

University of Al-Qarawiyyin's Position Regarding the French Educational Policy Between 1918 – 1925

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Abstract

The University of Al-Qarawiyyin began to confront the French educational policy since 1919 after the end of the First World War in 1918. That was after the French Resident General, Hubert Lyautey, began adopting a new policy in Morocco, one of which is the educational policy, through which, he sought to obliterate the Arabic and Islamic identity of Moroccans, and then Francization of Moroccans, and linking them to the French culture.

Accordingly, the research was divided into two topics, the first topic deals with French educational policy in Moroccan cities in its first section, and how was education divided into a whole system and departments based on religious, class, and ethnic foundations. The French, via those types of education, pursued an existing educational policy to tear-apart the Moroccan fabric, and prohibiting Moroccans from granting sufficient opportunities to learn various sciences. While the second section of the topic deals with the French educational policy in the countryside regions inhabited by the Berbers, who are the Arab component with the prominent effect on the Moroccan social fabric.

As for the second topic, it deals with the position of Al-Qarawiyyin University as a Moroccan educational institution that, for hundreds of years, supervised the foundations of education in the country, and prepared the Moroccan students so that they obtained the highest university degrees. In establishing these schools, the second section of the topic deals with the curricula of free schools and their types, with an example of free schools (Nasiriyah School in Fes)

Keywords: French educational policy, Moroccan cities, Berbers, Al-Qarawiyyin University, Free Schools, Nasiriyah School, educational curricula.

Introduction

At the beginning of 1919, Al-Qarawiyyin University began preparing its practical steps to respond to the educational policy pursued by the French Protectorate Department in Morocco, through the establishment of free schools that adopted the teaching of Arab and Islamic curricula in its education. That was after the scholars of Al-Qarawiyyin University have recognized the dangers of the French educational policy on the language and religion of Moroccans. The University of Al-Qarawiyyin was the institution responsible for teaching and nurturing Moroccans the Arabic, humanitarian, literary, and religious sciences to Moroccans for hundreds of years.

When I conducted this research, I relied upon a wide-range of sources that helped me draw up a plan to write the topic as required after obtaining the required resources, so that I could present a topic that would appeal to the readers.

On this basis, the research was divided into two topics. The first topic dealt with the French educational policy in the Moroccan cities, and how it was divided according to religious, ethnic, and class agendas. In this research, we also deal with French educational policy in Berber regions, and the nature of teaching curricula in those regions.

As for the second topic, we reviewed how the University of Al-Qarawiyyin responded to the French educational policy through its scholars and students, and their role in establishing free schools, supervising, and teaching in them. We also reviewed the curricula that were adopted in free schools, its quality and types.

The First Topic

First: French Educational Policy in Moroccan Cities:

After France imposed its complete control over the Far West, it worked to control the country culturally, to subjugate its inhabitants, then Francize them, and directly subjugate them to the French, by following a French policy based on creating schools with special specifications, aimed at eliminating Moroccan principles, and marginalizing the Arabic language and the Islamic religion. (Paye, 1992, P. 206).

In spite of that policy, General Hubert Lyautey has intentionally made the Moroccans believe that he would preserve their traditions, especially in the field of religious education before 1919. But after 1920, he followed a different policy, as the Public Education Directorate was established, which was managed by the French, and its administration was assigned an employee of the French administration George Hardy. George Hardy enshrined his educational policy on the basis of separating the quality of education in urban areas and the countryside (G. Hardy, 1926, P.16).

The education policy in urban areas was distinguished by religious and class discrimination, and accordingly, education was divided into three types according to the religious difference in Morocco at the time, considering that the European community in the Far Morocco has its own education system, and that they must receive special treatment even in the quality of their education, which was known as European education. After issuing a special lineabcker in this regard on September 29th, 1921, according to which, European education was granted three quarters of the education budget allocated by the Moroccan state for the field of education, as education in European schools was similar to education in France in terms of stages of study and teaching methods (Al-Jabri, 1973, p.18).

As for the second type of education was in accordance with the religious division. The Jewish education, which was special to the Moroccan Jewish community, for which the French Protectorate Department created a special system. In addition to the Jewish Union schools already existed in Morocco before the protection, the French-Israeli schools were added as well.

