arabic, French, and English. Each of these varies in length from 30 minutes to 90 minutes, depending on the importance of the daily activities of the qa'id al-thawra, or the leader of the Revolution, as al-Qaddafi is known (Gazzini, 2006).

channels exposed several cases of corruption in the government". Many observers interpreted this decision as al-Qaddafi freezing his son's vehement reforms (Arfaoui, 2009).

Migration as Development

The emerging picture of the media sector in Maghreb countries and its indissoluble connection with oligarchy systems and consolidated regimes drives us to assert that the information and reports on migration published or broadcast by the national media certainly reflect the governments' policies in this domain. Under the influence of their governments, Maghrebi media generally tend to reassess the importance of the migratory phenomenon and they definitively do not use the alarming tones used by European media. On the contrary, media in the Maghreb systematically provide a positive image of emigration by highlighting the economic success of migrants in destination countries and upon their return to their home countries (Tonti, 2009). In some countries, a large part of the public does not even have access to the increasingly frequent images of sea tragedies broadcast by the European media. If these are reported locally, the media often trivialize the risks. The sea deaths are described as isolated accidents, and, above all, these tragedies are usually only attributed to sub-Saharan migrants. This is a quite common characteristic to all media reporting regarding emigration: while providing a positive image of their own migrants,

sub-Saharans migrants are usually depicted in a negative manner, usually associated to illegality, criminality or citizenship issues, with the same dramatized approach commonly used by the European media when reporting about African immigration (Labdelaoui, 2009b).

After the major anti-immigrant backlash in 2000, each criminal act involving sub-Saharans in Libya is systematically emphatically reported by the local media. At the same time, the Libyan media have no comprehensive descriptions of the migratory phenomenon, figure estimations or consciousness of the real proportion of irregular migrant communities settled in the country. Migration is not portrayed as a structural phenomenon (Gazzini, 2006). The news about migrants usually refer only to isolated clashes with security forces, criminal arrests or failed attempts to leave

Libyan coasts to reach Europe by boat (Bashir, 2009). In Algeria, the government of Bouteflika has, for years, simply denied the existence of any irregular Algerian migrant flow to Europe. In 2005, confronted with the increasing phenomenon and political pressure from EU countries, the government had to officially recognise the problem of the harragas¹⁸, the Algerian migrants who attempt to cross the Mediterranean. Until then, newspaper articles and television reports dealt only with statistics about new sub-Saharan migrants crossing Algerian borders, the number of arrests made every week by Algerian authorities and the national origins of migrants and their legal status (Kaced, 2009). For more than a decade, the harragas phenomenon in Algeria has been taboo for the national media, similar to the civil war, the reconciliation process, the human rights issues, etc. Tunisia has a similar situation where the media focus their attention mainly on sub-Saharans, who are always marked with the label of 'illegal'. On the contrary, when referring to the Tunisians migrants living abroad, the reports shift their attention to the economic advantages of their status and praise their initiative when promoting development in their home areas with real estate investments or business projects (Zekri, 2009). Even in Morocco, where the public opinion has easily access to European media, "the state-television rarely shows the difficult daily lives of the migrants in the European paradise and the living conditions of their families left behind" (Ennaji, 2008: 4). Instead, the state-television often broadcasts reports of successful Moroccan migrants, who, after a long stay in Europe, invest their fortunes at home to the satisfaction of local authorities. Also in this country, the media contribute to spread fear of sub-Saharans, usually depicted as a threat to the Moroccan society, mainly in terms of security and criminality rather than economic concurrence (Ennaji, 2009).

Overall, the media in the region suggest a direct link between migration and development by obsessively documenting the investments of migrants in their home countries and emphasising – or better still, dreaming about – their successful lives abroad. While it can be argued that development has always been part of the debate in migration-related research and emigration often considered a government policy tool for development, it has only been in the last decade that migration has been progressively seen as a phenomenon that can be 'manipulated' or 'managed' to promote de-

18 In Arabic "those who burn", with reference to their identity papers.

velopment (Skeldon, 2008). However, very few analyses have taken into consideration the recent role also played by the regional mass media in this process. In Morocco, the state-television regularly reports information regarding migrant flow remittances, providing details about modalities to transfer money, location of Moroccan banks in European cities to facilitate the transfer, etc. It also broadcasts TV programs specifically devoted to migrants abroad that suggest punctual investment projects, mainly in the real estate and tourist industries within the most attractive areas of the country (Sadiqi, 2007). Similar programs are also sponsored by the Tunisian government in the national media. Unquestionably, it is unreasonable to expect overseas migrants to participate in failed states and economies just because of these promotions. They need tangible incentives and to work within some effective structures if they are to have an impact on their countries of origin. Thus both elements are present: the governments' strategies to campaign for migrant investments as well as effective investment opportunities expanded by tax concessions, money transfer facilities, state incentives to foreign direct investments (FDI), etc.

Morocco receives more remittances than any other country in the MENA region after Egypt. In 2007 they totalled over \$ 5.7 billion, a record according to the *Office des Changes*, Morocco's exchange rate monitoring body (Ratha and Xu, 2008). Last August, Morocco signed an accord to set up electronic money transfers through technology developed by the Universal Postal Union, the UN's postal agency. Other signatories included Jordan and Tunisia. This system should improve rural populations' access to secure reliable money transfer services through formal channels (UPU, 2008). Early this year, the Moroccan government drew up a new anti-crisis plan to encourage MRE to further invest in their country of origin by providing credits of up to 75 percent of the total investment if the investor provides at least 25 percent in foreign currency (CMC, 2009)¹⁹. In 2005, the Tunisian government approved five-year tax breaks to FDI in tourist sectors and for income derived from export. Offshore companies (those with at least 66 percent foreign ownership and 80 percent export-directed production) pay no customs duties on imports of capital goods, raw materials or semi-finished products. As a stable and growing economy

19 Financial and legislative incentives approved by Moroccan government are listed in chapter 3.1 of this article.

located just a short distance from the EU, Tunisia has done well by regional standards at attracting FDI, and

despite [that] there are medium-term to long-term concerns about political succession and the authoritarian nature of the government, the country's political and economic stability are a major factor of attraction for investments (FDI Magazine, 2005: 2).

Commentators said that the 73-year-old president Ben Alì took credit for making the country the most competitive economy in the region due to its reforms and flexible laws that have attracted FDI. Tunisia has North Africa's biggest middle class with more than two-thirds of households owning homes. A fifth of the population owns a car and access to schools and basic health care is available to all (*ibid.*).

It is relevant to highlight that, in these two countries, there is an evident concerted strategy to emphasize the successful lives of migrants, their economic potentiality and their patriotic duty to invest and develop their home countries with the facility of several sorts of investment incentives. This paradigm is constantly present in the media. The news and reports dedicated to migrants always have a positive economic connotation, while, on the contrary, when referring to sub-Saharan migration, the media systematically shift to legality/criminality issues. Despite the fact that new strict EU legislation has transformed the traditional Maghrebi emigration to Europe into *de facto* 'irregular migration', usually, the local media simply ignores any legal status issue when reporting about Maghrebi migrants.

This dynamic does not apply in the same way to all the Maghreb countries. In Algeria, celebration of the 'successful migrant' is totally absent in the government-controlled media, which, on the contrary, "tend to bolster the regime propaganda against the harragas, usually depicted as nation's traitors" (Labdelaoui, 2009b). After having denied the existence of the phenomenon for years, the Algerian government is now trying to criminalize the harragas. In 2007, they launched a national campaign through the media tailored to the young generations emphasizing the working and business opportunities available in the country. At the same time, the media have started to debate the new strict EU legislation on irregular migration, emphasizing the risks of illegal trips to Europe, praising the government's efforts to oppose the phenomenon and regularly reporting all the sea tragedies that have been simply ignored for years (Kaced, 2009). Some private and more independent newspapers counterbalance

this government-driven campaign by reporting figures on the harragas flows, analysing the phenomenon and the reasons behind it and giving evidences to direct testimonies of would-be migrants attempting to reach Europe or already living abroad. They do this without falling into the same misleading imaginary of the 'successful migrant' present in Morocco or Tunisia (Labdelaoui, 2009a).

Libya has a rather unique history of migration policy. Owing to the development of its oil and a high per capita GDP, it was always a destination country for labour migrants. Some limited temporary emigration occurred, mostly of businessmen and students to Malta and Egypt (NDI, 2005). Since Libya removed formal travel restrictions, there has been increasing travel by young people to Italy and Malta. However, the Libyan diaspora is very small. On the other hand, the number and proportion of immigrants in Libya is high. Estimates range from 1.1–1.4 million up to 1.8 million, of which only 600,000 are legal workers (Simon, 2006). With a total recorded population of around 5.5 million, this means that the immigrant population ratio is around 25–30 percent. The majority of temporary workers have traditionally come from Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco although more recent visa-free entry for all of Africa also resulted in large numbers of sub-Saharan Africans (NDI, 2005). Also in Libya, the state-controlled media tend to emphasize the linkage between criminality and sub-Saharan migrants. At the same time, a comprehensive picture and analysis of the migratory issue is totally absent in the media, which is not seen as a structural phenomenon, but rather as an episodic manifestation (Taeib, 2009; Bashir, 2009).

The Challenge of the New Pan-Arab Media and Internet

The stereotype of the successful migrant, synonymous with development and perpetuated by the vast majority of media in the Maghreb, is challenged by the growing influence of the new Gulf satellite television stations, which tend to more realistically document the difficult existences of migrants in Europe, emphasizing negative European attitudes towards north African immigrants and closely following the phenomenon of irregular migration across the Mediterranean sea (Abidi, 2009). Moreover, these new Gulf media can boast professional journalistic standards that invest them with an authoritativeness other Maghrebi media lack, thus challeng-

ing 'migrant imaginary' spread in North Africa by the local media outlets. In his study, Abidi highlights the role of the new pan-Arab satellite channels, mainly *al-Jazeera* and *al-Arabiya*²⁰, in re-connecting the migrants with their home countries, also pointing out their negative impact on the migrants' integration processes in European societies. Many believe that, over the past decade, the new pan-Arab TV channels have contributed to isolating Arab families living abroad and decreasing the linguistic competences of the family members staying at home. This aspect has been eased by the fact that, overall, Arab migrants do not empathize with European media, which tend to ignore the migrants' realities or, even worse, to present migration and minority populations as a threat to European societies, especially in reference to migrants of Muslim origins (Blion, 2008). Consequently, the new pan-Arab media have gained an immediate popularity with Arab migrants, allowing them to recover their cultural origins, especially the first immigrant generations. This is less so for the second/third ones educated in the host countries and with lower knowledge of Arabic (Abidi, 2009).

With reference to North African emigration, it can be argued that the pan-Arab satellite television stations generally play a key role in strengthening the diasporas connections. They indirectly support the government-controlled media propaganda in Maghreb, which tends to overemphasize the indissoluble kinship between migrants and their home countries by appealing to their nationalism to develop the native land (Skeldon, 2008). On the other hand, the Gulf satellite television channels challenge this propaganda by more objectively reporting the migratory phenomenon, which is depicted as structural, and also documenting the sea tragedies, migrant riots in the European detention centres, migrants' forced repatriations, etc. Moreover, the Gulf satellite television channels tend to emphasize the discriminatory attitude of European public opinion and media towards immigrants as well as EU migratory policies 'imposed' on the Maghreb countries to contain the migratory flows (Abidi, 2009). This sort of information is easily accessible by a large portion of the public opinion in the Maghreb simply because in Arabic.

The growing influence of the new pan-Arab satellite channels is often seen as a threat by governments in the Maghreb. Obviously, the main

20 Broadcasting respectively from Doha (Qatar) and Dubai (EAU).

reasons are other than migratory issues. The governments' worries primarily focus on the Islamist insurgency in the region and the possible impact the broad Gulf media coverage of the Iraq/Afghanistan conflicts may have on it, the *Abu Grhaib* scandal, the Middle East situation, the Gaza and Lebanon wars, Hezbollah's growing influence, Al-Qaeda leaders' video appeals, etc (CSIS, 2006). Moreover, the laic governments in the Maghreb fear the influence of the religious programmes of the pan-Arab televisions, e.g., the Saudi *Iqra'a TV* that proposes content with specific anti-Semitic and anti-American hatred²¹ (Cheterian, 2008). Above all, the new pan-Arab satellite channels represent a threat to the Maghreb countries' consolidated control and influence on the local media because the Gulf media bring a new plurality and overview of the international agenda that cannot be controlled and twisted for the local governments' own interests and policies.

The Gulf televisions are having an increasing impact on the Maghrebi societies and on the local media as well: due to the strong governmental censorship these latter usually work in straight lines, often ignoring any international dimension of the news and always referring to the official position of the state. But now they are pushed to produce better products because of the concurrence of the pan-Arab television that are more and more popular amidst the public opinion (Labdelaoui, 2009b).

Nevertheless, while the Gulf satellite television stations have transformed daily life and reshaped cultural identity throughout the entire Arab world, it seems that state-controlled local media in the Maghreb have been slow to adjust. Speaking at the Maghreb roundtable during the 7th CSIS Middle East Program²², Abdallah Schleifer²³, Washington bureau chief at *al-Arabiya*, and Mohammed Alami²⁴, chief Washington correspondent for

21 Broadcasting from Riyadh.

22 Cairo, 16th of June 2006.

23 A. Schleifer is a veteran of both the American and Arab media and currently heads al-Arabiya's Washington Bureau. Prior to joining the network, he worked as a producer and reporter in Beirut and served as the Cairo Bureau Chief at NBC News. Schleifer is the founder of the Adham Center for Television Journalism at the American University in Cairo.

24 M. Alami has been covering American politics for Arab audiences for over 15 years. He started his career with the Voice of America and has worked with the Associated Press, Arab News Network, and Abu Dhabi TV. Since 2000 he has been chief Washington correspondent with al-Jazeera and a columnist with the Moroccan Arabic daily *al-Ittihad al-Ishtiraki*.

al-Jazeera, analysed the pan-Arab television stations' impact on the relationships between North African rulers and the local media outlets that they ultimately control. Schleifer estimated that the pan-Arab media's most important potential impact lies in what he calls "the marginal freedom thesis". Based on his own experience in Egypt, Schleifer sees liberalization that was originally limited to the economic sphere creating demands for greater openness and transparency. Promoting access to the Internet for economic reasons makes it harder for the Egyptian government to censor information, and the rise of satellite viewership means state television needs to produce a product that is competitive. Schleifer emphasized that the present level of journalistic freedom in Egypt was unthinkable just fifteen years ago and stands as a testament to the influence of the pan-Arab media (CSIS, 2006). However, the Washington bureau chief at *al-Arabiya* recognized that his experience in Egypt does not apply to all North African states since the Maghrebis political reality differs tremendously from country to country. He noticed that, except for Egypt, the pan-Arab television stations are not allowed to broadcast directly from the other North African countries with a permanent presence.

As for Alami, he judged that pan-Arab television's impact on local media has been largely cosmetic thus far. Pointing to examples across North Africa, Alami said stations still feature much of the same protocol news he remembers from his youth, using the linguistic formulas of the 1960s to describe a litany of meetings and speeches by heads of state. He described Morocco as the only bright spot in the region and noted that the situation is particularly difficult in the Maghreb because the Libyan, Algerian and Tunisian authorities do not allow *al-Jazeera* to maintain a permanent presence. Alami praised Morocco's two state television channels as an example of further progress. While one channel focuses on the daily activity of the monarch in a traditional manner, the other has generated informative and engaging public affairs programming, for example, intensely covering the national inquiry into human rights abuses under the late King Hassan II (CSIS, 2006). However, in May 2008, the Moroccan government still suspended the licence for the satellite television channel *al-Jazeera*, which broadcast news on the Maghreb region directly from Morocco. "The Moroccan government claimed in a statement that the suspension was made on technical grounds" (IFJ, 2008: 1). In Tunisia, the government promoted a new state-radio called *Ezzeitouna* in 2007, focused only on religious contents, thus trying to counterbalance the concurrence of religious

pan-Arab television stations (Cheterian, 2008). In September of this year the U.S based NGO Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) condemned the Tunisian government-backed smear campaign against the *al-Jazeera* satellite television station. State-controlled media outlets have been attacking *al-Jazeera* since July 2009, when the station covered a conference in Geneva on the right of exiled Tunisian dissidents to return home and aired interviews with leading critics of President Ben Ali (CPJ, 2009a).

Aside from the current attempt to contain the influence of the pan-Arab media and in addition to the technical signal blockage of the main European televisions (except for Morocco), the new battleground for government censorship in the Maghreb is the Internet. Current statistics show a rapid expansion of Internet access in the region, much higher than the African average, though this varies from one country to another. Since 2000, the penetration rate of the Internet in the Maghreb countries (including Egypt) has been 920 percent, today reaching a total of 10–15 million users (ITU, 2006). This, despite the fact that buying a PC is still prohibitively expensive for the majority of middle-income families in North Africa, who regard internet service as a luxury. For example, that is why the number of internet cafés has grown spectacularly in Morocco, from less than 100 in 2000 to more than 3,000 in 2006, spread all over the country (Dahmani et al., 2007). According to ITU data, the total number of Internet users in Morocco swelled from 120,000 in 2000 to 4.6 million in 2006 (a multiple of 40) out of a population of 33 million. In Tunisia, the number increased from 32,000 to about 1 million (3000% growth) of a population of 10 million. The growth in Algeria is more restrained but still spectacular. It went from 150,000 internet users in 2000 to 1,920,000 users (1300 percent growth) out of a population of 25 million. However, these figures should be evaluated with caution because the basic concept of an 'internet user' can differ from country to country, and the discrepancies are highly influenced by the different costs of a connection and the ITC infrastructures. Nevertheless, it is unquestionable that North Africa is experiencing an 'internet boom', like the entire Arab world, and that internet usage in the Maghreb is now comparable to that of the East Asian regional average (*ibid.*).

This new, developing ICT reality is much more relevant when considering the difficult access to European media (audiovisual and printed) because of government censorship. For the young generations, educated persons and, more generally, the urban population, the Internet is pro-

gressively becoming the first outlet to access news and information from Europe. With the exception of Morocco, which differs radically from the other Maghreb countries, the Internet is taking up a key role in the transmission of open and uncensored information in the region. Last year, on the occasion of the 7th AMF in Dubai²⁵, RWB sounded an alarm for the growing government interference with internet data transmission in North Africa, for the purposes of censorship.

In Maghreb the growth in the Internet's influence and potential is being accompanied by greater vigilance on the part of the governments with already marked security concerns. Every year, the repressive governments acquire new tools that allow them to monitor the Internet and track online data. The Internet is gradually becoming a battleground for citizens with criticisms to express and journalists who are censored in the traditional media. As such, it poses a threat to those in power who are used to governing as they wish with impunity (RWB, 2008: 3).

Also Cheterian confirmed in his study that in Tunisia and Algeria a growing number of websites are progressively closed by the authorities.

With reference to migration, the potential of Internet is not only linked to a wider access to information, but also to a growing strengthening of the migrants' linkages on the two shores of the Mediterranean. Emails, new social networks and Skype are progressively replacing the costly telephone. It is worth looking for the word *harragas* e.g. into Youtube to watch hundreds of video clips uploaded by young Algerians documenting with cell phones their attempt to reach Europe by boat, with details about the locations of the best beaches along the Algerian coastlands to set out on the journey without being caught by the authorities. Sea tragedies are celebrated in the web with dramatic pictures of migrants' dead bodies on their back on the beach accompanied by Arabic rap music as a soundtrack singing the heroic feats of the young courageous Algerians. The ticket web/migration has produced a new language amidst the young generation, which celebrates the migrant as a 'modern hero' that fights an adverse destiny of poverty and indigence (Kaced, 2009).

25 The Arab Media Forum is an annual two-day event that took place on 23rd–24th of April 2008. Organised by the Dubai Press Club, every year the Forum brings together over 200 media professionals from the Arab region. The theme of the 7th Forum was "Bridging Arab Media Through Technology".

Media and Policy-making in Maghreb

Morocco: The Pervasive Culture of Migration

Morocco and Algeria's combined population of over 60 million persons constitutes 75 percent of the five-nation Arab Maghreb Union. Some 3.3 million Moroccans live abroad, nearly three times as many as 15 years ago. While recent years have seen a geographical broadening of the Moroccan diaspora, 80 percent of MRE still live in the EU, with an estimated 1.6 million MRE in France and 700,000 in Spain, the two biggest sources of remittances (OECD, 2007). MRE remittances and investments have always played a relevant role in the Moroccan economy. Out of the four Maghreb countries, Morocco has been the only one, since 1968, with a consistent policy of encouraging emigration in order to manage unemployment levels (Baldwin-Edwards, 2005). As soon as twelve years after independence, the Kingdom's budgetary plans (1968–72) proposed emigration as a means of solving the under-employment and unemployment problem, a policy which would simultaneously provide an increase in foreign currency through remittances. Migrant transfers would help finance internal investments, local employment and the creation of a group of nationals with professional skills and attitudes acquired in Europe, favourable to economic development. The 1973–77 five-year plan further proposed methods of stimulating emigration services in Morocco and setting up a network of social bureaux abroad (Nyberg-Sorensen, 2005). Similar plans were also adopted in the 80s and 90s. Those included activities favouring emigration and the conclusion of labour agreements with different receiving countries to further enhance development, as well as the creation of emigration funds designated to aid potential migrants with the costs of establishing themselves abroad (*ibid.*).

Although the volume of Moroccan migrant flows dropped significantly during the recession at the end of the 1970s, they picked up momentum in the 1980s and further increased during the 1990s, propelled mainly by irregular flows. With new Moroccan migrations to Spain and Italy after 1990, by 2004, the resulting diaspora was measured at over 3 million worldwide (over 10 percent of the current population), with 2.6 million in Europe as a whole and 280,000 in other Arab countries (Sadiqi, 2005). Between 1975 and 1998, remittances accounted for 6.5 percent of GDP.

The evolution of MRE remittances was marked by a sudden surge in 2001. Since then, their level has remained high compared to other countries, at about 9 percent of the GDP (Bouhga-Hagbe, 2009)²⁶. In absolute terms, Morocco today receives more remittances than any other country in the MENA region (just behind Egypt). According to the World Bank, they have been increasing remarkably since the '70s, passing from \$300 million in 1970 to \$5.7 billion last year, averaging \$2.6 billion annually since 2003. Overall, remittances today constitute 9.5 percent of the GDP and cover more than a third of the trade balance deficit (Ratha and Shaw, 2007). Today, the country's economy is increasingly unable to generate the job opportunities needed to absorb its growing young population and the unemployment rate has increased considerably over the past two decades²⁷. "Migration is still an important safety valve in reducing unemployment and social pressure by increasing income prospects for households through remittances" (Ennaji, 2008: 2). The real estate and tourism sectors are benefit most from Moroccan remittances, the former by direct investments in property in the country and the latter from both investments and income from those returning to take holidays in their homeland. More recently, MRE have begun to also play an active role in sectors such as agriculture and ICT (de Haas, 2006b).

The impact of the recent global financial and economic crisis on Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco has been minimal so far.

The region is expected to continue growing in 2009, however export revenues, remittance inflows and tourism receipts are projected to weaken due to the recession in Western Europe (Eghbal, 2009: 1).

26 To compare, according to the World Bank 2007 remittances were 6 percent of the GDP in Egypt, 5 percent in Tunisia and 2.2 percent in Algeria (Eghbal, 2009).

27 At the beginning of the '90s the official unemployment rate was between 9 and 11 percent. It then increased dramatically at the beginning of 2000, reaching a peak of 19 percent in 2003 and 2004. It dropped to 11 percent in 2006 and 9.8 in 2007. The government has made some progress in generating faster economic growth and reducing unemployment and poverty over the past 3 years. However, the unemployment rate remains high among the youth (17 percent in 2007) and in urban areas (16 percent in 2007). In the same year, the GDP grew by 6.7 percent. Per capita GDP is \$4500 (world ranking: 109th). Much of the economy is still dependant on agricultural, accounting for 20 percent of the GDP, and 40 percent of the population depends directly on it, but only 13.3 percent of people work in agriculture. Morocco has also seen an increase in economic development last year through its \$3.9 billion dollar tourist industry (UNDP, 2008).

With Spain's economy suffering, particularly from a struggling construction sector reeling from a burst real estate bubble, there are fears that remittances from across the Gibraltar Straits will fall. According to the *Centre Marocain de Conjoncture*²⁸, the effects of Spain's downturn will be 'slight', but with other European economies, including France, experiencing tougher economic times, the effect could be deeper in the coming two years. The MRE (Moroccan Residents Abroad) money transfers already fell 15.5 percent in the first quarter of 2009 and they are expected to stand at \$5.5 billion for the entire year, a drop of about 15 percent compared to the previous year (CMC, 2009). The authorities will be keen to ensure that any losses are offset by easier and better regulated processes of remittance transfer and MRE investment in the country, within an environment of international economic recession. Early this year, the government drew up a new anti-crisis plan to encourage MRE to further invest in their country of origin. As part of this strategy, the government and banks will provide up to 75 percent of the total investment (10 per cent and 65 per cent respectively) if the investor provides at least 25 per cent in foreign currency. As for money transfers, the government has decided to reduce the cost of these transfers and cut exchange commissions by 50 percent. The Moroccan banks and their branches abroad, decided to also provide a free transfer service between June and December 2009. Some Moroccan banks have implemented this measure since the beginning of the year. Moreover, the exclusiveness binding banks with transfer organisations may also be lifted to encourage competition and reduce transfer costs (*ibid.*). In addition, as previously stated, Morocco just signed an accord to set up electronic money transfers through technology developed by the Universal Postal Union.

Overall, it can be argued that "Morocco's economy increasingly relies on the migrants' remittances, hence the efforts of the government to establish institutional links with migrants abroad" (Ennaji, 2008: 6). The government strategy goes further than financial and legislative incentives. It also includes a public communication dimension. Early this year, the government launched a public campaign with advertisements in the main

28 The *Centre Marocain de Conjoncture* (CMC) is the first independent think tank analysing the Moroccan economy. Created in 1990, the *Centre Marocain de Conjoncture* is an institution for macro-economic, sectoral, demographic and commercial research and study, directed at companies and other private and public organisations.

media outlets to invite MRE to invest in the country in order to make the most of the GDP growth rate²⁹ and the new incentives, thus contributing to the social and economic development of Morocco (CMC, 2009). Aside from this recent campaign, conceived because of the global crisis and the remittances' fall, the government also indirectly encourages migration by supporting television programmes on the two state TV channels³⁰ which focus on migrant-development. For example, on the air for four years, the programme *Canal Atlas* advises MRE on investments in Morocco, with detailed information about potential projects, locations, government incentives, etc. (Sadiqi, 2007). Another television programme called *Biladi*, "My Homeland", shows the important reforms and changes that have taken place in Morocco on a weekly basis in order to persuade MRE to invest in the home country. While these institutional and economic programmes are addressed mainly to MRE and their relatives at home, other TV shows always broadcast by the state television stations tend to turn migration into something spectacular and are mainly tailored for young generations still in the home country. A typical example is the programme broadcast on Saturday night on 2M-TV called *Noujoum al-hijra*, "The Stars of Migration", which shows how Moroccan migrants have succeeded in host countries, providing interviews with MRE upon their return home that praise their standard of living and welfare. This TV show is really popular among the youth. It is often the source of new trends in terms of fashion and music and "the protagonists are portrayed as superstars" (Ennaji, 2009).

Obviously, these recent programmes broadcast by Moroccan television channels have played only a limited role in shaping the 'successful migrant' imaginary. The main input has always come directly from the MRE, with the remittances sent home and their investments in the country. A relevant role has also been played by European television, with millions of Moroccans in urban and rural areas watching all sorts of European

29 The Moroccan central bank, *Bank Al Maghrib* (BAM), stated on 17th of June that Morocco's 2009 growth rate is expected to stand between 5 and 6 percent (CMC, 2009).

30 RTM (Radiodiffusion-Télévision Marocaine) is the official government-run television network based in Rabat and broadcasting nationally (also available via the Internet). 2M-TV was a private outlet until 1996 and is now partly owned by the government (68% of the shares). It is very popular and focuses on education and entertainment, with a wide variety of programming covering news, talk shows and dramas 24/7. 2M broadcasts country-wide and is available on Globecast satellite.

channels³¹, contributing to consolidate the picture of a wealthy and liberal Europe, a land of opportunity and freedom, “making the Moroccans [think] of migration as a solution to their misery and frustration” (Ennaji, 2008: 7). Also in Europe, state television channels have recently developed programmes that turn migration into something spectacular. One of these is the new Spanish state television’s TVE1 talent show called *Hijos de Babel*, “Sons of Babel”, which is also very popular in Morocco. Started in 2007, “the show offers millions of immigrants in Spain – mainly from Morocco and South America – the chance to become the next Shakira or Enrique Iglesias” (Sanz, 2007: 1). Those selected from thousands of immigrant applicants hope to swap their more usual jobs as builders or greenhouse workers for a more ‘glamorous’ occupation in the music business. Like other reality-show formats, *Hijos de Babel* tracks the progress of the candidates, who live together, as they prepare for a musical career. It also investigates the candidates’ lives before they came to Spain and sets up and sponsors development projects in their home countries in which viewers can participate.

Considering the fact that, in Morocco, over 32 percent of the population is under 15 years old and almost 65 percent is under 30 (UNDP, 2008), it is easy to imagine the huge impact that TV programmes specifically tailored to young generations have on Moroccan public opinion. According to a recent survey conducted among young Moroccans, with results analyzed by Sadiqi, the young themselves (55.5 percent of the interviewees) believe that the Moroccan mass media, especially television channels, encourage, on a daily basis, irregular migration to Spain and France by showing and interviewing MRE who have succeeded in their migration projects and emphasizing an idealistic image of a wealthy Europe. Nevertheless, a minority, but significant number, of the interviewees (43.3 percent) also believe that media reports on irregular migration and sea tragedies have a consistent, discouraging impact on would-be migrants’ intentions (Sadiqi, 2007). This ambivalent result has several explanations. Not the least of which is the fact that the interviewees are all university students. They comprise a segment of public opinion with a sharp capacity to confront and analyse information from different sources and are most likely not the primary target of a TV show such as *Noujoum al-hijra*.

31 According to the World Bank 2006 survey, 76 percent of Moroccan households own a TV (Dahmani et al., 2007).

Nevertheless, the would-be migrants are often relatively well educated and from moderate socio-economic backgrounds, despite being commonly portrayed as 'destitute' or 'desperate'. They move because of a general lack of opportunities, which usually affects skilled workers. "Rather than a desperate response to destitution, migration is generally a conscious choice by relatively well-off individuals and households to enhance their livelihoods" (de Haas, 2008: 10). Even if data available are limited, it can be argued that a significant number of high school and university students in North Africa represent would-be migrants (Lutterbeck, 2006). On the basis of a less recent survey conducted by a Moroccan NGO³², Sadiqi argued that 54 percent of university students and 56 percent of high school students express the wish to emigrate to better their living conditions.

We have to acknowledge that the Moroccan media, despite being highly influenced by a government that owns the two national TV channels and the only publishing company for the entire advertising market (Cheterian, 2008), more frequently report (compared to the other Maghrebi media) the legal issues and humanitarian challenges of the migration phenomenon. Sea tragedies, strict European legislation, living conditions in the detention centres in Ceuta and Melilla, failing economies and unskilled works, etc., are all aspects openly reported and commented in the national media. "Migration is repeatedly debated and is regularly an election issue on a par with health and education", and "reports on illegal migration have been the top priority of major newspapers and television channels in Morocco" (Ennaji, 2008: 7). Therefore, it can be argued that while promoting MRE investments and sponsoring programmes in the state TV channels that celebrate the 'successful migrant', in a paradoxical public communication strategy, the government is also trying to restrain irregular migration, officially standing by its commitments with the EU coun-

32 The Moroccan NGO *Association des Amis et Familles des victimes de l'Immigration Clandestine* (AFVIC) carried out a 2001 survey on a relevant representative sample of population from 10 to 60 years old. According to this survey, almost 1/5 of actively employed Moroccans would like to emigrate. This number's increase of 82 percent includes employed Moroccans with at least an high school degree. The survey also revealed that the readiness to migrate is high, especially in the North of Morocco, where people live in precarious conditions due to a lack of resources and investments and also because of the proximity to Spain. In this region, 63.8 percent of Moroccans wish to emigrate, and 16 percent of them thought of emigrating illegally despite the risks (Sadiqi, 2007).

tries³³. The official position of the political authority is clearly reported in the media: migration is a priority in Morocco's socio-political policies and emigration is favoured manifestly, whilst, on the contrary, irregular migration is firmly opposed and publicly condemned. However, the gap between the two different stances is strictly maintained: the celebration of the 'successful migrant' and the condemnation of irregular migration seem to run along two different, but parallel, tracks.

Overall, it can be argued that the young generations have regular access to complete, comprehensive information concerning the migratory phenomenon. Security risks and difficult living conditions of migrants in Europe are often presented to the young Moroccans. Nevertheless, they continue to cultivate an extremely positive perception of Europe (80.4 percent of the Sadiqi and Ennaji interviewees) even though reports on Maghrebi immigration in Western media most frequently focus on boat-people trafficked by organized crime networks, exploited greenhouse workers, sinking economies, security problems, etc. We have to acknowledge that "the wish to emigrate stems from a deep-seated frustration with the conditions in the home country which might be little affected by the media" reports (Tonti, 2009: 2), both European and pan-Arab ones. Also the official government opposition to irregular migration reported daily by the national media cannot really affect the imaginary of the 'successful migrant' that permeates the entire Moroccan society. In Morocco, emigration remains an economic 'family strategy' (Ennaji, 2008) and the 'European dream,' a life-time project. It is estimated that more than 1.2 million people in Morocco have escaped poverty because of MRE remittances (Kachani, 2004). This estimation alone counterbalances any possible impact the negative media reports on irregular migration may have on Moroccan public opinion.

The media definitely play a remarkable role in shaping the views and attitudes of would-be migrants. The resounding success of programmes like *Noujoum al-hijra* and *Hijos de Babel* are evidence of this. Nevertheless,

33 However, the Moroccan government speaks critically of the new European migratory policy. During the Euro-African conference on migration and development on 20th–21st of October 2008, the Moroccan government defended the interests of migrants at a moment marked by controversy around the so-called "return directive" adopted by the EU. In this perspective, the Moroccan government called on European countries to abandon the policies of returning migrants and encourage the so-called "circular" migration system.

Ennaji highlights how the idea to emigrate is usually planted and matured in the family circle. The media are just a facilitating factor that fosters young Moroccans' wishes to migrate to better their living conditions as well as those of their relatives. In this view, the strengthening of migrant family ties on the two shores of the Mediterranean through the new ICT acquires a relevant importance. The decision to emigrate is heavily influenced by contact with relatives or family friends already settled in Europe as well as the MRE prosperity showed off at home. In addition, Moroccan migrants have created their own websites, television channels, and radio stations. In France, for example, Boeur TV, Berber TV, Radio Boeur, etc., allow migrants to express, in their own regional Arabic, concerns and aspirations in reference to their migration experiences in Europe. Primarily driven by economic needs and supported by family strategies, young Moroccans are more and more influenced in their decision to migrate by a growing interconnection with relatives and friends abroad. The exposure to media celebration of the 'successful migrant' and consistent government campaigns through TV programming to attract MRE investments and consolidate the connections to migrant-development only add to a pre-existing desire.

Algeria: The Government Propaganda Failure

Algeria stands as Morocco's polar opposite in many respects. Lacking a historical core identity, the modern Algerian state was forged in the crucible of harsh colonial rule and a bloody war for independence. Its model of government was that of a populist-authoritarian single party dominated by the military, with a revolutionary socialist-Islamic ideology and funded largely by petroleum and natural gas revenues. "From the outset, it stood as a geo-political rival to neighbouring Morocco" (Weitzman, 2006: 4). Decolonization has many legacies for Algerian migration. Under the terms of the 'Evian Accord' granting Algerian independence in 1962, Algerians enjoyed relative freedom of movement between Algeria and France, and by 1965 there were already over 500,000 Algerian nationals in France. Ever since, French governments have sought to restrict access to France for economic migrants. The main restrictions began in the early 1970s and were envisaged prior to the end of France's so-called Glorious Thirty Years of post-war economic modernization and expansion to which Algerians contributed in the manufacturing and construction sectors. However,

the 'duty' France had as a colonial power had left governments with no choice but to accept greater Algerian migration also to ease the increasingly tense political situation in Algeria itself (House, 2006: 3).

In 1968, the Algerian and French governments set a quota on migrants of 35,000 per year, which was reduced to 25,000 in 1971. Although Algeria officially suspended all migration to France in 1973, an estimated 7,000 Algerians nonetheless continued to migrate legally each year at the end of the 1970s. In the mid-1970s, both France and Algeria offered incentives to migrants to return home, one of them being guaranteed housing. The economic crisis in Europe in the aftermath of the Arab oil embargo of 1973 led to a recession that affected Algerians as well as other North Africans working in Europe, primarily in France. Because of rising unemployment, French trade unions turned against migrant workers, claiming that they took jobs from French workers, and formulating policies that restricted the rights of migrant workers even more than before (Chapan-Metz, 1993). By 1980, Algerians and other North African workers had lost their union rights and benefits, and, during the '80s, the migratory flows from Algeria to France slowed down drastically. Algerians and other migrants from the Maghreb have always been perceived as migrant workers and thus rarely naturalized in France.

The majority of them in the early 1990s had no voice in the French political system and did not represent a political force or even an interest group that could exert pressure to defend its rights (ibid.: 78).

Regular migration to France started to rise again in the second half of the '90s, with the recrudescence of the civil war. In 1996, Algiers registered 8,000 regular departures to France, a volume that has almost tripled in a decade, with 25,000 Algerians regularly admitted to France in 2005 and 32,000 in 2006 (Rahbi, 2009).

Nowadays, the Algerian diaspora is estimated at about 9 million people, 5.1 of them living in France. Among them, about half a million are regular migrants, according to the 2008 survey of the French Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques (INSEE) (Rahbi, 2009). Large communities are also present in Germany, Spain and Italy. With \$2.9 billion in 2008, Algeria came in fifth in the World Bank MENA list for remittances, almost half of the total of MRE money transfers (Ratha and Xu, 2008). The irregular migration from Algeria to France and Europe

appears to be on the rise for the past few years. As for the rest of the Maghreb, given its clandestine nature, the magnitude of the phenomenon is difficult to assess, the only available data being border apprehensions of would-be migrants. On the French side, according to the 2008 *Cimade* report³⁴, the number of irregular Algerians migrants apprehended by French authorities and sent to temporary 'administrative detention centres' in 2007 were 4,297 (Cimade, 2008). On the other shore of the Mediterranean, the Algerian coastguard intercepted 1,335 people and recovered 98 bodies last year. They were 336 and 73 in 2005, respectively (Labdelaoui, 2009c). But how many left? How many disappeared? How many did manage to cross safely? Nobody knows. Most likely, their number runs into several thousand every year. One thing is sure: the phenomenon is quickly increasing every year judging by the number of applications submitted by families to the 'Family tracking service' of the Algerian Red Crescent (ARC). This body helps families to trace their relatives who got lost during crossing attempts by working in partnership with Red Cross organisations in Europe, particularly those of Spain and Italy. The ARC says that, last year, an average of 50 applications were processed each month. This compares with a figure of only 5 applications per month in 2001 (Aflou, 2008).

The problem of irregular migration has recently received national attention in Algeria, eliciting action from civil society and the government. Since the first would-be irregular migrant had been reported by the Algerian media in 2005, the harragas have become a 'burning' issue in the country (Kaced, 2009). Hundreds of articles and reports have been written in both private and public newspapers, analysing, criticising or denouncing the phenomenon. President Bouteflika broke his long silence on the issue and stated that

there would be no difference between suicide bombers and harragas, except that the former kill innocent people and the latter do more harm to their close families and first and foremost to themselves (Mammeri, 2008: 2).

Until 2005, the very existence of the harragas was simply ignored by the national media, which followed the official position of the government

34 *Cimade* stands for *Comité Inter Mouvements Auprès Des Évacués*. It is a French NGO authorised and charged by law since 1984 to assist and accompany the irregular migrants during their entire stay in the 33 'administrative detention centres' spread all over the country. The *Cimade* delegates assure a permanent presence in each centre.

(Labdelaoui, 2008). Until then, media reports on migration dealt mainly with statistics about sub-Saharan migrants crossing the borders, the number of arrests made by Algerian authorities, their legal statuses as asylum seekers, etc. Algeria hosts around 95,700 refugees, mainly from the disputed Western Sahara, who sought shelter from the 1976 conflict between Morocco and the Polisario Front over the area's sovereignty. Around 4,000 Palestinian refugees also live in Algeria, along with some 1,600 sub-Saharan asylum seekers with no recognition and another 20,000 that fall under the category of 'economic migrants' according to the authorities (UNHCR, 2008).

Confronted with an exceptional number of harragas sea crossing attempts and under pressure from the French government, which proposed joint coastland patrolling, in 2005, Algerian authorities finally recognized the phenomenon and, as a consequence, "the Algerian media witnessed a complete shift of interest from sub-Saharan irregular migrants to the Algerian ones" (Kaced, 2009: 23). It is worth pointing out here that the Cheterian analysis and Bernhold and Mekhennet report on the Algerian media, depicted as generally aligned with the official government position, with limited room of manoeuvre for the private written papers, often submitted to the board of censors. They also generally display a low professional standard for journalists, often working under pressure from the authorities' prohibitions and uncertainty about the country's security situation (Cheterian, 2008; Bernhold and Mekhennet 2007). Considering this reality, it's easy to imagine that such a shift in media attention had a huge impact on Algerian public opinion, which until then tended to ignore the real dimension and structural development of the phenomenon (Labdelaoui, 2009a).