Those schools were supported by the French, and they were allocated the same privileges as European education, noting that the first type was also receiving the support of the World Jewish Union Organization. Among the other privileges that these schools obtained, was allowing the Jews, after completing their secondary studies, to complete their studies in France, and the same applies to Moroccans, except in certain and rare cases (Al-Talhi, 1994, p. 101).

As for the third type of education, it was (Islamic-French education), in which the French Protectorate Department made sure to be limited in spread, and it prevented Moroccan students from enrolling in European or Jewish schools (Al-Jabri, 1973, pp. 15-16).

However, and despite the fact that these schools were known to be limited, they were built on a class basis, as the Public Education Directorate invoked that it did not want to destabilize Moroccan society, and harm its traditions. According to what was stated in the Protection Treaty in that aspect, under the pretext of adherence to its contents, education was divided according to different classes of the Moroccan Society (Al-Jabri, 1973, p. 19).

The first types of these schools are the sons of notables schools, in which the children of senior employees associated with the Makhzen government were accepted, and the lessons were given in the French language first, and after Sheikh Muhammad bin Al-Hassan Al-Hajwi was able to persuade General Hubert Lyautey to adopt the Arabic language in Islamic-French schools, after his return as director of Sciences and Knowledge Delegation, which has been reintroduced again in 1921 (Al-Thaalabi, DT, p. 199). Just so to study the Arabic language for five hours compared to twenty-five hours for the French language, in literature and memorizing the Qur'an after the assignment of Moroccan teachers to it. The graduates of those schools were enrolled At Moulay Idris High School in Fes, or the Arab-Berber Studies High School in Rabat (Al-Jabri, 1973, pp. 17-18).

The purpose of these schools was to graduate a group of educated people to work in government administrative jobs, while graduates of al-Qarawiyyin University used to do these administrative tasks. Thus, the French created a means of pressure on the university to limit the jobs of its graduates on religious matters only.

And it seems that the purpose of educating the son of notables is to link this specific social class, which is clinging to the French culture, to the French Protectorate administration, and to form a generation that will become a link between the Moroccans and the French (Marty, 1925, P.178).

As for the other type of Islamic-French education schools, it is (public education) for the children of the general population of the Moroccan people in the metropolitan areas and country sides, and also the teaching was in the French language, with only three hours of Arabic teaching per week, while memorizing some Surahs from the Holy Qur'an. Although, these schools were French in essence, Moroccan in appearance (Al-Yazidi, 2015, p. 181).

Nevertheless, the graduates of these schools were receiving vocational education influenced by the economic situation in which they were living, in order to create a trained Moroccan workforce that could be used in the service of French economic interests (Marty, 1925, PP.148-159).

On the other hand, the French were not satisfied with neglecting the Arabic language and marginalizing it in schools, considering that **“it has no role in human civilization as opposed to the French language, the language of civilization and progress”** (Al-Talhi, 1994, p. 215). The French worked to teach the Moroccan students everything related to the European historical and civilizational heritage, and in return, they deliberately distorted the history of Moroccans and everything related to the historical and civilizational identity of the Moroccan cultural, and religious personality (Chraibi, 1978, p. 14).

It seems that France pursued this educational policy to make the Moroccan students feel, from a young age, that their country did not play any civilized role, and that those who ruled Morocco successively lived in chaos, turmoil, and revolutions (Al-Hammoudi, 2003, pp. 50-51). The French also tried to illuminate the students that **“the development wheel of Morocco is linked to the acceleration of France’s development”** (Al-Talhi, 1994, p. 215), and convinced them that **“there is no advancement for Morocco except in France and its protection, and there is no history of Morocco except the history that France wrote, for Morocco is an integral part of it, and a geographical extension of its country. As for the Arab and Islamic countries, they are far from Morocco and have nothing to do with it”** (Chraibi, 1978, p. 15). This policy was confirmed by an employee of the French administration, saying, **“We used to spread love of France in them, and the history of its glories and heroes, its battles, and that the history of France is the one that they should love and know, and we used to teach them songs and poems they were reciting in the glory of our fathers and grandfathers”** (Al-Farkh, 2018, p.85).