Analysing the articles about irregular migration from two of the main private daily papers of the country – *El Chourouk* in Arabic and *El Watan* in French³⁵ – covering the year 2008 and the first term of 2009, Kaced observes that, overall, the young harragas are depicted as victims of the socio-economic conditions in which they live, the collapsed Algerian

35 Although lacking of an official body to certify the circulation, according to the estimations of the *Sécretariat d'Etat chargé de la Communication*, in 2009, *El Chourouk* had an average circulation of 600,000 daily copies, while *El Watan*, 150,000. *El Chourouk* is the first national paper by circulation, followed by two other papers, always in Arabic. *El Watan* is the first national paper in French by circulation. Government statistics indicate that, today, there are 300 papers published in Algeria, out of which 79 are dailies. 56 percent of them owned by private groups (Belmadi, 2009).

economy, the lack of job opportunities and life prospectives. In the observed period, would-be migrants are described in the two dailies as “experiencing a social ‘malaise’, a sense of deprivation and exclusion from the society” (Kaced, 2009: 28). Implicitly, Algerian authorities are not free from blame, being considered responsible for the economic situation and the consequent widespread frustration of the young Algerians. At the same time, the phenomenon is also depicted as a concrete threat to the country: a “collective suicide” of “desperate young people” that has taken on an alarming dimension (*ibid.*: 25)³⁶. The risks and human costs of illegal migrant trafficking across the Mediterranean are also reported and debated on a regular basis in the two papers. Sea tragedies are often in the headlines. Overall, the opinions and statements of gendarmeries officials, high Navy chiefs, politicians and also ministers reported by the two dailies all emphasize the idea that the harragas are victims and should not be criminalized, whereas the phenomenon should be analysed to identify the causes. This editorial line clearly defined in *El Chourouk* and *El Watan* clashes with media reports from the government papers and the audiovisual outlets, all controlled by the government³⁷. Here, the blame’s tones are stronger, and the harragas are often depicted as criminals, if not “traitor[s] to the nation” (Labdelaoui, 2009b). It appears that, in the government-controlled media, there is a clear communication strategy to ‘criminalize’ the young Algerian would-be migrants (*ibid.*). Their attempts to cross the Mediterranean, leaving their families behind, is compared to an act of cowardice. Patriotic wording reminds people of the pride in the country’s independence and is opposed to the young generation’s wish to leave behind the difficulties and reach an unlikely French *Eldorado*.

As a matter of fact, the number of harragas intercepted by French and Algerian authorities has not decreased because of the government strategies to publicly oppose the irregular migration of young Algerians. On the contrary, it is constantly and significantly increasing. The government propaganda against the irregular migration is obtaining the opposite re-

36 *El Watan*, 23rd of January 2009. The expressions are attributed to a high official of the Civil protection.

37 Algerian television and radio stations are state-controlled. The television channel ENTV and the three main radio channels maintain regular news service and disseminate official political discourse. All present news is in three languages – Arabic, French and English – with an additional radio channel in Berber.

sults hoped by the authorities. The young are even more instigated to migrate illegally, because normally adverse to the regime propaganda, and above all because they see as an heroic achievement taking up the challenge with the authorities. Also the civil society is reacting to this propaganda, empathizing with the reasons behind the harragas' choice. The wish to leave amidst the young Algerians has reached such a level by now that has swept already away the government propaganda, and Algeria is witnessing a growing rift between the young generations and the political authority (Labdelaoui, 2009b).

The image of a generational gap and cultural incomprehension in Algerian society in reference to the harragas phenomenon recurs frequently in the recent debate in the national media. The two main papers considered by Kaced strongly emphasize the authorities' incapacity to understand the distress call of the young generation. Former Prime Minister Belkhadem³⁸ declared to *El Watan* that the young people are jobless and long to leaving because the idea that "those who do not find what they want, they have to learn to love what they find"³⁹ is too strict. Commenting on the former prime minister's statements, an *El Watan* editor wrote

When a Prime Minister says not to understand this phenomenon, it means there is no real dialogue at all. The phenomenon reflects the emptiness which has been achieved by the authorities in their relations with the Algerian society (Kaced, 2009: 30).

The French newspaper *Le Monde* quoted Mohammed Kouidri, Professor of Social Sciences at the Oran University with the following:

The harraga is becoming the archetype of a large part of our youth. At the beginning, we thought that poverty was driving young people to leave, but in fact it is the dream for a different live.⁴⁰

The Western way of life is sublimated by European satellite TV programmes and websites that young people watch everyday⁴¹, Koudri notices, and all

38 Abdelaziz Belkhadem was Prime Minister from May 2006 to September 2008 and a member of the National Liberation Front. He was replaced by the present prime minister Ahmed Ouyahia, a member of the National Rally for Democracy.

39 *El Watan*, 20th of January 2009.

40 *Le Monde*, 7th of April 2009.

41 Satellite dishes are widespread in the urban areas. It is estimated that more than 60 percent of Algerian households have access to European and other Arab channels via satellite (Dahmani et al., 2007).

harragas tell the same story, they lack perspectives and freedom, have difficulties getting jobs, and have trouble getting married and owning their own homes. “There is a gap between today’s young people and their parents’ generation”, observes Kouidri, “their parents also had dreams of emancipation but their dreams were rooted in Algeria where there was more freedom. Today, dreams have moved to another place” (Nelle, 2009: 2).

In light of the growing number of sea tragedies and harragas intercepted by coastal patrolling, the Algerian authorities have adopted a range of new measures, including urgent modifications to the Penal Code, approved by the Council of Ministers in August 2008. ‘Illegal migration’ is now an indictable offence that may receive prison sentences of up to six months. Penalties are harsher for the traffickers, who coordinate the migration networks, with sentences up to ten years in the worst cases (Mammeri, 2008). The new punishments for ‘illegal’ migrants have not received unanimous support from all political parties and civil society. It appears that opinions are discordant and the Algerian society deeply divided (Labdelaoui, 2008). Kaced’s analysis confirms that the ‘criminalization strategy’ of the government-controlled media is producing, as a counter-effect, an increasing solidarity with the harragas among the civil society, witnessed and reported on a daily basis by the private and more independent newspapers. “Criminalizing the phenomenon of the harragas wont change anything”, stated MP Mohamed Benhamou of the Algerian National Front to *El Chourouk*,

the government must get to the root of the problem and look into the reasons which drive graduate people, women and even elderly to take such risk to get to Europe [...] The phenomenon should be tackled by establishing a real social peace, creating jobs and solving the housing problems (Kaced, 2009: 30).⁴²

This ‘empathy’ with the harragas and attempts to focus the debate on the real reasons behind the phenomenon enhance the courage and determination of young Algerians – many of whom are repeatedly caught by the Navy and returned home as many as three or four times – which is rising to a symbol of political resistance to an authoritarian regime, thus gaining a positive connotation. Clearly, we are far from the symbolic dimension of the ‘successful migrant’ associated with the economic development present

42 *El Chourouk*, 10th of May 2008.

in Morocco and sponsored by the authorities. Nevertheless, it is possible to outline a parallelism because, in both countries, debating migration issues in the media has become an important strategy in the policy-making process, either to oppose the harragas phenomenon or to empathize with it, with an increasing impact on public opinion and the would-be migrants themselves.

Conclusions

There is a vast debate about the relationship between the media and the policy decision-making process and the impact the former may have on the latter and vice versa. However, despite growing interest in the organization and regulation of media industries in the so-called developed world, there is relatively little public discussion and literature about the material processes through which media policy develops in the LDCs. At a time of considerable changes in the media environment and developing countries, new actors and new paradigms are emerging that are set to shift the balance of power between public and private interests in the policy-making process. The Arab countries are a significant example, with the new Gulf satellite televisions transforming daily life and reshaping cultural identity throughout the entire Arab world in a handful of years. Elsewhere, changes are less evident and overwhelming, but it is clear that the developing countries' media and ICT in general have taken a central role in the policy-making process. The Maghreb region is in a privileged position to observe these changes, because it exists halfway between the pervasive media culture and the pluralistic reality of the Northern shore of the Mediterranean, where media and policy-makers influence each other in an indissoluble contiguity, and the poorer African continent, where both media and audiences are more passive entities, easily influenced by the political authorities in basically oligarchic societies.

This chapter acknowledged that both dynamics are present in the Maghrebi countries, at least in reference to a 'burning' issue such as the migration one. Definitively, debating migration issues in the media has become an important strategy in policy-making processes in the Maghreb. Notwithstanding authorities' public statements stressing the need to op-

pose irregular migration and to condemn it, North African governments seem to have little genuine interest in stopping the phenomenon because of their economies' dependency on migrant labour and remittance inflows, especially nowadays, due to the international economic crisis and the consequent fall of the remittances. In many countries, this reality led to developing an ambivalent media strategy, where the official position opposing the phenomenon is accompanied by celebration of migrant-development, often turned into something spectacular to seduce the young generations. But the gap between the two different pictures is strictly maintained: the celebration of the 'successful migrant' and condemnation of irregular migration seem to run along two different, but parallel, tracks. In this model, the policy-makers are by and large the conscious initiators of the communication process.

At the same time, in the Maghreb region, the European and pan-Arab media play an active role as well, much more than in the rest of the African continent, substantially influencing the policy-making process by offering a new plurality and drastically reducing the passiveness of the audiences and stimulating the local media. However, the foreign media contribute indirectly to the local governments' strategies because the news and the images depicting the wealthy and liberal Europe always have a greater impact on public opinion than those documenting the difficult immigrant living conditions, the sea tragedies, the discriminatory attitude of the European societies towards African migrants, etc. Nevertheless, Maghrebi authorities are deploying huge efforts in trying to contradict the foreign media, perceived as a threat to their consolidated control and influence on the local media.

In the end, the growing and widespread wish to expatriate, especially among the young, fed by the European media and also celebrated by the local ones, consequently influences the policy-making process by pushing the political authorities to make the most of it and tailor its migratory policy appropriately (programmes for MRE investments, etc.). Also, in the Algerian case – the only government in the region that harshly opposes the migratory phenomenon in the media – the wish to emigrate that stems from the frustration and the lack of opportunities of the young generations has pushed the political authority to react by criminalizing the harragas through a media campaign. A dynamic that reproduces the same cycle of dialectic influence in which the media react to policies and policy-makers react to media coverage in a continuum like in the modern Western societies.

The Illegal Immigrant: Victim/Hero

An Analytical Study on Content of Two Algerian Daily Newspapers: *El Chourouk* (Arabic) and *El Watan* (French)

ASSIA KACED

Introduction

The media is known to be one of the principal agents in shaping public perceptions and opinions about significant political and social issues. Through its implicit or explicit position in the coverage of 'burning' issues, it can play a crucial role in promoting or combating existing ideologies, stereotypes and beliefs. However, the impact of the media on public attitudes and opinions remains the subject of much speculation and debate (Maeroff, 1998; Spitzer, 1993; Wilson and Wilson, 2001). On the one hand, it is argued that the media reinforces the dominant ideologies by shaping our thinking (Infante, Rancer and Womack, 1997). On the other hand, it is said that the media functions as a watchdog that provides self-reflexive commentary and actively criticises and questions the status quo, thus becoming a serious agent for cultural, socio-political and institutional change (Dearing and Rogers, 1996).

Since the first would-be illegal immigrants had been reported by the Algerian media in 2005, illegal immigration or harraga as we call it in Algeria, has become a 'burning' issue in the country. Hundreds of articles and reports have been written in both private and public newspapers analysing, criticising, or denouncing the phenomenon. However, the idea that the Algerian society has of these young men and women crossing the sea to reach the 'lost paradise' depends heavily on the daily newspapers that draw them as either victims or heroes. Indeed, while some newspaper articles insist on the political, social and economic bad conditions in which the would-be illegal immigrants have lived, others refer to the heroic exploit of these young people who have succeeded to reach the other side of

the sea despite financial, security, geographical and climatic obstacles. Whether victim or hero, the Algerian illegal immigrant is almost never condemned as a trespasser to be punished by law.

Bernard Cohen, one of the predecessors in the development of the role of the media, places more emphasis on the issues covered by the media than on the impact of the media on public opinion. He states: "the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about" (Cohen, 1963, p. 13). In order to understand how the would-be illegal immigrants or harragas are perceived in Algeria and their impact on the Algerian society, we have to analyse the manner in which they have been portrayed by the Algerian media which has considerable influence on Algerian public opinion and attitudes. Indeed, an analysis of the written media images has been an essentially appropriate way of assessing the general impact on Algeria perceptions and social attitudes. The manner in which the media portrays these would-be illegal immigrants has significant, if not determinative effect on public opinion. Indeed, through this work, I will try to show the impact of the Algerian daily newspapers have on their readers, mainly the young ones in influencing migratory intentions.

Thus, the questions that impose themselves for debate are: Apart from illegal immigration as a social/political phenomenon, what is the position of the media towards the illegal immigrant as an individual? In other words, how does the media represent the illegal immigrant for its readership? Is the harraga a hero to be admired or a victim to be pitied? To what extent do media representations of the harraga reinforce or change current national perceptions as well as social attitudes and values? To answer these questions, I have identified and analysed the main narratives and themes found in the Algerian dailies. I have concentrated on the representation of the would-be illegal immigrants in both *El Chourouk* and *El Watan*. My choice of the two dailies has been based, on the one hand on the fact that they are the two top publications in Algeria, and on the other hand, on the fact that one is in Arabic (*El Chourouk*) and the other in French (*El Watan*) thus covering almost 90 percent of the literate population in the country. For the two newspapers, I have chosen the main articles covering the year 2008 and the first term of 2009, that makes a total of 119 articles.

The Algerian Media and Illegal Immigration

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the issue of illegal immigration has become a topic of interest for the Algerian media in general, and the Algerian newspapers in particular. The main concern of the Algerian journalists in the first years of the new decade, however, was Sub-Saharan migration. Indeed, from the year 2000 onward, Algeria had become a 'transit' country due to its central position on the road to Europe. Tens of thousands of Sub-Saharan migrants coming from countries like Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Senegal flooded on the Algerian soil. They either stayed short periods that did not exceed one month or long periods that lasted up to two years before heading to Spain or Italy. This new phenomenon was mainly due to the strengthening of European visa procedures in most African countries and the lack of alternative migration destinations. It was also due to the socio-political problems from which countries in west and central Africa suffered like civil wars, political instability, poverty, unemployment, and economic decline.

Accordingly, the main focus of the Algerian media in those first years was on the political and economic factors behind the migration phenomenon. The newspapers articles and reports were dealing mainly with statistics about the new migrants crossing the borders, the number of arrests made by the Algerian authorities, the profile of the Sub-Saharan immigrants and their legal status. When the first cases of Algerian illegal immigrants were registered by the Algerian navy, and the number of would-be illegal immigrants deaths in the sea increased, the Algerian media witnessed a complete shift of interest from the Sub-Saharan illegal immigrants to the Algerian ones.

The Illegal Immigrant as Victim

A series of main narratives have been developed by *El Chourouk* and *El Watan*, most of them already familiar to the Algerian audiences: the causes of illegal immigration, the socio-economic problems associated with the phenomenon, and the potential failure of the Algerian government in dealing with the issue. As far as the would-be illegal immigrants are concerned, there is generally a notable lack of negative prejudiced images about them in the newspaper articles I have examined. Instead, these young people are

portrayed in a rather sympathetic manner that stresses more often their social and financial hardships in their country of origin than their tentative at trespassing laws and rules.

The first aspect of the articles and reports that I considered of great importance and that could not just be ignored in my analysis was the choice of words in headlines dealing with the phenomenon of illegal immigration in the two dailies. Indeed, it has long been proved that headlines have great power to transmit a certain kind of message through the words that form them. It has also been widely recognized that many readers 'scan' newspapers rather than read all the news stories. Readers who adopt this strategy rely on sensational headlines employed in newspapers reports. Thus, the importance of the headlines cannot be underestimated.

In the case of the two Algerian dailies, the headlines used send a clear and unequivocal message that would-be illegal immigrants are victims of both the socio-economic conditions in which they live, and of the political system that is unable to understand their real needs.

Among the most sensational headlines employed in the newspapers, we have the following:

- Desperate Young Algerians Try to Immigrate Illegally Despite Deadly Risks
- Algeria: Illegal Migrants' Funerals Turned into Anger March
- Moroccan Police Ill-Treats Algerian Illegal Migrants
- Deputies and Men of Law Oppose "Illegal Immigration"'s Criminalization in Algeria
- Gross Human Rights Abuses Committed Against Algerian Immigrants in Spain.
- Algeria: lawyers Refuse to Criminalise Illegal Migrants
- Party Leader against Condemnation of "Illegal Immigrants"
- They Challenge Even Winter...
- The Harragas and Poor Governance
- Hopeless Harragas Testify
- Rupture of Confidence Relationship between Governors and Youth
- The Eldorado of Death
- The Sound of the Toll Instead of the Singing of Sirens
- Harraga: The Wheel of Misfortune
- Judgement of the Harraga is Illegal
- Powerless, the Government Finally Acknowledges the Seriousness of the Phenomenon of Harraga
- The Policy of Contempt, Insult and Repression
- Nothing Seems to Stop the Youth in their Desire to Challenge Death to Join Europe!
- The Overpowering Call of the Open Sea
- War to the People!

In addition to the sensational headlines used by the two dailies, the journalists and reporters of *El Chourouk* and *El Watan* have frequently sought out comments and viewpoints from high officials and government authorities to confirm the assumption that the would-be illegal immigrant is a victim. Accordingly, views of Gendarmerie officials, high chiefs in the Navy, politicians and ministers are reported in the articles. Where ‘experts’ have been called on to comment on the phenomenon, these have invariably been sociologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, and university academics. Indeed, in both *El Chourouk* and *El Watan* voice is given to people who hold high positions in government or the police in order to consolidate the idea of the would-be illegal immigrant as a victim of the socio-economic conditions in which he lives. In *El Watan* of 23rd of January, a high official in the navy declares:

In my opinion, he [the would-be illegal immigrant] is a victim. We need to stop for a moment and discuss with these Algerians who venture in the sea for an unpredictable adventure, we can see in them only victims, their stories are so moving that we are sometimes tempted to take sides with them.

Another high official, this time in the Civil Protection, is reported to have said:

We are still continuing our fight against this phenomenon [illegal immigration]. We control all our coasts in order to stop the tries of illegal immigration that our unfortunate harragas dare each time. This will allow us to avoid for them the worst that the sea can offer.

The National Front deputy, Mohammed Benhamou, is also reported to consider the would-be illegal immigrant as a victim:

Illegal immigration is taking alarming dimensions in Algeria. It is a collective suicide of young men seeking a better life abroad. Most of these desperate young people are victims of incredulous traffickers who promise heaven to them, but in most cases they [the would-be illegal immigrants] return home in coffins.

These quotations are meant, in fact, to give more weight to the statements of the journalists of the two dailies in their reports by showing that ‘everybody’ agrees with the idea that the would-be illegal immigrant is a victim, even the people who issue laws against him and try to criminalize him.

The economic drivers of the would-be illegal immigrant in *El Chourouk* and *El Watan* are often divided into push and pull factors. Push factors

include increased poverty, unemployment and decreased social assistance. Pull factors include the fact that wages are higher on the other side of the Mediterranean and that there is a persistent labor demand, mainly menial jobs. Most of the reports, 95 percent of *El Watan* and 90 percent of *El Chourouk* emphasise the crushing social evils under which the Algerian young people are living. So, for the two dailies, socially oppressive forces are what Algerian young people face. They are beaten down by poverty, wretchedness and misery. In 80 percent of the reports, unemployment or a precarious professional life is the main cause of immigration. In all the reports, the young people are victims of the socio-economic system in a country that has not given them a chance to prove their skills and capacities.

According to the two dailies, a sharp increase in the cost of life and the price of food have recently made life even harder for these young Algerian people. Working opportunities are reduced to nil because most of the small and medium size national companies have gone bankrupt or have been privatized. Thus, even university graduates struggle to find employment. A menial job in Europe is therefore a surer way of supporting one's family. A typical example is the testimony of an unauthorised fruit and vegetables seller who has been arrested as a would-be illegal immigrant.

This is not life that we are leading, policemen, when they catch me, first beat me, then take my goods and after let me go with a fine of 1500 dinars. There is nothing for us. In Arzew [the city where I live] strangers come from everywhere to seize jobs in Algeria's biggest gas network while we do not even know what a factory looks like.

As with other articles of this type, it is immediately mentioned that the would-be illegal immigrant is a victim of external forces. Because of the difficulties to find a permanent job with an acceptable salary in his country, he would think of immigrating to Europe where he could earn much more money. Therefore, the articles in the two dailies dismiss the prejudice that the harraga is a lazy youth who dreams of an effortless golden future. In fact, in some articles, the entire migration legacy is justified in this manner. For example, at the end of an article in *El Watan*, one of the reporters concludes:

Many desperate young Algerians, aspiring to life of high standards, security and higher education, have resorted to illegal immigration across the sea to promising destinations such as Spain, Italy and other European countries, fleeing joblessness and uncertainty at home.

In other words, the harraga is a product of unfortunate social, political and economic conditions. In fact, in the articles I have analysed, no mention has ever been made of individual failures and personal inadequacies or anything that would even remotely hint that the difficulties faced by the would-be illegal immigrants may be partly their personal responsibility. The Labour Party leader, Louiza Hanoun taking the floor before journalists at *El Chourouk Forum*, confirmed the above statement by declaring:

The short-sighted policy, conducted by the Algerian authorities, enlarged the gap between a limited number of beneficiaries and the rest of the population; especially the young people who preferred to risk their lives at sea rather than stay in Algeria.

The articles in the two newspapers make it clear that the would-be immigrants do not leave their country because of personal deficiencies of their own, or because they are incompetent. Instead, they see them as victims of a system that ignores their competence and skills, and that makes no efforts to understand their real needs. When explaining their tentative to immigrate, the articles and reports consciously emphasize the failure of the system that manifests itself through various factors: exclusion of the Algerian youth from the job market, inability of the educational system to integrate them, and a constant harassment from the police forces. They stress the fact that these factors are beyond the control of the would-be illegal immigrants and leave them no other choice than seek a better future elsewhere than in their home country.

In fact, when speaking about the reasons that have led the would-be illegal immigrants to seek an illegal way to improve their future, what is most notable in the articles is a strong tendency to blame the government for not providing the adequate conditions for them. Fleeing a country that sits on vast reserves of oil and gas, they risk their lives crossing the Mediterranean Sea in ill-equipped vessels. These young people are often tangled in the web that lies between the life they wish to have on one side of the Mediterranean and the realities they endure on the other side. Accordingly, the young people who decide to leave their home country and immigrate to Europe do so because their country of origin does not provide for their basic needs. One solution to their financial and social hardship is emigration. Among the many comments made by journalists in the two dailies about the plight of the would-be illegal immigrants in their home country, the following statement by Kamel Belabed, spokesman of the harragas families' collective, in *El Watan* of 12th of January is quite representative:

It is the precariousness which pushes the young people to want to leave at whatever cost and whatever the season. They are people who want to burn stages because they cheated them [the authorities]. They gave them precarious jobs and wanted them to hang on. The harraga burn stages to attain their goal which is farther and farther, and more and more inaccessible. People refuse to understand that it is a societal issue that must be solved with the concerned authorities to stop this phenomenon.

The problem has grown so acute that President Abdelaziz Bouteflika publicly called on the country's young to join him in rebuilding the country rather than believe what they see on Western TV.

I appeal to the youth to heed to this plea, rely on productive labor [...] and give up on the illusions of a pseudo overseas prosperity that satellite TV propaganda keeps trying to make us believe in.

The answer to the President's declaration came from a journalist in *El Watan*, taking the side of the would-be illegal immigrants against the 'demagogic discourse' of the government.

Are the young Algerians so stupid that they leave their country while the possibilities of work spill out of windows? The Algerian authorities are happy to announce 'the arrest' (What word!) of young harragas that the state prosecutor hurries to put in jail without any legal basis. For having wanted to escape life discontentment, contempt, a young person is not allowed to breath open air and to see the sun. It is this repressive logic that will make the number of harragas increase in the following months.

Nevertheless, not all the would-be illegal immigrants intend to leave the country because of crushing conditions. Although commonly portrayed as "destitute" or "desperate", some of the would-be illegal immigrants are relatively well educated and from moderate socio-economic backgrounds. They move because of a general feeling of hopelessness, stress, or despair. These young people do not try to reach the other side of the Mediterranean just to find a job and earn money. They see working just as a side-effect. In the first place they want to travel and see new things; they want to feel that something in their life is moving. They see their tries to reach Europe as an important part of being able to move. For them, freedoms of movement and of action seem to be reality only for those who were born on the right side of the Mediterranean. Accordingly, the two dailies deny the assumptions made by some government officials that all the would-be illegal immigrants seek to leave the country because of unemployment

and poverty. The roots are deeper. Boutadjine Salah, Commandant in the naval forces is reported to have said:

It has been noticed that these adventures do not concern the young unemployed alone, but also the civil servants, students, business dealers, women and children.

In fact, the would-be illegal immigrants in Algeria are described in the two dailies as experiencing a 'malaise', a sense of deprivation and exclusion that they continuously encounter. They feel lost, disoriented, lonely and marginalised in their country. They also feel that despite their dedication to studies, and their hard work, they are continuously faced with a future that promises little more than the difficulties endured by their own parents: poverty, homelessness, and most devastatingly, a sense of eternal despair. The only escape from such an intricate situation lies in the quest of a new haven, real or imaginary, that would provide for them social and mental balance. It is that quest that leads them to burn everything, starting with ID cards and passports, to bridges and borders, turning their back on their homeland.

Nabila Amir, a reporter working for *El Watan* ends her article by declaring:

Illegal immigration does not concern only the unemployed youth who is seeking a job in his dream country, but also civil service men, students, business dealers, handicapped people, children who are no more than 12. All in all, the category concerned by the phenomenon of harraga is the middle class. Profound discontentment, poverty, the feeling of exclusion, the lack of perspectives of improvement of life conditions, the well being, and the discovery of other skylines are so many trigger factors that push these Algerians to challenge the sea, to take immoderate risks to reach Spain, Italy, Great Britain, France or Switzerland.

Whatever the causes that lead the young Algerian people to try and immigrate illegally, they are often depicted as ill-prepared for the journey. They expose themselves to dangers. And aside from the possibility that they may be intercepted and deported, some considerably more dangerous outcomes have been known to result from their activity. As an example, illegal immigrants may be trafficked for exploitation, slavery, prostitution and death. In the two dailies, the journey from Algeria to Spain is often described as a 'risky route' and Spain as 'the Eldorado of death'. The risks taken are described as 'deadly' and the conditions of travel as 'awful'.

When the would-be illegal immigrant succeeds in overcoming the obstacles of the sea and reaches safely the Spanish shore, it does not mean that his misfortunes are over. The harraga becomes another kind of victim. Both *El Chourouk* and *El Watan* have denounced in many of their reports and articles (10 percent of the articles analysed), the human right abuses committed against the Algerian would-be illegal immigrants once they reach the shores of Spain. According to *El Chourouk* of 22nd of September, the Algerian harragas “are being subjected to an appalling and degrading treatment” on the part of Spanish coast guards and border police. The newspaper relies on the declarations of Benmadah Nourredine, Chairman of the European Federation in charge of Algerian migrants overseas. The latter is reported to have said:

Scores of Algerian migrants have been stripped of all their possessions and thrown into prison cells with no contact with the outside world [...] many of them have been beaten up and assaulted by Spanish prison wardens.

Benmadah added that many of these ill-treated Algerians have been kept in detention several years now with no legal back up.

The Algerian media has strongly opposed charging would-be illegal immigrants with the felony of unlawful leaving of the country, arresting and jailing them. When the Algerian justice minister Tayeb Belaiz declared that a new penal law on illegal immigration came to fill a legal vacuum, his declaration created very strong opposition. That was reported in both *El Chourouk* and *El Watan*. In fact, Algeria’s new penal code, setting out prison sentences for would-be illegal immigrants was met with anger and revolt by the civil society, nongovernmental organizations, political party presidents, and members of parliament. The latter declared that most would-be illegal immigrants have committed, if any, an administrative offence rather than a serious crime, and should not be considered as criminals. Thus, a number of deputies were to lead a campaign against the latest amendment of the penal code, which contained an article criminalizing the illegal immigrants and punishing them severely by imprisonment, in addition to a fine, if they leave Algeria illegally. The deputies called for the need to veto the article.

El Chourouk and *El Watan* reported the declarations of high authorities in the political and social arena, emphasizing all the time the idea that the illegal immigrant is a victim and should not be criminalized. *El Chourouk*, for example, reports the sayings of lawyer Rebah Mohamed Seghir

who describes the imprisonment of illegal immigrants as a 'scandal'. According to him, illegal immigrants are victims as the constitution stipulates that every Algerian citizen has a right in a decent life, and the decent life has not been provided for them. (*El Chourouk*, 25th of June). In another edition, the newspaper reports the declarations of the Labor Party leader, (now president-candidate), Louiza Hanoun. The latter declared in *El Chourouk Forum* on the 30th of June: "We are against the condemnation of illegal immigrants because they are victims". The only crime committed by these would-be illegal immigrants, according to the authorities opposing the new law, is to have dared to dream of a better, more plentiful and freer life elsewhere than in their country of origin and to have done your best to see their dream come true.

El Watan too used the declarations of high officials to oppose the decision. In one of its editions, the newspaper reports the declarations of Mohamed Benhamou, an MP and party official, who said that "criminalising the phenomenon of the harragas will change nothing". He also declared that "The government must get to the root of the problem and look into the reasons which drive graduates, unemployed people, women and even the elderly to take such risks to get to Europe, instead of searching for the easy solution". "The phenomenon needs to be tackled", said Benhamou, by "establishing a real social peace, creating jobs and solving the housing problem". The two papers have strongly emphasized the fact that the government is unable to hear the distress call of the young people in the country. This has been illustrated by reporting the declarations of Abdelaziz Belkhadem, former Prime Minister. The latter declared addressing the would-be illegal immigrants: "Those who do not find what they want have to learn to love what they find". Through this declaration, Abdelaziz Belkhadem limits the plight of the would-be illegal immigrants to financial difficulties. He even declared that work is available in the country and that young people are jobless because they are too demanding. For the two papers, the criminalisation of the would-be immigrants proves the incapacity of the government to establish any kind of communication with the society:

When a former Prime Minister says not to understand this phenomenon, it means there is no real dialogue. The phenomenon reflects the emptiness that is achieved by the authorities in their relations with society. Thus the absence of intermediation, the decline of society that makes this phenomenon occurs at the base. This is the paradoxical consequence of the domination of political and social aspects. It is the need to have control on the society that leaves no space to the individual freedom.

El Chourouk and *El Watan* consider that the European countries and the European consular services in Algeria have their share of responsibility in the increase of the rate of would-be illegal immigrants. In a report published in *El Watan* on 23rd of January 2008, colonel Zerghida, of the National gendarmerie refers to the results of a poll with would-be illegal immigrants. According to the results, 60 percent of the would-be illegal immigrants have gone through the legal procedure before recurring to illegal immigration. The tightening of the visa procedures has left no other alternative for them. Among the people interviewed, 7 percent are at their second or third experience of illegal immigration while 90 percent of them are at their first experience.

Neither death, nor new Algerian laws that make of illegal immigration a crime will get in the way of their dreams of finding a better life. In a poll promoted by another Algerian daily, *Liberté* by the beginning of January 2008, about 50 percent of the Algerians between 15 and 35 said that they are ready to depart, while 81 percent said they know someone who is getting ready to depart. These statistics have been confirmed by Lawyer Fatima Ben Brahem, who has defended harragas being tried by various courts across the country. She said that prison will not dissuade desperate young people from repeating their offence: "My clients, who are all desperate young people, are determined to resume their plans once they have served their sentence". *El Chourouk* and *El Watan* confirmed the statistics of *Liberté* newspaper and the declarations of lawyer Ben Brahem by interviewing would-be illegal immigrants and reporting their declarations. In a report edited on 25th of March 2008, one of the arrested would be illegal immigrants confessed to a journalist of *El Watan*:

We have put every penny in this boat. Ninety thousand dinars each. All our savings. And we have been caught stupidly. But, by God and if God wants, I will not give up. I will sell everything. The demodulator, the TV, the aerial dish, my training shoes, and if needed, my mother's golden chain, but I will go [...] if only I had died, it would have been better for me and for my poor mum.

The Illegal Immigrant as Hero

Although the Algerian media has not been explicit in its definition of the would-be illegal immigrant as 'hero', it does not miss any opportunity to describe him as 'courageous', 'perseverant', 'determined' and 'noble' in his

desire to seek a respectable lifestyle. Adjectives used by both *El Chourouk* and *El Watan* are, in fact, are the ones describing heroes in general. Thus, the journey undertaken by the harraga is described as 'deadly', 'risky', 'perilous' and 'hazardous'. The route is 'long', 'difficult', and the vessels used are 'decrepit'. The weather is very often 'cold' and 'windy' and the sea is 'rough'. When detected by the Algerian coast guards, they are 'chased', 'arrested', 'deported', 'judged' and 'jailed'. When they are arrested by the Spanish coast guards they are 'abused', 'ill-treated', 'beaten up', 'assaulted' and 'stripped of their possessions'. Despite of all these 'risks', the would-be illegal immigrants 'take the initiative'. Each of these terms connotes immigration sympathetically, if not positively.

"Better to be eaten by fish than by worms" is the slogan used by the Algerian youth to explain their desire to leave their country and immigrate to another one in an illegal way. In fact, the slogan shows two things. First, that the would-be illegal immigrants refuse the passive life they are leading in Algeria as objects of the socio-economic conditions in which they live. Second, that they are aware of the deadly adventure they are ready to take in order to move from the periphery to the centre of their destiny. This enterprise makes of the young would-be illegal immigrants heroes as they are leading a 'deadly mission' and a 'dangerous experience' fearlessly, all the time aware of the dangers and the risks that await them.

The ease with which the deported would be illegal immigrants speak about the dangers of the sea, death and failure that can disturb their migration project, and more importantly, their desire to try again and again the experience show how obstinate they are in fulfilling their dream.

When you're in a tall building on fire, you have the choice of dying inside or jumping. The risk of death is the same in both cases, except that in jumping you make a decision, your way of controlling your life,

said Tahar, a man who made a failed bid to reach Spain. When sociologist Ali Bensaad was asked to define the Algerian would-be immigrants, he told the journalists to be careful in their definitions as these people are not desperate people. He adds that contrary to the general belief, they are not all unemployed and of humble origins:

We realize that the majority are graduates and are employed. The harraga know the risk they are taking. They reject the impasse they find themselves in. In the absence of political and trade union channels for expression, these young people respond with

their own means [...] It's the lack of a socio-political perspective and freedoms that drives them to this choice. You should learn to pay tribute to their tenacity. It is the lack of opportunities and social freedom that lead to this choice. But beyond the political and union concrete freedoms, it's the lifestyle and social rigorism they want to flee.

The Oxford English Dictionary describes a hero as “a person, typically a man, who is admired for their courage or outstanding achievements” while a martyr is “a person who is killed because of their religious or other beliefs”. Thus, the ideas of heroism and martyrdom are not very far from each other. The would-be illegal immigrant, according to the Algerian dailies is of great courage and his achievement becomes outstanding if he succeeds in safely reaching the Italian or Spanish coast without being intercepted by the Algerian or European coast guards. If he is unlucky and dies before seeing his dream come true, at least he would have died for the belief that a better life was possible away from his home country. Thus, the very facts that make of the young Algerian would-be immigrant a victim in the eyes of the media and its readership, makes of him a hero when he survives the sea voyage northward and escapes the dangers of the ‘valley of barbed wire fences’ defending the ‘fortress’ and a martyr in case he dies. In fact, the cult of the hero who does not surrender to fate and who fights odds and evils is very developed in the Algerian youth. Neither death nor new Algerian laws that make of illegal immigration a crime, get in the way of their dreams of finding a better life.

This myth of the hero has been developed by both *El Chourouk* and *El Watan* when drawing the picture of the illegal immigrant. Indeed, the harraga in the two dailies is of very strong will, nothing seems able to dissuade him from his quest. He is also courageous. In 80 percent of the articles analyzed, he is like Ulysses in the Greek mythology. He braves the rough sea and challenges the high waters during the harsh winter coming within a hair's breadth of death to see his dream come true. When interviewing young people who have tried the experience of illegal immigration and failed, the two dailies do not miss to report the exact words of these youth who have been deported back and who do not hesitate to declare that they are not planning to give up trying whatever the consequences. A vivid example is the declaration of a would-be illegal immigrant who was arrested in the high sea. He declared to a journalist from *El Watan*:

As long as I am alive, I will join the other side [of the Mediterranean], even if I die in the sea. Dying in the sea is better than being eaten by worms. Because dying in the sea, I would at least be considered as a martyr.

Perhaps, the paramount of all these declarations is a message found in a bottle, and that was written by a would-be illegal immigrant before his drowning. This message found by Gendarmerie officials was reported in all national newspapers. The emotional character of the message caused very strong feelings among the Algerian audiences. In the message, written on the paper of a cigarette packet, the Gendarmerie officials could read:

We have tried to escape the country. Unfortunately, we have not succeeded. The sea pervaded us. Goodbye. Me, it is Derkouani Lakhdar. Dear mother, take care of yourself, you too, as well as my brothers and sisters. May God be Compassionate and bless us [...] goodbye mum and dad. You are the dearest in life. Thank you and forgive me.

By giving his name and expressing his feelings just before his death, the writer of the letter in the bottle has personified the phenomenon that was so far seen just in terms of factors and statistics. In addition, the would-be illegal immigrant who has been considered so far as a victim has become a tragic hero. In *El Watan* of 29th of April, the theologian, Cheikh Chemsedine Bouroubi declares that:

This young man who has challenged the dangers of the sea has nothing to do with the profile of the suicidal. He is a person who aspires to life.

While the harragas is a victim of the conditions in which he lives, and becomes a hero in case it happens that he is kissed by Lady Luck, he becomes undoubtedly a 'martyr' when he drowns. Cheikh Chemsedine issued a fatwa in which he declared "the immigrants who live Algeria by sea in a bid to reach Europe and die by drowning in the Mediterranean are 'martyrs' and are not committing suicide". This religious edict, in fact comes as an answer to the Algerian ministry of religious affairs that had banned illegal immigration saying it was against Islam. Cheikh Chemsedine's fatwa has been backed by the declarations of many members of parliament and government members.

Conclusions

To sum up, the would-be illegal immigrants, according to *El Chourouk* and *El Watan*, escape the pains and pressures caused by poverty, unemployment, low paying jobs, homelessness, and sometimes hopelessness, stress and discontentment. They risk their lives to reach the ‘promised’ land with the hopes of making a better life for themselves and their beloved. They face a rough sea in a deadly trip. They are ill-treated by coast guards, prison wardens and employers. They often take the least desired jobs such as picking fruit or working in kitchens. However, all these bad sides of the adventure do not stop them from trying again and again. If it happens that they succeed, they would become models and ‘good’ examples to follow by the ones remaining in the home country. If they die in the sea, their families would know that they have become martyrs and would go to an everlasting paradise. They would be remembered as proud people who did not accept to live poor and humiliated.

Accordingly, the hero (either alive or dead) and the victim are fundamentally linked to each other. The young immigrant unsuccessfully holds on to one world then to another for assistance. Whether victim or hero, he pays with his life for a ‘dream’ that rarely comes true.

The growth of the phenomenon shows, according to the two dailies, how incapable the Algerian government is in solving the problems encountered by the young people in their country. Unemployment, poverty and corruption are driving an increasing number of young people to stake everything on getting to the land of their dreams.

While the Algerian Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia qualifies the issue of illegal immigration in Algeria as a “major crisis” and a “national tragedy”, he assimilates the would-be illegal immigrant with a kamikaze who is in search of an imaginary heaven. These declarations by so high an official in government caused anger and frustration among the families of the would-be illegal immigrants who expected more understanding from the government. Accordingly, *El Watan*, in its edition of 28th of June reported the answer of an Algerian MP who declared:

[...] our children are not kamikaze, they did harm to no one, except to themselves. We do not need fetwas but justice and laws that protect our children and allow them to live in dignity [...] by accusing our children of all kinds of faults; you are inflicting us additional sufferings.

The editorials of the two dailies have repeatedly condemned the ways adopted by the government in dealing with the issue. The growth of the phenomenon shows how incapable the government is in solving the problems encountered by the young people. Unemployment, lack of qualifications, and the endemic disease of corruption are driving an increasing number of young people to stake everything on getting to the land of their dreams. Thus, at this fundamental level, *El Chourouk* and *El Watan* have promoted a discourse about would-be immigrants that depicts them as victims of the political system under which they are currently living.

Accordingly, as mentioned in the introduction of this paper and as noticed through my analysis of the depiction of the would be illegal immigrant in both *El Chourouk* and *El Watan*, there is generally a notable lack of negative prejudiced images about the young harragas in the newspaper articles I have examined. Instead, these young people are portrayed in a quite positive manner that stresses more often their courage and perseverance than their failures in their experience of reaching the other side of the Mediterranean. There is also pity and sympathy in the articles over the social and financial hardships of the would-be illegal immigrants in their country of origin. In addition, we feel that the journalists of the two dailies, although not approving of the would-be illegal immigrants in their desire at trespassing laws and rules, understand that this is the only solution that remains. According to the two dailies, the argument advanced by the Algerian government about reducing the rate of illegal immigration through legal punishment or enforcement of current laws does not solve the problem. A better communication and some understanding from the official authorities would help to seek another way for the Algerian hopeless and desperate youth.

The overall effect of the reports and articles in *El Chourouk* and *El Watan* is to incite sympathy of the government and the authorities on the plight of the would-be immigrants. The journalists who write about the issue are conscious of the effects that such articles have on the formation of the collective imaginary. In fact, the media reinforces the already existing idea held by much of the Algerian readership that youth is a sacrificial generation of a political system that is unable to hear their pleas.

Press and Migration in Algeria

A Study of Newspapers Articles: *Expression* and *Ennahar El Djadid* in 2008

HOCINE LABDELAOUI

Introduction

Due to the scale reached by the harraga phenomenon and the presence of Sub-Saharan migrants, the place the topic of migration holds in the Algerian press has evolved from a chronological handling to full coverage. In fact, browsing the titles of press articles from the last ten years shows that the editorial volume on this topic has exploded, not only on account of an increase in the number of newspapers, but also, and chiefly, because of more editorial volume in each of them. Regardless of their public or private nature, newspapers regularly publish information on migration whether it refers to the harraga, the illegal entry of Sub-Saharan migrants, the presence of foreigners or the situations of Algerian emigrants.

The interest in studying this evolution of migrant visibility in the Algerian press is that it allows analysing both the creation of the media field and the place of migration in Algerian society. In fact, when they create more interest in the migration topic, the press has to give media coverage to a phenomenon which is becoming structural. Then, while providing such coverage, it also gives media coverage to itself, meaning that it looks for a position in the media field under construction.

Therefore, this paper analyses how the Algerian press deals with migration. On what do the editorial voices focus? Which methods do they employ? Which categories constitute the content of the disclosed information? What communicational effect is sought?

To answer these questions, the methodological approach used shows, above all, the states of the press and the migration issue in Algeria. This will be used later to analyze the content of two newspapers' articles. One is the

Expression; It was established in 2000 and edited in French with a circulation of copies per day. The other is the *Ennahar El Djadid*, established in 2007 and edited in Arab, with a circulation of 400,000 copies per day. The choice of these two newspapers is based upon two factors. First, the two newspapers follow two different editorial lines. The *Expression* favours deferred and deep analysis, while the *Ennahar El Djadid* deliberately opts for researches unpublished and original information. The second factor is the wish to use two other newspapers in another work to create a representative idea of how migration is dealt with by the Algerian press.

Press in Algeria: A Media Field under Construction

Since 1988, the press in Algeria has evolved from a state press, subject to the control of the sole party and authorities, to one now being of the most flourished examples of free press in Africa and the Arab world. According to the statistics from the state secretary in charge of communication, as of 3rd of May 2009, there were 332 titles with various publication schedules. Their combined global circulation has reached 4.5 million copies (State Secretary of Communication 2009: 46). The 332 titles are divided into 65 newspapers (32 edited in Arabic and 33 in French), 82 weekly magazines, 58 monthly magazines, 12 fortnightly magazines, 7 quarterly magazines, 5 bimonthly magazines and 62 magazines with irregular publication. In 1988, this number did not exceed 30 titles, considering all kinds of periodicity (State Secretary of Communication 2009: 45).

Since 1998, following the growth of the headlines and in order to meet the growing reading needs, press circulation has increased. It went from 700,000 copies per day in 1988, to 2,434,150 copies per day in 2008 and then 2,470,164 copies per day in 2009 (State Secretary of Communication 2009: 46). The number of different languages used in the publications also increased. The various papers are edited in four languages, which are, in order of frequency, French, Arab, English and Tamazight. The increasing importance of the press also appears in the number of employed persons. In 2009, this sector employed 3,000 journalists (2,500 working in the private sector and 500 in the public sector) of the 4,484 in the entire media sector (*Echourouk El Youmi* 2009: 6).

In order to accommodate this sector's development, the state has put several mechanisms in place. The official press agency *Algérie Presse Service* provides information gathered by its 261 journalists, out of whom, 69 are regional correspondents and nine are international correspondents (State Secretary of Communication 2009: 37). According to the State Secretary of Communication, Algeria has eleven journal printing houses (six belonging to the state and five to the private sector) and twelve magazine printing houses (two state and ten private sector). Three national companies, ten regional companies (five for the eastern part of the country, four for the western part and one for the southeastern part of the country) and eight circulation wholesalers ensure the papers' distributions (State Secretary of Communication 2009: 46). The press also benefits from the services of other bodies such as the *Centre national de documents de presse*, the *Maison de Presse* and the *Algérienne de papier*. Implemented in the last decade, these services have assured continuity in Algeria's media sector, however, their effect on implementing an autonomous press remains limited due to several diverse obstacles.

First of all, there is the issue of enacting a new information law adapted to developing the press sector in Algeria. Endorsed by media professionals and promised by the state, this law is taking a long time to come into being. In the meantime, the sector activities are regulated by legislation enacted during the birth of pluralism in Algeria. Compared to the 1982 information law, the information law enacted in 1990 has allowed progress in expanding press freedom, but it contains several provisions restrictive to the exercise of this freedom. Two facts confirm this observation.

The state, still applying the 1990 law, has introduced provisions into the criminal code that punish journalists found guilty of writing libellous articles, or articles causing damages to persons or institutions, with detention and fines. According to the bureau of the International Federation of Journalists in Alger, approximately 250 Algerian journalists have been prosecuted and many others have had cases decided by tribunals (*Echourouk El Youmi* 2009: 6). The second fact concerns the fragile lifespans of publications. Many die off either due to financial difficulties or because of suspension threats. The table below shows that this threat has already been effective.

Table n°. 1: Evolution of press headlines in Algeria from 1962 to 2008.

<i>Current status of publication</i>	<i>Number</i>
Number of established titles	881
Suspended titles	16
Stopped titles	327
Unknown status of publication	254
Published titles	284

Source: Ministry of the communication. 2008. *Les Cahiers de la Communication*. Alger. ANEP Editions. Pages 8–44.

We should note that, in 2008, only 284 out of 881 headlines established since 1962 are still being published. The other titles are either suspended, have ceased publishing or are in an unknown state. This fragile situation is complicated by the professional difficulties journalists encounter while exercising their profession. The available data shows that Algerian journalists are underpaid. In fact, 60 percent of journalists working in the private sector receive a monthly salary of 250 US dollars, 30 percent get a salary of between 250 and 350 USD and only 10 percent receive a salary exceeding 350 US dollars. Only a few chief editors are paid over 1,000 USD (*Echourouk El Youmi* 2009: 7).

The problems establishing strong and autonomous trade unions should be added to this situation. The attempts to this end have not come to fruition. Many silent partners and power circles occupy the headlines. In this context, we must analyze how the press deals with the migration topic, starting with examining how much knowledge of migration flows issues exists in Algeria.

Migration in Algeria: A Topic Giving Publicity to the Media

Migration has become an important topic for both public powers, politicians and civil organizations as well as researchers and university students. This interest has not escaped the printed press. It has, in fact, become one of the rare sources of information in this matter, particularly concerning statistics.

The printed press has especially found a niche commenting on its evolution and other various issues. The delay in implementing a specialized body for collecting data on this topic causes difficulties with verifying figures and data the press use. Therefore, before analyzing the texts of these two newspapers, it is necessary to briefly cite the current state of migration flows in Algeria.

Algerian Emigration: Towards a New Configuration of Departures and Forms of Settlement

From single men leaving for France, poaching resources from their rural lives, to the settlement of families in Arabic countries, fleeing colonization, to the current, familiar emigration to France, the departure of Algerians has assumed a new configuration. As a result, this emigration no longer exclusively concerns the corridor between Algeria and France, inherited from colonization. New destinations in Europe, North, Central and South America and the Middle East attract many Algerian migrants for permanent settlement or to start new mobility. The composition of this emigration has also changed significantly. Couples, single women and young people, mostly graduated and professionally skilled, are now the main actors of the migration flows. Paradoxically, this evolution has not produced much reliable knowledge and we can talk of a deficit in knowledge of migration in Algeria (Labdelaoui2008 a).

This is why it would be hard to define a reliable figure on the number of Algerians settled abroad and we are led to use estimates produced using various methods of calculation. In this context, we note that the official Algerian sources tend to overestimate this number. This is the result of declarations from the Ministry of Solidarity and Family and the Algerian community abroad, which estimate over 5 million Algerian emigrants live abroad (Oued Abbès 2009). The press publishes figures on the flows of the Algerian migrants during the last twenty years, but these are not verifiable. This is how we learn that over 450,000 persons left Algeria during the '90s. The departures have not ceased. The press talks about the exile of more than 215,000 expert professionals (*Ennahar El Djadid*, 2008) and the Association of Algerian Expertises estimates that 400,000 Algerian scientists are settled abroad (Khiati, 2008).

The use of these figures is problematic not only for their inexactness, but equally because of discrepancies between statistics from the consular Algerian services and those from international bodies. According to statistics published during the presidential elections held in April 2009, 940,000 Algerians settled abroad voted in that election (*El Watan*, 2009). Even by factoring in the number of non-registered Algerians with the Algerian consulates and those who obtained the nationality of the host country but are still considered Algerian citizens by Algerian law, it would be hard to reach the figures estimated by the official sources and published by the press. This position is confirmed by the following information from the World Bank, which precisely shows the scope of Algerian emigration.

Table n°. 2: Data on the emigration in the Maghreb countries in 2008.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Emigrant Population</i>	<i>% of the total population</i>	<i>Emigration rate of the graduated</i>
Algeria	1,783,476	5.4	6.5
Morocco	2,718,665	8.6	10.3
Libya	90,138	1.5	3.8
Tunisia	623,221	6.2	9.6

Source: World Bank. 2008.

In this chart, we notice that Algeria is no longer the first emigration country in the Maghreb region and that the proportion of Algerian emigrants represents a rate lower than the ones recorded in Morocco and Tunisia in respect to the total population. The emigration rate of graduates is not so catastrophic as suggested by the above-mentioned estimates.

The 'HARGA': The Current Form of Irregular Emigration of Algerians

Commentaries and conjectures on migration have increased with the appearance of the harraga phenomenon. This Arab word, which refers to a common emigrant action of burning all documents certifying their original nationalities, is used to refer to illegal emigrants who travel across the Mediterranean. Many approaches have been attempted to control this problematic phenomenon, from voluntary public powers actions, to politi-

cal exploitation and from associations seeking social visibility (Labdelaoui, 2009b). However, scarce knowledge of its real causes and the profiles of its participants have hampered achieving results. Until ongoing research makes progress on this topic, any analysis must rely on the rough available data. As a result, in order to comprehend the scale of the departures, we have to use figures published by the security services on the arrests, interceptions and sea rescues of the irregular emigration candidates. The figures in the table below give an idea of the growth of the departure attempts and, as a consequence, on the numbers that arrive at their destinations.

Table n°. 3: Evolution of the candidates to illegal emigration arrested by the Algerian coast guards.

<i>Years</i>	<i>Number</i>
2005	336
2006	1,016
2007	1,568
2008	1,335
Total	4,255

Source: table built on the basis of the figures announced by the Algerian coast guards and reported by the press.

This phenomenon's worsening, apparent by the numbers of arrested candidates, is even more significant if we add the number of candidates found dead or declared missing and the statistics on people expelled from immigration countries or returned by police forces to Algerian borders. The data disclosed by the coast guard show that over 331 illegal emigrants died or went missing between 2006 and 2008. Algerian police state that 16,269 Algerians were expelled or taken back to the borders between January 2005 and 30th of August 2007 (Labdelaoui, 2009b).

Irregular Immigration of Sub-Saharanans

The evolution of Algerian migration covers another parameter of the migration issue. For some years, in fact, Algeria has become a destination for foreign migrant flows settling or continuing on to European countries. This immigration is generally defined as 'illegal immigration', which is

used more often than 'irregular immigration'. It is generally associated with the migration of nationals from Sub-Saharan countries and, as a result, we tend to ascribe all negative aspects of foreigners' illegal stays on the migrants from this region.

Like the harraga phenomenon, the immigration of sub-Saharanans is difficult to define and, in order to assess its scale, we are led to use figures related to detentions, returns and attempted border crossings. According to statistics published by the Algerian police, between 2001 and 2007, 26,048 foreign citizens in irregular migration situations were arrested, deterred or expelled (Labdelaoui, H. 2009b).

Legal Foreigner Migration

In addition, it is necessary to underline that the evolution of the illegal migration phenomenon occurs at a time when the legal presence of foreigners is adapting to create communities of foreign migrants (Labdelaoui, 2008c). This fact is little known, so we just have the figures reported by the press as recent data. The last official available figures date back to 1998. The general population census, made during this year, counts an aggregate number of 73,818 foreigners of different categories. One year later, the census conducted by the general direction of the national security counts 80,000 foreigners (Hammouda, 2005: 32). The December 2007 national agency figures on employment, considering the professional situation of the foreigners, counts 23,000 registered foreign workers compared with 24 in 1998 (Labdelaoui 2009c).

Clearly, these figures must be updated in order to take into account recent developments. The *Centre de recherches en économie appliquée pour le développement* (CREAD) estimates the number of foreigners at approximately 325,000 people, including legal foreigners, irregular migrants and refugees (Musette, 2009). To cope with this influx, the state attempts to reconcile repression through permission, as we may notice in the new law on the access, stay and circulation of foreigners, and made new provisions in the legal code which criminalize immigration. These two texts introduce provisions to regulate the legal foreigners' stays and strengthen the fight against irregular immigration. We can see from these developments that migration is the object of several interventions. This raises social questions, a fact not lost on the press.

General Outline on how Migration is Dealt with by the Printed Press

Before analyzing how the migration topic is dealt with in the articles of the two selected newspapers, we should place the media treatment within a global framework of migratory issues. Two sources enable presenting this outline that, one must admit, is still insufficient and just reveals general trends.

Established in 2000 to gather information about human rights in Algeria, the Algerian organization Algeria Watch regularly sorts through press articles on migration issues. Published on their website, this press review allows us to define the treatment of the migration topic from 2005 to 30th of July 2009 as it corresponds to the evolution of different forms of flows.

Table n°. 4: General outline on the evolution of how the Algerian printed press deals with migration.

<i>Category</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>Total</i>
Harraga	19	20	31	56	31	158
Algerian Migration	10	04	18	19	16	67
Illegal Sub-Saharan Immigration	80	45	08	12	04	149
Foreigners in Algeria	02	01	03	03	09	18
Total	111	70	60	90	60	389

Source: table drawn up on the basis of the data on the website: <www.algeria-watch.org>.

From above table, we may notice that the harraga phenomenon and illegal sub-Saharan immigration are the two most frequently covered topics by the printed press in Algeria. However, the attention given to each of these two topics follows different evolutionary curves.

The attention given to the harraga phenomenon follows an ascending curve from 2005 to the first six months of 2009. This is explained by the scale illegal Algerian emigration reached in the last three years. On the contrary, illegal Sub-Saharan immigration follows a descending curve in relation to the number of articles published during the same period. The scale of this phenomenon took on a significant dimension at the begin-

ning of the new century, later decreasing, but not disappearing completely from the print media's articles.

The emigration of Algerians and the presence of foreigners in Algeria are gradually gaining importance in the media dealing with migration. An increase in events related to these topics during the last two years has led the printed press to dedicate more coverage to them. On one hand, this growth in editorial volume dedicated to migration is explained by the scale each form of this phenomenon reached and, on the other hand, by increased access to sources of information on these various forms. Along these lines, we should repeat statements journalists from numerous Algerian newspapers made at a workshop organized in Alger during December 2007 by the *Comité international pour la solidarité entre les peuples* (CISP, *International Committee for the solidarity between populations*) on Algerian media coverage of irregular immigration. They acknowledged that dealing with the topic of irregular immigration meets with trouble accessing sources. This explains the evolution in quantity and quality of how this topic is treated (CISP 2007: 11). Rather than freely collecting information on a specific topic, journalists must make do with data from the security services, disclosed via the official press agency or directly collected through the same services.

Organizing this workshop demonstrates the interest the CISP has in the treatment of migration by the printed press in Algeria. In the workshop, the CISP submitted results from an analysis of articles published by four newspapers – *Liberté*, *El Watan*, *El Moudjahid* and *Le Quotidien d'Oran* – on the irregular immigration topic between the months of April and December 2007.

Table n°. 5: Subdivision by sub-topics of the articles in the following newspapers: *Liberté*, *El Watan*, *El Moudjahid* and *Le Quotidien d'Oran*.

<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Harraga</i>	<i>Sub-Saharan Migrants</i>	<i>Unidentified Migrants</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Liberté</i>	43	02	12	58
<i>El Watan</i>	45	06	05	56
<i>El Moudjahid</i>	15	–	09	24
<i>Le Quotidien d'Oran</i>	50	09	04	63

Source: CISP (2007). Workshop on Reflection with the Journalists on the Medias Coverage of the Irregular Immigration in Algeria.

The above table's figures confirm the observation of a relative increase of interest in the harraga phenomenon and a decrease in editorial volume dedicated to sub-Saharan migrants. In fact, we should note that the four newspapers have dedicated 80 percent of their articles on irregular migration to the harraga phenomenon. The journalists who attended the CISP workshop explained this observation by pointing to difficulties in accessing information on sub-Saharan migrants (CISP 2007: 11). When dealing with the harraga phenomenon, they have more chances to gather information. Journalists may question the authorities, the actual harraga, their families or entourages. Conversely, they only have information from the security service on sub-Saharan migrants. In other words, dealing with sub-Saharan migration partially depends on the willingness of the Algerian security services to disclose information and content depending on political constraints.

The Editorial Volume and the Methods Employed to Deal with Migration

The newspapers *Ennahar El Djadid* and *L'expression* engage in migration media coverage. To evaluate their impact, we should start by examining the editorial volume the two newspapers dedicate to the migration topic and the methods journalists use to handle it.

Table n°. 6: Subdivision of the *Ennahar El Djadid* and *L'expression* newspapers articles by handling methods.

<i>Methods</i>	<i>L'expression</i>	<i>Ennahar El Djadid</i>
News	121	139
Regions	07	06
Culture	09	03
Dossier	04	–
Front Page	04	03
Total	145	151

In respect to editorial volume, the two newspapers dedicate a significant number of articles to all forms of migration. This fact shows a certain interest in this topic. The newspaper *Ennahar El Djadid* has published more articles. This can be explained by the fact that this recently established paper aims to find a place in the media sector through front-page articles.

The division of editorial volume by treatment methods confirms this last observation. From the above table, we notice that over 80 percent of the information published by the two newspapers is dealt with in the section “news”, i.e., as media coverage of events circulated at the time they are happening. In this context, the newspaper *Ennahar El Djadid* not only distinguishes itself by a greater amount of information handled within this section, but also for multiplying the methods of event coverage. This newspaper favors researching unpublished information through reports in regions known for being lands of migration. In this context, reports were published on attempts at illegal emigration, the networks for illegal departures as well as on the presence of sub-Saharan migrants in Algeria. The desire to seek out unpublished news leads the newspaper to carry out interviews with the migration actors: harraga, institutional players and men of culture. The newspaper *L'expression* promotes analysis and reflection to enrich the coverage of events. This newspaper has published dossiers on the topic of migration, focusing on the cultural aspects of this topic

The two newspapers' interest in migration also appears in the front page and editorial space dedicated to the topic. The two newspapers have dedicated the same number of front pages to migration, yet the newspaper *L'expression* has had two editorials dedicated to this topic, something we do not find in the *Ennahar El Djadid*.

Three elements can explain the supremacy of the news section in the way the two newspapers deal with migration. Above all, difficulties in accessing information sources hamper journalists attempting an investigative work. We must further add that the information on migration newspapers receive is often slated for immediate publication. In a word, the non-specialization of journalists in the migration topic has kept the two newspapers from dedicating more articles to analysis and reflection. In 2008, to cover this topic, the newspaper *Ennahar El Djadid* invested in over 38 journalists, spread over all the categories. *L'expression* employed slightly fewer journalists for the same work during the same year.

The Categories for Treatment of the Migration Topic

In order to understand to what extent establishing migration treatment methods affects covering each of the various forms of this phenomenon, the subdivision of these methods must be analyzed by treatment categories. Reviewing the articles has made four categories emerge: the harraga, the sub-Saharanans, the Algerian emigrants and the foreigners in Algeria.

Table n°. 7: Subdivision of the articles published by *Ennahar El Djadid* by category of treatment.

<i>Category</i>	<i>News</i>	<i>Regions</i>	<i>Culture</i>	<i>Dossier</i>	<i>Front Page</i>	<i>Total</i>
Harraga	67	06	03	–	03	79
Sub-Saharanans	16	–	–	–	–	16
Algerian emigrants	41	–	–	–	–	41
Foreigners in Algeria	15	–	–	–	–	15
Total	139	06	03	–	03	151

The subdivision of articles published by the newspaper *Ennahar El Djadid* into methods and categories of treatment confirms the above-mentioned observations in respect to the interest granted to the harraga phenomenon. Over 50 percent of these articles treat this phenomenon according to the four methods of treatment employed. Algerian migration was the object of 20 percent of the published articles. Sub-Saharan migration and the presence of foreigners was the subject of nearly the same editorial volume and treated within the news section. The editorial line is confirmed by the existence of unpublished dossiers on migration. The newspaper *L'expression* presents a different configuration.

Table n°. 8: Subdivision of the articles published by *L'expression* by category of treatment.

<i>Category</i>	<i>News</i>	<i>Regions</i>	<i>Culture</i>	<i>Dossier</i>	<i>Front Page</i>	<i>Total</i>
Harraga	87	04	04	02	02	99
Sub-Saharan	14	–	02	01	01	18
Algerian emigrants	16	03	03	01	01	24
Foreigners in Algeria	04	–	–	–	–	04
Total	121	07	09	04	04	145

In this table, we notice that the articles dedicated to the harraga phenomenon are more numerous. They represent over 60 percent of the articles published by this newspaper. Algerian emigration commands slightly more space than that reserved for sub-Saharan migration. The legal presence of foreigners is also considered more often by this newspaper.

Unlike *Enahar El Djadid*, *L'expression* has remained relatively balanced in treatment methods of migration categories. We notice that topics related to the harraga phenomenon and Algerian emigration were treated according by four methods. Sub-Saharan migration is treated by three methods: news, culture and dossier. The topic of foreigner presence in Algeria is treated by one method – news. This hierarchy of topics by method and category is confirmed by the subdivision of harraga phenomenon topics on the front page of *Ennahar El Djadid*. The phenomenon was the front page subject of two editions of *L'expression*. Sub-Saharans migration and Algerian emigration were both featured only once on the front page of the same newspaper.

The Content of the Circulated Information

Although following two different editorial paths, both newspapers address the same sub-topics. They both identify the migration actors, describe the migration phenomenon, explain migration's causes and assess the state action.

Identification of the Migration Actors

For the needs of their respective information policies, *L'expression* and *Ennahar El Djadid* use different qualifying terms for the categories of migration actors – the harraga, The sub-Saharans, the Algerian emigrants and the foreigners in Algeria.

Identification of the Harraga

The two newspapers use the term harraga in its plural form, and only occasionally in its singular form, 'harag', without explaining the meaning

and the use of the plural, considering it evident that the term ‘harraga action’ is a collective action.

Table n°. 9: Qualifying terms employed by the newspapers *L'expression* and *Ennahar El Djadid* for the harraga.

<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Employed qualifying terms</i>
<i>L'expression</i>	Harraga, young people, individuals, persons, candidates, old, illegal
<i>Ennahar El Djadid</i>	Harraga, girl, candidates, child, university students, young people, old people, group, families, infants, minors, illegal migrants

We should note that the newspaper *Ennahar El Djadid* employs more qualifying terms than *L'expression* to identify the harraga. The former's strategy can explain this fact. By increasing their reports, *Ennahar El Djadid* had more opportunities to meet different profiles and tell of their diversities.

The two newspapers describe arrested or rescued harraga as “candidates to illegal emigration”. They are mostly young people, with rare elderly people. Borrowing terminology from administrative statements, *L'expression* points out that they are “persons” and “individuals”. *Ennahar El Djadid* elaborates more on this aspect by underlining that among the harraga there are children, families, infants, girls, minors and university students.

Employing general and rather ordinary qualifying terms, the two newspapers, while failing to establish their own information, content themselves with using the little knowledge available on this topic. The information they circulate, however, emphasizes the fact that illegal emigration tends to become a phenomenon concerning several categories of society as well as to become a societal phenomenon. The comments of the newspaper *Ennahar El Djadid* emphasize this trend, noticing how the harraga are victims of a social and economic situation and of the networks and barons specialised in trading the youngsters' dreams.

Identification of the Sub-Saharanans

To identify sub-Saharan migrants, the two newspapers use a less rich terminology compared to the one used for the harraga. It is closer, if not identical, to the vocabulary of the security service statements. It does not

offer any speculation on the causes of the phenomenon or on the actors' profiles.

Table n^o. 10: Qualifying terms employed by the newspapers *L'expression* and *Ennahar El Djadid* for the Sub-Saharan.

Newspaper	Employed qualifying terms
<i>L'expression</i>	Africans, persons, illegal migrants, Sub-Saharan, citizens
<i>Ennahar El Djadid</i>	Africans, illegal migrants, citizens

In their comments, the two newspapers present sub-Saharan migrants as illegal migrants – victims of mafia networks. They are also likened to criminals, troublemakers, drug and counterfeited money dealers and AIDS spreaders. The newspaper *Ennahar El Djadid* points out that they represent a threat to local workforce and its comments agree with those made by *L'expression* that emphasise the dream sought by these migrants in Algeria.

Identification of the Algerian Migrants

The two newspapers possess accurate and clear terminology with no police generalizations and value judgements when they deal with information on Algerian emigrants. Patently, more than conceptual, the problem the journalists face relates to socio-cultural and economic issues.

Table n^o. 11: Qualifying terms employed by the newspapers *L'expression* and *Ennahar El Djadid* for Algerian migrants.

Newspaper	Employed qualifying terms
<i>L'expression</i>	Emigrants, Diaspora, expertise, national community
<i>Ennahar El Djadid</i>	Expertise, Algerian community (El Djalía), emigrants

The two newspapers employ practically the same terms, borrowed from political vocabulary, such as “the national” or “Algerian community”, and specialized terminology, such as “the diaspora” and “*El djalía*”, an Arab word used as a term for ‘community’. The content of the newspaper *L'expression* emphasises the capacities of the Algerian emigrants, their

achievements and their relationships with their country. The newspaper *Ennahar El Djadid* shows more interest in the new emigrants and their difficulties in the countries of destination.

Identification of Foreigners

Though often ignored, when the newspapers do refer to foreigners living legally in Algeria, they use just one term: “the foreigners”. These foreigners were the subject of comments by both newspapers during debate over a new law relating to access, stay and circulation of foreigners. The media cover foreigners to report on reactions and events relating to workers’ settlements in certain countries, such as China.

Description of Illegal Emigration

In reporting on the harraga phenomenon, the newspaper *Ennahar El Djadid* uses a terminology that describes the illegal departures as both ordinary navigation movements and as suicidal and failed acts. The titles and comments of this newspaper announce that the harraga have left, embarked, navigated and reached the Spanish and Italian coasts. Their boats have left the Algerian home waters and reached the northern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. The departures are described as planned acts, scientifically prepared and executed.

This normalizing of illegal emigration sometimes ceases. A few titles and comments describe illegal emigration as a failed action. At these times, the harraga are presented as victims of criminal networks. They are ‘intercepted’, ‘arrested’, ‘judged’ and ‘condemned’. Some are depicted as found dead offshore, declared missing, expelled or sent back. The descriptions by the newspaper *Ennahar El Djadid* deal with the causes of this phenomenon. The analysis also emphasises economic factors such as unemployment, poor life quality, and feelings of loss and dignity. These factors fall under the term ‘hogra’, which refers to the pursuit of a better life.

This rich and exact description does not appear in the articles of *L’expression*. The terminology chosen by this newspaper aims at dramatizing the phenomenon, a fact that explains the use of expressions such as ‘failed attempt’ or ‘harraga’ or ‘intercepted’, ‘arrested’ or ‘condemned’.

Explanations of the causes of this phenomenon, however, are specified by using clear terms such as 'hogra' and 'harga' or 'hell'.

Description of Sub-Saharan Migration

The richness of the vocabulary employed by the two newspapers to describe illegal emigration of Algerians disappears when the focus is put on the migrants' arrivals and arrests and little information is given on the conditions of their stays. This immigration is described as a tragedy, a dream and a threat. This last idea is continued in the reports of the newspaper *Ennahar El Djadid*, announcing that dawn comes from the South. Algeria is not presented as transit country, but as an El dorado sought by migrants waves ready to face anything.

Description of the Algerians Emigration

The two newspapers' converging analyses on illegal immigration diverge in the comments related to Algerian emigration. On this topic, the two newspapers follow different approaches. *Ennahar El Djadid* grants more interest to present departures. In its comments, we notice a tendency to reposition analysis of this phenomenon to the present state of migration politics in the European and American states. The information they circulate shows that Algerians are attracted to the American green card and Canadian points system visa. The new French quota policy is severely criticized.

The newspaper *L'expression* uses a different approach. The core interest focuses on emigration as a process leading to success and integration in the immigration countries and on keeping relationships with the country of origin. In this context, we notice that the comments of the newspaper emphasise Algerian successes in France such as the minister Fadéla Amara, the comedian Fellag, the writer Yasmine Khadra and other young politicians. The same comments underline that success and development in migration movements are threatened by European migration policies. Obstacles to these successes are identified and commented on to show that France is coloured only by television and sport. The new migration policy of the French State known by the term "chosen immigration" is harshly criticized, as is the European policy of the blue card.

Description of Foreigners' Presence

The presence of foreigners in Algeria has created few reflections and analyses in the articles of the two newspapers. There is more circulating information on their presence in the economic sections and when articles deal with entrances and exits or on the debates over the new law governing the entrance, stay and circulation of foreigners.

Assessment of the Public Powers Action

Information coped with by the two newspapers has covered another relevant migration issue, namely the public powers action. The above-made observation in relation to the discrepancies of the comments depending on the forms of migration is once again confirmed at this level.

The Public Powers Action in Relation to Illegal Emigration

The public powers' actions in relation to handling the harraga phenomenon has been the subject of much commentary, in particular by the newspaper *Ennahar El Djadid*. The articles published by this newspaper show that the Algerian public powers have covered security aspects, prevention, protection and, eventually, cooperation. The newspaper highlights the measures to reinforce surveillance of the coasts and home waters, harraga arrests and the mobilization of marine units. It also announces new provisions that criminalize illegal immigration. The media covered meetings on emigration prevention and a council of ministries held by the president of the republic. Decisions that favour obtaining credits for the harraga were equally commented.

While pointing out these measures the newspaper does not fail to show deficiencies. The attitude of the public powers in relation to the phenomenon of the harraga is described as hesitant. The Algerian consulates, such as the Algerian embassy in Madrid, are described as "non-answering services". Eventually, in matters of cooperation, the newspaper announced that negotiations to re-establish security cooperation between the Algerian and French governments were resumed.

The articles of the newspaper *L'expression* are less numerous and more focused on security measures. It reports, with no follow-up, the initiatives of the ministry in charge of the Algerian community abroad. It also simply announced the implementation of a Mediterranean observatory for illegal emigration.

The Action of the Public Powers in Matters of Illegal Immigration

The action of the public powers in matters of illegal immigration is rarely commented on by the two newspapers. Attention is more on the arrests of sub-Saharan migrants and on the fight against this phenomenon. The newspaper *L'expression* marks deficiencies in the means used by the public powers, stating that new mechanisms should be found. To this end, it announces that the Sahel States are going to be associated to this fight.

The deficiencies of the public powers actions are equally noticed by *Ennahar El Djadid*. It highlights poor security solutions, the absence of civil society and the refusal to deal with asylum applications as failures to handle the illegal immigration phenomenon in Algeria.

The Public Powers Action in Matters of Emigration

By publishing information on the measures taken by the Algerian State in favor of the national community abroad, the two newspapers question the efficacy of the implemented system, especially in relation to capital remittances and mobilization of the diaspora. The newspaper *L'expression* raises questions about establishing a council for migration as well as the possibility of a fourth addendum to the emigration agreements entered into with France in 1968.

The Public Powers Actions in Matters Relating to the Presence of Foreigners

The articles of the two newspapers on public powers actions relating to the presence of foreigners in Algeria focused on the debate between deputies and senators over a new law on the entrance, stay and circulation of

foreigners. The two newspapers note the concerns of the Algerian State to reconcile the repression of the irregular stays with the protection of legal foreigners' rights.

The Communicational Effect

The analysis of articles published by the two newspapers shows two different editorial lines, which, however, produce practically identical communicational effects. Opting for investigative journalism, supported by reports, interviews and gathering of unpublished information, the newspaper *Ennahar El Djadid* tries to blend information obtained through official channels on migration and treatment with data collected in the field with the actors and institutions.

Favoring analysis and reflection, the newspaper *L'expression* is less focused on field research and tries to enrich the data obtained through official channels through an effort of analysis and criticism. Nonetheless, with very different editorial approaches, the two newspapers achieve similar results, producing the same communicational effect. Before analyzing the results of this effect, we must identify the intended purposes and specify the employed media.

The Intended Purposes

From the analysis of articles published by the two newspapers on migration, we see that two purposes are pursued. The first purpose is prevention against the evils and plagues of illegal emigration and immigration. The comments developed and the terminology used emphasise the risks and dangers faced by the candidates to illegal emigration. They highlight the reinforcement, control and surveillance of the coasts and home waters by both Algerian and European security services and police forces. When we come to the issue of sub-Saharan immigration, prevention plays a security role; sub-Saharans are blamed as the origin of public order trouble, AIDS propagation and proliferation of drug trafficking and counterfeit monies. The second purpose is to describe the dangers of illegal immigration to

the youth to dissuade them from trying exile adventures. The articles published in this perspective are few and often little convincing.

The Employed Media

In order to transmit information about migration to attain the two aims identified above, the newspapers reinforce their messages with word weight raise consciousness by picture shock.

Dramatization by Word Weight

Trying to prevent the dangers and risks of illegal emigration and immigration, the two newspapers use crisis terminology to treat illegal emigration and alarming and catastrophic terminology to circulate information on sub-Saharan immigration. We see these methods in the titles of *L'expression*. Shocking words match the seriousness of the harraga phenomenon. We may read such serious and dramatizing titles as “600 Cremated Corpses”, “When This ‘Twilight Home’ is Going to be Stopped?”, “Shame”, “Between the Jaws and the Jail Claws”, “They Challenge the Laws of Nature”, “Evil to Be Eradicated”, “That the Wave Sweeps You Away”, “We Are Onboard a Human Catastrophe”, “The Floating Coffins are Back on Duty” and “From Boat People to Harraga”.

The same dramatizing effect is also present in the articles of *Ennahar El Djadid*. However, the terminology aims to present facts uncovered through field research. The most representative titles are ones such as “Ennahar Meets the Most Dangerous Baron of the Persons’ Escape and of Their Money”, “An Old Man Aged of 63 Gets to Almería”, “A fact Without Precedents and Embarrassing for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs”, “The Spanish Coast Guards Intercept Algerian Families at Their Illegal Arrival in Spain”, “The ‘Hogra’ Causes the ‘Harge’”, “Expulsion of 14,660 Algerians from France During the First Five Months of This Year [2008]”, “The Beginning of Application of the New Provisions Criminalizing the ‘Harga’”, “Over 400 ‘Harraga’ Before the Court of Oran in Less Than Six Months” and “Some Opportunities to Enable the ‘Harraga’ Benefiting from 40 Million Cents”.

The terminology used for illegal immigration is more alarming and closer to police vocabulary than journalistic expression. These are examples of *L'expression* titles referring to illegal immigration: "Africans Arrested in Annaba", "Algeria New El Dorado", "New Fighting Mechanisms are Necessary", "167 Persons Arrested in Tamanrasset", "30 Illegal Immigrants Arrested in Maghnia", "Drowning of Around Thirty Sub-Saharan Off-shore El Hoceima" and "300,000 Sub-Saharan in Algeria". The newspaper *Ennahar El Djadid* adopts the same line, however, using a more alarming vocabulary. It uses titles such as "Thousands of Africans Transform Three Provinces in Areas Undermined by Aids", "5,000 African Immigrants Have Invaded Tamanrasset", "Tamanrasset: The Paris of the African 'Harraga'", "The Algeria Policy in Matters of Illegal Immigration and 'Harga' is Exclusively Founded on the Security Solutions", "Arrests of 80 African Migrants Near Ouargla", "The Police Have Arrested 286 Illegal Residing Foreigners Since the Beginning of the Year [2008]", "Four Months Detention Against an Illegal Immigrant", "Illegal Immigrants Threaten the Local Workforce", "The African 'Harraga' Keep on Surfing in the Algerian Desert and "Arrest of 39 Illegal Immigrants in Ain Amenas".

Examples of dramatizing and alarming tactics disappear in the comments published by the two newspapers on Algerian emigration. The comments of *L'expression* appear to encourage emigration. Some examples of this include "Holidays to the Ancestors' Country", "Almost 900,000 Come Spending Their Holidays in the Country", "The Emigrants Come", "Zeribi and Ramdenia in the Footsteps of Fadela Amara", "Fadela Amara in *L'expression*: I Dream in Kabylie", "France Will Grant More Visas", "Algeria Wants to Benefit From its Diaspora", "A 4x4, a Blond and Holidays at the Village", "Controlled Origins (ex Zebda) to His Week in Alger: Mous and Hakim are Going to Put the Hall on Fire".

While not totally absent, the desire to glorify emigration is less evident in the titles from the newspaper *Ennahar El Djadid*. The most representative titles are ones like "New Measures for Protecting the Asylum Seekers", "Algeria on Top of the Maghrebi Countries Applying for the Green Card".

It is apparent from the above examples that, because of efforts to reduce the evils and plagues of illegal emigration and immigration, journalists from the two newspapers employ unsuitable lexicons against sub-Saharan. The published figures and data are not reliable and are subject to mistaken interpretations. Evidently, the two newspapers try more to be

present in the circulation of news and less in the communication of messages helping to form opinions.

The Raising of Consciousness through Picture Shock

The articles of these two newspapers are often completed by pictures used to raise the consciousness of readers on the seriousness of the immigration phenomena. This approach is more evident in the newspaper *Ennahar El Djadid* that not only supports all its comments with pictures but also uses enlargements and coloured pictures. The chosen pictures, especially in the articles of the *Ennahar El Djadid*, show decomposing corpses, arrested persons and desperate people. The pictures of sub-Saharanans emphasise the number and groups of migrants, highlighting the danger and threat.

In several cases, this willingness to use pictures to illustrate article content has produced results unsuitable to the intended purpose. This is why we notice a trend to insert pictures of the president of the republic, ministers and other people in charge to illustrate the content of articles about arrests or the presence of illegal migrants. In some cases, pictures for articles pertaining to Algerian State sovereignty show police agents belonging to foreign countries. Evidently, relying on pictures to illustrate article content is not only badly controlled but also unsuitable to the intended purpose.

Conclusions

Through analyzing the articles of these two newspapers, while admitting that it is difficult to generalize for the entirety of the printed press, one common theme appears. That is that migration is covered by media and tends to entertain the place of migration in the collective imaginary of Algerian society.

The treatment of the harraga phenomenon perfectly illustrates this perverse effect. In fact, we notice that the explication of the risks and dangers run by the candidates does not remove the motivations for leaving.

Prevention and consciousness-raising contain factors encouraging emigration. This perspective is supported by the artistic and cinematographic treatment of the harraga phenomenon, leading to elevate prospective illegal emigrants to the statuses of heroes or stars and likening the 'harraga' to an alternative profession, as demonstrated by a statement by the signer Massi: "If I were not a signer, I would have been Harraga". This idealization of emigration is nourished by images of successful emigrants residing in European countries who, when coming back to their country to spend holidays, confirm emigration's place in the social imaginary.

In a way, the treatment of illegal immigration supports the place of emigration. Associating sub-Saharan migrants with offenders, drug and counterfeited money dealers and AIDS spreaders, allows Algerians to deny those 'illegal' migrants the rights they support for their own migrants.

The Effects of the Media on Moroccan Migration

MOHA ENNAJI

Introductory Background

Morocco is a North African country that lies at the crossroads of Africa, the Mediterranean Basin and Europe. Its main religion is Islam and its official language is Arabic. The Berber language is widely spoken by Berbers, who represent nearly half of the population. French is used as a second language, which is widely used in education, telecommunications, transportation and the private sector (Ennaji 2005).

Morocco, from 1912 to 1956, was a French Protectorate, with Spain occupying the northern and southern parts of the country. After independence, Morocco adopted a capitalistic system of economy. As a consequence, the gap between the rich and the poor began to widen and the disparities between rural and urban zones became larger. On a political level, Morocco is a constitutional monarchy that has adopted a multi-party system since independence. The first two decades of post-independence were characterized by state building within an authoritarian regime led by the late King Hassan II.

Morocco adopted many social measures in favor of the working class until the 1980s, when these measures had to be revised under pressure from the IMF and the World Bank, which imposed structural adjustment reforms to reduce high public expenditure. As a result, the country decided to encourage the liberalization of the economy and privatization. The Moroccan economy is based on agriculture, which represents between 15 to 20 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), employs about 40 percent of the labour force and contributes 35 percent of exports that include phosphates, clothes and fish. The secondary sector represented about 30 percent of the GDP in 2000. The remaining 54 percent covers all the other sectors. The country's main economic resources are the remittances of Moroccan workers abroad and the tourism industry.

The Moroccan government has recently reduced its budget deficit (Van der Erf and Heering 2002: 15). It has made a strong effort to overcome its budget problems by encouraging national and foreign investments and by making a number of regulatory changes to improve the investment climate. However, there is an increasing decline caused by high oil prices and droughts. This fact has decreased activity in many sectors, including the key agricultural sector, by holding down exports.

According to the 2004 population census, the Moroccan population numbered exactly 29,891,708 people, which represents a demographic growth rate of 1.4 percent compared to 2.1 percent in 1994. This figure would be higher if Morocco had not lost some three million inhabitants in the past four decades (departures of foreigners, Jews and a considerable number of Muslim Moroccans). The population density varies from one region to another and half of Morocco's territory is scarcely populated.

Although the active working population is estimated at over one-third of the overall population, around 70.6 percent of Moroccan workers are unqualified and only 13 percent have achieved the secondary education level (Ministry of Finance and Privatization 2005). The average unemployment rate reached 11.9 percent in urban areas and is estimated at 19.3 percent compared to 3.3 percent in rural zones.

Rural exodus has been increasing since independence. The rural population decreased from 70 percent of the population in 1960 to less than 46 percent in 2004 (National Census of 2004). These figures show that Morocco is increasingly becoming an urbanized country. Many of the rural migrants view the city as a transitory phase in their migration project to Europe. It is believed that migration to the European Union usually starts more from rural than urban areas (Berrada and Hamdouch 2000: 35; Erf and Heering 2002: 12). This internal migration is due to the fact that people look for better living standards and always seek to improve their living conditions, which are often harsher in rural than in urban areas. The World Bank Report of 2000 indicates that 12 percent of the urban population has been living under the poverty line compared to 27 percent in rural zones. To fight poverty, the state has elaborated strategies to encourage national and international investments and has recently launched the National Initiative for Human Development, a program that seeks to modernize and improve the infrastructure of the poorest districts and areas in the country.

In a national survey conducted by Ennaji and Sadiqi (2008), economic reasons represented 70 percent of the causes of migration. It is the perception of better economic conditions elsewhere that is behind the choice to migrate (see also Ennaji 2007; Charef 2004). The Moroccan economy is increasingly unable to generate the job opportunities needed to absorb its growing population. As a result, unemployment has considerably increased during the past two decades. Migration has been an important safety valve in reducing unemployment and increasing income prospects for households through remittances. Without them, the rate of unemployment and sub-employment, as well as the social pressures associated with these conditions, would be much higher.