It is clear from the above that the French educational policy in Moroccan metropolises is intended to transform the young generation into a submissive tool in the hands of the French Protectorate, to be used in taming and integrating all Moroccans to accept and submit to the French rule. It did not stop at that point, but intended to follow an educational policy that threatens the unity of the Moroccan people, in a pursue to create chaos, and threaten the unity of the Moroccan people, especially after it carried out a different educational policy with the Berbers.

Second: The French Educational Policy in the Barbarian Regions:

The University of Al-Qarawiyyin was a destination for the people of the Berber regions, thanks to the strategic location of the city of Fes, which is surrounded by many regions with a Berber majority, and for the important services it provides to students coming from those areas, in terms of providing supplies and accommodation, and this explains that the majority of its students are hobo students, who make up about two-thirds of the university (Marty, 1925, p.80).

These features enabled Al-Qarawiyyin University to play an important role in spreading the Arabic language and the principles of the Islamic religion in those regions, since the university is the main place for teachers who teach at the Quranic schools, zawiyas, and ancient schools, which are widely spread in the Moroccan desert, and its educational curricula are the same as of the rest of the tributaries of Al-Qarawiyyin University (Albike, 1994, pp. 177-184).

It becomes clear to us that the University of Al-Qarawiyyin used to receive the barbarian student, a young man, and return him to his hometown as a jurist or scholar who would start teaching the younger generation there, based on what he had learned at the university or if he was an employee of the administrative and judicial departments.

The French administration sought to make its Barbarian policy a success, as they assigned a number of French experts who were specialized in Oriental and Islamic studies, and are familiar with the studies developed in regard to Berber regions. In addition to the results that Paul Marty and Louis Massignon have acknowledged about the nature of this society, especially the Berbers, relying on what was stated in the ideas of the Christian missionary Charles de Foucauld, who represented the most important (missionary missions) that traveled and studied these regions in terms of customs, traditions, and norms of the Berbers, and then called for their Christianization (Al-Talhi, 1994, p. 99).

Louis Massignon and Paul Marty found that the best way to separate the Berbers from the metropolitan dwellers is via Christianizing and converting them from the Islamic religion, and to achieve this they must be prevented from learning the Holy Quran and using the Arabic language in their areas (Marty, 1925, P.229).

In order to implement this policy, it was advised that education and school should be the means that should be used, and that the new generation of children should be targeted through their schools, since the generation of Berber parents had witnessed the imposition of the French Protectorate, and therefore, this policy could not be achieved with the presence of a generation which is spiteful towards France and its policy (Yazidi) (2015, p.185).

At the same time, multiple viewpoints appeared within the French administration, including the call to teach the Berbers a Secular-Western education, that leads to the activation of their nationalist ideology, and this also falls within the policy of discrimination that the French administration called for (Paye, 1992, P.29).

Nevertheless, this opinion was rejected by the French Protectorate Department, since such education may make the Berbers open-minds to the principles of freedom and equality that France claims to adopt, so the view that called for education to be religiously oriented was prominent at the schools created by the French Protection Department, which was well-known as (the French-Berber schools) (Abdel-Hamid, 1992, p. 242).

On this basis, the French administration worked on implementing its policy in the French-Berber schools, but without provoking the anger of the Berbers, and worked on convincing them of the feasibility of that education and its objectives, through impacting them psychologically. In addition to making the teachers at those schools look like the ones who are living a better life, relying on a group of Algerian teachers of Berber origins who converted to Christianity. The most prominent of them, the Algerian Sa'id Kanoun, who was assigned as a supervisor of the educational process, after assuming the duties of the rapporteur of the French Protectorate Department for Berber groups, while some jurists were previously assigned to that exact

administrative position, who were completely removed from any job duties in the state (Al-Talhi, 1994, p. 97).

In order to implement the Berber educational policy, General Hubert Lyautey issued a decree in 1920 prohibiting the use of the Arabic language, whether in education or in administrative correspondence, in order to replace it with the French language. He also issued another decision in the same year, according to which, opening of any new Quranic school was prohibited and it was disallowed to teach in Zawaya anymore. General Hubert Lyautey took the opinion of Louis Massinius, and issued another order in 1923, according to which, the Holy Qur'an was permanently prohibited from being taught in the mosques located in the Berber regions (Ibn al-Hasan, 2005, p. 86).