Moroccan migration started in the 1960s with flows going mainly to France. During the postwar labor migrations into Europe, France attracted a significant number from the Maghreb, particularly from Morocco, before Italy emerged as a country of destination in the 1980s. By 1998, there were already approximately one million Moroccan migrants in France, and 300,000 legally resided in Italy (Hamdouche et al. 2000).

Migration to European countries has not only helped reduce the unemployment rate of the country, it has supplied needed workers for Europe. In this regard, migrants contribute significantly to development in both Morocco and the host countries, hence the importance of elaborating joint policies and strategies of co-development. However, there are reasons to believe that migration has a limited expansion capacity since Europe is reducing the demand for new North African migrants who are on the verge of being replaced by East European and Latin American workers. Thus, the capacity of Morocco to export its excess supply of labor is diminishing and unemployment levels are increasing. More importantly, migration cannot be the unique solution to the country's problem of unemployment.

Given Morocco's geographical situation at the crossroads between Africa and Europe and the fact that only seven miles separates it from Europe, migration is predictably a key issue, having significant political, social and economic implications. The proximity of Europe makes Morocco a country of both emigration and immigration (transit); it partly explains the rise in irregular migration of Moroccans and non-Moroccans through Morocco, the political debate around the 2003 law on migration, negotiations with the EU on readmission and so forth. Morocco, according to estimates, hosts about 20,000 illegal migrants from sub-Saharan Africa (cf. the Moroccan daily *Le Matin* of 14th of April 2008).

The theoretical approach adopted here is a broad version of the migration economics theory, which analyses migration as a means of revenue-raising and stipulates that the migration decision is determined more by family strategy than individual choice. Within this framework, it is argued that people migrate with the expectation of increasing their income and of improving their living standards while taking minimal risks.

The data are mainly gathered from the fieldwork I carried out between May 2005 and February 2007. I have equally relied on statistics from previous surveys undertaken by Moroccan and international scholars. Some figures have been collected from previously published reports issued by the Moroccan government or the World Bank. Emphasis has been put on presenting new data and new findings based on our fieldwork as well as on analyzing migration with respect to Moroccans' perceptions and attitudes.

To elicit the effect of the media on Moroccans, I used a questionnaire, interviews and participatory observation. The aim was to grasp the way the media shape youth's opinions about migration and migrants. The questionnaire was administered to 121 participants (77 males and 44 females); 12 people were interviewed during spontaneous discussions. Their ages varied between 18 and 59. This chapter analyses the impact of media on migration projects and Moroccan migrants from the socio-cultural perspective and assesses how media discourse can affect migration flows and attitudes toward migration in the sending and receiving countries.

Causes and Consequences of Migration

Causes

According to Hamdouch and Khachani (2005), there are various internal and external causes of migration in Morocco. First, there are the huge economic discrepancies between Morocco and European countries. The income per capita in Morocco is much weaker than in Europe. Morocco has only 5.6 percent of Europe's average per capita income (World Bank Report 2002). This gap is deepened by the discrepancy between different social categories of people and the different regions of the country. For

example, it is a fact that the northern region is much poorer than the central region, which accounts for the very high rate of international migration in the former region. Because of these difficult economic conditions, migratory flows are expected to increase in the future. Another internal cause of migration is the instability of the economy, which is essentially based on agriculture. This instability is caused by the numerous droughts that the country has suffered and sky-rocketing oil prices. These two factors have combined to reduce economic growth.

Despite measures taken by the government since the 1970s to reduce demographic growth (for instance through family planning), the population of Morocco has continued to steadily increase since its independence. This factor has directly impacted employment since the job market is inundated each year by a greater labor force, which neither the public nor the private sectors can absorb. As a result, unemployment has increased, especially among university graduates. In parallel with population growth, the number of jobless people has also increased. Thus, from 1994 to 2004, the rate of unemployment has increased from 12.1 percent to 13.7 percent. This is partly due to the fact that the state has cut public administration jobs and drastically reduced recruiting for the public sector. Because of the liberalization of the economy, the state has decreased public investments and employment (Ministry of Finance Report, 2004). In addition, privatization and liberalization led to restructuring public and private enterprises that suffered as a result of severe competition with European firms. As a consequence, many businesses closed down or were obliged to reduce their work force. All these reasons are 'push' factors for migratory flows, inferring that unemployment has social ramifications for migration. The high rate of unemployment and poverty are such factors which thrust many young Moroccans to emigrate legally and illegally (Hamdouch and Khachani 2005).

Europe's strict migration laws have also had an effect on migration; many young people are forced to migrate illegally because the conditions of obtaining a visa are tough, due to the Schengen agreement, which imposed heavy constraints on migration procedures. These measures have brought about an increase in the phenomenon of illegal migration. For many illegal migrants, the cost is very high, as most of them pay their traffickers between 1,000 and 5,000 euros to get to the other side of the Mediterranean. In many cases, families of potential illegal migrants take out bank loans or sell their jewels and property in order to pay the traffick-

ers. In other cases, illegal migrants' dreams collapse when they are arrested by the Spanish authorities and sent back home or die at sea. When they are lucky enough to reach Spanish territory, illegal migrants work under very severe conditions to make ends meet and to send remittances back home to help improve their families' standards of living.

The European job market also indirectly encourages migration. Migrant workers are badly needed, especially in the private sector, small businesses and in the informal economy. Thus, many Moroccan migrants work in services, building and agriculture, often without a work contract. This situation is profitable to the European employers who often pay migrant workers half the amount they would pay their European counterparts. A recent survey by Glavez Pères (2000) and reported in Hamdouch and Khachani (2005) revealed that, in Spain, more than 45 percent of migrant workers have no work contract and that they work in appalling conditions for less than twenty euros a day as opposed to forty euros for Spanish natives.

Migration is equally encouraged by the networks of traffickers on both sides of the Mediterranean. These traffickers charge high fees, as mentioned above, and often make false promises to the potential illegal migrants. Spanish traffickers, who are very active in Ceuta and Melilla, have made fortunes out of this 'business', which bestows on them between five billion and seven billion dollars a year, according to a recent Moroccan 2M television program (see also Hamdouch and Khachani 2005).

Consequences of Migration

Generally speaking, migration has a positive impact on both the country of origin and the host country. A 'win-win' concept of 'give and take' exists at the heart of the process of international migration. Migration may also be a means of improving the living conditions of families left in the home country since it helps to satisfy their subsistence needs and improve their standards of living. According to a survey conducted by Bourchachen (2000) concerning the impact of the remittances of migrants on the living standards of their families, more than 1.2 million people have escaped poverty because of the transfers made by Moroccan workers abroad.

Remittances sent back to Morocco have been increasing remarkably since the 1970s. They have risen from 303 million dollars in 1970 to

3.3 billion dollars in 2003 (Ministry of Finance Report 2004). The main reason for this increase in the amount of remittances is the big rise in European salaries and the facilities the Moroccan government has made for Moroccan workers abroad to transfer money and to invest in Morocco. Morocco has also developed its banking system within the country and has opened many banks in European countries with strong Moroccan communities. Another reason is that the number of Moroccan migrants abroad has increased over the last four decades.

As a matter of fact, many migrants have business projects in Morocco, 80 percent of which are in the building industry.¹ The importance of investments varies from region to region and according to the size of the city. Morocco's economy increasingly relies on migrant remittances, hence the efforts of the government to establish institutional links with migrants abroad. Today, the Moroccan migrant has a role to play in the process of economic growth. The migrant is indeed a developmental actor in both the sending and the receiving countries.

Female migration is an important aspect of the social consequences of migration. Female migration to Europe is usually made possible through family reunification, marriage and higher education. Migrant women can be divided into two types: women migrating in the context of family reunification and those migrating as individual migrants. As Al Ghali (2003) argues, the image of the Moroccan woman who migrates alone today differs from the traditional image of 'the passive woman' who had migrated before in the context of family reunification (2003: 8).

In the host country, families and young children may be affected by their confrontation with a new society. In fact, there is a tension between the two cultures (one dominant² and the other dominated and devalued³) that causes a change in attitudes and aspirations.⁴ As a result, the migrants may lose their cultural identity and national values. They live in a real paradox because in their homes, they behave as a Moroccan, Muslim family, speaking mainly Moroccan Arabic or Berber; outside, they encounter a different religion and another language and culture. Although the children are usually bilingual and bi-cultural, most of the time the

1 This fact did not change, as illustrated in Hamdouch et al. (2000).

2 The culture of the host country.

3 The culture of the migrant.

4 K. C. Breener (1987).

Western culture dominates. The second and third generations face this problem of identity, as is evidenced by the rise of Muslim fundamentalism in Europe.⁵ Because of miscommunication, adolescents are often in conflict with their parents, and Muslim immigrants are negatively depicted by the European media.

Economic instability, unemployment, and poverty are the major causes of migration. The situation in the country of origin is decisive for migration, and the latter is itself viewed as a strategic answer to such situations. All these factors push many young Moroccans to migrate. Nonetheless, the causes of migration have evolved over the decades, and the impact of the media plays a key role in migration decisions. However, it is difficult to isolate this single factor within the causality of a phenomenon as complex as migration. As with any important social process, migration takes place within a comprehensive and multifaceted context.

The Impact of the Media

Media may influence the migration project and intervene in the individual and collective migration processes in a variety of ways. Television images transmitted by the destination countries may be an important inciting factor and a source of information for potential migrants. Media images of migrants in host countries may also determine attitudes toward the migrants and their experiences and impact the degree of their integration and social inclusion in the receiving societies.

On the other hand, media images transmitted from the countries of origin may affect migrants' attitudes and social life in the host countries. New technologies, like the Internet, play a crucial role in migration decisions and in the cultural identity of migrants. Media images have a remarkable effect on the minds of Moroccan migrants on a daily basis. The European and Moroccan media report on migration issues everyday because the latter affect public policy, politics, social and economic sectors. Reports on illegal migration have been the top priority of major newspapers and television channels. Migration is repeatedly debated and is claimed to be an election issue on par with health and education. In many cases, migration problems have influenced voting behavior in the host countries.

5 Program *Lakum-u Al-Kalima*, 2M TV on 10th of August 2004.

I am interested in the way media influence and shape the migration process and the lives of Moroccan migrants and how the media determine people's attitudes to migrants and their cultural identities. Images of a free and opulent West are diffused by Western and Moroccan media alike, which push young potential migrants to take the move or take the risk of crossing to the other side of the Mediterranean. Films, magazines and the Internet tend to reinforce these images in the minds of young Moroccans.

Migrants returning in the summer also consolidate these stereotypes and transmit the image of a developed and comfortable life in the West. The fact that they drive luxurious cars and buy nice apartments in their country of origin pushes those who did not migrate to think that migration is a good move, not knowing that the migrant workers toil all year in the host country to save up and buy a nice car to drive back home for vacation. Of course, media are not the only factor that influence migrants and people's attitudes. Other channels of information are usually used, namely letters from friends, the influence of family members who have already migrated, correspondence with Western friends, word-of-mouth communication, information from work agencies and traffickers.

The positive image of successful migrants returning to their home country during summer vacation is remarkable, especially for those young Moroccans living under the constraints of unemployment and poverty who begin to envisage migration as a solution. Many of these 'successful' migrants own nice apartments and sometimes have important investments in Morocco. They become models for potential migrants whom they generally help to realize their migration ambitions. This optimistic image of the migrant is magnified by the power of television. With a satellite dish, millions of Moroccans in urban and rural areas can watch European channels that generally portray a liberal and wealthy Europe. This makes many of them think of migration as a solution to their misery and frustration.

According to the fieldwork material, most respondents (55.5 percent) think that the mass media, especially the Moroccan television channels, indirectly encourage migration since they often give the public an idealistic view of the West. For example, *Noujoum Al Hjra* ("The Stars of Migration") is a television program that shows how Moroccan migrants have succeeded in host countries. *Canal Atlas* is another television program that advises migrants who have amassed significant savings to invest in Morocco. Another television program called *Biladi* ("My Homeland") shows the major reforms and changes that have taken place in Morocco in order

to persuade migrants to invest in the country. Moroccan television rarely shows the difficult daily lives of migrants in the European 'paradise' or the living conditions of their families left behind.

We do not know exactly how these media affect attitudes and decisions, the extent of their influence on youth and to what degree the media distort or accurately describe the living conditions in the West and the real situation of migrants. Given the complex relationship between media and migration, it is important to note that the results of this research are provisional and should be taken with caution.

A number of works have been published on the effect of media on migration. Here, I would like to cite Mari Gillespie (1995), who discussed how migrants used global, host-country, home media and media produced by the migrant community itself to make sense of their migration experience and to come to terms with their new living conditions. The pioneering work of Teun Van Dijk (1991) analyzed media discourse and the issue of racism. Gordon and Rosenberg (1991) studied racism in the mass media and its impact on immigrants. Solomos and Wrench (1993) examined the discourse of the press and television on migration issues in the 1980s and their impact on the socio-political debate. Jessica Ter Wal (1996) discussed the discourse on migration through the press in Italy and how it shaped Italians' attitudes toward immigrants.

Global media, like the Internet and satellite television channels (CNN, BBC World, France 24), talk almost daily about migration issues. In the receiving countries, media are very active and have, at times, distorted the image and reality of Muslim migrants – Moroccan migrants in particular. Immigrants have created their own websites and networks, television channels and radio stations (in France, there are the following: *Boeur TV*, *Berber TV*, *Radio Boeur*, etc.) to voice their own attitudes, concerns and aspirations. Rap and Rai music, coming mainly from Morocco and Algeria, but also from the diaspora, are the most popular types of music in France. This expresses new identity politics. It may just well indicate that the immigrants in Europe have failed to integrate in the host society.

The reception and use of satellite channels in Europe by migrants testifies to the important role of media in shaping peoples' ambitions and ideas. Satellite reception has made programming from home countries available to migrant communities in Europe. Immigrants watch Moroccan television in their apartments in Europe and surf the web to read Moroccan newspapers and magazines. As a result, there is fear among

politicians in Europe that this tendency may prevent immigrants from integration. However, according to Hargreaves and Mahdjoub (1997), unlike the first generation of Moroccans in Europe who prefer to watch Moroccan television to keep in touch with the home country, helping to create a space where they feel at home, the second and third generation prefer European and international channels like MTV, TF1 and M6 because they are influenced by European youth culture. Inside Morocco, European TV channels, especially Spanish ones are watched without difficulty in the Northern cities (Channels 1, 2, *Telecinco*, *Antena 3* and regional channels of Andalusia). Parabolic antennas are everywhere and are increasingly connecting Moroccan youth to international European satellite TV channels, mainly French ones.

The high migration flows from Morocco to Europe are attributed to the role that the national and European media play in attracting Moroccans to Europe. Given the fact that Morocco is only half an hour away from Europe, Spanish, French, Italian and Portuguese channels are watched daily in many parts of Morocco. With the help of the satellite dish, which is widespread in the country, hundreds of channels can be watched by Moroccans in their homes. Surely driven by economic necessity, but lured by images of comfort and success portrayed by the different channels, young Moroccans flocked to the countries that fuelled their hopes and aspirations.

However, interviews with immigrants revealed that they were disillusioned with the European dream and the imaginary world of television. They actually face problems of integration, racism and exclusion (Ennaji and Sadiqi 2008). Most of these migrants feel deceived and misled (55.7 percent). However, it is important to remark that this disappointment depends on whether the person has a valid residence permit or not. Those who already have legal residence status mostly feel satisfied and optimistic (56 percent).

Unemployment is high among migrants, especially during financial and economic crises. Migrants usually take hard manual jobs that are unaccepted by the white Europeans. Their pay and living conditions are often poor; their security is minute, and the risks are quite high. What are meagre wages to a Spaniard, for example, are enormous to a Moroccan and the family he remits them to. In fact, migration is more likely to be a social, family project than a merely individual decision. Research on remittances shows the importance of family strategy in migratory projects (Bourchachen 2000).

Movies, newspapers, books, sport games, television and radio programs show a different, liberal, rich world to people who are impatiently waiting for modernization and democratization forces to root at home. Paradoxically, the most frequent images of Maghreb immigration in the Western media allude to xenophobia and racism. Moroccan immigrants appear as boat-people (in crowded pateras), trafficked by organized crime networks and persecuted by police authorities, or as exploited greenhouse workers, socially rejected by ordinary neighbors. At the core of Spanish politicians' discourses and statements, African immigration is associated with external border control, labor market needs, a submerged economy, population change, differential citizenship rights and security problems. A derogatory perception of Maghreb immigration is also recurrent in broadcast debates on crime (robbery, violence, drugs traffic, etc.), terrorism and prostitution.

To the question "which country would you like to migrate to", the vast majority of respondents mentioned Europe, followed by Canada and the USA. At the top of the list of European countries, France is first with 17.7 percent, followed by Germany (13.1 percent), Belgium (12.0 percent), Holland (11.5 percent), Spain (10.6 percent) and England (8.0 percent), as shown in the following table:

Table nº 1. Percentages of respondents' favoured country of destination.

<i>Country of Destination</i>	<i>Respondents (percent)</i>
France	17.7
Germany	13.1
Belgium	12.0
Holland	11.5
Spain	10.6
England	8.0
Canada	11.2
USA	9.3
Sweden	6.6

The main reasons for the respondents' choices are to do with the fact that the top five countries already have important Moroccan migrant communities, in addition to the geographical proximity and language factor.

Concerning the question as to whether Europe is a ‘paradise’ worth migrating to, the vast majority (80.4 percent) thought that it was so. Only 16.6 percent mentioned that Europe was not perfect, as the table below indicates:

Table n° 2. Respondents’ perceptions of Europe as paradise.

<i>Respondents</i>	<i>Yes (percent)</i>	<i>No (percent)</i>	<i>Don't Know (percent)</i>
Females	24.2	11.2	2.0
Males	56.2	05.4	1.0
Average	80.4	16.6	3.0

Given these statistics, it is clear that most respondents see Europe as an interesting place to be. When asked why, they said because one could get a good job in the European Union, where salaries are attractive. This attitude may be explained by the fact most respondents long for an easy, comfortable and happy life. They also stated that, in Europe, there is respect for human dignity and the workers’ rights are guaranteed by law.

As for the migratory decision-making process, about half of the respondents revealed that they had migrated for economic reasons. To the question why did you migrate to Europe, the respondents answered in the following ways:

Table n° 3. Causes of migration.

<i>Causes</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
family	35.1%	59.0%	44.8%
friends	33.3%	12.8%	25.0%
television	3.5%	1.1%	2.1%
radio	1.2%	1.1%	1.0%
acquainted Europeans	1.8%	1.1%	1.0%
tourism travels	3.5%	5.1%	4.2%
studies	3.2%	7.8%	5.2%
Other reasons	21.1%	10.3%	16.7%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The first reason, according to the survey, is the family strategy. The second major reason is the network of friends, more frequent among men (33.3 per-

cent) than among women (12.8 percent). Mass media are not reported as a chief reason by the female respondents. In the case of males, only 5.3 percent claimed that media were the key factor in their migratory decision.

To the question of how they felt about their immigration experience and if they were disappointed or satisfied, many respondents (31.3 percent) answered that they were happy with their migratory experience because "there is better life quality in Europe than in Morocco" (45.2 percent). Similarly, for those who considered their migration a mistake, most of them (61.7 percent) alleged that they were "finding more difficulties than imagined before" (54.8 percent).

Nineteen percent of the respondents declared that television had a big influence on their vision of Europe; 39.4 per cent stated that television had a low impact on their migration project and 41.4 per cent said that they were not at all influenced. Although the variables of education and age of those most influenced did not seem to make a difference, the gender variable showed a different picture: it is notable that 73.7 percent of the most influenced were men. Thus, 24.6 percent of men admitted to being very influenced by television, compared with 12.8 percent of women. Most of them (79.8 percent) declare they watched Moroccan TV for two hours on a daily basis; their favorite programs were, in order of importance, sports, foreign serials, national and international news.

As far as watching European TV channels in Morocco, a significant difference emerges between the very influenced group and the less influenced group. While 58.8 percent of respondents mentioned that they watched European TV but were not influenced, 89.5 percent stated that they were heavily influenced. Differences in channel choices as well as in program preferences are irrelevant for both groups, as they all prefer to watch sports, news reports, European serials and American movies. Many respondents mentioned that they also liked to listen to European radio stations; fifty-two percent said they were very influenced by radio programs, while 33.8 percent stated that they were hardly influenced by radio stations. This fact cuts across rural and urban areas. Only 8.1 percent of the interviewees declared that they had been very influenced in their migration decision by listening to Morocco radio. The same remark was made by those who listened to European radio stations before they migrated.

With regard to the written press, only 6.1 percent of the total claimed to have been very influenced by Moroccan, Spanish and French newspapers (Malgesini 2002). Only 5 percent of the interviewees claimed to be

very influenced by the Internet. However, it is interesting to note that many respondents use the Internet for chatting with their friends and relatives abroad, usually through Skype, and also to gather information about their migratory project. Many surf daily for over one hour, searching for job and marriage opportunities, mainly in Europe. By increasing their access to this medium, many internet surfers migrate virtually, thus nourishing their migration dream and feeding their imagination and vision about the 'Eldorado' in Europe.

Mass media influence is greater in their coverage of illegal migration, which has attracted headline news, prime-time debates and intense negotiations inside Europe and between all Mediterranean countries. The illegal migration of Moroccans and sub-Saharan Africans to Spain and Italy has also been subject to hot media debates (Ennaji 2004).

Media's impact on migratory projects is relatively small, affecting less than 10 percent of Moroccan immigrants in Europe. The main reasons for migration are socio-economic, fostered by the family strategy and the influence of friends. For most of the interviewees, Europe is the most convenient place where they can work and improve their family income, despite the fact that they would do low-level jobs. According to respondents' testimonies, television and the media did not inform accurately about the difficulties of getting jobs or permanent resident status in Europe, nor about the negative attitudes toward migrants, which badly impacts their standards of living and social integration.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have dealt with migration and media in Morocco. The fieldwork material reveals that the lack of employment opportunities and the low standard of living are the fundamental motives pushing men and women to migrate. Although the causes of migration are basically economic and social, it seems that the mass media, chiefly television have an important impact on Moroccan youth and on migrants. Moroccan television generally focuses on the positive aspect of migration, which impacts social development through the Moroccan workers' remittances and the transfer of know-how and technology. As a matter of fact, most migrants

own their own houses in Morocco and, in many cases, have a business run by relatives.

Through the data collection methods used (namely questionnaires, interviews, recordings, participant observation and introspection), I have found out that the average Moroccan has developed a rosy vision of Europe, which the Moroccan and European media depict as a land of opportunity that is wealthy, civilized and respectful of human rights and freedoms of expression. Although media play a remarkable role in shaping views and attitudes about migrants and migration processes, it is not the major cause of migration. It functions as a facilitator or as an additional push factor that fosters young Moroccans' desire to migrate to better their living conditions. The key causes of migration remain economic (poverty and unemployment) and social (family reunification, studies abroad).

Migrants' families and friends also impact the migration decision of many young Moroccans. They are influenced by the workers' remittances, the luxurious cars they bring in the summer, tapes, videos, internet messages or phone calls in addition to Moroccan and European television channels. We do not completely understand the degree to which various media affect decisions to migrate and to what degree they shape attitudes and opinions about migration as a process and as a choice. What is also unknown is the extent to which the media discourage emigration to Europe.

The Moroccan media often have programs which sensitize people to the high risks and perils of illegal migration. Articles in newspapers and documentaries on *2M* and *RTM* television channels are used to inform potential illegal migrants of the dangers of illegal migration. The media also report about the hard living conditions of those who make it to Spain, who are often shown living in slums with no water, no electricity, no sanitation, etc. (El Ejido events is a good case in point).

Thus, I personally believe that media have a serious role to play in shaping and controlling migration. They ought to provide a clear and realistic view of European life and institutions and correctly and objectively depict the living conditions of migrant workers in the host countries, rather than reinforce the existing stereotypes about migration and about Moroccan migrants in Europe, in particular. They must equally provide profound coverage of the real issues of migrants and their rights and do whatever they can to discourage illegal migration, the migration of minors and the exploitation of migrants by their employers and traffickers who take advantage of poor young people and push them to take risks.

Analysis on the Possible Impacts of ICTs in Migratory Contexts With a Focus on North Africa

IVAN URETA¹

Introduction

The undeniable existence of expressions like “In Spain the average salary is 3000 euros, isn't it?” and “Here it is impossible, abroad you can do it” causes one to wonder how the social imaginary developed to produce these statements? Taylor (2004) defined the social imaginary

as the way ordinary people “imagine” their social surroundings, a way of thinking that is carried in images, stories and legends, which is shared by large groups of people and which makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy.

It is obvious from hearing these kinds of expressions that Vygotsky's (1934), Hayakawa's (1949) and Maturana's theories concerning thought, language, emotions and actions have merit. According to Maturana and Varela, for the study of biology and the ontology of language, language, emotion and action are the same phenomenon. These expressions are a manifestation of a wide array of cultural values, both collectively and individually created (Krippendorff 2005).

In addition, the consumption of symbols coming from occidental countries is overwhelming. In the Andean mountains or in a Moroccan slum, one sees satellite dishes perched precariously on roofs like a massive troop of stained mushrooms absorbing international information. Information from satellite dishes offers views of life in the North.

1 This research has been possible thanks to the support of the Swiss Secretariat for Education and Research as part of the project: Learning Arabic for Increasing Business and Mutual Understanding. Funded by the European Commission.

Some research questions could be: How is information stored and managed by individuals and collectives? What about their media diets? How many hours do they spend in front of the TV or the computer? Do this information really impact and mould consumers' behaviour and mind-sets? If so: how deeply? How consistently? Or are we – from the north – just assuming that these peoples are more influential than they really are? Are we overestimating the impact and role of communication technologies? My purpose is answer some of these questions.

As for some introductory examples, many students who permanently or temporarily went to Europe or the United States found that, as soon as they communicated to friends and family that they would go abroad, they started to receive an increasing number of Messenger, Hi5 or Facebook invitations to remain in contact. It is also common to see girls and young women or men seeking potential partners in cybercafés. This is an intensive activity in itself and demands several hours per day of searching and communicating by chatting. In short, all this evidence pushes one to research the impact of media and information and communication technologies (ICTs) (Castells 1996, 1997, 1998) in those societies where a huge “migration culture” is present.

Since 2004, I have conducted surveys among young university students from Peru, Argentina, Chile and Ecuador, to investigate to what extent it was possible to measure and quantify their migratory intentions. Migratory intention does not mean that an individual has already started the migratory process, but rather that he/she would like to migrate sooner or later, permanently or temporary. In any case, migratory intention, with all its grades and intensities, sets down a set of thoughts and convictions which shape the imaginary, guiding daily activities and short, medium or long-term objectives in a certain way. The first survey results regarding migratory intention offered figures between 80 and 85 percent (Ureta 2007). After broadening the sample and repeating the survey, the same trend appeared. Roughly modified, two new surveys were conducted in the Maghreb in 2008 and 2009. Outcomes regarding migratory intention remained almost constant.

After achieving these results, it was necessary to go in depth to find the causes behind these intentions, and moreover, reflect on possible effects and consequences. To accomplish this, it has been structured into three main parts. First, it offers a summary of the main body of theories which try to explain migratory patterns throughout history. This first part is de-

voted to essential questions such as: why do people migrate? Have migratory patterns changed over the years, depending on economic, political, technological, social or cultural contexts, or, on the contrary, despite the many factors that can intervene in shaping migratory intentions, are there core and essential facts that are not mutable?

The second part describes the development of ICTs in Africa and the Arab world, focusing specifically on the Maghreb. This overview will offer a first step to contextualizing the outcomes revealed by the two surveys conducted in the Maghreb during 2008 and 2009. The third part analyses these outcomes, trying to be as objective as possible in order to highlight positive and negative effects of ICTs related to these complex contexts. The fourth, and final, part interprets these results critically, reflecting on how and to what extent these ICTs affect social change in migratory contexts, paying special attention to local development and economic performance.

Migration Theories

Although not the purpose of this paper, it would be interesting to do a summary survey on the main theories dealing with migration issues, even though a comprehensive critical study has already been done by Douglass Massey et al. (2000). It must be said that there is not a common and accepted framework to study migration as a unified discipline (Massey et al., 1994 and Massey et al., 1993). In spite of that lack, there are four main groups of theories. First, there are economic theories, then, historical-structural approaches, third, migration systems theory and, finally, transnational theory (Castles and Miller, 2003).

The first group of theories generally says that, according to available scientific literature, quality of life is a major driving factor that pushes individuals beyond their regional or national boundaries (Pei-Shan, 2001; Basu, 1992; De Jong and Fawcett, 1981; Varady 1983). Accordingly, individuals act on push-pull factors and are guided by autonomous decisions, which follow a cost-benefit analysis. Therefore, the decision to migrate appears to be a rational choice (Castles and Miller, 2003: 22). However, revisionist economists like Amartya Sen, in showing their opposition to the neo-classical economic doctrines, have described how the theory of rational choice has radical limitations (Sen 1977).

It is difficult to deny that this group of theories does contribute to the understanding of migratory processes. However, the complexity of the phenomena, being wider, requires additional explanatory factors. Partially in response to these economic theories, the historical-structural approach, which has developed since the 1970s, stresses theoretical fundamentals using elements of Marxist political-economic theory in which asymmetrical relationships constitute a central part. Authors such as Saskia Sassen highlight the fact that combinations of objective elements such as poverty, or distortions in the local labour market, combined with emerging ideological stimulus, induce migratory processes (Sassen, 1988: 9). This ideological stimulus is related to the presence of foreign direct investment (FDI) and official development assistance (ODA) as well, which lead to an increasing need for a cheap labour force. As Castles and Miller (2003: 25) explain, migration has been seen as a method for mobilizing a cheap labour force and as means to maintain privileged positions of control over less developed countries (Cohen, 1987). Although this historical-structural approach also presents some possible difficulties as a theoretical explanation, mainly in terms of generalising migratory processes, it may still be acceptable to explain certain migratory processes.

By accepting the complexity of international migration, migration systems theory offers an interdisciplinary approach, highlighting the importance of cultural, economic and even political links between sending, transit and destination countries. This theory has a certain explanatory power because it explains how migratory flows are affected by the interaction of three specific realms or structures which operate at macro, micro and meso levels. This interaction functions by intertwining formal, informal and 'facilitating' factors such as the political economy, law, interstate relationships, social networks (Boyd, 1989) and the 'migration industry'. This theory has been reshaped in part by Jennissen (2007) introducing four factors (economic, social, political and 'linkages') that work as causality chains within the framework of the international migration system.

Finally, transnational theory contains the elements to become one of the most important theoretical approaches to understanding migration related issues, mainly explaining current and future human mobility based on the deterritorialization of nation states (Basch et al. 1994). This mobility, this new interpretation of space, time and territory brings with it the concept of the 'transmigrant' (Glick-Schiller 1999) and the transnational model of citizenship (Castles and Miller, 2003: 45).

Media and ICTs Influence on the Social Imaginary

The theories presented briefly above reveal that academic efforts in trying to explain migratory flows use a wide array of methodologies and approaches. Most of them share an economic and political framework to understand how migration flows operate and how individual and collective behaviour is affected. As outlined, since 1990, we have seen an explosion of migratory flows worldwide and, coinciding with the mentioned period of time, international migrations from developing countries to OECD countries have grown year by year. In 1990, 53 percent of international migrants lived in developed countries, but by 2005 this figure had risen to 61 percent. According to official reports released by the UN, the average annual growth rate in migratory flows hovered around 1.4 percent from the 1990s to 2005.

This coincides with another historical moment: globalization, where media and technologies have experienced a new dimension in transmitting images and icons, channelling information and values, connecting people, shaping economics and presenting a closer world (Castells 2006). By accepting this new historical moment, but taking critical theories (Giddens, 1987) into consideration as well, new theoretical approaches must be adopted to look for new explanatory paths. Although we should accept that current international migration flows are not a unique event in history; the well-studied 'migration hump' experienced a century ago revealing similar characteristics (de Haas, 2005; Martin and Taylor, 1996; Massey, 1991). Because of this, it is necessary to be very prudent in analyzing these new trends to avoid exaggerated conclusions based on simplistic, cause-and-effect explanations. Given that ICTs and the media play a decisive social role today, it is important to reflect deeply on their effects in shaping the social imaginary as it concerns migratory motivations, intentions and social changes.

To be more systematic, we suggest that media may intervene in the migration process and in the individual and collective experience of migration in three ways; First, images transmitted from destination countries or by the global media generally, may be an important source of information for potential migrants. Whether this information is accurate or not, it can act as an important factor stimulating migrants to move [...] Second, host country media constructions of migrants will be critical in influencing the type of reception they are accorded, and hence will condition migrants eventual experience of inclusion or exclusion [...] Third, media originating from the migra-

tion sending country, such as films, video and satellite television, as well as new global distribution technologies, such as the WWW, are playing a dynamic role in the cultural identity and politics of diasporic communities. [...] Such media may help migrants feel “at home” in their country of “exile” but at the same time perhaps slow down their processes of integration and incorporation (King, 2001).

Specific studies regarding the influence and the impact of the media and ICTs regarding migration flows are difficult to find (Blion, 2008). Despite some established convictions and intuitions, only a few works have been done considering the links between media, technologies and migration. Appadurai's Concept of Modernity offers a critical starting point to have a better understanding of media and development. His intellectual position concerning this dualism can be traced back to his theory of rupture (1996: 2–3), which actually reflects on media and migration as its two main concepts in analyzing how both function in shaping the social imaginary and constituting subjectivities. In so doing, Appadurai, by criticizing the traditional Western theoretical establishment and modernization theory, explains how media and technologies offer perpetual resources to nourish imagination concerning the self and its relation to the world. These media could intervene at two levels: imagination and fantasy. “While fantasy implies passivity and false consciousness [...] imagination is today a staging ground for action, and not only for scape” (Appadurai, 1996: 7).

Some studies about the first approach, the role of media and ICTs connected to fantasy, have been done to investigate, for example, the relations between media and migration. A very well-known case is the role of television in the Albanian migration to Italy (Mai, 2004), the Moroccan case (Sabri 2005) or Fujita's works about young Japanese “cultural migrants” and the construction of their Imagined West (2004). On the other hand, and focusing on the Arab world, some works have been done concerning media and social changes (Al-Hroub, 2006; Shteivi, 2006; Fakhro, 2006; Al-Jassem, 2006, Sakr, 2001; Sakr et al. 2007), but these analyses do not pay specific attention to migration.

To bridge this gap, Russell (2001) asks,

‘How do potential migrants receive knowledge or impressions about places they might think of relocating to?’ The question, rephrased in the specific jargon of the migration behaviourists, is, how do people construct ‘information fields’ about areas and places which then become their ‘migration fields’ (White and Woods, 1980: 30–4).

Beyond a doubt, the media and ICTs exert a major influence on individual and collective behaviour. Although, according to Castells, these technologies reflect the society, the “Internet does not induce a new, virtual society. Rather, it expands, and develops, existing social networks”. Regardless, since the nineties, TV, the Internet and mobile telephones have been channelling a tremendous flow of information worldwide.

Media and ICTs Development in Africa and the Arab World

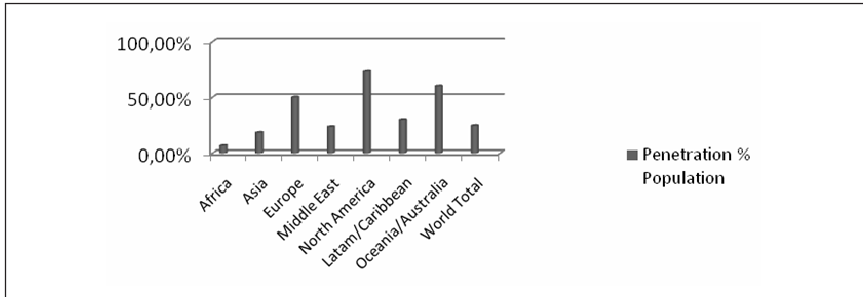
As we can see in the table below, Africa and the Middle East experienced the highest user growth during the period of 2000–2009, which is a logical conclusion shared by emergent regions. Africa grew 1,359.9 percent whereas the Middle East saw an increase of 1,360.2 percent. These amazing figures must still be analyzed with prudence. It is important to consider penetration rates (Prario and Riccheri, 2003). Despite the growth rates, this index better underlines the overall situation. And in this regard, the penetration rate in Africa stands at 6.7 percent while the Middle East’s rose to 23.7 percent.

Table nº 1. Internet Population.

<i>World Regions</i>	<i>Population (2009 est)</i>	<i>Internet Users Dec. 31, 2000</i>	<i>Internet Users Jun. 30, 2009</i>	<i>Penetration % Population</i>	<i>Users Growth 2000–2009</i>	<i>Users % of Table</i>
<i>Africa</i>	991.002.342	4.514.400	65.903.900	6.7%	1.359.9%	3.9%
<i>Asia</i>	3.808.070.503	114.304.000	704.213.930	18.5%	516.1%	42.2%
<i>Europe</i>	803.850.858	105.096.093	402.380.474	50.1%	282.9%	24.2%
<i>Middle East</i>	202.687.005	3.284.800	47.964.146	23.7%	1.360.2%	2.9%
<i>North America</i>	340.831.831	108.096.800	251.735.500	73.9%	132.9%	15.1%
<i>Latam/Caribbean</i>	586.662.468	18.068.919	175.834.439	30.0%	873.1%	10.5%
<i>Oceania/Australia</i>	34.700.201	7.620.480	20.838.019	60.1%	173.4%	1.2%
<i>World Total</i>	6.767.805.208	360.985.492	1.668.870.408	24.7%	362.3%	100.0%

Source: Internet World Stats. June 2009.

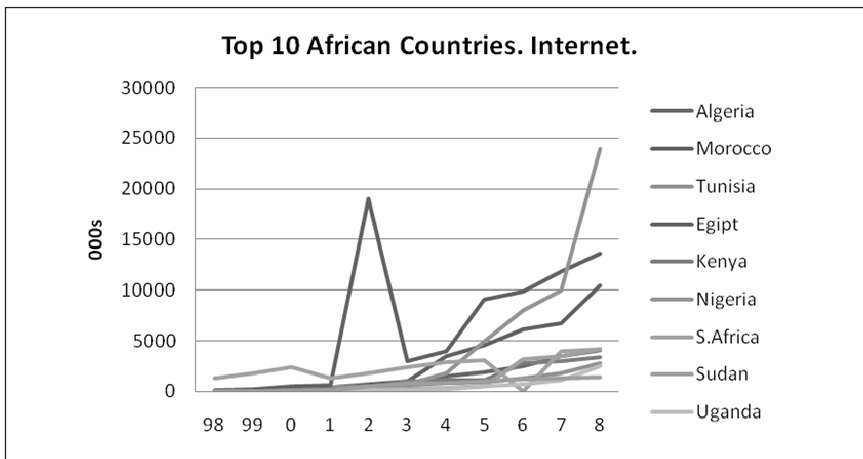
Graphic n° 1. Internet Penetration % Population.



Source: Internet World Stats. June 2009. Elaborated by the author.

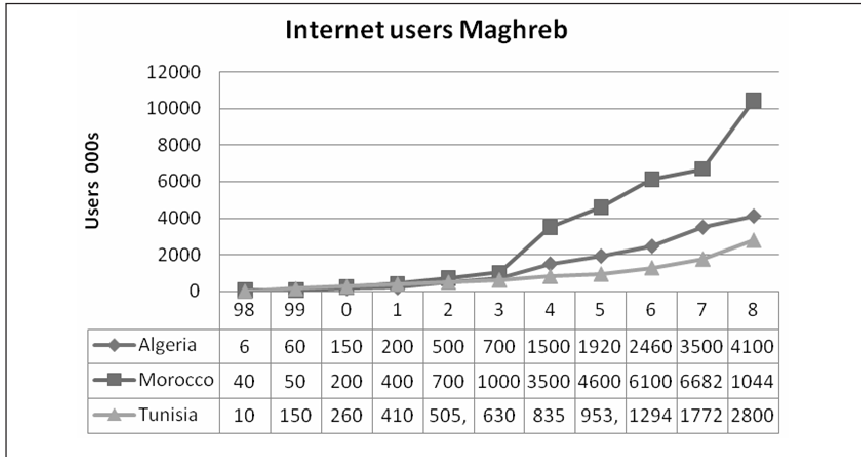
By analyzing the African situation, we see that within the Top 10 Internet countries in Africa, three of them are from the Maghreb region: Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia.

Graphic n° 2. Top 10 African Countries, Internet.



Source: International Telecommunication Union. Elaborated by the author.

Graphic n° 3. Internet Users, Maghreb.



Source: International Telecommunication Union. Elaborated by the author.

Regarding less developed countries, particularly the Arab World, there are intrinsic difficulties to understanding the extent to which ICTs affect social changes since credible and accurate information is hard to find (Al-Jasem 2006). At the same time, to study the impact and development of Internet use in Arab countries, and a large number of other developing nations, one must take factors such as censorship into consideration. As Al-Jasem (2006) notes, one Arab government sought to block 400,000 websites. However, attempts to block and censor websites are almost unmanageable tasks. There are also overlapped effects which aim to have a certain impact within specific socio-economic groups. Concepts such as ‘e-jihad’ or ‘global jihad’ – regarding Abu Moussab Al Souri’s approaches – are broadening their presence. As for possible social and political changes within Arab countries, Al-Jasem considers the importance of distinguishing Internet users by age since more than 60 percent of Arab internet users are under 35 years of age.

According to Al-Jasem (2006),

this age group is easily susceptible to influence, but in my view, it is not this age group that leads or imposes political or social change in Arab countries. It is likely that in some still hierarchical societies these factors have characteristics incomparable with western societies.

The introduction of and increasing connectivity in Arab countries is especially evident in those countries where younger rulers have started to govern, such as Morocco, Jordan, Qatar or the Kingdom of Bahrain. Surely, there is still room to improve 'electronic expression/freedom'. In Morocco, it is widely known that one can voice opinions about everything except against the monarchy. In any case, logging on the Internet, since its beginning, has always provided the right to choose, and this capacity can be very valuable within more or less rigid socio-political contexts. The more an individual can exercise his/her right to choose, the easier it is to generate a critical mass and consciousness among members of civil society (Abdulkarim Julfar 2006).

The Maghreb Case. Focus on Morocco

As pointed out by Belguendouz (2001: 4) and the OECD (2001: 253) in 2002, Morocco, along with Turkey, had the largest population of migrants in the European Union. Concerning Morocco, the expatriated population now reaches about 2 million, most being in Spain, France, Italy and the Netherlands.

Moroccan migration is not new. It started before the colonial period when many Moroccans went to the Middle East and Western Africa. Later on, during the second half of the nineteenth century, Moroccan merchants started to go to France and England. If we compare the Moroccan migration with the Algerian one, we find that Moroccans are located in more than thirty countries (ten of them are European countries) although, until the sixties, the main flows of Moroccan migrants almost exclusively ended in France.

The Moroccan migration in Europe has its roots in three pushing factors: first, the war against Algeria and its independence; secondly, a demographic trend which destabilized the match between population and resources and; thirdly, and most importantly, a European need to build its labour force (Bonnet and Bossard, 1973).

From 1975 onwards, we observe an official interruption caused by stabilization and a search for new European destinations. At the same time, many borders were closed because the needs for a labour force were satisfied. Thus, petroleum producers like Libya and Saudi Arabia discretely attracted new migrants. Facing these new market restrictions, clandestine migrants started to spontaneously depart and, with a growing frequency,

head to Europe again. Spain and Italy became preferred destinations. The consequence was a huge migration flow, especially during the nineties, which has not yet been accurately tabulated (Lopez Garcia, 1993; Bousetta, Gsir and Martiniello, 2005).

It is, of course, possible to explain Moroccan migration in terms of political and economical matters, but according to our hypothesis, this analysis should be enlarged by investigating how media and new technologies affect or shape the social imaginary, values and subsequent migratory intentions. Currently there are 133 satellites delivering 4,665 TV channels and 1,445 radio programmes all over the world.

Along with this fact, a 'migratory culture' is very present in Morocco, as Ennaji and Sadiqi (2007) recognized. This migratory culture has been studied at the level of migratory intentions to more accurately understand how the social imaginary and behaviour are shaped (Sadiqi, 2007; Ureta 2008). We infer that media and new technologies have a major influence on Moroccans' migration intentions. One example of the media's influence is the very well-known Moroccan TV program entitled 'The Stars of Migration' which shows distorted views of reality, spreading huge misinformation. Also during June 2008, the Finnish group Nokia signed an agreement with the Moroccan SNRT (National Radio and Television Society) to broadcast TV programmes through mobile phones. To keep pace, the public (essentially, state) Moroccan television station decided to produce new thematic channels.

On the topic of the Internet, in 2007, the quarterly statistical report by the Moroccan SNRT showed the country had around 400,000 ADSL connections. This makes Morocco the first African country in terms of connections, even higher than South Africa. The growth rate of ADSL connections reached 57.8 percent. Morocco has become an African leader in new technologies and creative proposals concerning communications. For instance, during 2006, Maroc Telecom offered the first "Push-to-Talk" (PTT) service on the continent, which it called *MobiTalkie*. Previously, in 2005, Morocco, followed by Lebanon, sent the most SMS transmissions in the Arab world.

After looking at these facts and figures, it is easy to assume that ICTs are changing many everyday aspects of life, from both individual and collective points of view. Regarding the Arab world, new information technologies and access to satellite channels are changing the way Maghreb families observe traditions like Ramadan. To quote Jankari (2009),

the arrival of the holy month of Ramadan means abstinence from dawn to sunset, with an immoderate use of new technologies and satellite TV channels. One of the key-concept of Islam is the family. Due to the increasing usage of ICT's family relations are changing.

Bourezg (2009) says,

I would also say that the space taken up by computers at home has changed the habits of many families, making individuals more independent and careless about carrying on conversations with each other on a variety of topics [...] many Maghreb wives complain about the reluctance of their spouses to chat, debate and exchange views with them, as they prefer to spend their free time in front of the amazing computer.

On the other hand, Al Gharbi (2009) stresses that, despite the availability of so many TV channels (1500) and Internet penetration,

new information technologies seem to be original opportunities for sociability, where modernity is intertwined with tradition. During the month of Ramadan, Maghreb peoples manipulate these technologies by converting them into new sources of identity, structures and new or modified standards.

It is easy to imagine that ICTs and the media could have an influence in migratory contexts, especially because people can maintain fluent and permanent contact with those who are part of the diaspora or have access to a wide array of information. In contexts where a 'migration culture' exists, these elements could play a very important role in shaping individual or collective intentions and thoughts regarding mobility and migration. This is evident in the fact that the most active ICT users and the most likely to be migrants correspond to the same groups: young people with a variable level of education.

The Impact of ICTs in Migratory Contexts

A two step research methodology was applied. An initial survey was conducted in Morocco during 2008. The main aim was to challenge the results obtained in Latin America regarding the relationship between three variables: education, migratory intentions and entrepreneurship. Firstly, we assumed that students of economics and business at undergraduate levels may be prone to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Secondly, it may also be likely that in countries with a high migration rate, this rela-

tionship could be weak or inconsistent. The hypothesis was that the existence of a massive migratory intention within a social context where migration is a valuable part of the culture could have negative effects on economic performance and on development policies.

The survey was applied to 3 groups of students (45 respondents each group) belonging to three Tangier based institutions: *Abdelmalek Essaadi University*, *INAS* (Institute National de Action Sociale) and the *Ecole Supérieure des Sciences Techniques et de Management*. We developed a test-retest methodology to assure higher reliability of outcomes. The socio-economic background of these students was very broad as we selected these institutions to provide the necessary heterogeneous sample.

The survey was structured into three main parts: education, entrepreneurial spirit and migratory intention. For this paper's purposes, we will only take the two aspects related to entrepreneurial spirit and migratory intention into consideration. It is interesting to note that 93.93 percent of respondents wished to be entrepreneurs in Morocco and create their own businesses there. It is obvious that starting up a business not only demands time, but implies a massive amount of desire, perseverance, determination and financial resources. These qualities are needed to reach short, medium and long-term objectives. What is clear is that starting up a business is mainly a long-term activity.

On the other hand, 75.75 percent of respondents were convinced that they would like to migrate and live abroad because living conditions and opportunities are better in Northern countries. The main pushing factors were: lack of social justice (54.54 percent), economic instability (36.36 percent) and social despondency (24.24 percent). These two linked responses (entrepreneurship and migratory intention) are contradictory, given that migration implies nearly the same elements as entrepreneurship: desire, information, perseverance, determination and financial resources.

After achieving this contradictory, but important outcome, the next step was to study the possible causes behind this "migratory culture". Given the previously stated importance, overwhelming presence and use of ICTs, it was necessary to know to what extent these ICTs and the media are responsible for triggering, and expanding, this huge migratory intention.

A second survey was conducted in 2009, focusing on the same target group. This second survey had a specific objective to test some of the essential questions asked in the first survey. This second survey used "Google

surveys”, where the questionnaire was uploaded in classical Arabic. This method has permitted enlarging the sample to get a larger number of respondents from Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, although this system may present some difficulties and reliability is reduced as individuals may fill out the survey more than once due to technical problems experienced during the process. In total, there were 149 respondents between the ages of 20 and 32, one third of whom were women.

Concerning Internet and mobile phone usage, 81.25 percent of respondents have been using the Internet and mobile phones for at least five years. 43.75 percent of surveyed students responded that they surfed 4 or more hours daily and everyday, whereas 37.5 percent use the Internet between 2–3 hours daily. They access Internet mainly from their homes (68.75 percent) and from cybercafés (12.5 percent). 50 percent start their sessions opening e-mail. This could signify that they do not use the Internet mainly as a working tool, but for leisure. There is another interesting aspect regarding places people connect to the Internet. In the Arab world, especially in the Maghreb, it is very common to see many women accessing the Internet in cybercafés. This may happen because there are not many public places, such as cafeterias, where they can go, as these places are mainly reserved for males. However, they can freely go to these cybercafés and there directly broaden the social and cultural dimensions of their lives, for a brief time escaping certain restrictive atmospheres. This is probably not the cause of the feminization of migration over the past years, but this factor should be taken into consideration to help explain it.

Considering respondents’ Internet habits, 20.83 percent start with Google and 6.25 percent open some kind of social network such as Facebook, Twitter, Fotolog or Hi5. As for the social dimension of blogs, 56.25 percent recognised that they access blogs more or less intensively, whereas the rest did not demonstrate much interest in this kind of activity. 64.58 percent use social networks mainly as channels for keeping in touch with friends and family and for leisure. In contrast, just 35.42 percent responded that these social networks can be very useful to launch social initiatives to fight social problems, to promote dialogue and to improve the fabric of civil society. Concerning chatting, 14.58 percent used these systems frequently to search for potential boyfriends or girlfriends, while 54.16 percent responded that they did it sometimes. 91.66 percent of surveyed students responded that they could not stop using ICTs because they would feel isolated.

Specific questions addressed the influence of ICTs on potential migratory intentions. It was very interesting to see that 39.58 percent said that ICTs do not trigger their desires to migrate because they have information about both good and bad aspects of living abroad. This finding is very interesting if we relate it to the fact that 8.3 percent will migrate permanently, 35.42 percent will migrate temporarily and 37.5 percent have not yet decided, but plan to migrate sooner or latter. To sum up, 81.22 percent had a variable migratory intention. However, 54.16 percent recognised that the Internet would be very useful to get information once they have decided to migrate. These results seem very rational, but although the migration process could appear as a truly rational choice, this is not always true. To be a migrant means, more or less, to be a risk taker. In facing risks and moving forward with determination, rational choice is not always the main driving factor. It is not the poorest individuals who migrate. Those who migrate internationally (excluding smuggling, asylum seekers or refugees), must have financial resources and a certain amount of education. In Algeria, migration of young people is not freely permitted. The easiest way to obtain a visa is through abusive payments to corrupt officers, starting at about 2,500 euro.

“On-site Migration” and Possible Consequences in Less Developed Countries

Over recent decades, social inequality has increased all over the world (Massey 1996) despite the efforts of governments, NGOs or supranational organizations. As Castells (1999) recognized,

the interaction between economic growth and social development in the information age is still more complex [...] the reintegration of social development will not be accomplished by simply relying on unfettered market forces.

As for migration issues, discourses in the nineties dealing with multicultural citizenship and multicultural policies were fashionable. Arriving at the threshold of the 20th century, this trend started to decline due to international worries about security. Regarding international security and taking advantage of this discursive inertia, the events of 9/11 have ‘legitimized’ sceptical visions over the preceding optimistic ones.

After 9/11, as pointed out by Lahav (2007),

the implications of foreign networks were very much discussed in the media, raised the expected populism and led to arguments that liberal democratic governments would be compelled to dramatically rethink their border controls in a global world full of people on [the] move.

Quoting Gerber (2002), “since 9/11, migrants are perceived as potential terrorists”. This means that migration issues have shifted from the domain of ‘low politics’ to those concerns related to national security or ‘high politics’. In addition, as soon as economic indicators start to announce grey horizons, the first argument made by politicians is a very popular one: those aliens are jeopardizing our welfare and security.

In addition, there is a paradox. Article 13/2 of the UN’s Universal Declaration says, “Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country”. It is thus possibly to appreciate that through the Internet, this right is permitted and enhanced. Most people in less-developed countries have the right to ‘migrate’ on-site and a password can act as a temporary visa. We can appreciate here the existence of an overlapped and a contradictory international situation. On one hand globalisation pushes people, physically and imaginary, beyond national boundaries and on the other hand, political restrictions block this historic trend.

Following the discursive thread of the paper, it is important to highlight two essential points: 1) the migratory process is mainly an exercise in imagination and 2) through the migratory process the migrant seeks to increase the choice of opportunities. As for the first point, It is important to understand that the migratory process is mainly an exercise in imagination, where firstly, the ‘would be migrant’ starts to imagine him/herself living a different reality. Imagination is, thus, the main driving factor regarding the migratory process. Given that the existence of this dimension is undeniable, the migratory process is both a mental and a physical phenomenon. For us, the migrant should be studied as an individual who can migrate mentally and physically. For this reason, beyond economic or financial costs, emotional costs are the main burden international migrants face and suffer. Mentally speaking, and regarding ICT usage, this sort of migration could be called *cyber migration* (Zengyan, Yinping and Lim, 2009). This phenomenon represents the largest movement of ‘migrants’, or cyber migrants, in the history of humanity.

Secondly and roughly speaking, those who expect to migrate, or who have a migratory intention, aim to broaden choosing capacities. In less developed countries the range of choices is definitely smaller than in industrialized countries. Hence, by migrating an increase in choosing capacities is 'envisaged'. But If real or physical migration is restricted, an individual may still 'migrate on-site' using Internet for example. This 'on-site migration' typically lasts several hours per day, everyday, according to the survey. This 'on-site migration' temporarily increases choosing possibilities but when the user logs-off, he/she returns to their quotidian realities. This could be called a 'permanent transitional situation', where the user fluctuates from real to imaginary contexts. There are surely negative effects as there is a rising awareness about the negative effects of the Internet on human behaviour and more specifically among young people (Young, S. Kimberly 1998; Simkova and Cincera, 2004; Weiser 2001; Chia Yi Liu and Yang Kuo 2007; Seo, Sun Kang and Yom Cin 2009; Ferraro, Caci, D'amico, Di Blasi 2009).

These two factors may have a direct impact on economic performance. According to Kahneman's work on psychology (1994), attention and effort are two main driving elements of human action. They are a combination of motives, motivations and expectations operating across space and time. The migratory process or an 'on-site migratory process' can be considered as factors that consume time, attention and effort. This combination of attention and effort can be applied for either productive activities or to consolidate the individual migratory process, or even to remain in the 'transitional situation' as well (Ureta, 2007). The more an individual wants to migrate, the more attention and effort he/she applies to reaching that objective, thus, productive activities are not a priority.

Considering 'on-site migration' in these socio-cultural contexts, the impact on economic performance could be the same, having negative consequences for less-developed countries as we might speak of the existence of 'cyber brain-drain' of young and educated people.

This kind of 'cyber brain-drain' could have worse consequences than the normal brain drain, which, on the contrary, can be productive in terms of knowledge transfer, remittances etc. 'Cyber brain-drain' through 'on-site migration' is literally a drain of actual work and intellectual forces within a country, or society, which are badly needed to improve elements linked to efficiency, efficacy and creativeness. This 'on-site migration' could increase episodes of social fracture as well. E-movements promoting ex-

tremist Islamism, found in less-favoured social groups, find an excellent niche for potential members. I suggest that, in this migratory context, if one has the right to migrate on-site, but not the possibility of migration with the same ease, this can cause a number of frustrations. Thus, because of frustrations such as the lack of ability to migrate or to broaden choosing capacity, increased individualism and less social understanding may provoke social fractures.

Conclusions

In the beginning of this chapter, hypothesis regarding the huge impact of ICTs and the media regarding migration issues were presented, but it is necessary to develop a more critical point of view in order to avoid simplistic cause-and-effect approaches.

Although ICTs are a new phenomenon, when discussing 'space of flows' and network societies (Castells 1996) it is necessary to point out that current international migration flows are not a single, unique event in history. In the past, there were certain periods with similar figures and impact (de Haas, 2005; Zlotnik, 1998; Nyberg-Sorensen et al. 2002). Thus, we are not facing unique events today. Communication and social networks always existed. Otherwise, these massive human movements would be impossible.

What is clear is that ICTs and the media have influence regarding social interactions. Initially, it was reasonable to think that images from the North could act as a very strong pulling factor. To conclude this research, we observe that individuals have a natural predisposition to migrate or not. We do not consider asylum seekers or environmental refugees. Surely, international migration (clandestine or regular) has some implicit risks, and these risks are taken into consideration, more or less seriously, by potential migrants. A potential migrant can access some information on the Internet, which may sometimes offer a distorted, overly easy view of the so-called "boat trips". In these cases, of course, we have to consider that the people accessing these technologies do not belong to illiterate groups.

To wrap up, migratory intention does not mean migration. Migratory intention means a mental predisposition, more or less intense, which may,

but not always, lead to migration. There are fewer people who actually migrate than those who would like to. ICTs and the media can help or influence those who want to migrate become those who have a real intention to migrate. For those who have no real intention, these technologies can be good or bad allies. These effects only depend on usage. It is reasonable to think that within those contexts where migratory culture is valued, migratory intention is very high and the use of ICTs and satellite channels is extremely intensive, a number of frustrations can arise. Depending on socio-economic background, these technologies can help individuals channel their intentions or, on the contrary, frustrate their desires. Individuals can have access to the Internet and be in contact with friends abroad, but when they want to put plans into motion, passport issues and severe administrative rules may get in the way if they do not have sufficient financial resources. Before or after experiencing these frustrations, 'on-site migration' can be an exit for many young people.

Media Impact on Development and Illegal Migration in Libya

TAEIB A. EL-BAHLOUL

Introduction

Media are as old as the history of mankind. They played, and still play, an important role in world history. It is generally recognized that media can make things better or make them worse, depending on their orientations and their cultural as well as political background. Whether they are newspaper, magazine, radio, television or other new information technologies, they have the ability to tell the 'truth', reveal ideas and be informative or molest the facts, cover them and give room to rumors, gossip and other means of disinformation (Ibrahim 1980). The question to ask, however, is which of the two types of media's role and impact should we discuss?

Should we focus on the powerful Western media, which have enough margins of freedom, possesses advanced technology and qualified personnel? Should we examine the media sources which, driven by profit-making, represent powerful interest groups and generally view non-Western peoples, such as Arabs, Africans and Muslims, in a rather degrading and abusive manner? Or do the third world media, Libya's included, which lack adequate freedoms, advanced technologies, qualified experts, money, suffer from poor circulation and subject to government control and ownership need examining? Indeed, as a result of their weaknesses, the third world media views the powerful and developed Western countries in a conspiratorial manner that is, in some cases, true.

Due to the emergence of new information technologies, such as the mobile phone and the Internet, some might argue that things look better. The fact remains that, since new technologies are not yet owned or used by everyone, particularly in Third World countries, people still need fair and just media. Balanced and objective views regarding human and international relations is yet to be born in the media.

Putting these issues aside and sticking to the main theme of the workshop, this paper attempts to discuss how the Libyan media dealt with the developmental processes of a number of sectors, such as education, health, housing, agriculture environment and others, with the aim of presenting their impact. Moreover, since illegal migration became a hotly debated issue outside Libya, with its pros and cons, and since migration and development are related and closely linked, the coverage of the Libyan media, or lack of it, will also be examined. This paper aims, in the final stage, to come up with recommendations that might bring objective, balanced views and policies in dealing with the question of media, development and illegal migration.

Libya and the Question of Development

In the early 1950s, Libya was classified as one of the poorest newly independent states, lacking both material resources and qualified peoples. Poverty, diseases, illiteracy and a lack of proper housing were widespread (Khedouri, 1966). Using whatever resources available, the new state embarked upon a modest course of development which was enlarged after the discovery of oil in 1963.

In the field of education, for example, the few schools in the country before independence were renovated and new ones of various types, including one university, were established in many parts of the country. Likewise, a number of projects for city planning, housing, medical centers, roads electricity and agricultural loans were undertaken. International assistance, foreign experts, teachers and doctors were sought. Meanwhile, a few newspapers, a radio station, a television station and a few phone lines were founded, but only in few areas. After the September revolution of 1969, Libya witnessed a radical and extensive course of development that touched all sectors of the economy as well as aspects of life. This course of development was nevertheless, governed by two main factors: oil and nationalistic revolutionary ideology. Billions of dollars were spent on education, agriculture, industry, health, roads, communication, water projects and media (Ministry of information 1995).

Though evaluating this process of development is beyond the intention and scope of this paper, the fact remains that the outcome is mixed

and subject to a hot debate. It can not be denied that, in the field of education, for example, four thousand schools of various types, ten universities and twenty higher education institutions were founded, while thousands students were sent to study abroad for either undergraduate or graduate degrees. Indeed, it should be emphasized that 90 percent of Libyans had some form of education or another, meeting the millennium development goals. The same can be said about other sectors such as health, roads, housing, etc., where certain degrees of success were achieved. In the health sector, many hospitals, medical centers and mobile clinics were established in almost all parts of the country, furnished and provided with medical staff, tools and medicine which were prescribed and given freely to the people.

Moreover, attention was also given to communication and transportation for civilians as well as the military. Thousands of miles of modern roads were paved and built and telephone lines were provided to almost every house in urban areas. Furthermore, the housing sector witnessed an impressive change. Tents, shanty houses as well as old ones disappeared giving way to thousands of new houses and apartment buildings. The Libyan state either built those houses and gave them away to needy people or provided long-term loans at little or no profit. Electricity reached every house and that food was, in large part, subsidized until very recently; only a few items are still subsidized.

Looking at the history of development in Libya and the role played by the Libyan media, one is tempted to believe that the Libyan media, whether it is radio, television, newspapers or other means of information, have never treated the process of development in depth. Rather, their treatment of the subject was descriptive, shallow and followed official lines. The Libyan media occupied themselves with quantity rather than quality and tried to draw an image of grandiosity to the country, its leadership and its governing ideology. Moreover, they have never paid attention to significant issues related to development, such as depth, balance, distribution, continuity, meaning, worthiness, cost, effects and so forth. Corruption, nepotism, regionality, favouritism, bribes, poor planning, execution of projects, bad management, theft and others abound. Fearing, perhaps, that any criticism, even if it were constructive, might play into the hands of the opponents of the revolution. Journalists have found it safer to steer clear of issues that attract the wrath of the government and threaten their own interests.

Libya and the Question of Migration

It is generally known that the issue of migration goes far back in history. Since early days, people used to move from one place to another, with varied motives. Some looked for safety, food or shelter. Others tried to escape wars, harsh environments, social degradation and/or political mistreatments. In other words, people migrated in search of freedom, or driven by the desire to improve their social status and economic well-being (Elhawat, 2007). In the old days, migrants knew no borders; they had neither travel documents nor national identity cards. With the emergence of the national state, however, the situation changed radically. A strong and rich government started to impose restrictions and create obstacles against migrants without paying much attention to their dilemmas.

In regards to Libya, a reading of its history during the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century clearly indicates that it profited from migration. Many Libyans migrated to neighboring regions during Ottoman rule, as well as during the Italian colonial period. They escaped hunger, social conflicts, economic hardships, political abuses and military persecution. Libyans found safe havens in counties such as Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Chad, Sudan, Niger, Nigeria, Syria and Turkey. The majority of those Libyans came back after the country obtained its independence in 1952, but some preferred their newly adopted homelands and remained (Rashed, 2002 and Abolqasim, 1995).

During the decades after independence, Libya ceased to be a migration country as is the case with other North African and sub-Saharan countries. Instead, the country became a destination for migrants, as well as a transit point for migration to Southern Europe (Al-kut, 2007). There are a number of interrelated and interwoven factors that made Libya a destination of migrants, as well as an illegal departure point for migration to Europe.

Geographic Location

Libya is a country that has long borders, estimated at 4400 kilometers, with 6 African countries, such as Tunisia, Algeria, Niger, Sudan, Egypt, and Chad. These border lines run through desert areas and therefore they

are impossible to control without the use of advanced technology. Libya is also located on the Mediterranean sea, with a coastal line of 1770 km, the longest among all the countries on that sea (Sharaf, 1966). Though most of the Libyan population lives in the coastal area, the fact remains that there are areas on the Libyan coast not inhabited and, therefore, form departure points for illegal migration to Europe with the help of organized criminals.

Population Density

Libya is a country with a small population, hardly exceeding 6 million people. These people occupy an area of almost 2 million square kilometers, with an average of three people to each square km. This situation does not allow the inhabitants to control and safeguard their borders. This was demonstrated in 1911 when Italian troops made relatively easy landings on the Libyan coast, but the interior gave them a harder time.

Economic Situation

Though Libya went through difficult times and poverty, hunger and illness were widespread, the discovery of oil in the mid 1960s, and its subsequent export, made radical, social, economic and cultural changes. In a few decades the country was able to achieve the highest standard of living in Africa. It also undertook a number of developmental projects that touched all aspects of life. Yet, since Libya has a small population compared with its neighbors, the need arose for foreign laborers, both legal and illegal. Since the 1970s, the flow of migrants started its incursion into the country and eventually became difficult to control and manage (Elhawat, 2007 and Al Kut, 2007).

Libya's Foreign Policy Orientation

The Libyan state, during 1952–1969, did not play any significant role in regional or international politics and remained, for the most part, in self-seclusion. However, the leaders of the Libyan revolution, who came to power on September 1, 1969, adopted a radical foreign policy. They propagated the views that they are progressive, supported international liberation movements and remained neutral in cold war politics. The most important factor that drove Libyan foreign policy was the call for Arab unity. Libya has tabled a number of various proposals to achieve that goal, but neither one was accepted by the other Arab regimes. During the early 1980s, the Libyan government issued a decree making Libya a country for all Arabs. Accordingly, any Arab was able to become Libyan citizen and be treated equally with Libyans (law number 10/1989). Though the Libyan media praised the event, the fact remains that the Libyan regime might have had other potential factors in mind. Its aims were, perhaps, to put some pressure on other Arab governments to remedy the scarce population. It must be kept in mind that the timing of the decree came after the Libyan government's war with Chad. Nevertheless, the door opened and many Arabs took advantage of the situation to reside in the country.

Moreover, when Libya's relation with the West deteriorated in the mid 1980s, the Libyan leadership adopted a more active role in the Pan-African movement. Having no Arab support in its confrontation with the West, the Libyan government called for activating and reforming the Organization of African Unity. It also carried out an intensive political campaign and was influential in the creation of the African Union 1999/2001. As if that was not enough, it insisted on the creation of the so called "United States of Africa", where peoples, goods and capital can move freely from one country to another and without restrictions. To achieve such goals, the Libyan state mobilized all its efforts.

Libyan officials contacted their African counterparts. Conferences, symposiums and workshops were financed and held in Libya and other African countries to promote the federal idea. The Libyan leader, Moammar Ghadafi, invited many African rulers and influential people to visit Libya and engaged himself in many state visits throughout Africa in order to market his views to the African public as well as to pressure African governments. Moreover, a radio station under the name called *The Voice of*

Africa started broadcasting from Tripoli in Arabic, African languages as well as in English, French and Portuguese with the hope of becoming the daily expression of the Libyan media. Radio stations, newspapers and television promoted the country as the promised land of paradise and its political system as the only one to free and guide Africa to its destiny and solve its problems (*Alshams, Alzahaf Alakhdar, Aljamahiria* and *Alfajr Aljadeed* newspapers). Though reliable studies regarding the effect of *The Voice of Africa Radio*, as well as other organs of Libyan media, are lacking, the large flow of migrants into Libya, which has been estimated at two million, indicates that some influence must have taken place.

Conditions in Neighboring States

With the exception of Tunisia, which witnessed a harsh but relatively stable political regime and an impressive economic progress, all of Libya's neighbors, including Algeria, Niger, Chad, Sudan and Egypt are suffering from political unrest, social conflicts and sharp economic problems. These situations forced many citizens of those countries to migrate to Libya, either in search of jobs or using it as a point of illegal departure to Europe.

Africa's Failed Development

It is generally known that sub-Saharan Africa experienced a number of political and economic systems that did not correspond with peoples' aspirations and hopes after independence. Africa had, in fact, suffered from non-democratic rulers, corruption, poor planning, tribal and social conflicts, foreign loans and foreign interventions. Though nature is harsh and diseases are common, Africa's population shows sharp increases and its economic records indicate extreme poverty and ill-distribution of wealth. Indeed, the search for safety, food, shelter and jobs prompted many African youth to think that migration might solve all, or part, of their problems. Being, perhaps, the weakest circle in the chain and the largest gate from Africa to Europe, migrants flooded Libya illegally. While some wanted to stay in, others hoped to cross the sea to Europe, where European media say conditions are much better.

Migration and its Effects

There is no doubt that the above factors encouraged migrants to come to Libya more than any other North African country. Many studies were undertaken to examine legal and illegal migration to Libya (Al Kut, 1999). They estimate the number of migrants at two million. Though accurate statistics are not available, the whole and complete total might be much larger, since Libyans do not cooperate with their government in registering foreign workers for fear that registration might subject them to penalties or taxation. We should keep in mind, however, that African migrants are willing to take jobs in construction, cleaning, farming, animal grazing, car washing and others which were seen by Libyans as degrading. Meanwhile, the state is going through a process of change from the public sector to a private one. Since migrants' wages are far below the ones received by locals, the private sector has found it profitable to hire migrant workers and lower the costs to do business.

Therefore, the effects of migration are far reaching on all parties concerned, whether directly or indirectly, particularly on the sending ones. The sending African countries, for example, lose unknown numbers of their citizens to the Sahara desert and the Mediterranean sea. Other numbers of migrants, who committed killings, thefts, smuggling and other crimes, are usually given prison sentences of various lengths or, in some cases, death. Furthermore, the sending states, when they become unable to protect the well-being of their citizens, lose national pride as well as the respect of others.

In the case of Libya, which is both a transit and a destination country, the effects of migration are perhaps much worse than other parties concerned. Because migrants are cheap labour, they undertake jobs that some Libyans are willing to accept. They participate in the development process, but, by accepting low wages, they make many Libyans unable to compete. Thus, a large segment, estimated at 30 percent of Libyan workers, became unemployed. Migrants, nevertheless, are not wholly to blame for such a problem. Libyan psychological make-up and the failure of their educational system created gaps in the labor market. The economic impact of migration is not limited to unemployment alone. Since the Libyan government subsidized food, medicine and gasoline, and provided health services and education freely to all residents, one might deduce that a

migrant population one-third the size of the Libyan population must have influenced the availability of goods and services and increased the costs to people and the government.

Furthermore, foreign migrants have upset the social fabric in certain Libyan areas, particularly in the south. Since African borders were not drawn on tribal bases, many tribes such as Tebo and Tawarig were divided between Libya, Chad, Niger and others. Driven by poverty and political unrest in Chad, the Tebo tribe in that country started moving northwards to join a few of their tribesmen in the Libyan city of Kufra. The Libyan tribe of Zaweyya, being the dominant in the region, felt threatened and a conflict started in January 2009, forcing the government to deploy a large force of security police in order to keep the peace. The Libyan media did not talk about this event. Meanwhile, some migrants got married to Libyan women and had children. Yet, when the Ministry of Education started to implement reciprocal policy by imposing fees on non-Libyan students in 2007, Libyan mothers of those students strongly complained and the question was not settled until after the Gaddafi Foundation intervened with the Ministry of Education to postpone the imposition of fees until a legal solution is found (Gaddafi Foundation's Annual Report, 2008).

Reports indicate that illegal migration has also helped the emergence of organized crime in Libya and the development of its tactics. The smuggling of humans and drugs, either through the desert or the Mediterranean sea, has increased (unpublished report of the anti-drug task force 2009). Gangs used four-wheel drive vehicles, small boats, cell phones and other means of information technologies to avoid security personnel and did not hesitate to give bribes and corrupt officials, especially those whose salaries are very low. I was told by one eyewitness that the cost of transporting one migrant from Libya to Europe ranges from one thousand to 3,000 euro, many times the cost of an airline ticket. It is also believed that there is a strong connection between the increase of migrant flows and an increase in the size of drug quantities entering Libya. Reports show that the number of migrants caught smuggling drugs into Libya, and beyond, during the period of 2001–2008, is almost 5,000. This number does not include those who got through (Report of Anti Drug Task Force puts the number of those who caught at about 15 percent). It must also be stated that drug use, as well as drug addictions, were not known in Libya before the mid 1970s. The records of the Drug Rehabilitation Centre in Tripoli city show that 7,315 persons were admitted during the period from 2001

to 2008, and half of this number was infected with AIDS (unpublished and private data from the Rehabilitation Centre, 2008). During my service in Nigeria as a deputy ambassador, I had to facilitate the departure of 132 Nigerian women infected by HIV from the Libyan city of Ghat alone. Since this city has a population of 12,000 and the Nigerian women were caught practicing prostitution, some of their customers were, perhaps, Libyans.

Faced with all these problems together, one might ask how the Libyan media dealt with them, and to what degree were they successful. To answer these questions, it must be pointed out that the Libyan media witnessed a number of developments. As in other third world countries, the media started small and grew over time. There were a few newspapers before independence but no radio or television stations. After independence, a number of newspapers, such as *Albakika*, *Alraaid*, *Al maidan*, *Al balagh*, *Allibi* and others, flourished and radio and television stations were established in the mid 1950s and 1960s. The media, in this early period, suffered from both a lack of advanced technology and qualified people, but they were mostly privately owned and enjoyed some margin of freedom.

After the revolution in 1969, the Libyan media showed some growth since money became available and they attracted some university graduates. Yet, government control became stronger and media were oriented towards propagating the revolutionary ideas. With the announcement of 'the peoples authorities' in 1977, the semi-independent papers vanished and there was nothing else but the achievements of the revolution. It must be said that Libyan media recently had some quantitative growth with the establishment of 6 television stations and 20 radio ones. Though migration is closely related to development, the Libyan media have never treated the issue in depth. There is a fear, perhaps, that a qualified discussion might go against the revolutionary ideas. The failure of the official media to tackle the problems regarding migration, which affected both local development and external policies, is undoubtedly clear. A review of newspapers such *Alshams*, *Al zahfalakhdar*, *Aljamahiriyah* and *Alfajr* revealed no examples of such discussions.

As a result, people, during the last few years, turned to the Internet and satellite television stations. News related to migration problems in Libya and elsewhere became widespread. In the light of this, what are the means and tools which can be adopted by concerned media for the sake of

providing an objective, fair and just treatment to the subject of illegal migration in order to reach well thought out solutions for the interest of all parties concerned?

Conclusions

I have several recommendations for the Algerian media and the wider global community to better handle the migration issue. First, the media has to be given some margin of freedom. They should separate themselves from the political ideologies of the government. They should also strive to represent the hopes and aspirations, as well as the interests, of the people at large. Libyan mass media needs to be encouraged, particularly *The Voice of Africa Radio Station*, to discuss the issues related to illegal migration openly and to tell the truth about work conditions and the dangers associated with migration.

Since Libya invested in a large program of investment, we suggest that Europe follow suit, provided the African countries offer some facilities and ease restrictions. Libya and the EU both have money and technology, therefore they should find a formula for joint radio programs. These programs must be free from value judgements, jargon and stereotyping. The European Union should provide training and technology for the Libyan police force. The two sides should adopt lines of cooperation rather than confrontation and pressure. The EU should consider the involvement of NGOs in providing assistance to the African people. In the case of Libya, The Gaddafi Foundation has already taken the lead in providing many services to sub-Saharanans. Since illegal migration was closely connected to drugs, money laundering, corruption and organized crime, Libya and the EU should enforce their laws and not tolerate any violation. Most important of all, illegal migrants' rights must be respected and migrants should be treated in the most humane fashion at all times.

Europe

Informative Treatment of Immigration and Intercultural Dynamics of Spanish Mass Media

NICOLÁS LORITE

Introduction: Socio-Informative Contextualisation

Do Spanish media play an integrative role or do they lean towards discriminatory models? Do they foment miscegenation? Do they produce racist effects? Do they treat immigration in a good or bad way? Do they tackle migratory realities with informative, quality criteria or do they produce and reproduce sensational discourses? Do they dynamise interculturality or only intraculturality? This text tries to answer these questions by referring to the migratory processes and socio-communicative transformations which Spanish society has undergone since the middle of the '90s.¹

The function of the media, the ones reaching the whole Spanish state as well as the ones for specific regions such as Catalonia, Madrid, the Basque Country, Andalusia, Valence or Galicia, has gradually grown along with the increase of foreign populations in Spain. Specifically speaking, in 2008 (INE, 2008) 11.3 percent of the registered population (5,220,600 inhabitants) came from other countries. Just a few years earlier, in the middle of the '90s, there was hardly any immigrant population in Spain. In 1996, only 1.37 percent of the total registered population, specifically 542,314 inhabitants, were foreign. The interest in coming to Spain was generally limited to summer tourism. During the vacation months, millions of people arrived only as tourists. Tourists continue to arrive to this day. However, an important part of this tourist collective stayed as residents in Spain, especially retired persons. This case applies to the German and English residents on the Balearic Islands or in Andalusia.

1 From research done at MIGRACOM: Observatorio y Grupo de Investigación en Migración y Comunicación, Universitat Autònoma of Barcelona. Available at: <www.migracom.com>.

In parallel, and since the second half of the '90s, a dramatic demographic change has occurred, resulting from important economic development in the country and the consequential increase of labour demands which are not covered by the indigenous population. Spanish birth rates reached the lowest global level during the '90s. The active population, especially the scarce new, junior labourers, does not show any interest in the available jobs. It is a new, better-prepared and educated generation compared to the previous one, but also more bourgeois, which aspires to enter into qualified work. The non-qualified jobs accept foreign labour, prevalingly African and Latin-American. These jobs are predominantly from economic sectors such as agriculture, construction or services. Bordering countries such as Morocco, big contingencies of the Latin-American population (prevalingly from countries such as Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia and Argentina) and Eastern European countries such as Russia and Romania show interest in covering such labour demands. This labour deficit signals that Spain transformed from being a country sending emigrants to being a country receiving immigrants.

During the '60s and '70s, Spain was an emigration country. An important part of the Spanish population emigrated towards countries such as Germany and France. In fact, this collective once took the same low-qualified employment which is now being accepted by the immigrant population in Spain. During these decades, important internal migrations within the country also took place. The Spanish population tends to concentrate in specific metropolitan centres such as Barcelona and Madrid. This is a result of the economical development policies of the 1960s, which are based on a model of growth which is concentrated in few industrial and urban centres or poles.

Our concern here is to understand how the media tackle the migratory flows towards Spain. We will examine the processes of mediatised intercultural dynamisation by looking at certain topics such as the social media production of visual, audio and textual discourses. In order to identify the link between the communicative social dynamics and the media we need to know whether the information about immigration which is disseminated by the main Spanish media (press, radio and television) is the most adequate to boost respect for diversity and foster active intercultural communication between the native and immigrant populations. It is of interest to know whether the media shows inter and/or multiculturalism and whether we consider ourselves to be socio-communicative

researchers of the social reality. The fundamental thing about this sociological media analysis is to be able to adequately differentiate between our subjective positioning (ideological, political and cultural) and the objective media analysis. The interpretative subjectivity of society should not condition the objective and scientific methodology of the analysis which is applied in order to analyse the media's treatment. This objective mediatisation needs to be understood, taking into account the maximum number of points of view which are drawn from broadcasting, production and reception of media discourses.

We need to know which contexts about migratory processes are spread by the media to the varied population and understand how these messages are produced by private or public media enterprises. This will lead us to analyse textual, audible and visual languages, usually articulated by the media, first from an objective point of view regarding the messages they disseminate; from a second point of view regarding the structures, roles and functions of media production; and from a third point of view which covers the study of the recipients' answers and perceptions to the messages.

This social media analysis of migratory reality should be obtained from both formative and informative aspects. This means we need to differentiate between where the informative role starts and where the formative role of the mediatised discourses finish. Additionally, models of research-action and applied audiovisual research need to be taken as a reference.

In Spain, and, more concretely, in certain regions (also called autonomous regions or countries, according to the political and terminology) such as Catalonia, communicative, cultural and linguistic policies have been used since the 1970s which should encourage an active and normalising intercultural communication between the autochthonous and the immigrant population. The same has been done regarding internal migrations in order to avoid cultural conflicts between the Andalusian population which emigrated to Catalonia during the '60s and the '70s and the Catalanian, autochthonous one. From the middle of the '90s on, but particularly since 2000, identical processes of mediatised intercultural dynamisation between exterior immigration and the autochthonous population have been practised. Social, institutional and political organizations seek to make the media not only inform, but also form a tolerant behaviour towards diversity. These processes of mediatised dynamisation primarily

emerge from the connection between political, journalistic and university vertexes. Integration policies which are articulated by entities such as the General Direction for the Integration of Immigrants (Secretariat of State of Immigration and Emigration, Spanish Observatory of Racism and Xenophobia, Ministry of Labour and Immigration of the Spanish government) take the important role of the media as an integrator into account and try to 'negotiate' certain political-communicative frames of conduct with those responsible.

This means that it is not enough to understand the dynamising processes of the media, but that it is important to start from a frame of recommendations which different professionals (journalists, administration technicians, researchers, etc.) have agreed on in order to foster interculturality.² The political and media vertexes are connected with the educational one. Certain pedagogical university settings, especially the ones committed to socio-demographic change, try to adapt research to teaching and also to provide future communicators with more adequate theoretical and professional tools, enabling them to produce contrasted and objective quality discourses. This helps bring about respectful socio-cultural relations with diversity and avoid racism and xenophobia. Research observatories and groups on immigration and communication such as MIGRACOM have promoted this tripartite connection between the media, politics and education since the middle of the 1990s. This university research group has been entrusted by the government, specifically by the Department of Social Welfare of the Generalitat of Catalonia, with conducting an initial study called *Treatment of non-communitarian immigration in Catalonia*. Both these environments are linked with the media. In 1995, the government of the Generalitat of Catalonia, the main social media and the Association of Journalists of Catalonia (collegiate organ of journalists) signed the "Agreement on the Protection of Ethnic Minorities and their Cultures". On 15th of October 1996, a key moment of this tripartite link between politics, media and university took place at the headquarters of the Association of Journalists of Catalonia. On this day, the conclusions of the study on the treatment of migration were presented. The results were discussed by the researchers, journalists, administration technicians, politi-

2 See "Guía de recomendaciones sobre el tratamiento informativo de la inmigración" of OBERAXE, Ministerio de Trabajo e Inmigración. Available at: <www.oberaxe.es/files/datos/47d1394b65cc8/GUIA%20MEDIOS%20ELECTRONICANIPO.pdf>.

cians, teachers and responsible NGOs and, starting from there, they designed a more adequate and quality model of treatment. This encounter demonstrates the potential results of a research conducted within the university arena, making use of scientific and objective methods and methodologies. It also serves as support for the launch of a *Manual of Style on the Treatment of Immigration and Ethnic Minorities*, which is the first in Spain and one of the first in Europe.