On the other hand, Paul Marty stressed, after he was entrusted with the duties of supervising the French-Berber schools, to implement an extremist educational policy. He commanded saying, "The Berber-French schools must be a barbarian in its students, and French in education and life." Marty carried out his policy with all vigor and arrogance, to the point that he issued the expulsion penalty towards an Algerian teacher named Mohamed El-Khidr; after he discovered that this teacher was teaching the Arabic language and Prayers to his students in one of the schools, and as a result, he issued an order through which all non-French teachers at these schools were replaced French teachers, and forbidding any relationship between jurists located in Berber regions and teachers of Berber schools (Marty, 1925, p. 228).

With all of this strict policy, the French faced difficulty spreading their education in all Berber regions, due to the vastness of these areas, and the abundance of rugged mountains and valleys that are difficult to reach for French educational personnel (Al-Talhi, 1994, p. 99).

It is clearly evident to us through the educational policy that the French pursued with the barbarian regions, through which they wanted to disperse the unity of the Moroccan Muslim people, by working to separate the barbarian element from the Arab element, and then the exclusivity of the Berbers, since the French, being the occupiers, were aware of the dangers of their presence in Far-Morocco, concurrently with the presence of people who are united linguistically and ideologically, and who follow the same religious and legislative institutions.

Therefore, this educational policy was a major challenge for Al-Qarawiyyin University, as university graduates from those regions faced difficulty finding a job opportunity, whether in teaching or administrative jobs. In addition to that, this policy worked to limit one of the most important essential supporters that was providing the university with its students. This prompted the Moroccan elite in general, and the scholars and students of Al-Qarawiyyin University in particular, to take practical steps to respond to the French educational policy via establishing the so-called free schools' movement.

The Second Topic

First: Al-Qarawiyyin University Forms the Educational Frameworks for Free Schools:

The scholars of the University of Al-Qarawiyyin and those with them from the notables and merchants of the city of Fes realized, at first glance, the extent of the danger of the French educational policy on the Moroccan national identity, through its endeavor to marginalize and obliterate the Arabic language and Islamic religion (Dimes, 1991, p. 24). The villagers and intellectuals of Far-Morocco noticed the apparent contradiction in France's educational policy, while the French Protectorate Department used to invite the children of Moroccans to enroll in their schools, it was obstructing their enrollment at the same time (El-Dafaly, 2014, p. 293). Since the total of Moroccans who were entitled to get to University, only 2% of Moroccans were enrolled, while the percentage of enrolled students from the Moroccan Jewish community was about (90%) (Damis, 1991, p. 25).

In addition, the scholars of the University of Al-Qarawiyyin have been alerted to the subtle dangers of French schools, especially after the French teachers have sowed some concepts in the hearts of young students through inciting and contesting the history of the Islamic Morocco, and working to make students despise their religion (Chraibi, 1978, p. 14). This prompted parents to refrain from enrolling their children in these schools, fearing that they would become French, deteriorate and make them neglect their Islamic religion, and converting towards Christianity or atheism (Al-Farkh, 2018, p. 86).

This trend was reinforced by the arrival of jurisprudential and intellectual books from the Islamic East, and their spread in the cities of (Fes and Rabat). Including a book, which was widely spread among Moroccans and they were strongly influenced by, which is the book (Guiding the Confused people, and Warning Muslims from Christian Schools) by Youssef Al-Nabhani. The author of the book warned Muslims against European schools because, according to his opinion, it **“corrupts the faith and alienates the youth from the Sharia”** (Al-Nabhani, 197, p. 13).

In addition, Moroccans were alerted to the existence of some kind of stagnation and failure to keep pace with contemporary education, whether in mosques, zawiyas, or even religious schools, and to limit education to the old curriculum, which is based upon memorizing religious texts taught in the manner of recitation only (Chraibi, 1978, p. 15).

The aforementioned would motivate scholars at Al-Qarawiyyin University to respond to French education on the one hand, and try to break the deadlock in Moroccan basic education on the other hand, by establishing pure Moroccan schools, known as free schools.

Free schools were established after the scholars of Al-Qarawiyyin University agreed with the intellectuals, as these schools were opened via donations from the people. As for the place, it was either a mosque which was renovated into a school, or a religious Zawiya of one (Sufi Principles), or even renting or buying a house. That was usually done by collecting donations from people who somehow live a good life (Dimes, 1991, pp. 24-33).