This manual gathers various fundamental recommendations to carry out a journalistic, as well as informative, and pedagogical production that is adequate and respectful towards diversity and minorities. One of the key recommendations is the denomination of immigrants. Often, they are identified differently than the autochthonous population in order to negatively discriminate the immigrant population. The ideal thing to do is to apply the same identification, as personalised as possible, to all persons on whom the media turns their spotlight. The ideal procedure is to use the name and surname for all protagonists of the news. It is important to avoid denominating immigrants with expressions such as “illegal” or “undocumented” since this causes the division between legal as positive and illegal as negative. The manual also recommends contrasting informative sources, in other words, making sure that the immigrants manifest their opinions in the same way the sources of civil society or official sources do. In general, the autochthonous civil society speaks for the immigrants. It also recommends not disseminating images of injured or dead immigrants. Their broadcasting dramatise the migratory process and causes negative stereotypes.

This frame of recommendations is a fundamental tool in understanding the most adequate approaches, but it also serves as a comparative model. In other words, it allows ascertaining the variations of immigrant treatment in the media through different chronological observations. This interaction allows us to evaluate and update the recommendations and socio-communicative policies that define them.

Theoretical and Methodological References

Before we present data regarding the media treatment of immigration in Spain and its dynamising intercultural function, we shall consider some theoretical and methodological premises. These pursue a basic objective: avoiding subjective interpretations of reality. Analysing them should go beyond an essay or a subjective and speculative vision, which is generally connected to the personal, biased and ideological vision of events in the news. We must avoid subjective perceptions, which are often gained through daily consumption of media from the sofa, predominantly during our nocturnal leisure. This is even more important if this subjective observation creates a standard opinion of social reference.

First of all, the concept of media treatment needs to be delimited. Not everyone interprets the same media treatment of reality the same way. What is positive for some people may be negative for other people. Therefore, we approach objectivity if this concept is the result of a broad socio-communicative process of informative mediatisation, i.e., if we deduct the predominant socio-cultural values of those involved with constructing the news and the different subjective interpretations of the audience from the plural socio-cultural perception of textual, radio and television discourses from the sum of professional criteria applied during media production routines with ethical-journalistic rules.

The concept of media treatment needs to be as universal as possible. Universality allows us to extrapolate results and to homogenize to the maximum different interpretations which can result from the same reported reality (García Ferrando, Ibáñez y Alvira, 1998). Above all, it is important to know which socio-journalistic references we use in order to evaluate the good or bad media treatment of reality, which is associated with journalistic ethics and the dynamising intercultural criteria on which a civil society has reached a consensus.

An objective concept of media treatment starts from the consideration that immigrants, or any social collective, are adequately treated in the media when information is contrasted, when they decline opinions in all implied sources of the news and when the maximum number of visual, audible and textual viewpoints of the mediatised reality are taken into account in order to finalise this objective evaluation. This means that the good treatment of immigrants in the media does not only entail informing about their realities

with a positive, paternal, gentle or festive focus. It also implies ensuring that any event related to their daily realities will be treated objectively, making varied use of informative sources and taking into account audio and/or audible and textual viewpoints. We must always be aware that this production is conditioned by routines and that the reception of the disseminated information is plural and can be interpreted in many ways depending on the subjective and objective perceptions and the socio-cultural models of reference of the readers and spectators of the media (Lorite, 2004).

The meaning that we ascribe to media treatment needs to go along with a research method of reference. It is convenient to draw upon contrasted methods. The scientific method continues to be the most adequate one to extract an evaluation of the media treatment that is as objective as possible. In spite of its limitations, this way of studying the mediated reality allows critics and non-critics to best avoid personal speculation, extrapolated and totalitarian subjectivities and even anti-mediatic visions. It is convenient to start from a hypothesis framework and from a quali-quantitative, experimented and previously contrasted methodology, which allows validating in the most scientific way a priori questions (Lorite, 2005).

It is also convenient to specify the pedagogical, social and professional objectives of this research process. It is important to be clear on how academic research interacts with civil society and on how we use the results to incorporate them into the pedagogy of qualitative journalism at the university and in the educational area in general. This leads us to examine the socio-pedagogical functions of our research model, specifically, whether we research only from a theoretical-academic perspective or from the nexus of academia and pragmatics. In order to put into practice a socio-communicative pedagogy that is consistent with the greatest correspondence between media reality and social reality, we need to understand the media treatment of migratory processes. This starts with models of research-action and applied research observing, through qualitative and quantitative methodologies, the methods used for producing news. This means that the analysis of radio and television's influence is based on the content of the messages as well as the concepts dealt with and on the language articulated during the production and editing of the textual, visual and audible media discourses.

Likewise, the research conclusions and the framework of alternative propositions are edited textually but they are also published audio-visually. It is about using an applied audio-visual research method that is able to analyse audio-visual production with the concepts of audiovisual

language and that ends with conclusions and audiovisual alternatives³ as well. We must not forget that this model of research-action and applied research, which is particularly interested in a pedagogy of quality information on migrations, is common in societies with continuous socio-mediatic transformations. Today's theoretical and methodological reference is likely to be useless tomorrow. The means, as well as society, change. This implies that the concepts of reference need to be updated and there need to be both static and changing units of analysis. The static unit allows comparing different periods, while the changing unit needs constant updating.

The static unit is given in spacial-temporal parameters, e.g., the time television channels spend on a piece of information in the total structure of a news program. The changing unit will have to adapt to social changes. Analysis of the content can vary along with society as well as the transformation of technology and computer science regarding the production and reception of information. Producing news for traditional television is not the same as producing it for cable or interactive internet television. This unit of analysis must also alleviate the problems caused by news reference, i.e., the media unit is formulated as a universal unit of analysis in order to carry out an objective analysis of content. This criterion tries to solve deficiencies when using the concept of news pieces as units of analysis.

Often, we evaluate the media treatment of immigration from samples of news that are not very homogeneous. News is not always news and not all news disseminated by the media is news. Neither is the news in written media equal to that of audiovisual media. A quantitative analysis that evaluates tendencies in media treatment of immigration must establish a media unit that is capable of incorporating criteria like news-worthiness, topicality and instantaneousness peculiar to the meaning of the news (Rodrigo, 1989 y van Dick) as well as other media typologies that are less informative such as reports or interviews.

Among the fundamental concepts used to (as objectively as possible) evaluate the media treatment of immigration, its uses and socio-communicative and intercultural acquirement, we find the concepts of mediatised

3 This is how MIGRACOM, in 2002, conducted the research on *Media treatment of immigration in Spain (Tratamiento informativo de la inmigración en España)* (Lorite, 2004) as well as the 2005 analysis done for the Mesa per la Diversitat a l'Audiovisual del Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya, when studying the television treatment of the "Jump of the fences in Ceuta and Melilla" (Bertran et al., 2006).

intercultural dynamisation and value of audible and visual levels. As far as the mediated intercultural dynamisation is concerned, it is important to define the criteria that can adequately measure the levels of interpersonal, intergroup, active and mechanical communication which transmit the disseminated content through the media (Lorite, 1992). The social dynamisation produced by the reception of disseminated content through the media is interpersonal if the individual reception of a media unit entails its subsequent communication to another individual. It is intergroup if this disseminating extra-mediatic network expands to the closest groups of reference during their daily relations. It is an interpersonal and mechanical intergroup communication if it does not go beyond this routine verbal and non-verbal communicative process. It is active if its personal and/or intergroup transmission brings about the personal and social reaction of individuals and/or groups, which suggests adapting the treatment to interpersonal communication models. Therefore, the media unit can produce, on one hand, active and integrative processes of intercultural dynamisation, capable of causing miscegenation of society, or, on the other hand, processes of racist, xenophobe and discriminatory dynamisation.

Regarding the value of visual and audible levels, we need to take into account that the visual compositions are polysemous. In order to understand their value, we need to add different meanings that are ascribed to the mentioned frame of realities, including production, publication and reception of discourses. A first set of concepts is given by the production of media discourses. These concepts are usually used by cameramen, photographers, producers, publishers, journalists and a whole range of professionals that intervene in the elaboration of the media unit. A second set of meanings are formulated based on the broadcasting or disseminated content by the media, which are constructed in advance by publication or editing. For its analysis, a whole range of concepts are used, such as shot, framing, editing, light, colour, etc., which are unique to photographic, television and film language. Finally, a third set of meanings are applied by the various recipients of multicultural society, starting from their different perceptions which are related to their ideologies, cultures and religions as well as various ways of understanding the mediation of social reality and its interpersonal and intergroup relations.

Starting from the combination of the different executed analyses regarding production, broadcast and reception, we can obtain objective references and multivariable quantitative and/or typological qualitative indicators,

which allow objectively specifying whether the perspectives media apply to immigration are uni-polar, bi-polar or multi-polar, whether they are adequate or inadequate and whether they are of quality or not.

The Different Media Perspectives

The major Spanish national and regional media have tended to show migratory processes from different perspectives in each chronological⁴ period. In 1996, the media perspective was bi-polar. It was a period in which there was hardly any immigrant population in Spain (around 1 percent of the total population) and the sparse news on the immigrant collective was generally positive. In 2000 and 2006 the perspective tended to be uni-polar. During these periods, massive arrivals of immigrant population looking for 'a better life' took place. Information focused on the entry or the intent to enter of the immigrant population, which is often labelled with expressions such as 'waves' or 'avalanches'. This uni-polar perspective is considered to be quite Eurocentric and alarmist. The journalistic language of the media coverage of the arrivals is even often militaristic. They are called an 'assault' or 'invasion'. This treatment is related to the origin of the information. In general, it is the army or the police who provide news agencies with information and details regarding events, which reach the editorial departments. This is due to the fact that the security forces of the state are usually the ones, and sometimes the only ones, who have this exclusive information at their disposal.

The icon of this migratory process is the *patera*, an unseaworthy boat of limited size in which roughly ten people try to cross the Atlantic between northern Africa and the Andalusian beaches in southern Spain. A more current icon is the *cayuco*. It is a slightly bigger boat than the *patera*. Usually, around 50 people travel in them for several days, sailing between Senegal and the Canary Islands.

What catches our attention about this uni-polar perspective is its distortion of the migratory reality. It only reflects a minimal part of the mi-

4 This is according to the studies that have been carried out by MIGRACOM on the media treatment of immigration in Spain since 1996.

gratory flows towards the country. It is even quite an oblique perspective since it only shows those who arrive in a dramatic way. The media do not report on the massive arrivals which occur by plane. The majority of foreign immigrants enter through the airports, mainly Barajas in Madrid, the capital of Spain. Only about 5 percent enter in *pateras* or *cayucos*. However, entry by plane is not news-worthy since it seems too normal. There are no dead or injured people. There are not even dramatic flights which would catch the attention of journalists and interest an audience which is more and more thirsty for morbid information on this and other topics.

A uni-polar period is followed by a multi-polar one. The uni-polar perspectives of 2000 and 2006 that focused on *pateras* and *cayucos* were succeeded by the multipolar perspectives of 2002 and 2007. The dramatic arrivals by boats lost visibility. The media reiteration dilutes the interest of the journalists and the audience for the same matter. This is a common process of journalistic production. Therefore, information tends to concentrate on other novel topics, for example, the interest or simple curiosity in whether immigrants can settle down in a racist and xenophobe country like Spain. This focus can be as morbid as those looking at dangerous arrivals. What predominates is a larger and multi-polar perspective on the migratory reality that says “here” or of the “they are among us”, shown from political, social and labour contexts.

In 2008, Spain from bi and multi-polar perspectives of the previous years to a tri-polar perspective. This perspective concentrates on three vertices: politics, conflicts and arrivals. A first vertex or pole of topicality on immigration corresponds to the political arena with topics such as the regularisation of migratory flows conditioned by the economic crisis, immigrant unemployment and the necessary adjustments that allow the immigrant labour force to relocate to other economical sectors without causing problems to the social system. An important part of the male immigrant population managed found work in the construction sector but they became redundant due to the crisis and the explosion of the ‘real-estate bubble’. The urgency of re-incorporating this unemployed immigrant labour force concerns those in politics, labour unions and business. They affirm that if this problem is not soon eradicated it can cause delinquency and poverty.

A second media pole or vertex of 2008 corresponds to conflicts. The immigrant population is often linked with criminal (related to Eastern, Russian, Latin or Chinese gangs) and violent acts, such as domestic and

social violence. The media tends to focus on these stories whether the immigrants are the aggressors, the victims or both an Ecuadorian man may kill a Spanish woman, or a Spanish woman may kill an Ecuadorian man or a violent act may occur between two Ecuadorians. This story commands attention because it is about an Ecuadorian man. That makes it news-worthy. The origin of a person decides how important a criminal act is to the media. If the violent act were between two Spaniards, it probably wouldn't stand out that much. It's not a person with a name and surname who dies, but it is an Ecuadorian who assaults, passes away, commits a criminal offence or is killed or attacked.

In 2008, the third pole or vertex of the tri-polar perspective corresponds to the 'traditional' topic of arrivals. The arrivals of immigrants by *patera* or *cayuco* to the Spanish coasts continue to captivate the news, even if this happens on a smaller scale compared to previous years. The treatment of 'us' towards the 'others' is something that has been present since the first media coverage regarding this matter. We continue to consider this reality from an excessively Eurocentric journalistic perspective. Spanish media show contemporary migrations as an immigratory process, a process of arrival. It is hardly ever considered as emigratory (departing their home countries) or, even less, migratory (without arrival or departure). The media does not examine the immigration process by looking at the area or country of departure and the, predominantly, economic causes which motivate emigration to Spain. It also isn't looked at as a fluctuating or migrating process. The arrivals are always alarming because the population that arrives is seen as invaders. The arrival is not viewed as the arrival of a migrant collective in search of a better life wherever they may find it.

Other information remains insignificant and does not acquire notoriety because it doesn't fit into the reductionist media tri-polarity. Integration on its own is not news. It becomes news-worthy if some aspect related to the conflict stands out, especially when related to racist and xenophobic violence. In-depth debates on the topic are not news-worthy. This fundamental aspect of the processes of intercultural dynamisation reaches notoriety only if there is a strong confrontation between immigrants and racist groups which ends, most strikingly, with dead people and images of blood.

The tri-polar perspective occurs, and is redefined in the media, particularly in daily production routines. The media rarely use quality information criteria, such as contrasting sources, so sensitivity to diversity suffers. Immigrants are not the protagonists the news portrays. The

connection of information with reality is minimal. Talking about the 'others' continues to be a routine activity, elaborated in the multiple editorial departments which inform on a daily basis and which are limited by the usual spatial-temporal variables that the new means of communication and information on the internet have failed to change. Reality is told from the perspective of the productive dynamics of the media, therefore, reality is not mediated by the media. It only represents reality in a biased way.

In any case, we need to underline that there is an interest among Spanish journalists to treat immigration adequately. Editorial departments try to apply the media recommendations and not to use inadequate expressions or show images of dead or injured immigrants. But all media break with this respectful tendency towards diversity when presented with shocking news regarding the death of immigrants trying to reach the Spanish coasts. Showing them in dramatic situations and calling them 'undocumented' because they arrive without proper identification papers has informative value. This is greater if the autochthonous' value over immigrants rises in moments in which the mediation of Euro-nationalism in Spain is fostered by the media. A protectionist treatment of European values of closed boundaries emerged as a consequence of the global economic crisis. This means that quality media treatment seems to increase along with sensationalist media treatment. Both are localised in each one of the three vertexes of the tri-polar perspective (politics, conflicts and arrivals). All the media treat immigration in a good or bad way in each of the approached matters.

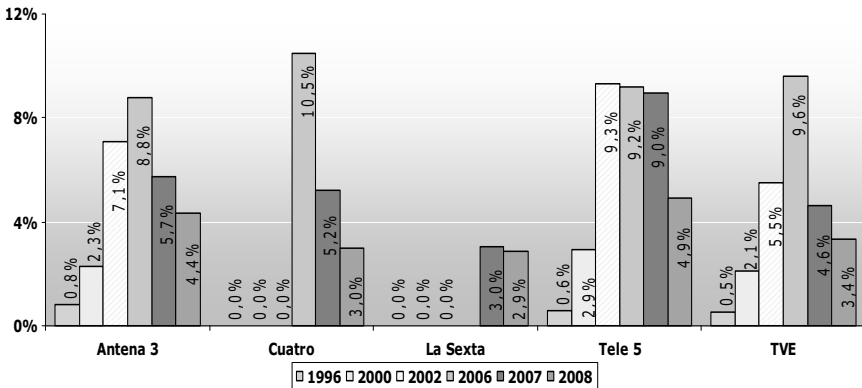
Media Presence

One way of understanding the real dimensions of the Spanish media's immigration treatment is by knowing the media presence or the time that radio and television dedicate to immigration in their daily news programs. When analysing this media presence of immigration in the five television channels which cover the entire Spanish state (*TVE*, public television and *Antena3*, *Tele5*, *Cuatro* and *La Sexta*, private television), we can see that, in 2008, the late night news, broadcast between 20:30 and 22:00, have dedicated 4.5 percent of their time to deal with the different topics of the tri-

polar perspective (politics, conflicts, arrivals). We can observe a similar proportion when it comes to the regional and autonomic television channels (*TV3* in Catalonia, *Canal Sur* in Andalusia, *Tele Madrid* in Madrid, *Canal 9* in Valence, *ETB-1* in the Basque Country y *TVG* in Galicia, all public): 4.2 percent. The same happens with the radio stations that broadcast into the whole Spanish state (*Cadena SER*, *COPE*, *Onda Cero* private and *RNE-1* public): the proportion is 4.1 percent.

If we take the same period of the previous years⁵ as a reference, we can draw the conclusion that the immigration presence in audiovisual media increased considerably from 1996 to 2006. From 2007 to 2008, a significant decrease occurred, as the following graph shows.

Graphic nº 1. Immigration presence in audiovisual media 1996–2008.



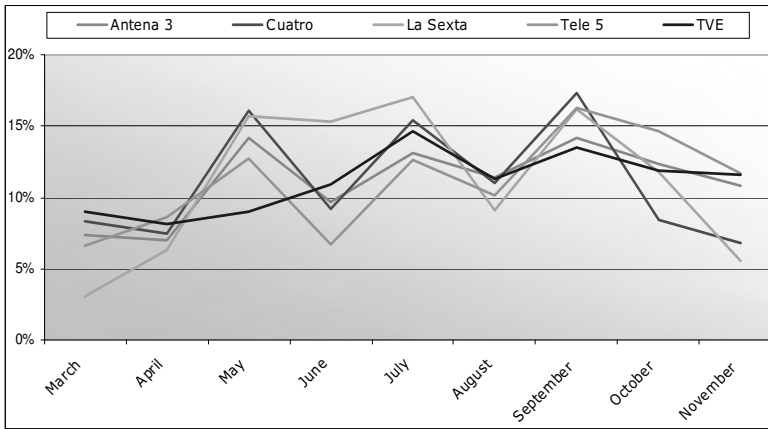
1. Source: *Tratamiento informativo de la inmigración en España, año 2008*, MIGRACOM-UAB, Dirección General de Integración de los Inmigrantes, Observatorio del Racismo y la Xenofobia, Secretaría de Inmigración y Emigración, Ministerio de Trabajo e Inmigración.
2. *Cuatro* and *La Sexta* give a margin of 0,0% because they did not exist during these dates.

This interest in immigration fluctuates among the years. In 2008, interest in topics regarding immigration increased during July and September and

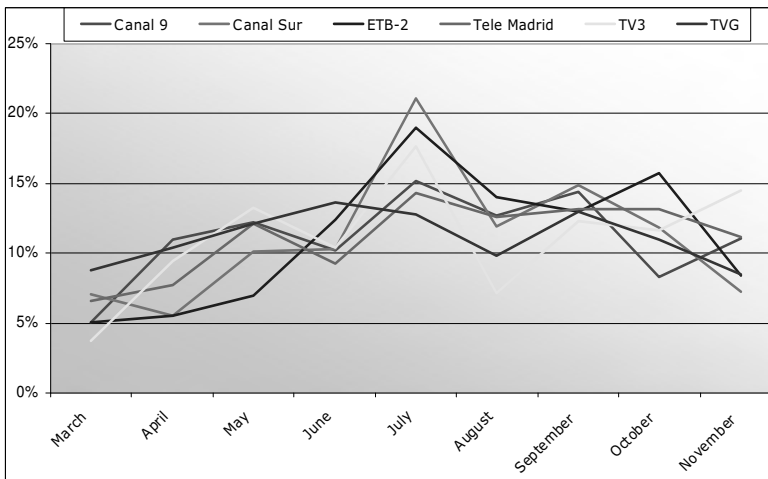
5. Identical sampling of evening/night radio and television news programs, specifically, 2008 (from 28th of April to 1st of June), 2007 (from 30th of April to 3rd of June), 2006 (from 1st of May to 4th of June), 2002 (from 27th of May to 16th of June), 2000 (from 22nd of May to 19th of June) and 1996 (from 6th of May to 2nd of June).

decreased during March and April and again during October and November. This seems to be connected with changes in media production which are associated with political and social activity.

Graphic nº 2. Immigration fluctuation, TV channels.



Graphic nº 3. Immigration fluctuation, TV channels.



Source: *Tratamiento informativo de la inmigración en España, año 2008*, MIGRACOM-UAB, Dirección General de Integración de los Inmigrantes, Observatorio del Racismo y la Xenofobia, Secretaria de Inmigración y Emigración, Ministerio de Trabajo e Inmigración.

In general, television channels (*TVE, Antena3, Tele5, Cuatro and La Sexta*) dedicate one out of four minutes of their political perspectives on immigration to collecting proposals from political parties on migratory facts. If, to these themes, we add political performances on immigration matters in the European Union, or in certain European countries such as France and Italy, the proportion is almost three out of four minutes. This means that the treatment of immigration is concentrated almost exclusively on these Eurocentric perspectives. It leaves out, or hardly tackles, matters that are important to immigrant collectives such as political agreements with their countries of origin in order to solve the problem of departures without proper identification papers.

These aspects do not acquire the appropriate relevance when countries sending immigrants have something to say regarding the matter. The 'here' is more relevant than the 'there'. The Spanish media tend to cover immigration from inside the borders, borders which do not only encompass the Spanish territory but also Europe. Often, they pit Europe and the Europeans against the non-European immigrants.

Three out of ten minutes (30.9 percent) of the total coverage on immigration during the state-owned television channels' evening or late night news programs is assigned to show criminal acts in which the immigrant population appears to be involved. What catches our attention is that in the news where immigrants are at the vertex of the conflict, they are treated as criminals, aggressors or murderers rather than as people who someone has committed a crime against, attacked or murdered. In any case, good news is not news-worthy. Therefore, the normalising perspective on this matter is hardly mentioned. The successful political measures with immigrant organisations that attempt to alleviate and eradicate racist and xenophobe outbreaks are not news-worthy.

We said before that, in 2008, one of the three media vertexes of the tri-polar perspective on immigration in Spanish media was the 'classical' topic of the arrivals: 32.5 percent of immigration information in the general television channels (*TVE, Antena3, Tele5, Cuatro and La Sexta*), 44.7 percent in autonomous television channels (*TV3* in Catalonia, *Canal Sur* in Andalusia, *Tele Madrid* in Madrid, *Canal 9* in Valence, *ETB-1* in the Basque Country and *TVG* in Galicia), and 35.3 percent in general radio stations (*SER, COPE, Onda Cero* and *RNE*).

The arrivals are not associated with airports. They continue to be associated with the sea. Only 10 information units of general television

channels, out of 233 that deal with the arrivals, are assigned to inform on the immigrant population which enters the Spanish state by plane. This means that out of the three hours and 51 minutes assigned to the arrivals, in total, only 13 minutes and 58 seconds are assigned to inform about the aerial way of entrance into the Spanish territory, which, as has been previously demonstrated, is the most common means of arrival for immigrants.

Good news about the normal integration process of immigrant populations into Spanish society is not news-worthy either. The little time radio and television news programs assign to topics directly related to the integration of immigrants (3.1 percent in general television channels, 6.2 percent in autonomous television channels and 5.5 percent in general radio stations) is used to present cases in which the immigrants themselves or representatives of their organisations explain their integration processes into Spanish society. From an integrative perspective, some cases show the receiving society or its organisations working in favour of immigrants. Likewise, some information regarding integration policies is given, but like the previous percentages, these are also insignificant given the social interest for this matter.

The media are hardly interested in other themes related to the integration process of the immigrant group into the receiving community. Topics rarely covered include family reunification, adaptation, incorporation of immigrants into the autochthonous customs, linguistic standardisation (especially in regions such as the Catalanian or Basque one), cooperation networks between immigrants, incorporation and adaptation of the immigrants into economic dynamics and a number of other themes along these lines. The media inform about the drama of arrival but do not perform a formative role in these integrative processes.

The Roquetas Case⁶

In order to avoid a rise of racism in Spain, the media have to adequately cover topics related to conflicts between the immigrant and autochthonous populations. In 2008, it was on precisely this matter that Spanish audiovisual media, radio as well as television, dedicated most of their time. It is about the case of the “200 housings” in Roquetas de Mar.

On 7th of September 2008, a young Senegalese immigrant (the expression Senegalese is applied in almost every report), called Ousman Kote (from the journalist voice-overs since his name has never appeared in written form), was murdered while trying to mediate a fight in the outlying neighbourhood of the “200 housings” of Roquetas de Mar, a city in the province of Almeria, which is situated in the autonomous region of Andalusia, in southern Spain. The murder provoked an immediate response from his comrades, also of African origin, who have burnt down various properties, vehicles and three housings which belonged to the alleged aggressor. In the beginning, the media linked the death with alleged drug trafficking or score settling, suppositions which made the comrades of the victim even more angry because they didn't consider themselves participants in this social condition.

The alleged aggressor, who was called “gipsy” by the victim's comrades, escaped from the place to hide in a country house near Almeria city, where he was arrested some days later. The supposition that he was gipsy created a feeling of vengeance towards this whole collective. Due to the fear of possible repercussions, loads of families of this ethnic group left Roquetas. After the first night of clashes, a large group of civil guard riot police arrived at the scene and stayed there for several days. The media treatment given to this case can be observed starting from different criteria: a fundamental one is the denomination of the victim. The media identify him as a “Senegalese immigrant”, a “young Senegalese” or simply as a “Senegalese”. It is on only a few occasions that his name and surname are used to describe him. Since the television channels had no access to first-

6 This case has been extracted from the report “Media treatment of immigration in Spain, 2008” carried out at MIGRACOM-UAB for the Dirección General de Integración de los Inmigrantes, Secretaría de Estado de Inmigración y Emigración, Ministerio de Trabajo e Inmigración.

hand images of the conflict, they documented it with videos of low quality provided by amateur witnesses from the neighbourhood, eager to be on television. The amateur cameramen tended to focus on the conflict and, particularly, shocking details such as the fires. These dark, nocturnal images dramatise the conflict. Their darkness is moving and it over-emphasises the violence. They link immigration and the immigrants to these violent attitudes, symbolised by the fire, and they incite the autochthonous community to stick to the racist and xenophobe stereotype of needing to watch this 'other' who could burn them down.

The manuals of style recommend not using private images of the protagonists of news reports unless they authorise it. In the following image, we can see that the victim was treated in that inadequate way. The man appeared on all television channels with a naked torso, lying relaxed in what we assume is his bed. It is questionable whether the victim would have allowed this image of himself to appear in the Spanish news programs. It is further questionable if the usual protagonists of the news (politicians, for example) would appear on television in such a way. Therefore, the spreading of this image can shape a false stereotype of immigration.

The television news emphasised the presence of police on the scene. We can see images of the civil guard next to the burnt house or in patrol cars. These images attribute a decisive role to the security forces of the state. The images that show their presence seem to say that the conflicts provoked by the Senegalese immigrants when facing the gipsies have to be controlled by the forces of order. They also insinuate that there is a need to control immigrants who are 'out of control'. They appear safeguarding key points of the incident such as the house, which has supposedly been burnt down by the immigrants:



But the alleged Senegalese (it is better to insist on the supposition until it is proven that they really came from this country) friends of the victim insist that the murdered man was a good person whose murder must be avenged and that they don't need police to do so:

Cuatro 7th of September 2008

- “The guy, very, very good people, a very good person.”
- “We don't want civil guard, we want that they kill this man, that's all.”

Antena 3 7th of September 2008

- “We are the majority, count the Chicanos. If we are going to do justice here it is going to take long.”
- (Starts with voice over) “It's always, always a dark one who's killed [...] always, always one is killed, what is this!!”
- “Listen to me carefully, if there is no justice, you have to take revenge, and that's it, that's it [...]”

TVE 7th of September 2008

Daniel Serifo, Association of young people of Guinea Bissau (he is the only character who is identified since he is the responsible of an organisation): “His family in Africa is ruined. He is a boy who has been working to help his family [...] to do justice, this is what we ask for.”

Tele 5 7th of September 2008

- “The black who are here, every gipsies who leaves we kill, that's all.”
- “This man has to be condemned, you understand? It cannot be the person who leaves the house you take a knife to come and fight and separate the people and you kill him. This is a person, not an animal. Jail, jail for the whole life. If the person leaves the house, there we have problems.”

Tele Madrid 7th of September 2008

- “We police come, police come, we call ambulance, ambulance does not want to come, when ambulance arrive he dead.”
- “I don't want to live here.”

TVG 7th of September 2008

- “He was not coming, half an hour passed, an hour, he was not coming. The guy was dead in the hands of the people.”
- “There is no justice, there never is justice, dark people are dogs, kill them [...]”

The president of the Association of Senegalese Immigrants, Spitou Mandi, called for calm: “The spirit of Ousman [the agreed upon name] does not need our resentment – no resentment, no revenge, no street fights”. He appears, making this plea, in the following images disseminated by *Canal 9* of Valence and *TV3* of Catalonia on the first day of the quarrels (7th of September 2008).⁷



Some channels, such as Catalonian *TV3*, emphasised, from a less dramatic and integrative perspective, the interest of the Senegalese to pacify the conflict: “First, a minute of silence has been made and later the president of the Association of Senegalese Immigrants has addressed the assistants to ask for peace after the heavy incidents of last morning.” (*TV3* 7th of September 2008). The images of the alleged Senegalese are quite similar to the ones from official sources. In this case, visual discrimination was not observed.

There is no violence detectable in the attitude of the immigrants, either. The majority of the images show them talking or standing in silence, all in a pacific attitude.



7 Almost all media collected opinions of the immigrants, the people responsible, their associations as well as of some alleged Senegalese neighbours. The first ones are usually identified by their name and surname and their position or responsibility while this is not applied to the second ones.

The early information on the event was not very pacifying. It encouraged the violent response of the immigrants. All the media used expressions such as “pitched battle” to describe the conflict. A war dimension was assigned to the city conflict which can boost new conflicts that are even more violent.

Antena 3 7th of September 2008

Reporter (voice over): “Highest tension in the neighbourhood of two hundred housings. This morning its streets reflected the six hours of *pitched battle* occurred between immigrants and security forces.”

La Sexta 7th of September 2008

Voice over: “In Roquetas de Mar for people have been arrested after a *pitched battle* between the police and a group of Sub-Saharan who were complaining about the death of a Senegalese.”

Tele Madrid 7th of September 2008

Reporter voice over: “After the death notice of a 28 year old Senegalese a *pitched battle* broke out in the neighbourhood known as the one of two hundred housings.”

TVE 7th of September 2008

Newsreader: “All right, we already go to Almeria. A young Senegalese has died after having been stabbed, as we were telling you, in Roquetas de mar and his murderer has provoked an *authentic pitched battle* in the slum area of the two hundred housings. Consuelo Escudero is still there.”

Reporter voice over: “*The battle* between immigrants and order forces went on for six hours until after 5 o’clock in the morning. Six police cars have been set fire to, two brigade vehicles have been wrecked and three agents are injured.”

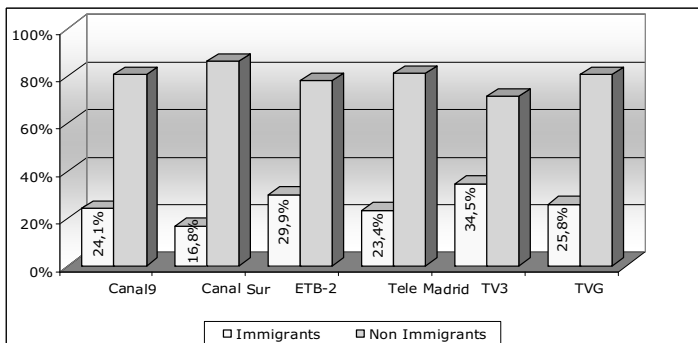
Fulfilment of the Recommendations

The manuals of recommendations for better media immigration treatment at the journalistic, political and social level have reached a consensus on the suitable models of reference in order to evaluate their contributions to the correct intercultural dynamisation of the autochthonous population with the immigrant one. If we take some main proposals of the OBERAXE (2008) and CAC (2002) manuals as references, we can see that they coincide on several points: the necessity of contrasting informative sources; personalising the immigrants by using their names and surnames and not

the generic term “immigrants”; carrying out higher quality visual treatment, with less drama and sensationalism, of the migratory reality; performing a formative function, in addition to the informative one, which will educate the media audience with knowledge of the origins and socio-economic causes that bring about contemporary migrations; and adapting audiovisual and textual media production to new social media realities that require new program formats and typologies.

Regarding the contrast of informative sources, the manuals of recommendations recognize that high quality, objective and diverse media treatment that helps normalize and integrate immigrants happens when it adequately contrasts the different informative sources within reports. This recommendation is rarely applied. The informative sources are not balanced. The media gives much less time to the opinions of the immigrants than to the opinions of the non-immigrants in their portrayals of the migratory reality. The radio and television channels dedicate much more time in their news reports to autochthonous information sources from the areas of politics, state security forces and the native citizenry. In 2008, immigrant sources’ contributions (taking samples of evening-night news programs as references) to general television channels (*TVE, Antena3, Tele5, Cuatro* and *La Sexta*) amounted to 1 hour, 6 minutes and 19 seconds out of a total of 4 hours, 41 minutes and 48 seconds. This equals an average of about one minute out of four was dedicated to balancing opinions on immigration.

Graphic n° 4. Informative Sources. Times. Television, 2008.



Source: *Tratamiento informativo de la inmigración en España, 2008*. Dirección General de Integración de los Inmigrantes, Observatorio del Racismo y la Xenofobia, Secretaría de Inmigración y Emigración, Ministerio de Trabajo e Inmigración.

The recommendation guides suggest using the name and surname in order to denominate immigrants the same way as the autochthonous population. It is about balancing the nomenclature to avoid discrimination. However, on a daily basis, we may read headlines which refer to a supposedly Spanish person with names and surnames and other persons identified by their countries of origin. For example, we might find something like “Juan Pérez and two Ecuadoreans attended the political encounter”. In order to not discriminate the immigrant population, Juan Pérez should be denominated the same as the Ecuadoreans. In this case, the line could read “a Spaniard and two Ecuadoreans”, or, if we say Juan Pérez, we should add the names and surnames of the Ecuadoreans also. In any case, the least discriminatory treatment occurs when every person who gives his or her opinion is referred to by his or her name and surname rather than generally labelled with their origins. Denominating someone by his or her country of origin implies the identification of the person with this nationality. Often this sobriquet does not fit with reality. In order to make sure of its correct use, we should contrast it with the denominated. We should know if Juan Pérez wants to be considered Spanish. The identification by name and surname allows the media to treat the immigrant like any other person. This helps free immigrants from the connotations associated with being a foreigner, a condition which, in many cases, immigrants reject since many consider themselves to be citizens of the world rather than immigrants.

The manuals recommend not using images of injured or dead immigrants because they unnecessarily focus the interest of the audience on certain visual fragments of reality that are often not very informative. These images are only useful to over-emphasize reality and to introduce a sensationalist treatment while they cause negative stereotypic perceptions of the immigrants within the autochthonous population. However, these images continue to be used in order to give visual support to cases related to arrivals, conflicts (particularly violent acts) and, sometimes, even to tackle social matters.

The manuals of style also recommend personalising images of immigrants in the same way they suggested denominations. The tendency has been to show close-ups of immigrants' faces which have been treated with suitable photographic criteria regarding light, colour, composition, angle, etc. Years ago, immigrants were primarily shown in groups, by night and in the *paterna*. The usual angle of the pictures is now frontal or at the same

level, which treats the persons as equals. The high angle (taken with a static, shows the 'others' as inferior) is now used less than the frontal shot, but the low angle (which extols them) is almost never used. In any case, these general tendencies must be qualified. The frontpage pictures of the daily newspapers tend to personalise the immigrants more than the pictures on the inner pages. Close-ups and detail shots are typical for this 'shop window' space of the written media. Nevertheless, this personalisation often concentrates on details associated with drama. A picture of a smile is not front page material, but crying is.

The manuals recommend covering the daily lives of immigrants. This approach allows the media to better illustrate their realities rather than when it is limited to specific perspectives, such as political. But the time radio and television channels assign to information about the daily lives of immigrants and their environments is practically nil. Daily lives are not news-worthy and even less so are good reports on the regular lives of the new citizens. This is not a unique situation. This is a general tendency of most media. More adequate coverage comes with granting more importance to daily life in news programs. Integrative coverage like this is peculiar to local media but not to general media. Magazines and local radio and television channels often contains positive coverage of realities. Sometimes, this is a sugar-coated portrayal reality. Everything is good. They hardly tackle dramatic issues such as the arrivals in *pateras*. However, the daily radio and television news programs with the largest audiences in the country position their content, mindful of ratings, on entertainment rather than on encouraging interculturality.

The manuals suggest giving as much information as possible about immigrants' countries of origin. Above all, the economic, political and social causes which result in migratory processes must be explained. The media still do not show the causes for immigration from the countries of origin. There are a few correspondents who very rarely travel only to follow a Spanish politician, or natural catastrophes or war. It is important to take into account the profitability of journalists' trips. The little coverage from origin countries is testimonial in nature. This is to say that they justify the cost of displacement by showing some places peculiar to the country but they do not approach reality and contrast it. Generally, this contrast is provided by longer productions such as reports or documentaries. Radio or television news allows, at the most, 'stand-ups' of a few seconds from emblematic or well-known places. The media, in this sense,

are not formative but punctually informative, even though it is a segmented model of information and almost fictitious in regards to reality.

The manuals also recommend recycling and personalising journalistic routines. The information has to appear with the names and surnames of authors. The majority of press pictures are anonymous. They also recommend approaching reality by means of live news coverage. However, there are only a few media units which use live connections. Spanish journalism is not very suitable for this type of expensive coverage. The presentation of information in the news programs must also adapt to new formats which are more appropriate to the emergent, diverse societies. The majority of information follows universal standard patterns. The host introduces a video followed by limited development, sometimes only one minute in length. Informative spacial-temporal 'mathematics' continues to be used which segments reality according to the demands of the video edition and the informative presentation. The images and clothing used by the Spanish newsreaders are also signs of this presentation standardisation. The same static, medium frame is used, some more closed, others more open, but all are medium shots. All men wear ties and suits and all women wear dresses:



These images allow us to ascertain that the common presenter on Spanish television subscribes to an occidental phenotype. Even though there are aspects peculiar to individuals, it could be said that these physical features are peculiar to Spanish people, which are different to the ones predominant in other near countries such as France, England or Nordic countries such as Norway or Sweden. This phenotype discriminates other possible phenotypes. There are no black, South-American or Chinese presenters in the news programs of the most popular Spanish radio and television channels. Neither is there a social or cultural diversity in the editorial departments of the media which would represent the Spanish demographic reality.

One last observation concerns the manuals' proposals regarding gender discrimination of the immigrant population. The information needs to take the real data of the immigrant population into account and show men and women in the most equitable way possible. When analysing television reports, we observe that in the verbal discourse, as well as in the visual one, more men than women are mentioned and shown. The news programs suggest that immigration is more masculine than feminine. However, the media part with reality again. The predominance of one gender or the other depends on the country of origin of the immigrants.

Producing Immigration News in Receiving Countries: Beyond Journalists' Professional Ideology and Cultural Explanations

CARMEN SAMMUT

The media can play an important role in the promotion of integrated societies that include diverse cultures. They are often seen as “key resources in the struggles for visibility, presence, community, influence and symbolic power which many, if not all, minority groups seek” (Silverstone and Georgiou 2005, p. 432). Yet, media systems are in themselves the outcome of internal processes and so the context remains an important influence on the production, dissemination and reception of news (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). While news content is influenced by factors such as the journalists' professional ideology, cultural attitudes towards immigrants and the demands of the publics, it will be argued that our analysis also needs to take into account political and economic factors, which determine whether the media systems open up to migrants. Such considerations also affect the complex and ambivalent roles of journalists; as critical public intellectuals scrutinizing responses to the influx of migrants, and as producers of texts that may reinforce social and cultural stereotypes.

This study empirically explores dilemmas for journalists in Malta as they cover stories on immigration in a context experiencing rising public anxieties and concerns with the impact of migration. It will be argued that most media organisations still have not resolved how to adapt to the new realities as they did not extend their deliberative democratic role to engender a critical mass on integrative processes. This is a dearth of discussion on the notions of multiculturalism, migrant inclusion and cohesion (expounded by Zetter et al. 2006).

This analysis is based on preliminary data gathered during in-depth unstructured interviews with journalists in November and December 2006 and in further interviews that were carried out between January and February 2009. Malta had suddenly become an immigrant-receiving country in

2002 and as yet no news organization has engaged migrants at any level of the production process. Data was gathered during the height of immigration flows. Immigrant began to subside in 2009 and 2010 as a result of a bilateral agreement between Italy and Libya¹.

A total of 20 interviews were carried out with Maltese journalists from the following media organisations:

Table 1.

<i>Media organisations</i>	<i>No of interviews</i>
di-ve.com	1
Favourite TV	1
Malta Today	2
Nazzjon/Net TV/ Radio 101	2
PBS	2
Orizzont & Torca	2
RTK	3
Super One	1
The Times	5
Where is Everybody?	1

A Small Peripheral Context

It has been stated that migration is “a way of life on islands” (Connell and King, 1999, p. 1) but the shift from a country of emigration to a land of immigration is indeed an uneasy transition for Malta. The Maltese islands are positioned at the heart of the Mediterranean Sea, a passage that has always united the region and facilitated human movement. But this sea

1 Italy pledged to invest four billion Euros in Libya, whereas the Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi agreed to allow Italy to return sub Saharan migrants intercepted in international waters to Libya. This agreement came into force in 2009 and, as a result, there was a drastic reduction in the number of immigrants that reached the Maltese islands.

that unites also divides societies with “very different levels of wealth, opportunity and quality of life” (Russell, 2001, p. 2). In 2002, hundreds of immigrants, suffering great privations, started to reach the shores of Europe’s smallest microstate. The immigration influx gained momentum as the islands headed towards EU accession in the 2004 enlargement. Then, it became evident that Malta was turning into an “intermediate stop” (Aubarell and Aragall, 2005, p. 8) in a trans-Mediterranean migratory flow that emanates from sub-Saharan Africa, cuts northwards towards Libya and across the Mediterranean Sea, into continental Europe.