After choosing a committee to supervise the school from senior scholars and some notables and merchants, that committee, in turn, would choose the teaching staff, who would be chosen from scholars and jurists at Al-Qarawiyyin University, or sometimes from university students who were at advanced stages of study, and those who were known to be competent and own remarkable scientific ability (Al-Wazzani, 1984, p. 376).

The free schools were not known at the beginning with that name, but rather they were known since their founding as the Renewed Quranic Schools. But after their spread in all Moroccan cities, because those who oversaw their establishment, donation, and teaching in them are Moroccans without French or Moroccan government interference, so it was named by its founders. In the Free School, it is free as a reference to not being submissive to the General Education Directorate of the French Protectorate Department, and outside the French supervisors in the Directorate (Dimes, 1991, p. 7)

The freedom of that school lies in the fact that its financial funding was outside the budget of the protected state and the French Protectorate Department. It was self-funded, and adopted by the school founding committee, and then relying on the monthly tuition fees paid by the students, and the financial aid from notables and merchants had an important source of funding these schools. What helped reduce expenses was that most of the scholars or students who were in these schools volunteered to work for free, or for low wages, while students who were unable to pay were exempted from monthly subscriptions (Al-Dafaly, 2014, p. 261).

It is worth noting that a number of students of Moulay Idris High School in the city of Fes volunteered to teach in those schools, especially the French language, and this helped deepen their relationship with the students and scholars of the University of Al-Qarawiyyin who were studying in those schools (Paye, 1992, P.226), which would have a great influence on the national movement later.

On this basis, the first free schools were established in the city of Fes in 1919, which was known as the Sidi Bennani School, and the committee managers and supervisors for that school were chosen from a number of scholars of Al-Qarawiyyin University, namely Sheikh Muhammad Ibn Al-Arabi Al-Alawi, Sheikh Abd Al-Salam Al-Sarghini and Sheikh Muhammad Ibn Ahmed Al-Senhaji and Sheikh Ahmed Al-Balghithi, as well as the Arab jurist Al-Harishi with a group of notables. This elite committee was able to succeed in the process of opening free schools, by setting up educational frameworks, and preparing their staff of scholars and students of Al-Qarawiyyin University, and being entrusted with providing their own financial allocations (Dimes, 1991, p.44) .

The success of free schools in Fes prompted scholars, intellectuals, and notables to open schools in other cities, including Rabat, Salé, and Casablanca, and among the founders and supervisors of these schools was a number of scholars from the University of al-Qarawiyyin (Chraibi, 1978, p. 15).

We must point out at the most important components of the success of the free schools, which is the role of the owners of the zawiyas belonging to the Sufi orders, by allowing the use of the

zawiyas (which are in favor of the Sufi order), or part thereof, to establish the free schools, and not to require that the students or their parents be disciples of the Sufi, as they did not interfere with the affairs of the school, its curricula, or the orientations of its teachers (Dimes, 1991, p. 38).

Despite the donations of merchants, craftsmen, and professionals, which were received by some free schools, the majority of the free schools were suffering from a shortage in furniture, as it was limited to a mat and the like at the beginning. (Al-Talhi, 1994, p.99).

After its success in Fes, Rabat, and Casablanca, the experience of the Free School was transferred to the city of Tetouan, via the efforts of Mohamed Daoud, who returned from Fes, after obtaining his graduation certificate from the University of Al-Qarawiyyin, and he carries in his mind the idea of a free school, after he found many young people in his city, had been accepted in the Spanish education, which is a threat to the principles and religion of these young people, despite its scientific and economic benefit (Ben Jelloun, 1975, p.145).

On this basis, the jurist, who graduated from the University of Al-Qarawiyyin after his return from Fes, Muhammad Daoud, decided to open the first free school in 1925 in the city of Tetouan, which was known as The Private School, and followed the same system of free schools in Fes and Rabat with the addition of learning the Spanish language (El-Wazzani, 1984, p. 374-375).

It seems that the reason that prompted David to choose the Spanish language is due to it is the language of the occupier, so it must be learned to be able to deal with the occupiers in public life and in jobs.