From time to time immigration tends to hit the news headlines as it scores high on the news value criteria that drive national and international agendas². However, Malta lies on the southernmost periphery of Europe and is also one of the smallest nations in the world³. Smallness and the geographical distance from the centres of power, partly explain why Maltese concerns in the face of immigration often go unnoticed in the international information flow, unless stronger nations or international institutions are implicated. As a result, the islands have to struggle to reach overseas audiences through the international media.

Malta maintains that European immigration policies should appreciate the importance of size and demographic pressures. Yet Nairn (1997, p. 143) observed that in relation to most microstates:

[F]actors of ‘scale’ (size, population, relative economic, social and cultural weighing) have usually not been adequately taken into account in reflections on the significance of frontiers and the identities these delimit.

In a bid to explain to European journalists, a former Maltese Home Affairs Minister asserted:

Since 2002 we have had almost 8,000 irregular immigrants reaching our shores. To get a measure of what that figure means, you have to appreciate that – relative to our population size – this figure equates to almost 1.7 million arriving in Germany or 1.2 million in France or the United Kingdom, or 800,000 in Spain during the same period (Borg, 2006, p. 2).

- 2 Immigration scores high points on most of the news value criteria identified by Galtung and Ruge (1965) that include: frequency, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, personalisation and negativity.
- 3 In 2007 the Maltese islands had a population of 410,290 and a density of 1,298 persons/km²; one of the highest in the world (National Statistics Office, 2008).

Such rationales are employed in support of Malta's demand for amendments in the Dublin II regulation, which stipulates that until their application is processed, asylum seekers have to remain in the country that first receives them. Malta has insisted on this amendment in the European Parliament and the European Commission. As pointed out by Nueman and Gstöhl (2007) small states are not necessarily weak states. While, the EU's large states have more clout in the formation of policy, up to now small states have equal value in decisions that require unanimity (Antola, 2002). Various segments of the Maltese media have, at various stages, voiced their opinions on ways in which Malta should exert greater pressure if the EU does not heed to its demands.

The small scale-setting does not merely influence the immigration debate but also affects media production. The idiosyncrasies of the Maltese media system confirm that, as noted elsewhere, the global media trends do not necessarily erode distinctive media nationalism (Tunstall and Machin, 1999). As in other Mediterranean 'pluralist and polarized' media contexts (Hallin and Mancini, 2004), here the state, political parties, the Catholic Church and influential business elites have sustained a mammoth media system. This inhabits a setting characterised by a limited audience reach, dearth of resources and cutthroat competition (Sammut, 2007a). Similar traits were observed in other microstates:

Small populations delimit audience reach, making commercialization and profitability less likely than larger markets, and out of necessity the state is commonly a major stakeholder in and has institutional influence over media systems (Karlsson, 2008, p. 16).

Institutional Influence on the Media

The Maltese media system often mirrors the concern of political elites as there is still strong media-party parallelism⁴. Malta is the only European democracy where political parties can own radio and television stations. While some media organisations are succeeding to inch their way forwards towards greater professional autonomy, on the whole institutional

4 Seymour-Ure (1974) coined the term 'press-party parallelism' to describe the degree to which the structure of the media system was parallel to the party system.

influence still prevails over key news outlets. Partisan media blatantly promote party-centric agendas, whereas the other media often emphasise 'balance' between the two sides or they advance specific interests through their dependence on spin and formal sources. It is thus not surprising that Malta remains a highly polarised country, where the electorate is diametrically split between two main parties: The Nationalist Party (Christian Democratic) and the Labour Party (centre left).

While the partisan media give high priority to immigrant arrivals, for years they hardly questioned the low-profile position of the parties on immigration. Until 2009, mainstream parties had abdicated from any serious discussion of the issue to an extent that the key debates of the 2008 election revolved around bread and butter issues (economic stability, the cost of living and lower taxes) and the personal capacities of the main party leaders (Fenech, 2008). It is often assumed that governments' low-profile policies are aimed at avoiding inflaming further public passions. While partisan journalists advocated the institutional agendas, most of the non-partisan journalists interviewed in early 2009 confessed they hardly had any understanding of government's policy on immigration and they wished to gain a better insight possibly through informal briefings.

Low-profile positions are complemented by broad inter-party agreement: Both sides say they do not want to turn migration into a divisive issue; both avoid plunging into populist political incorrectness; both consent to long-term detention. Furthermore, Malta's five representatives in the European Parliament (out of a total of 736) took a common position as they called for amendments to the Dublin II regulation and pressured for the Commission to give more assistance to Malta. Yet the façade of partisan unity cracked in February 2009 when the Opposition demanded an urgent Parliamentary debate as it wanted to address popular sentiment. The Prime Minister did not accept the urgency as he still claimed that "both sides of the House were looking at all dimensions of illegal immigration in the same way" (Anon, 2009a, n.p.). The first debate in Parliament took place in mid-March 2009 when mainstream parties were being challenged by fringe rightwing groupings in the run-up to the European Elections of June 2009. The proposals presented in Parliament were supported by the Greens, who felt "vindicated" as the defence of solidarity, international obligations and national interest was deemed to be the only way to "allay the mass hysteria propagated by ignorance, fear and extremist views" (AD, 2009, n. p.).

The current political responses in Malta are astoundingly similar to the initial reactions of other 'new immigration' Mediterranean countries like Spain and Italy. Almost two decades ago it was observed that on one hand, Spanish politicians defended immigrants and criticised racism and on the other hand

leaders point with pride to their country as Europe's principal deviant case in terms of public and government tolerance for immigration [...] Critics of the politicians' low-profile stance on immigration complain that it simply masks the absence of a real national immigration policy, as well as the lack of an administrative infrastructure and capacity that would be needed to implement an 'active' immigration policy. To some observers the reticence of the political class reflects the country's ambivalent attitudes towards the 'new immigration', many [...] still do not know what kind of immigration policy they really want (Cornelius, et al. 1994, p. 334).

As expected, Maltese partisan media reflect the positions of their main shareholders and they do not engage in meaningful discussion on cohesion and integration. The interests of the parties precede professional ideals and personal preconceptions. In partisan media organisations populist discourse is often accepted even though editors stop short of allowing racist comments. A journalist who admitted he has very little sympathy for immigrants, said he is unable to express his thoughts liberally lest his paper is labelled racist with a negative impact on the image of his party. Hence, editorial control is exercised to ensure that strong nationalistic views do not infer racist perspectives.

As stated earlier, the Roman Catholic Church is one of the traditional media players. The radio station RTK, which enjoys considerable audience ratings, mirrors the position of the Curia and its various sub-organisations that give assistance to immigrants⁵. These church organisations provide a steady flow of news stories that are broadcast on the station. The church radio's news editor acknowledged that the station underscores the human element:

5 *The Jesuit Refugee Services* (JRS) was among the first to step-in to offer support. Another Church organisation, *The Emigrants' Commission*, which was set up in 1950 to assist Maltese emigrants overseas, has revised its mission to help immigrants. The nuns of the *Good Shepherd*, who gave shelter to victims of domestic violence and distraught single mothers, are now giving sanctuary to immigrant women and children. The *Peace Laboratory*, set up in by a Franciscan priest in order to spread peace education, also provides shelter to immigrants.

We are anti-racist and very careful with the language we use. The term ‘illegal immigrant’ is not deemed to be politically correct because some of the asylum seekers had no other option but to flee their homes without official papers (personal communication 2006).

Ownership influence explains the shift that can be observed in the Maltese-language newspapers *L-Orizzont* and *It-Torċa*, which belong to Malta’s biggest trade union, the General Workers’ Union (GWU). In 2002 these newspapers echoed the dilemmas of the trade union’s leaderships. Initially, the GWU leaders were very apprehensive that the new arrivals would undermine the job security and welfare of Maltese workers. One of the trade unionists went as far as declaring that Malta should consider measures that are neither “humane nor just” to solve the crisis. He also made reference to the dangers of clandestine prostitutes and undetected diseases (Farrugia, 2004).

Initially, the union’s newspaper mirrored such concerns. It published negative stories alleging that ‘home-made’ weapons were confiscated from immigrants at detention camps⁶; it warned that some may be potential terrorists (Catania, 2008); it reported about black prostitutes spreading AIDS (Vella and Farrugia, 2005a, 2005b). In Autumn 2008 GWU changed its position. It appointed a specialist on ‘third country nationals’, it endorsed a policy paper to protect migrant workers and acknowledged that cheap labour is re-emerging to threaten working conditions (Pisani, 2008). The newspapers now tend to prioritise the exploitation of immigrants. One of *L-Orizzont*’s journalists even joined a group of volunteers who visited Kenya to experience the root causes of immigration (Pisani, 2007).

With some exceptions, discussion on integration is also nonexistent in non-partisan media. The English-language newspapers that are published in Malta and Public Broadcasting Services tend to report the positions of the main institutions but also those of other local stakeholders. These media give ample coverage to civil society groups and provide a platform for opinion leaders. As yet, none of these emanate from within the community of migrants. These media outlets give a voice to the small green party *Alternattiva Demokratika*, which opposes detention centres and calls for

6 Irregular immigrants may be detained up to 18 months in three localities: Ta’Kandja, Floriana, and Safi Barracks. When they are released from Detention Centres, those who are allowed to stay are transferred to the Open Centre in Marsa.

multi-cultural approaches. As discussed further on, most media organisations report dilemmas on exposure to anti-immigrant extremists but they still give coverage to *Alleanza Nazzionali* (AN), a recent rightwing formation that advocates a harsh anti-immigrant agenda and opposes multiculturalism. AN attacks the main parties for their inaction and the EU for its “interference” on this matter (AN, 2009).

Some journalists and columnists, who write for the English-language newspapers, form a front that emphasizes immigrants’ rights and Malta’s international obligations. For instance, a news story that appeared in *The Times* in mid 2004 referred to an Amnesty International report, which claimed that Malta had forcibly repatriated some 220 Eritreans (cited by Texeira, 2006). Most of these irregular immigrants were imprisoned and tortured upon their repatriation. The story was picked up by the Maltese press from mid-May 2004 right up to the very first European Parliamentary elections that took place in Malta.

The powerful role of non-partisan columnists as opinion leaders clearly irked extremist anti-immigration groups. In 2006, Malta was hit by a series of arson attacks against individuals working with migrants and supporting their plight. Attackers even torched the front doors of the private homes of Saviour Balzan, the editor of the English-language newspaper *Malta Today* and against freelance columnist Daphne Caruana Galizia. This sparked a solid reaction by the journalistic community and a demonstration was organised outside the Prime Minister’s Office by the newly formed *Journalists’ Committee* that pledged to “keep writing about the plight of migrants and to represent their voices” (Schembri, Journalists’ Committee, personal communication 2006).

Media reportage of immigration shows evidence that some journalists are aiming at greater journalistic sovereignty. These include the newspapers published by *Media Today* that embrace “an irreverent position towards the establishment” (Balzan, cited by Sammut, 2007a, p. 47) and consequently it is less dependent on institutional and formal sources. As some journalists aspire for greater independence, their reportage of migration has moved from being responsive to political agendas set by others, to setting the national agenda themselves. As opposed to other media organisations, the *Malta Today* questioned the existence of an immigration crisis, just when “incendiary rhetoric and kneejerk reactions to [...] immigrants reaching Malta are leading many across the political divide to speak in catastrophic terms about the immigration phenomenon” (Anon, 2009b, p. 14).

Overall in Maltese journalism there are attempts to improve the quantitative and qualitative visibility to ethnic minorities but, as argued later, such content is sporadic and limited. As the media help shape “imagined communities” (Anderson, 1991), they can help us conceive a cohesive society. Instead of being ethnocentric and inward-looking, journalists can part-take in ongoing processes described by Grixti (2006), where the media broadly advance an identity formation that is hybridized and inclusive and yet strongly rooted in local culture. This journey entails many pitfalls. In Malta there are hardly any references to integrative processes and the debate is often polarised between those who give priority to national security and those who seek to advance the human rights and dignity of immigrants.

In Defence of National Security

In this research journalists held divergent views on what suits national interest and how this impinges on immigrant rights. Illegal immigration is often portrayed as a threat to national security as, according to one adviser, the government’s duty is

to ensure that its people are secure and safe, and that their liberty, including their fundamental human rights and economic well-being are being assured. The goal of Malta’s security policy is to safeguard the freedom and territorial integrity of the Maltese islands (Scicluna, 2006, p. 11).

Hence in liberal democratic communities the principles of exclusive membership are deemed to be inseparable from human rights. It is often claimed that without borders that control immigration and naturalization, political communities do not exist and a world without borders “would be a world either of economic anarchism or it would be a global state, with all the dangers this may bring” (Cole, 2001, p. 4). Such views are congruent with realist theory of International Relations, where states draw border lines along a bounded space containing people, and police these boundaries to keep the right people in, and the wrong people out (Pettman, 1996).

Some journalists are more prone than others to accept orthodox visions employed by the state and political parties. These include those journalists working for political set ups who appeared overtly sympathetic to

the challenges faced by the armed forces to control immigration, to their difficulties in running the detention centres and in deporting detainees.

I support Maltese soldiers and I write about their conditions. I feel that some other journalists, especially those working with the independent press, scorn the role of the armed forces and make derogatory remarks

said one of these reporters (personal communication, 2006). A journalist working for the rival Maltese language newspaper held an identical position. He also acknowledged that he sticks his neck out for soldiers and the police, even though he is often accused of being racist, an accusation he denies.

We need to really investigate from where these people are coming and their backgrounds. Did they escape because of persecutions or because of financial problems? Are they fugitives? Are they escaping from the law? Are they army deserters or, more bluntly, terrorists? I believe that the majority are honest people, but who can tell? Are we safe? Have you been to Marsa, near Albert Town lately [where the open centre for immigrants is located]? Do you know how many crimes these people are committing? Are our soldiers and police safe from health problems? Are we safe (personal communication, 2006)?

Brushing aside political correctness, such journalists were more concerned about the negative impact of people trespassing national territory. It was noted that journalists who defend the army, often have better access to formal and informal army sources. The army and the police are sensitive to critical texts by journalists who are more sympathetic with immigrants.

While some media may engage in criticism towards the government or the army, most Maltese journalists wish to protect national interest with external stakeholders. For instance, my interviews of 2009, journalists revealed that some asylum seekers were granted temporary travel documents and then disappeared from the island. They did not publish this story as they deemed it was “not in the national interest to expose ourselves to the Europe Union?” (personal communication 2009). An editor expressed similar concerns: “A lot of migrants are escaping from Malta. It is a very touchy subject and we are all complicit in this. Is it in our national interest to try to stop it?” (personal communication 2009)⁷. Similarly, a

7 The story, entitled “Malta’s Best kept Secret: Thousands of Asylum Seekers leave the island with special document” was then published in *Malta Today* (Vella 2009).

television producer felt obliged to protect Malta's name with the foreign media:

I had footage of riots at a detention centre that showed soldiers beating immigrants. Other stations did not show the footage: One station did not want to embarrass the army; the other did not wish to embarrass the Government. We proceeded to show it even when we were told that the transmission would trigger further riots [...] Although I gave the film to Amnesty International, I declined to sell it to an Italian media organisation. I am not patriotic but I somehow felt it was not right (personal communication, 2009).

Some journalists initially criticised colleagues who were sympathetic with the armed forces and the police or those who were concerned with popular sentiment. These were deemed to engender unnecessary panic through sensationalistic stories. Yet, by 2009, even some of the journalists who are sympathetic with immigrants acknowledged that it was no longer possible for them to ignore public opinion.

The Power of Public Sentiment

In spite of global trends towards media commercialisation, it has been observed that Maltese journalists still tend to address their publics as citizens rather than consumers. This is because some owners put political dividends before commercial profit whereas others give importance to public interest before audience ratings. (Sammut, 2007a). Nonetheless audiences cannot be ignored. Firstly, the media owned by power elites still need to appeal to their publics. Secondly, all media organisations still inhabit a very competitive environment and so they need to assert their market position. Although it has been stated that most journalists do not have valid audience profiles (Sammut, 2007a), journalists do have awareness of the uncontrollable emotions that are stirred by immigration issues.

An EU-wide survey revealed that 87 percent of the Maltese respondents considered immigration as their top security concern as they reported the highest level of related anxiety in the whole of the EU (Eurobarometer, 2009)⁸. Another survey that received great prominence in the newspaper

8 The EU average was 61 percent.

Malta Today, confirmed that public alarm was rising sharply (Debono, 2009). However, it was a research commissioned by the Maltese newspaper *The Sunday Times* that revealed how such fears are embedded in xenophobic attitudes. A study by sociologist Mario Vassallo (2005) revealed that 90 percent of the respondents had no objection to a European neighbour but an equal number said that living next to an Arab or African neighbour was highly undesirable. Moreover, more than 75 percent of the individuals said they would not give shelter to persons who were trying to escape their native land because of political persecution, war or civil war, hunger or mass poverty. They claimed Malta is far too small to receive migrants, no matter what their troubles are.

These fears penetrate media texts. Texeira (2006) analysed media content and observed instances where newspapers published anonymous articles that fomented racism. On top of this, audience-generated content, such as the 'letters to the editor', tends to be more xenophobic. In his analysis of letters Schembri (2006) found a correlation between the number of immigrant arrivals and the number of letters received by the press. As anxieties spread, he observed a rise in racist sentiments among the readers who wrote letters to editors. Fear also penetrates the media of the public sphere through numerous phone-in radio programmes, vox pops and televoting and most importantly on internet blogs and online newspaper comments.

Such responses bring to light 'moral panics', a term first coined by Cohen (1987) to explain how, from time to time, society creates 'folk devils' who "become defined as a threat to societal values and interests" (p. 9). Trapped in such panics, society reacts against whoever is deemed as a menace to the values and principles that it upholds. The media may contribute to these panics because they stylize episodes and amplify the facts by turning them into a national issue, even when matters are not strictly significant. This partly explains why in Malta, the panic roused by immigrant arrivals in February 2009 superseded the fears of the international financial and economic crisis that swept the globe. One editor noted:

Over the years, the Maltese perceptions changed. When the first groups came, they were wet, cold and hungry. They were survivors who had spent seven days at sea. Then, the response was phenomenal. People used to donate food, clothes, toys, shoes [...] People felt genuinely sorry for these people. Now we no longer believe they are refugees and 'imsieken' [poor souls]. We see them as coming here to exploit us. They are no longer deemed to be people who have escaped deprivation by the skin of their

teeth. We believe they were brought over by human traffickers [...] and that they are coming for all the wrong reasons. A lot of people are now convinced that these people are criminals and that they are leaving their country and going to Europe to become part of the criminal underclass. So by carrying silly stories about migrants getting loud and rowdy, we are just reinforcing the image that these people are bad people [...] Moreover, journalists find it easier to pick up bad news. And if audiences are convinced that immigrants are criminals, at times journalists tend to feed the audience what it expects (personal communication, 2009).

The riots at the Safi Detention Centre of 23rd of March 2009 are a case in point. *The Times* reported that two Maltese officers and a soldier were slightly injured when 500 to 600 migrants tried to force their way out of the compound. Damage was caused to an education centre within the barracks where computers and projectors were destroyed (Anon, 2009c). As soon as the story was posted on its online edition, *The Times* received around 60 angry comments from readers. These clearly demonstrated public concerns on this matter.

Online read fears regarding *The Times*' story on the Safi riots of 23rd of March 2009.

<i>Online reader comment</i>	<i>Readers' fears</i>
"With a 500 strong riot [...] things can go very very bad! Not only for law enforcement officials but also for the residents of the area!!!"	Violence can spread beyond Detention Centres.
"They are outnumbering us!!!" "Please send these people back to their countries before it is too late." "My advice is not to let this situation deteriorate to a point where some local hotheads will find it necessary to take the law into their own hands with tragic consequences."	The situation is almost out of hand.
"Malta should stand up and defend our country and our citizens. There is time for diplomacy and negotiation but there is time for action."	Diplomacy is not yielding results.
"Wake up government, admit that this is a national crisis now and start doing something concrete about it for the sake of the Maltese citizens before its too late! Before the blood of any Maltese citizen is shed!" "What is government waiting for? Look at the time and resources spent on this issue with no end in sight!"	The government took little action.

<p>“I really think that we need a new government that can stand up to them, that backs soldiers and police officers”;</p> <p>“‘The situation is under control’, ‘We are not in a crisis’. These are the words of a completely incompetent Minister.”</p>	
<p>“Even the PL [Labour Party] leader is sending wrong messages with his speeches. He says we should not be tough with these people.”</p>	<p>The opposition should be harsher.</p>
<p>“The EU is diplomatically eyewashing us with some sort of funds to elevate our burdens to which funds we ultimately are contributors.”</p>	<p>The European Union is not helping us.</p>
<p>“Just two days ago Euronews showed a feature on the situation of illegal immigrants in Malta. But what Euronews did not show is the riots that our soldiers and police have to face. And what about the expense to repair damage and to pay personnel?”</p> <p>“Do the French newspapers publish these stories now? I guess not!”</p>	<p>International media are unsympathetic.</p>
<p>“I appeal to the Authorities to stop talking and deliberating, wasting precious time; start repatriating. Stop sacrificing our soldiers at sea to bring in illegals. Hunt down and crack upon the international criminals [...] charge them with extortion, human trafficking and mass murder for all those drownings they have caused.”</p>	<p>We need to support our army.</p>
<p>“It is a clear sign they do not want to be educated because those civilised know that education is the key to the future thus they do not go about destroying schools and education centres. Keep on dreaming that integration is possible.”</p>	<p>‘They’ do not want to integrate.</p>
<p>“I know we are a Christian country with Christian beliefs but I am sick and tired and angry from hearing about these illegals.”</p> <p>“The Government should and must act in the interest of this country and for the future [...] let us keep this country in the hands of the Maltese only.”</p>	<p>‘We’ do not want them here.</p>
<p>“These Safi rioters are criminals of the lowest category. They came here uninvited and we have treated them like guests. We have given them all the opportunity to prove themselves refugees.”</p>	<p>Rioters are criminals.</p>

While cyclical moral panics may eventually serve as a process that leads to the construction of new and more open identities (Erjavec, 2003), media scholars warn that moral panics and media-driven myths may push authorities to legitimate drastic measures against immigrant groups (Eldridge, 1997). As seen above, reports of riots in the Maltese detention centers invariably lead to public appeals for severe action. Riots in any of the three detention centers stir very strong public reactions because such stories are almost always partial and one-sided. When they do report these riots, the media rely on formal sources and they almost always present a formal institutional perspective. Very often they report statements by the Army and other authorities but we never get to hear the detainees' version. Information about the causes of immigrant riots often reaches the media when it is too late for it to be disseminated with any affect on public opinion.

The Absent "Others"

With few exceptions, media content largely reveals Malta's state of denial; they reproduce the oft-repeated assumptions that Malta is never the immigrants' intended destination; that immigrants are intercepted, rescued or come "by accident" (Anon, 2009d, p. 1). Through repetition they reinforce the idea that Malta is obliged to host and tolerate immigrants through international commitment, namely the Geneva Convention and the Dublin II regulations. They picture 'temporary' flimsy tents that are permanently set up in detention centres, a sign of transitoriness and impermanence. In these centres immigrants are deprived from access to information and adequate channels of communication (Emigrants' Commission and JRS, 2005). Long-term confinement leads to riots, which sometimes give detainees some media exposure and a chance to vent their frustration. Reporters have very limited access to the detention centres. On one hand authorities fear the presence of journalists, camera crews or photographers as it may trigger revolts. On the other hand, the authorities need to publicize the severity of the setting to discourage prospective illegal immigrants. An editor stated:

One of the reasons why people are treated harshly and are confined in detention centres is for the government to send out a message to immigrants that if they come

to Malta, there is no way they can keep on going (personal communication, 21st of February 2009).

In this research, it appeared that there is an increased awareness among journalists about the negative role of racial and ethnic stereotypes. Blackman and Walkerdine (2001) describe stereotypes as

representations that circulate in the media of those groups in society which exist outside the mainstream. Because of their status, the assumption is made that we only gain knowledge about these minority groups through the media and other forms of pedagogy (p. 17).

Awareness of this, prompts some journalists to counterbalance prevalent unconstructive stereotypes. This is not a plain sailing endeavour. There are times when the media need to report negative stories on immigrants. Nonetheless, some journalists feel it is their responsibility to handle their text with greater care lest they engender further xenophobia. A reporter confessed:

Once I had to report about an immigrant who burnt a car belonging to a soldier. I felt that I couldn't suppress that information, knowing full well, however, that publishing that sort of article could fuel racism, which I believe abounds in Malta (personal communication, 2006).

Amore (2005), Murphy (2005) and Texeira (2006) pointed out that perceptions of immigrants are constructed through the continuous portrayal of immigrants in negative and limited roles: Primarily arriving on boats in large groups, confined in centres, as prostitutes or illegal players in the black economy. Stereotypes are constructed through qualitative misrepresentations where immigrants are portrayed as anonymous individuals with anonymous backgrounds who are causing unmistakable and identifiable problems for Malta.

Structural deficiencies in media organisations imply that few newsrooms have adequate resources to give a balanced picture of the situation. Small newsrooms are more likely to depend on formal news sources (Sammuto, 2007a)⁹. Moreover, media organisations depend on a single

9 The extent of media dependency on formal sources was revealed in October 2008 when the Emigrants' Commission stated that immigrant arrivals exceeded the local birth rate. All newspapers reported this with prominence. Only one newspaper questioned the statistics cited and why they included nine months of arrivals and births instead of the total number over an entire twelve-month period (Vella 2008). The rest merely reproduced the data.

news pool for court news and this is contributing to the negative portrayal of immigrant.

Editors are more or less at the whim of the reporters that constitute this pool. When these reporters encounter a story, especially if it involves a migrant from a Detention Centre or the Open Centre, they pick on that story straight away, irrespective of its content. As a consequence we are picking up a lot of police and court reports that stress the negative side of the migrant's presence in Malta. My argument is that if I never dream of publishing a story about a Maltese citizen insulting a police officer, why should I carry it if a migrant does the same. This adds to xenophobia (personal communication, 2009).

News from informal sources requires more effort and resources. It is time-consuming for journalists to go to the Open Centre and interview refugees. As stated earlier, journalistic access is often a point of contention with the state. Through their NGOs, journalists have demanded access to the detention centres as a matter of principle. Yet since 2008, it became harder for journalists even to visit the Open Centre for immigrants in Marsa, as special permits are now required. Many journalists also reported difficulties to communicate with immigrants either because of language or because migrants are scared to talk as they fear it might jeopardize their chances to be granted asylum. Greater access to immigrants may help deconstruct some of the stereotypes as it can "play an important part in promoting a greater public awareness of the plight of persons escaping persecution and conflict, by portraying their individual challenges, fears and hopes" (Falzon, UNHCR, personal communication, 2006).

Overall, the media still tend to disseminate a "sociology of absence" (Baldacchino, 2002, p. 56), where Maltese society is portrayed as one essentialized culture and a single ethnic group¹⁰. Although immigrants are highly visible in the media, they remain disempowered. Although their voices are being heard in relation to human interest stories that focus on the drama of their personal accounts, they still remain absent and voiceless in most debates that affect their fate. On many occasions they fall into a spiral of silence or are analysed as voiceless 'others'.

Moreover, migrants are still unable to drive the agenda in news organisations. They have no influence on production processes and the Maltese media still do not cater for the needs and wants of migrant "others". This

10 For instance, religious content on all the broadcasting stations reinforces Malta's Roman Catholic identity to the exclusion of religious minorities.

sustains a landscape that hardly offers any possibilities of integration for refugees. Overall, in the Maltese islands, migrants' have inadequate access to the labour market and to nationality, whereas electoral rights are "critically limited" (Niessen, et al., 2007, p. 125).

Journalists' Responses

Maltese journalists are responding to the unfolding situation, even if they are largely doing this in uncoordinated ways. They acknowledge their responsibilities: a) to defend human rights and dignity irrespective of people's colour, race, religion; b) to make sure that our country abides to its international obligations; c) to facilitate a free flow of information and a platform for various groups and d) to filter out harmful hate speech and racial incitement.

Self-regulatory systems through journalists' organisations and a professional *Code of Ethics* is one way in which news workers can ensure they meet these responsibilities. Members of The Institute of Maltese Journalists acknowledge their Code of Ethics needs to be updated to specifically reject racial incitement (Institute of Journalists n.d.). Racial incitement was however already made illegal by the *Criminal Code* and the *Press Act* that prohibit threats, insults and fomenting hatred on racial, national or ethnic grounds. Moreover, the *Broadcasting Act* prohibits racial discrimination and stirring racial hatred and makes anyone, including journalists, liable to imprisonment (Government Notice 413, 2007).

A. *Beyond Polarities*

Maltese journalists do not wish to polarize the migration issue: in terms of partisan divides or along imaginary pro-immigrant/ anti-immigrant fronts. Some resort to the professional ideology of detachment where they present facts and the opinions of various sources. Yet, others feel that detachment or inadequate analyses may provide readers with the facts, but not the wider picture. A degree of balance was deemed necessary by most interviewees. Even journalists who are sympathetic with immigrants acknowledge "there

is a threshold to how much you can editorialise. Too much interpretation can have an adverse effect as people may reject the message” (personal communication 2009).

A degree of audience empowerment is thus acknowledged. Hall (1980) and others theorised how the media cannot fully predetermine meaning as audiences can negotiate and even oppose messages. Some journalists reported instances when attempts to modify public opinion had an opposite effect:

A colleague pointed out ‘audiences know that racist comments really upset you. They know where you stand and so they shut you off. I worry this audience resistance may turn into wider xenophobia’ (personal communication, 2009).

In spite of this, as pointed out by Cohen (1963), the media have an agenda-setting role and they can tell “readers what to think about” (p. 13). Hence, journalists are not totally powerless. Their contribution can engender attitudinal change by drawing public attention to unknown facts and alternative perspectives.

Since audience agency is acknowledged, journalists are increasingly aware they need to address public sentiment. Previously those who were sympathetic with immigrants, often ignored public fear:

Some of us come from an upper middle class background and we are insulated from the realities of segments of the population that depend on menial work and who consider immigrants as a threat to their employment. We cannot dismiss this fear, we need to address it (personal communication 2009).

Hence, public sentiment should not be automatically equated with xenophobia. The secretary of the Institute of Journalists Joe Vella observed that initially “those journalists who highlighted the difficulties resulting from these influxes were often accused of racism” (personal communication, 2006). These journalists denied they were racist and claimed they are mainly writing about threats to national boundaries, which are an important angle that needs to be explored in order to balance the news.

While the realities of EU membership, migration and globalisation invite reflection on ‘our’ ‘local’ identities, in their role as public intellectuals journalists should defy a narrow focus on any preset established traits, at the cost of rejecting ‘others’. The professional ideology of journalistic detachment may lead some journalists to perceive culture as a clearly de-

finable whole and so some news texts impose unity and coherence on cultures.

This generates coherence for the purposes of understanding and control [...] From within, a culture need not appear as a whole; rather it forms a horizon that recedes each time one approaches it (Benhabib, 2002, p. 5).

The rejection of cultural essentialism does not only open the way for multicultural perspectives, but it will also conscientise journalists that the feelings of the Maltese publics may also not be coherent and one-dimensional. One editor acknowledged that people may not share similar fears:

We should stop asserting that the whole society is racist. There can be a variety of people fearing immigration for a range of reasons: terrorism, violence, work, mixed marriages etc. (personal communication 2009).

Similarly another journalist pointed out:

Not all those who are worried about immigration are racist. On this issue discourse has become so polarize that as soon as someone conveys some genuine concern, he is labelled racist (personal communication 2009).

As a result, journalists cannot be blinded by polarisation or by the assumption of a consensus on immigration within society. This would hinder them from smelling stories that may reveal complex underlying processes that also need to surface in the public sphere.

It is often argued that the media need to explain context to facilitate public understanding. Mario Schiavone, from the Institute of Journalists, stated: "Audiences should be aware of crises in countries like war-torn Sudan and Eritrea and the famine in Ethiopia, the places immigrants are fleeing from." There are several factors that militate against such information. While globalisation processes make it imperative for individuals to follow and interpret international news; this same globalisation is often promoting commercialisation and market-driven media content. There are now some Maltese broadcasters who also assert that few people are interested in current affairs. Consequently, there is an encroachment of audience-driven news formats that support entertainment values at the cost of explanation. These processes are accompanied by more emphasis on personalisation and on individuals at the expense of information on social, political and economic processes. Dahlgren (2000) aptly noted that in

many parts of Europe the future of public service media is uncertain, less popular informational programming are marginalised and infotainment is increasing. A combination of these factors is leading to what Philo (2002) described as the 'mass production of ignorance', where audiences are either informed in ethnocentric ways or they are misinformed about the world because of a low level of explanations. Malta seems set on this trajectory.

B. Beyond National Security Concerns

One of the roles of the media is to look beyond concepts of national security that merely entail the policing and patrolling of state borders. Security must also be built collectively in our everyday lives and it entails justice and the protection of migrant's rights (Sammut, 2007b). This perspective echoes Galtung's concept of positive peace and security. According to this view, peace and justice are not based on the absence of conflict but are founded on fairness (Galtung, 1996). A few journalists are aware of this:

We must remember we now have coloured kids at school, including multiracial Maltese kids. We have to protect human beings, and be careful when throwing stones at each other, for they might bounce back straight into our face,

said one reporter.

Many journalists feel that national security could be threatened from within, by people who incite racial hatred and xenophobia. In view of this, while most journalists agree that "we need a frank, intelligent and complete debate that acknowledges all perspectives", most felt that "the media should not give a voice to people making dangerous comments and who spread hatred into people's hearts" (personal communication 2006). The people who publicly fomented anti-immigrant sentiment belong to Far Right movements.

As observed by Falzon and Micallef (2008), the Maltese Far Right has a "heterogeneous and formless nature" (p. 394) and the number of individuals involved "commute between the movements" (p. 397). Until 2002, the Far Right was the domain of a few eccentric individuals. By 2004 some individuals obtained maximum exposure as they managed to ride on the wave of anxiety caused by the immigrant influxes. One of the most vociferous and controversial figures, Norman Lowell, contested the first European Parliamentary Election held in Malta in 2004. Initially his an-

tics attracted ample coverage. At one point, the Malta Broadcasting Authority, proceeded against the television station *Smash*, as it broadcast “content which was likely to encourage or incite to crime or to lead to disorder or to be offensive to public feeling” (Broadcasting Authority, 2004).

At that point, journalists did not have a common view on whether Lowell should receive coverage. One respondent warned:

Whereas the media should not act as instruments of racial incitement, we are running the risk of alienating people and fuelling subversion by suppressing anti-immigration opinions. The dangers of discrimination are clearly there, but crudely suppressing anti-multiculturalism and anti-immigration views is equally dangerous (personal communication, 2006).

Lowell’s appeal waned and in 2008 he became the first Maltese to receive a two year suspended jail sentence for incitement to racial hatred. Journalists have fewer qualms on whether they should give exposure to the political party *Alleanza Nazzionali*, that was set up in 2007. In spite of its staunch anti-immigrant stance, it avoided the use of racist rhetoric.

It was noted that Far Right elements resorted to the new media to disseminate their message¹¹. Castells (2001) pointed out that the Internet offers extraordinary potential for the expression of citizen rights as it broadens the sources of communication and contributes to democratisation. Yet, as Pajnik (2005) noted, while the new media are often deemed to be conducive to the democratization of society, they can also function as a mechanism of exclusion. In this case study, Internet’s democratic potential was widely exploited by the Far Right but it has not yet served immigrants held in detention centres, those in the open centre or those who are living in communities to actively engage in key debates. Until now nobody has used the Internet to challenge the consensus regarding the ethnic antagonism between ‘us’ and ‘them’ but instead it has been used to reinforce the divide. As Siapera (2005) concluded, “the political gains of the Internet will remain ambiguous insofar as they rest on one-sided publicity, which does not offer the possibility for public contestation or negotiation of claims made online” (p. 499). Moreover, we also need to keep in mind that even

11 Lowell resorted to the *Imperium Europa* website to disseminate his controversial speeches, to mobilise his disciples and to name individuals opposing him, including journalists. In the 2009 campaign for the MEP elections, AN disseminated anti-immigrant messages via YouTube.

if migrants do obtain a stronger voice in the virtual world, the Internet is not a “substitute for social change or political reform” (Castells, 2001, p. 164). Such reforms are necessary to ensure integration and social cohesion, which are necessary to “cross over ethnic divisions and foster dialogic understanding” (Sreberny, 2005, p. 443).

An Inclusive Media System?

The Maltese media system needs to be less polarized and more inclusive. Until early 2009, the question whether migrants should have some editorial influence over newspaper space or broadcasting in Malta appeared to be far-fetched. Editors acknowledged there is void but took a defensive stand:

There is a huge imbalance against immigrants; there is hardly any room for them but I am not sure if this is the journalists' fault, the migrants' fault or the authorities' fault (personal communication 2006).

Should newspapers and stations provide room for migrants who are granted a refugee status or asylum in Malta?

If you were to ask the public, the majority would exclaim ‘do we have to go that far?!’ I personally see nothing wrong with this (personal communication, 2009),

disclosed a newspaper editor.

Malta has not yet fully included emerging ethnic minorities in shaping a vibrant public sphere. While immigrants tend to use the media to communicate among themselves, there were very few efforts to break out of this ghettoisation. The establishment of a Migrant' Networkd for Equality in July 2010 was the very first attempt that was made for Maltese civil society to incorporate an eclectic migrants' organisation.

In this context, one must add that it is an advantage that the Maltese media still tend to positively encourage public debates and broader social and political participation. In spite of the limitations linked to size and scale, the Maltese media system already has adequate pluralistic set ups that can adapt to include ethnic minorities. Hence, the state and the main

institutions need to consider the need of social cohesion and through their influence on the media system at large, they should foster an inclusive media system. PBS, the national television and radio stations are governed by public service remits that should include a mission to “develop and structure programme schedules and services of interest to a wide public, while being attentive to the needs of minority groups” (Prague Conference, 1994, p. 9). Moreover, political parties, trade unions and the church remain important agencies of public debate and key intermediaries between the public and the state. As a result they have a key role to play in processes of integration. These outlets need to open up to media projects by diasporas. Such projects should aim at inclusive content that avoids media policies and practices which foster excluded voices “to fix monological minority subcultures without developing channels and genres that cross over ethnic divisions to foster dialogic understanding” (Sreberny, 2005, p. 443).

Public Discourse and the Raising of Islamophobia: The Swiss Case

IVAN URETA¹ and ANNEMARIE PROFANTER

Introduction

Over this decade, European public discourse and the media have concentrated their efforts in distorting a sensitive issue such as migration-mobility, aiming at reinforcing an ethnocentric re-construction of the ‘otherness’ (Triandafyllidou, 2000; Van Dijk, 1997; Riggins, 1997). As has been pointed out by de Haas (2007),

Media and dominant policy discourses convey an apocalyptic image of an increasingly massive exodus of desperate Africans fleeing poverty and war at home trying to enter the elusive European ‘El Dorado’ crammed in long-worn ships barely staying afloat.

The European response to deal with these issues is the increasing of control borders and raising the discourse of security (Lutterbeck, 2009). Moreover, after 9/11, the artificially created binomial relation “migration-security” has incorporated a third variable: Islam.

To what extent this correlation between migration-mobility, Islam and security – or insecurity – is justified by the facts? Among others, this is the purpose of this chapter. Beyond conventionalist convictions, migration-mobility and insecurity do not seem to be reasonably linkable. As was pointed out by Kindleberg (1967) – after his analysis on European statistics regarding criminality rates since the end of the II World War onwards – there were not consistent evidences demonstrating that the criminality

1 This research has been possible thanks to the support received from the Swiss Secretariat for Education and Research. It is part of the project: Routes: Analysis of the 20th Century European Migration. Life-Long Learning Project. European Commission.

rate was higher among immigrants than among nationals. The same trend has been evidenced by other authors regarding the United States (Steinberg, 1981; Sampson 2008) or by Avilés (2003) for Spain.

There are some opened questions which are attached with the precedent comments. It would be arguably to think that this public discourse which is affecting the entire occidental world has a lot to do with a moment in which national identities are in crisis given the badly managed concept of globalization, where, perhaps, the old concept of nation-state has been overtaken, practically speaking (Castells, 1997, 1998, 2004; Walby, 2003). Within this realm, what does it mean to be European? What constitutes the very identity of Europeans? How will Europe look like in fifty years from now? The big European metropolis as well as smaller cities, become more and more uniformed in the globalizing age.

The question of how to best integrate Muslim citizens is not a simple one to be answered and every European state has its issues through which European Muslims are targeted, be it the headscarf or burka in France, the mosques in Germany, acts of raging violence in Britain, cartoons in Denmark; questions of homosexuality in the Netherlands – the list goes on. The purpose of research in this area is to unveil the issues behind those publically discussed. What lies at the bottom of all these concerns is a deep and fundamental identity crisis of Europeans. (New) Muslim citizens, the growing number of Muslim immigrants, and their growing visibility in cities, challenge the foundations of a multi-faceted and multi-regional not in itself united identity of what identify themselves as “the Europeans”.

In 2009, the Swiss referendum against the construction of new minarets was fuelled by the crumbling foundations of the European identity on the one hand and vague feelings of anxiety and fear of the unknown new breed of citizens who – as claimed over and over by populist agency – seem to have some kind of hidden agenda. But what they have above all to counter our scattered and multiple identities, is a distinctive religious and cultural identity which is a visible and constitutional part of their everyday life. Given this scenario, is necessary to assess how the media has shaped and channelled public discourses regarding this sensitive issue and how the European public opinion and specially, Switzerland has reacted and is reacting to these inputs, through their votes and political orientation and which could be expected or unexpected consequences of those decisions.

International Context: Constructing the “Otherness”

During the nineties, discourses dealing with multicultural citizenship and multicultural policies were fashionable. Reaching the threshold of the 20th Century, this “fil rouge” began to decline abruptly due to international worries about security. As for international security, and taking advantage of this discursive inertia, the events of 9/11 have ‘legitimized’ the strength of sceptical visions against the previous optimism.

After the 9/11 attacks, as has been pointed out by Lahav (2007),

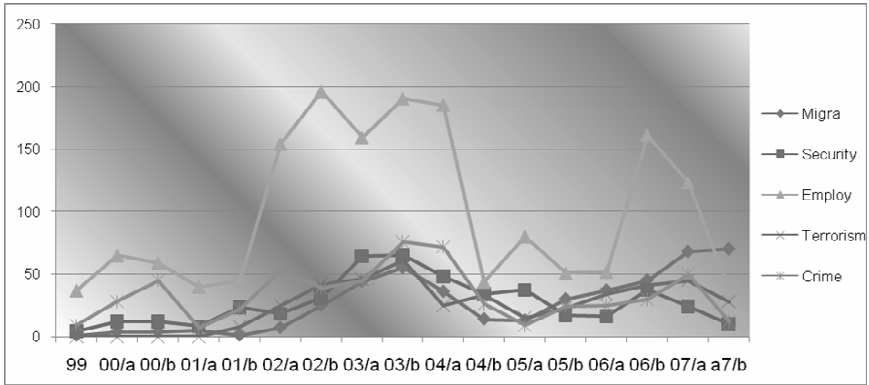
the implications of foreign networks was very much discussed in the media, raised the expected populism and led to arguments that liberal democratic governments would be compelled to dramatically rethink their border controls in a global world full of people on move.

Quoting Gerber (2002), “since 9/11, migrants are perceived as potential terrorists”. Practically, this means that migration issues have shifted from a pure technical domain of “low politics”, to these concerns related to national security or ‘high politics’. And for sure Islam and Muslim communities have passed to a central part of the public discourse, which has been radicalised even more after the Madrid’s and the London’s bombings in 2004 and 2005 and successive attempts (Kepel 2008).

At an international level and considering the European Union as a whole, we elaborated a quantitative multivariable analysis to show how migration related issues evolved at the level of the European public opinion from 1999 onwards and to what extent these issues were attached to others such as security, employment, terrorism and crime (Ureta 2010).

The table below shows how, migration related issues show an evident degree of correlation with at least three variables: security, terrorism and crime. This prove may confirm, firstly, that migration related issues started to be more present from 2001 onwards and on the other hand that the linkage of these issues with some other, very sensitive at the level of the public opinion, is consistent. For sure, Switzerland, which represents our case study, does not escape from this frame.

Graphic nº 1. European public opinion. Fluctuation-correlation Migration, Security, Unemployment, Terrorism and Crime.



Source. Eurobarometer. From 1999 to 2007. Elaborated by the author.

According to the Pew Global Attitude Project (2008), negative views of Muslim communities have increased in Europe between 2004 and 2008. In Spain these views negative increased from the 37 percent in 2004 to the 52 percent in 2008. In Germany these figures fluctuate from the 46 percent to the 50 percent. In Poland from the 30 percent to the 46 percent. In France there was a variation of 9 points, from the 29 percent to the 38 percent and in the UK from the 18 percent to the 23 percent.

Attached to this increasingly strict socio-political environment, in Europe, not by chance, more intensive policies devoted to control migration flows were issued since 2007. Surely, the Blue Card (2007) started to mark a new rhythm in ‘managing’ migratory flows. Given that European countries attracted mainly non-skilled migrants – 85 percent – (European Commission 2007), a new policy was launched to overturn this trend. USA conversely attracts the 50 percent of skilled migrants. But, this initiative was contested as far as this policy would worsen situations of Brain Drain in less developed countries. I am not particularly against this measure, but could as well penalize migrants, given that the Blue Card aims at reinforce the idea of circular migration.

In addition and reinforcing all the previous policies, which went into force, in 2008 (15th of October) was approved the European Pact on Immigration and the Asylum, which actually was the flag of the Sarkozy’s election campaign in 2007. Obviously given the importance of the migra-

tory challenge within the European region, Sarkozy probably thought that leading this initiative, France could come back to take his position in the region. The pact was articulated into four main pillars: legal migration, illegal migration, asylum policies and foreign countries.

In July 2008 a refurbished Barcelona Process changed façade and the Union for the Mediterranean treated to re-impulse failed tasks. Obviously, the three baskets which characterized the Barcelona Process became four, as far as International Migration demanded customized attention. This occurred when the economic downturn started to be recognized by major governments. Hereupon, as soon as the economic perspectives started to darken, migration issues gathered momentum in the public discourse and the response was clear during the 2009 European Parliamentary elections.

Obviously, in epochs of turmoil and economic and financial uncertainty, security is a prime argument to be used. The linkage between migration and security is almost automatic, whereas the measures and policies used to reactivate the economy and to overcome this status of danger are widely accepted and applauded. As such, economics and politics are not a classical example of modernist disciplines, including predictability, observation, reproducibility, and objectivity. This is not even a question of rhetoric, as far as rhetoric could be the “art of probing what men believe they ought to believe, rather than proving what is true according to abstract methods” (Booth, 1974). It is rather a question of misinformation, and as a consequence, “a number of recent studies suggest that natives respond to immigration by voting with their feet” (Borjas, 1995; Filer, 1992).

It is possible to say that, when the economy performs adequately, discourses against migration are rare, or even ignored (Andreas, 2000; Hollifield, 1992). A sort of generalized trust, along with multiculturalism and global citizenship paint the social fabric of receiving countries. Thus, if economic revenues from immigration are large, the costs of increased expenditure in social programs would be interpreted as a worthwhile investment with a high rate of return (Borjas, 1995).

Within this panorama, the radicalization of public discourse has gathered momentum, and, political communication (Van Dijk, 1997), mainly from the right wing is squeezing these issues – migration, Islam, Muslims, security, terrorism – to achieve, without any scrupulous their objectives. Switzerland would be a very interesting study-case to assess and to understand how political manipulation through the public discourse

is able to overcome and to reverse public opinion on sensitive issues, even if problems of integration of Muslim communities did not and do not exist.

Swiss Situation Pre-Referendum, 1998–2009

Switzerland has a dual role as international player, where perhaps, although not the purpose of this paper, the concept of neutrality should be revisited. On one hand is recognized as a neutral country but at the same time, hosts a large number of international organizations with relevant impact worldwide.² Specifically the country has 25 ‘headquarter agreements’ with 25 international organizations of the UN system, – although until 2002 Switzerland did not belong to the UN system – and nearly 250 NGOs acting as consultants and advisors (Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs, FDFA). In addition, 153 nations have permanent representations in the Confederation. This international vocation has its reflex at a demographic level given that Switzerland has one of the highest percentage of immigrants and non-citizens of the continent in relation to its population. According to the last 2000 census, the 22.4 percent were foreign born and the 20.5 percent had foreign nationality (Efiionayi, D., Niederberger and Wanner, 2005; Buscher, and Haug, 2003).

Despite this international *ethos* and neutral political projection, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), in its first country report, highlighted that

the division between welcome and unwelcome non-citizens is more noticeable than in other countries (and) racial prejudices and xenophobia have been increasing over the last decade (ECRI 1998-27).

This report elaborated some recommendations in order to reduce episodes of racial discrimination and racism and to improve the overall situ-

2 Switzerland was included as well in the OECD grey list, although in September 2009, due to a new DTA (Double Taxation Agreement) with the Qatari government was removed. See: <<http://www.news.admin.ch/message/index.html?lang=en&msg-id=29205>>.

ation of social and civic dialogue within the country. Deep reflections on the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) represented one of the cornerstones of the report. It was ratified after a Referendum in 1994, but in 1998 the article 14 was not still accepted (ECRI 1998, p. 7).

It would be necessary to underline that the CERD entered into force on the 4th of January 1969 (OHCHR). In addition by 1998 Switzerland had not ratified some other important conventions such as the European Social Charter, the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination and Education, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages or the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ECRI 1998, p. 7). However these facts have a direct correlation and were affected by the characteristics of the Swiss law at Federal or Cantonal levels. Conversely on the first of January 1995, after a referendum entered into force the Anti-racist criminal legislation (ECRI 1998, p. 8).

The first ECRI report on Switzerland raised a key pedagogic question regarding the control and the reduction of such racist or xenophobic behavior. Hence, the media given their social dimension should show and should channel accurate information regarding these sensitive issues: "it would seem necessary to make the mass media in Switzerland aware of their responsibilities concerning problems of racism and intolerance" (ECRI 1998, p. 10). This responsibility, this social responsibility, was, obviously, extensive to those who use the media to broadcast public discourse, the political class. Is noticeable that within this first national report not references to Muslim communities and Islam were done. Only some events of anti-Semitism and comments on Roma/gypsy communities were reported. It will be interesting to prove how the appearance of Muslims communities and Islam will be more recurrent – crescent – in the three successive reports.

A second report was elaborated by the ECRI in 2000 to assess how Switzerland was performing and improving points commented previously. By 2000 Switzerland ratified, amongst others, the Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional and Minority languages (ECRI 2000-6, p. 5), fact that shows an evident interest for safeguarding weakest links of the Swiss multicultural model. However, Switzerland did not pronounce any position regarding the article 14 of the CERD and the ECRI urged the Confederation to sign some other legal dispositions such as the Revised European Social Charter, the UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education, the

European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers and the European Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level (ECRI 2000, p. 5). This last convention could crash frontally against one of the more solid principles of the rigid Swiss philosophy on migratory policies, but conversely, this factor would be decisive in terms of integration and in terms of facilitation of social dialogue. Although is true that over the time, some cantons gave the right to vote to non-citizens at local and cantonal level. For example in 1849, Neuchatel was the first in conceding this right and with different intensities followed: Jura (1978), Appenzel Outer Rhodes (1996), Vaud (2003), Graubünden (2003), Fribourg (2004), Geneva (2004) and Basel City (2006) (Information Platform Human Rights 2007).

Considering the context of the new millennium, an important factor could help to contextualize and to clarify some inherent aspects: In 2000 Switzerland subscribed a New Federal Constitution. Its article 8 (2) expresses the following idea:

No one must suffer discrimination on account of their origin, race, sex, age, language, social status, way of life, religious, political or philosophical convictions or because of any bodily, mental or physic deficiency (Swiss Federal Constitution 2000).

The article 15 is entitled *Freedom of Faith and Conscience*, where:

The freedom of faith and conscience is guaranteed. Every person has the right to freely choose his or her religion or non-denominational belief and to profess them alone or in community with others. Every person has the right to join or belong to a religious community and to receive religious education. No person may be forced to join a religious community, to conduct a religious act or participate in religious education (Swiss Federal Constitution 2000).

From these two articles is evident the conviction of the Swiss Confederation for preserving and observing fundamental principles, but some comments should be done in order to adjust divergences between theoretical points of views and practical concerns. Hence, practically speaking and coming back to the 2000 report, ECRI highlighted a crucial aspect that can illuminate, surely, our argumentations. For instance, the article 261 bis of the Swiss Criminal Code on racial discrimination (ECRI 2000, p. 6) was adopted for further discussion and for being implemented in the future. But there are some breaches where some exceptions can be roughly filtered, because this article does not apply “when the racist insult in ques-

tion involves wide categories of persons rather than single groups, as in the case of racist references to asylum seekers or foreigners in general” (ECRI 2000, p. 6). Anyway this article was finally and lately included in the Swiss Criminal Code on the 1st of April 2009 (Swiss Criminal Code, p. RS311.0) expressing that:

Whoever publicly, by word, writing, image, gesture, acts of violence or any other manner, demeans or discriminates against an individual or a group of individuals because of their race, their ethnicity or their religion in a way which undermines human dignity, or on those bases, denies, coarsely minimizes or seeks to justify a genocide or other crimes against humanity [...] shall be punished with up to three years imprisonment or a fine (Swiss Criminal Code, p. RS311.0).

Probably the late adoption of this article (April 2009) is part of the peculiar Swiss legal system, a country where the Holocaust denial is not considered, explicitly, illegal. Putting aside this comment, on the other hand following the ratification of the CERD, the Federal Commission Against Racism (FCR) was implemented after mandate emanated by the Federal Council the 23rd of August 1995. However, according with comments of the ECRI 2000 report, the strength of the FCR was still quite modest and further developments in terms of influence on the public sphere were highly desirable (ECRI 2000, p. 8).

Within this report and regarding vulnerable groups only references to anti-Semitism, the Jenisch (Roma/Gypsies communities) or asylum seekers were considered. Muslim or Islam references were not noticed (ECRI 2000, p. 9). Obviously, this basically means that before 9/11 terrorist attacks, Islam and Muslim communities were not considered as a threatening factor within the Swiss territory despite the considerable dimensions of the Muslim community in the Confederation: 310.807 according to the 2001 Federal Census which represented the 4.26 percent of the Swiss population (Swiss Federal Statistical Office). Is remarkable that the lowest proportion of Muslims is represented in the Canton Ticino, situated in the Italian speaking part with a 1.82 percent. In the table below is appreciable the Swiss cities with more than the 5 percent of Muslim population according with the 2001 Federal Census.

Table n° 1.

	<i>% Muslim Communities in Switzerland</i>
Basel City	6.72%
Glarus	6.50%
St. Gall	6.13%
Thurgovia	5.94%
Schaffhausen	5.80%
Aargau	5.49%
Solothurn	5.39%
Zürich	5.33%

Source: Swiss Federal Statistical Office. Census 2001.

This table will be representative when our analysis will assess how has evolved public discourse and media treatment regarding Islam and Muslim communities in Switzerland, specially, from 2007 Federal elections onwards. The ECRI in its 2000 report forecasted and underlined how future events of racism and discrimination could be prevented, by saying that:

Although open manifestations of racism are quite rare in Switzerland, ECRI is concerned that a climate of intolerance or xenophobia towards non-citizens and those who are different from the native Swiss population appears to persist [...] feelings of xenophobia and intolerance towards non citizens are not uncommon, and may even be increasing. Such feelings may be exacerbated by discourses in public life which play on unwarranted fears of the population (ECRI 2000, p. 15).

By quoting this paragraph seems to be clear that some latent problems of racism or discrimination could worsening if public discourse and media treatment would play a populist role in dealing with migration related issues. Obviously this reflection interrogates about, to what extent public opinion, independently of the educational level, can be affected and manipulated through the management of the fear and the threat, generally or specifically speaking.

Within the Swiss context, this increasing presence of issues regarding xenophobic or racist discourses coincided with the political discussion on new laws regarding asylum seekers and foreigners. At that time, ECRI encouraged Swiss politicians and opinion leaders to “refrain from utilising such issues and to take a firm stand against any manifestations of intoler-

ance or xenophobia towards citizens” (ECRI 2000, p. 15). Although through Swiss constitution’s articles number 16 and 17 (Freedom of Opinion and Information and Freedom of Media) no restrictions regarding these sensitive issues are mentioned, specially: “The freedom of the press, radio and television as well as other forms of public broadcasting of productions and information is guaranteed” (Swiss Constitution, Art. 17.1), but on the other hand we can appreciate that some political statements could trespass legal boundaries regarding international dispositions. Hence, the advised figure of the Ombudsman would have guaranteed in part this kind of posterior episodes.

The third ECRI country report was published in 2004, thus, three years after the 9/11, moment in which Islam, terrorism and security related issues were attached together as we stated above. Some progress were done regarding the precedent situation when on the 2nd of June 2003 was released a clear declaration of the Article 14 of the CERD, but some other dispositions mentioned above were not ratified so far. As was stated before the new Federal Constitution (2000) contains specific dispositions to fight against any form of discrimination, racism or xenophobia but the ECRI recommended to the Swiss authorities to make sure that these new dispositions are correctly and broadly disseminated among the population, otherwise the effect could be minimized (ECRI 2004, p. 8). At that time is evident that the Swiss government took some measures to restrict some advances of right wing parties, which were gathering more political relevance. Moreover by 2002 was created the Federal Service to Combat Racism with the scope of aiding and alleviating the work developed by the Federal Commission Against the Racism.

Interestingly and very linked with the international scenario presented in the point before, the third ECRI country report on Switzerland underlines, for the first time, that Muslims, the second largest religious community in the country with 300.000 members (Federal Census 2000) are among targeted groups. As reported by this report (ECRI 2004, p. 12):

Representatives of Muslim communities have indicated that although hostility towards Muslims may not be overtly expressed, problems exist when Muslim communities try to organize places of worship, meeting places or burial grounds, as some local authorities are reluctant to grant planning permission for such projects.

Despite being the first time ECRI reports that Muslim communities are among targeted or vulnerable groups is noticeable that, by 2004 already,

the ECRI recommended to Swiss authorities to strengthen their efforts towards reducing and combating discrimination against this group specifically considering the practice of their religion (ECRI 2000, p. 20). Public opinion regarding this group started to be more and more present since that moment onwards and the Swiss government, being aware of this escalation reinforced their strategies to disseminate correct messages to the population in order to erode myths and prejudices. But very often just an image, just a populist political campaign or slogan can be able of destroying months or years of aware raising. By reading these ECRI reports on Switzerland we can observe that climate of opinion regarding foreigners was worsening since 1999 despite these political and governmental efforts in combating discrimination and xenophobia. Equally, an increasing “general stigmatization of black Africans” was reported (ECRI 2004, p. 22).

To sum up this overview, is interesting to note that the fourth ECRI report on Switzerland coincides with a very special socio-economic and political context. On one hand the economic crisis was beaten markets and societies all over the world, politically speaking, migration policies have become more restricted, the European parliamentary elections in 2009 revealed the raising of the right-wing and security and international counter-terrorism measures are dominating the political panorama. Within this context public opinion is much more vulnerable and irresponsible public discourses grasp this occasion for increasing their overall influence achieving great, and, sometimes unsuspected results.

Considering these facts, in Switzerland some other advances were evident during 2008. The New Law of Foreigners is an example and it aims at increasing measures for integrating foreigners at local levels, permitting through that an improvement in the public life. This legal disposition coincides with the fact that Federal authorities showed their opposition to certain “intolerant parliamentary motions and request for referendum, such as the request for a referendum aimed at banning the construction of minarets” (ECRI 2009, p. 8). These actions and reactions started to be a politically correct opposition to certain propositions, coming specially from the right wing.

From 2007 onwards the Swiss People’s Party ,started to produce caustic and racist billboards in a number of political campaigns. As has been recognized by ECRI, since 2007, and given the highest score obtained by UDC during the parliamentary federal elections – with 29 percent – this party shown a “dangerous polarization in political discourse” (ECRI 2009,

p. 8). Evidently this slanted discourse entailed xenophobic or racist responses. The 'Chronologie Racism' 2007, revealed that the number of racist events increased a 30 percent. Thereupon this trend has grown and the political radicalization has used a number of threaten symbols to achieve their populist objectives.

In 2007, during the Federal Election political campaign three white sheeps kicked away a black one from the Swiss territory. This was the publicity used by UDC to defend their proposal of expulsing foreigners who committed crimes in Switzerland. In 2008 there were two more examples of this kind of 'political' behavior. UDC, yet again, to defend their proposal against the free mobility within the European Union and the inclusion of Romania and Bulgaria in the European space designed a billboard in which some black crows were picking on a Swiss map. The decision of choosing some black crows was explained by Tony Brunner, UDC national president: "The crows are birds of prey, they are aggressive and burglars and they threaten the existence of other birds" (Swissinfo 2008)³. Moreover, some other political representatives of the UDC, like the national counselor Yvan Perrin, defined Bulgaria and Romania as the "European third world".




During the same year, another initiative was launched by the UDC, aiming at promoting 'democratic naturalizations' processes, given that they considered that there is a direct correlation between the number of foreigners and the number of crimes. The images selected for this political proposal showed a number of avid hands – with skins of different colors and evidently belonging to foreigners – trying to grab Swiss passports. At the same time the populist party *Lega dei Ticinesi* from the Swiss Italian speaking part, plastered the canton with similar images, although their impact was more reduced given their geographical influence.

The table below shows these billboards chronologically and shows how the population voted against these proposals. We can observe how the UDC exploited this way of doing racist political communication and although their proposals did not succeed, these images of dangerousness, of threaten, this sowing of icons and images have had an effect on public opinion and at the end, they harvested an 'unexpected' success – according with electoral forecasts – during the referendum against the construc-

3 <http://www.swissinfo.ch/ita/index/Tre_corvi_contro_la_libera_circolazione.html?cid=7125092>.

tion of minarets, despite federal and cantonal legal measures to combat racism and discrimination.

Table n° 2. UDC political campaigns.

<i>Billboard</i>	<i>Election proposal/ Data</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Party</i>
	To expulse foreigners who have committed crimes. 2007.	No votation.	UDC
	Against Free circulation EU and EU enlargement Bulgaria and Romania. 8th of February 2008.	Failed. Yes: 59.6 percent. No: 40.4 percent.	UDC
	Promoting Democratic naturalizations. 1st of June 2008.	Failed. Yes: 36.2 percent. No: 63.8 percent.	UDC

Source: Swiss Federal Chancellery.

To recap slightly, a comparison among the four reports could illuminate the evolution of the treatment of the Muslim community and Islam as a targeted group. Within the first and the second report (ECRI 1998 and 2000) there were no references to Muslim communities. Conversely and quantitatively speaking 13 references appeared within the ECRI 2004 re-

port and 39 in 2009 becoming that year the most cited group overcoming the group of Black people with 35 references. This growth is an evidence of how political discourse used strategically this group for achieving political consensus and influence avoiding any moral or ethical position. This overview permits now to understand better why and how the outcomes of the referendum against the construction of new minarets were a political success.

Voting on Symbols: Excess of Democracy?

Functionality and symbolism are constitutive parts of the architectural discourse, and perhaps, towers represent materially this duality better than other kind of construction. From the tower of Babel, to the Lighthouse of Alexandria, passing through the Eiffel Tower, the Twin towers or the latest Burj Khalifa, towers are a strong symbolic representation of power. The destruction of such symbols is strictly tied up with the destruction or elimination of identity and cultural features. Probably the most recent episode which remembers this symbolism, is the destruction of the Twin Towers in 2001. At smaller scale and with different nuances, the minarets controversy in Switzerland had a similar symbolic dimension.

As was presented in the precedent epigraph the political discourse of the Swiss right wing started to be evidently racist and xenophobic from 2006 onwards. Specifically the controversy against the construction of minarets started in Switzerland can be traced back in 2005 when the Turkish centre based in Wangen bei Olten (Canton of Solothurn) presented a project to build a minaret of 6 meters high. After a long administrative process this minaret was erected just in 2009, 4 years after of the submission of the proposal. One year later, in 2006 and until 2008 members of the Swiss People's Party and of the Federal Democratic Union promoted a popular initiative to impede the construction of such architectural elements. But given that all cantonal parliaments found the proposal against the principles of the constitution (Stüssi, 2008), it was not successful. In trying to achieve the expected political results, in 2007 the Egerkingen Committee launched a federal popular initiative.


By analyzing the precedent facts, it would be questionable to what extent the press and the Media freedom are still defensible by constitutional rights when such examples of explicit racism and xenophobia are flooding cities with absolute impunity. There exists, thus, a clear contradiction between fundamental rights against racism and xenophobia, on one hand, and press and Media freedom on the other hand. Conversely, it is important to underline that more than one year before the referendum, the Federal Commission Against Racism (FCR) released a report against this initiative by expressing in the first point that “The People’s initiative against the construction of minarets should be rejected” because among other important aspects:

The initiative violates religious freedom as protected by human rights, as well as the freedoms of religious belief and conscience enshrined in Article 15 of the Swiss Federal Constitution. A minaret ban would restrict the right of Muslims to practice their religion as individual and in groups [...] The initiative creates anxiety among majority communities and minorities. It restricts the rights of Muslims, giving rise to concerns within the Muslim communities about how much further such restrictions might go in future. Furthermore the advocates of the initiative are deliberating creating fear among the majority population of creeping Islamization, which is seen as constituting a threat. The fact that there are no serious integration problems with Muslims in Switzerland with regard with the practice of their religion is entirely ignored (FDR October 2008, p. 3–4).

But despite these Federal manifestations no further measures were taken, probably because it was assumed that this referendum would be rejected massively or because the strength of monitoring institutions is not strong enough. Considering the first theory, is clear that there was not problems of integration of the Muslim communities in Switzerland so far as has been highlighted above by the FDR or by Fulvio Pezzati (*Corriere del Ticino*, 30th of November 2009, p. 3).⁴ Considering the second theory, which could work in correlation with the first one, the ECRI recommended that the consolidation and further development of the Federal Commission Against Racism, the Federal Service for Combating Racism and the Federal Commission for Migration Issues was needed and necessary (ECRI 2009, p. 9). That fact reveals the weakness of these institutions at a practical level. The table below shows the billboard and the outcomes of this referendum.

4 President of the Commission for the Integration of Foreigners in the Swiss Italian canton.

Table 3. Minarets.

<i>Billboard</i>	<i>Election proposal/ Data</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Party</i>
	<p>Referendum against the construction of new minarets.</p> <p>29th of November 2009.</p>	<p>Succeed.</p> <p>Yes: 57.5 percent.</p> <p>No: 42.5 percent.</p>	<p>UDC</p>

Source: Swiss Federal Chancellery.

Probably the characteristics of the Swiss direct democratic system impeded political and social forces to block emphatically the referendum against the construction of new minarets. Allegedly, Swiss people did not question themselves deeply about the legitimacy of this political initiative. In any case, this proposal was completely symbolic and significant and, for sure, followed the international trend which is punishing Muslim communities, Islam and international migration in general, specially considering the current economic and political context.

Finally, Switzerland a multicultural and neutral country by definition, situated in the heart of Europe votes for a constitutional ban of the construction of further minarets. The 57.4 percent of the national voters in Switzerland approved this ban on the 29th of November 2009. The Swiss People's Party, the largest political party, known for its anti-immigrant stance called the referendum and Schuler, one of the leaders of the Egerkingen Committee, which authored the bill, and a lawmaker from the conservative Swiss People's Party, declared in a telephone interview: "the minaret is a political symbol against integration; a symbol more of segregation, and first of all, a symbol to try to introduce Sharia law parallel to Swiss rights" (Lauter, 2009, para. 3). Although pre-election polls predicted a defeat of the referendum, it has been shown in many studies that these correlations are not positive across the board when it comes to political correct statement on issues of social policy, security, etc. versus anonymous voting procedures.

International Perceptions and International Organizations' Reactions

The 400,000 Muslims in Switzerland, the Muslim community in the rest of Europe, liberal democratic thinkers, centre and left wing parties alike, as well as international agency such as Amnesty International express warnings over the growing tension reflected in the outcome of the Swiss referendum. As opposed to the functions of minarets in Arab countries outlined above, the role of the minarets in Europe, however, is symbolic in nature as no muezzin calls the faithful in the traditional way using a megaphone. Yet, with this outcome in mind a few questions shall be put posed: How is the right to freedom of religious expression interpreted by Europeans? What about European fundamental rights? Could the construction of mosques (and minarets) constitute a fundamental step towards the integration of Muslims?

Article eight of the International covenant on civil and political rights (CCPR) of the United Nations about the "Consideration of reports submitted by the states parties under article 40 of the covenant – Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee: Switzerland" states:

The Committee is concerned about the referendum initiative aimed at prohibiting the construction of minarets and about the discriminatory advertising campaign which accompanies it. It notes that the State party does not support this referendum initiative which, if adopted, would bring the State party into non-compliance with its obligations under the Covenant (arts. 2, 18, 20). The State party should strenuously ensure respect of freedom of religion and firmly combat incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence (Human Rights Committee, 2009, para. 8).

The European Court of Justice in Strasbourg now deals with the outcome of the referendum due to an appeal against the referendum decision lodged by Hafid Ouardiri, the former speaker of the mosque in Geneva, arguing that the ban violates the right to freedom of religion and the non-discrimination rule. Ouardiri argues that by signing the European Convention of Human Rights Switzerland has accepted that the European Court of Justice has power over certain fundamental rights which are not to be questioned by the populace (Anon, 2009c).

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay, declared that the ban is against international law, and an act of discrimination.

Acknowledging that the government itself did not support the referendum initiative, she deplors the exploitation of a latent fear of the other and that initiatives like that would split the society:

Politics based on xenophobia or intolerance is extremely disquieting, wherever it occurs [...]. We are not at that point in Switzerland, but this initiative, taken alongside some of the blatantly xenophobic posters used in this and several recent political campaigns targeting asylum-seekers, migrants or foreigners in general, is a part of an extremely worrying trend (United Nations, 2009, para. 5).

Article nine of the European Convention for Human Rights determines liberty of religion. However, the modalities with which this shall be guaranteed are not stipulated precisely. For this reason, the Swiss referendum does not constitute a violation of the European normative, is not a judicial question but an ethical-political one, interprets Cassese, an expert for international law at the University of Florence (Squillaci and Terlizzi, 2009, p. 18).

Cordone (2009, para. 2, 4, 7, 9), the senior director of Amnesty International, states that

from a strictly legal point of view, the construction of minarets is now prohibited in Switzerland [...]. Even if the Swiss Federal Supreme Court does not reject the law, the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg almost certainly will [...]. First, xenophobic and, specifically, Islamophobic sentiment is much more widespread than even the most pessimistic observers had thought [...]. Second, the failure of civil society and the leading mainstream political parties to campaign aggressively against the referendum was clearly a big mistake.

The Swiss government – concerned over the possible negative consequences on the national economy (7 percent of the export goes to Islamic countries) pulls water over the fire explicating that the vote against the construction of new minarets is not a vote against the liberty of religion. However, governments throughout Europe are concerned because of impending destabilisation and the emerging Islamophobia. In fact, shortly after this was announced the right-wing party ‘Lega’ demanded such a referendum to be held also in Italy adopting the triumphant model of Switzerland. And to top it all, vice-minister Castelli proposed to insert the cross as a religious symbol of Christianity in the banner as to undoubtedly recall the catholic roots of an Italian identity (Folli, 2009, p. 18).

As reported by the biggest print media in south Germany it would never be feasible and legal to put such a question to a referendum (Preuß,

2009, p. 2). Never? Well, with one exception so far: in the small town of Schlüchtern in Germany the republicans initiated in 2002 a referendum and behold 53.4 percent voted in favor of the project. However, there have been two further attempts for a referendum to stop the construction of a mosque in Berlin. These were, however, blocked by the city council arguing that they constitute a violation of freedom of religion and the building law (Preuß, 2009, p. 2).

European and Arab Media Reactions

An analysis of the reactions of the Swiss voting results reported by the main print media in Europe reveals a complex picture of this problem. The weekly German magazines *Der Spiegel* as well as *Die Welt* interpret the outcome of the referendum as a victory of the fear of 'Eurabia': diffuse discomfort, vague misgivings led to this shocking but clear statement. A ghost called 'direct democracy' seems to circulate: when the populace has the power to govern and take decisions directly, it may well happen that it holds beliefs diverging from the ruling government or from the political correct statement. However, the outcome of the referendum as regards the quest of minarets astonished also the Swiss themselves. The pre-election polls gave diverging prognoses.

On top of that, the political establishment supported by the main print media warned that a 'yes vote' would maneuver Switzerland into an outcast position threatening with a boycott of Arabian states. However, the proclaimed outcome was reversed. Therefore, this outcome as reported in this weekly magazines by some is interpreted as an act of bravery rather than an expression of fear: the majority of the populace has in contrast to the recommendations of the governing bodies and economic entities taken a diverging standpoint (Brandt et al., 2009, p. 112; Ayaan Hirsi Ali, 2009).

The main reasons for this result as analyzed by one of the major German newspapers, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, lies in the huge skepticism of the Swiss people against Islam and the will for integration of the rapidly growing Islamic minority, now being at 400,000. Switzerland has always been proud of its secular tradition (Altweg, 2009, p. 2). The minaret was interpreted as symbol of the political Islam, as a marker that

Muslims want to distinct themselves from the Swiss cultural identity and develop a parallel society. The headings of the main German tabloid, *Bild*, allege that the Swiss have anti-Islamic motives. An opinion-poll amongst online-readers revealed 82 percent opponents of minarets in Germany (*Bild online*, 2009).

In Austria, *Der Standard* comes to the Swiss government's defense emphasizing that while the leading political establishment does not support the outcome the ugly face of direct democracy has been shown. In contrast, BZÖ general secretary Martin Strutz and FPÖ-chairman Heinz-Christian Strache expressed were delighted with the outcome (Bonanomi, 2009). The *Salzburger Nachrichten* title that a ban of minarets is so not an issue in Austria and that the outcome is a heavy blow against integration. Heuberger (2009) claims: Switzerland has manoeuvred itself internationally on the political sidelines and the neologism 'self-character assassination' would hit it all.

In France, *La Croix*, poses the question whether this kind of referendum would reveal similar results in other European countries. In times of high unemployment rates immigrants are seen as a threat. The rejection and mistrust expressed by the referendum are interpreted as harmful to Muslims and Christians alike banning the construction of new minarets while allowing the construction of walls of misunderstanding (Anon, 2009a, p. 2). The *Figaro* proclaimed that the new constitutional amendment was not deemed legal appropriate and that Switzerland could be forced to revoke its claim. The Swiss justice minister, Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, gave cause for serious concern and expressed her warning that the whole initiative would constitute a violation of human rights (Anon, 2009b).

In Italy, as outlined earlier, the right wing party *Lega* made heavy use of the news by calling for a similar referendum and the Pdl for a redesign of the national flag showing the roots of this catholic nation. In an interview with the Imam of the mosque in Milan, it was revealed that the place of worship being invisible was never a bon of contention (Casadio, 2009). *La Stampa* reports from the Vatican who interprets this outcome as an obstacle to integration and mutual respect. Fini, breathes a sign of relief that the bright idea put forward by the Pdl only lasted one morning. It is reported that the discussion over the referendum splits the Italian political establishment (La Mattina, 2009).

In Poland, the *Rzeczpospolita*, the Warsaw daily newspaper, signalizes sympathy for the outcome of the referendum interpreting it as a sign of

growing discomfort of the populace with the political attitude in relation to the integration of Muslim immigrants in Europe. In the Netherlands, *Trouw*, Amsterdam daily newspaper, cautions against a polarization of society because the ban refers to a religious symbol with political meaning and relevance (Anon, 2009a, p. 2).

In the British *Guardian* the main article by Tariq Ramadan, himself a Swiss citizen, is titled "The Swiss have voted not against towers, but Muslims. Across Europe, we must stand up to the flame-fanning populists". Ramadan freely expresses his 'Anti-Helvetism' stand:

For the first time since 1893 an initiative that singles out one community, with a clear discriminatory essence, has been approved in Switzerland. One can hope that the ban will be rejected at the European level (Ramadan, 2009, para. 2).

He further urges for the fight against populism but argues that we can't blame them alone but that there is a lack of courage, of trust in the new Muslim citizens of Europe. Islam has become a European religion and that together with our Muslim citizens we have to tackle societal problems such as unemployment, poverty, and violence (Ramadan, 2009). BBC News titles "Swiss referendum 'reflects unease with Islam'". "They [the Muslims] are seen as not just resistant to integration, but determined to impose their values on the Christian or post-Christian societies of the West" (BBC News 2009, para. 9).

Considering the Islamic and the Arab world this event has been obviously discussed in national newspapers. Abdallah (2009) has done an interesting media analysis of the Arab world considering three levels: the Media reaction, the religious reaction and the official reaction. For example, *Al-Raya* from Qatar expressed that was amazing how in a country with such a long tradition in freedom of speech and direct democracy principles acted in that way. For the Tunisian newspaper *Assabah*, "the stigmatisation of Islam in the West is no longer a question of mere media provocation" (Swissinfo 30th of November 2009). For *El Watan* – Kuwait – this referendum is a clear symptom of "European mental regression, a return to the Middle Ages and a desire to eliminate others" (Swissinfo, 30th of November 2009).

Obviously, there were some reactions regarding the possible consequences Switzerland and Europe could suffer after this referendum. As has been quoted by Abidi (2009), this event is one of the best excuses Gheddafi could dispose to manipulate the latent diplomatic conflict between Switzer-

land and Libya, who already said in July 2009 that Switzerland is one of the sources of the Al-Qaeda terrorism given that their money is deposited in Swiss banks (Hammadouche, 2009). Following a similar rationale, *Al-hayat*, thinks that these outcomes would reinforce the statements of Islamic extremist movements and would justify their future violent actions against this 'declared' European islamophobia (Al-Haddad, 2009).

However, despite these manifestations there is another aspect which would seem to be counterintuitive. As has been stressed by *The Jakarta Post*, the Swiss referendum has had more impact in western press rather than in the Muslim-Arab world. By quoting Abshar Abdallah (2009)

[...] the easiest shot at an answer is that the incident in Switzerland is not explosive enough to stir a wide controversy [...] Another possibility is that the Danish cartoon controversy taught Muslims a good lesson. The whole mess that has been conducted in the name of defending the Prophet after the outbreak of the Danish cartoon controversy seemed to tarnish the image of Islam.

This fact is actually important to understand better how this controversy has been considered in western countries and in Arab-Muslim countries alike.

In Europe there is a notable social awareness regarding the fight against racism and discrimination and obviously, it is politically incorrect to do not criticise these events. For example lots of money are invested in social initiatives at the level of the European Commission, UNESCO – 2010 is the UNESCO international year for the rapprochement of cultures – or organisations of the third sector. Probably this is one of the main reasons behind the fact that this controversy has had much more resonance in Western countries rather than in the Arab-Muslim world.

Conclusions

The Swiss controversy has surely alerted western societies regarding to what extent, in contemporary, developed and democratic countries, political discourse can provoke serious damages at unsuspected levels. This case study reveals first of all, how the political discourse can take advantage of the international context to promote initiative against groups perfectly

integrated in hosting societies. Thus, apart from any kind of acknowledged social problem, through political communication is possible to construct threatens.

Secondly, the results of this referendum are not an isolated event. Over the past years and specially from 2006 onwards, the current first Swiss political force, started to promote a number a populist political campaigns using, irresponsibly, threatening images regarding foreign communities, exulting and enhancing the Swiss tradition of isolation and mining a social fabric constructed upon the basis of the multiculturalism.

Thirdly, intuitively, theory can assure that a higher level of education can provide individuals and collectivities a higher critic sense to ponder events. This case study may demonstrate that beyond the degree of education, economic development and social 'engagement', a properly orchestrated populist and simplistic discourse can achieve notable results. This is even more shocking in a 'neutral' country with a long-standing tradition of humanitarian aid and multiculturalism.

Fourthly, we can appreciate that there is a lack of connection or coherence when we analyze the aim and the scope of legal articles belonging to the Constitution. On one hand, international regulations against racism, discrimination and xenophobia are being adopted, recognized and assumed by the Swiss constitution, but at the same time, some other articles by accepting *tout-court* press and media freedom, could be contradictory with these high principles of social and constructive coexistence. This contradiction is evident within this case study, because these examples of political communication jeopardize and ignore international and national legal dispositions alike.

Fifthly, this case demonstrates that the referendum success is not an isolated event. Linked with the precedent point, the political forces behind this initiative, the first political force of the country, mainly, started to exhibit this discourse and this kind of racist and xenophobic publicity since 2006. Previously, Swiss citizens aborted some of their proposals but at the end, the accumulation of images, populist concepts and all the political panoply released had an effect.

Sixthly, this case demonstrate that beyond the pedagogical effort done by the Swiss government over the years to reduce dangerous stereotypes and radical discourses, a simplistic political campaign can ruin all efforts.

Seventhly, this success can legitimize and enhance extremist political discourses in neighbor countries like Italy, Germany, France, The Nether-

lands, the UK (etc.) and, through that, promote an hostile social environment within a context of political orientation to the right-wing as was certified during the last European parliamentary elections. In addition, European governments should act monitoring and applying international regulation to those who are promoting this kind of public discourse, even though important political forces are behind these proposals. This would guarantee the policy coherence at any level and can reinforce the moral consistency of international law, which image could be damaged due to arbitrary interpretations.

Finally, this political coherence is needed because by accepting these proposals it would be expected a radicalization of political forces belonging to the Arab-Muslim world and through that, new episodes of violence and cultural misunderstanding doomed to increase.

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Contributors

ANNEMARIE PROFANTER is an expert in education and psychology. She is a tenured member of the Faculty of Education at the Free University of Bolzano, Italy. She has been visiting lecturer in Pakistan, Oman and Saudi Arabia.

ASSIA KACED is a Ph. D. candidate at the department of English, University of Algiers, Algeria. She holds a master in Sociology.

CARMEN SAMMUT is a lecturer at the International Relations Department of the University of Malta. She specialized in media and culture in international affairs. Sammut is also a regular media exponent. Sammut participates in newspaper analysis programmes and contributes a blog on the newsportal <www.maltatoday.com.mt>.

DAVIDE VIGNATI is a journalist and presently he is correspondent at the Swiss parliament in Bern. He also worked as communication coordinator for the International Committee of the Red Cross with stints in Africa, Middle East and Asia.

HOCINE LABDELAOUI is professor of sociology at the University of Algier, Algeria and runs the Migration Studies Programme. He is associate consultant at the Centre for Research in Applied Economics, Population and Development.

IVAN URETA is a formerly senior researcher at the Institute for Mediterranean Studies, University of Lugano. Currently, he works as a research and teaching fellow at the Department of Middle East and Mediterranean Studies, King's College London, as a research fellow at the World Habitat Research Centre, University of Applied Sciences of Southern Switzerland and as an associate professor at the Geneva School of Diplomacy.

MOHA ENNAJI is one of the leading North-African socio-linguists. Full professor who has been affiliated with Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah Uni-

versity since 1982. Ennaji is President of the South-North Centre for Intercultural Dialogue and Migration Studies, Fez, Morocco.

NICOLÁS LORITE is professor of Audiovisual Communication at the Faculty of Communication Sciences, Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain. Responsible for projects on intercultural dinamization appointed by the Secretariat of State for Emigration and Immigration, Spanish Government. Lorite is director of *Migracom*.

TAEIB EL-BAHLOUL is associate professor in the Faculty of Arts at Al-Fateh University, Libya. Formerly, Dean and Head of the History Department at the same University.

VICKEN CHETERIAN is a Geneva-based political scientist, working at CIMERA. His research interests include conflicts, peace-building, nationalism, transition, democratization, and environment and security. He is the founder of the Caucasus Media Institute in Yerevan, Armenia, which he directed from 2002 to 2005.