Al-Qarawiyyin University scholars continued their support for free schools through advertisements, promotions, and praise. In addition to inviting parents to make their children apply through mosque sermons and in all their religious and social activities (Ben Jelloun, 1974, p.145). They urged the development of school curricula by keeping in pace with development and modernity, as well as focusing on national identity, and paying attention to national history. Muhammad bin Al-Hassan Al-Hajwi asserted that by saying, **“I am astonished for a nation that does not have study books for its glorious history, is it not strange that we take the history of our country from others, who do not even know about it as we do, and they may have damaged our dearest things unintentionally, and without prior knowledge, when he thinks he is providing benefits and good”** (Al-Farkh, 20 Y18, p. 85).

It seems that Al-Hajwi wanted to respond to the method of teaching history in French schools, and detracting from the history of his country.

The free schools also received the interest of Sheikh Abu Chaib Doukkali with the scientific and spiritual status he holds among Moroccans on the one hand, and the political status as Minister of Justice on the other, as he was keen to visit these schools in Rabat, Casablanca, and Fes in order to observe what they offer (Riad, 2005, p. 98).

On the other hand, he referred to the importance of learning the French language, by virtue of his position in the Makhzen government protected by France, as he stressed the importance of the relationship with France, saying, **“Then learn the other from the languages of Europe, especially the language of France, which is close to your country, the interests they share with you, and the union of its state with your country, whoever learned it and preserved his religion and nationalism, wins, while the merchant seeks profit in his trade, the manufacturer in his craft, the farmer is his seeds, and the claims of imitators and extremists shall not ring a bell in your heads”** (Ben Jelloun, 1974, p. 146).

On this basis, the good reputation and continuous advertisements in favor of free schools were a motivation for parents to enroll their children in them, but the matter increased to the point that some parents had to transfer their children from French Protectorate schools to the free school. In addition to some students in French Protectorate schools who applied to the summer vacation at the Free Schools. Thus, this atmosphere constituted an incentive for some students to officially leave the French School and submit their enrollment at the Free School (Al-Wazzani, 1984, p. 375).

Second: Curricula in Free Schools:

Education in the Free School was distinguished by the diversity of subjects taught in Arabic (to restore consideration to it, after being neglected by the French), Theology, and other sciences, such as History, Geography, and Logic, as well as Mathematics, (Marty, 1925, P.140) where students complete what they had started. However, education inside Free Schools, until 1925, was limited to the elementary phase (Al-Sharabi, 1978, p. 32).

Among those schools is the Nasiriyah School, as that school, thanks to its administration and its director, had the jurist Muhammad bin Ghazi and its teachers, who are among the best scholars and university students with fame and reputation, so the school witnessed a large number of students. This became applicable to all free schools (Dimes, 1991, p. 32).

The role of teachers at the Free School was not limited to teaching the curriculum only, but some teachers who were reformist scholars discussed reforming ideas with some of their students, and taught them Egyptian and Syrian patriotic songs, which they repeated enthusiastically (Al-Burki, 1993, pp. 66-67).

The Free School continued to push students towards creativity and discussion, by holding parties at events attended by scholars and parents, in which free school students compete to show their abilities in speeches, sermons, and reading poetry (Dimes, 1991, p. 45).

We can describe the establishment of free schools until 1925 as the stage of pure education, that was far from any ideological or political orientations. As all segments of Moroccan society, whether scholars, merchants, notables, Sufi orders, or the general public participated in its foundation, which was the reason for the success of this educational experience under the French occupation of Morocco.

Conclusion

After studying this topic, the following conclusions were apparent:

- 1- After the First World War, the French began adopting an education policy in Morocco based on the separation of Moroccans into religious and social sects.
- 2- The schools were divided into French, Jewish, and Moroccan, which in turn, were divided into Sons of the Notable Schools and professional schools.
- 3- The majority of Moroccans' children were unable to enter the schools established by the French, because these schools were unable to accommodate all children of Morocco who are of school age.
- 4- Free schools were able to contain the children of Moroccan cities, and teach them Arabic, and Moroccan religious sciences.
- 5- The free schools, through the University of Al-Qarawiyyin, and its scholars and students, were able to preserve the Arab, Islamic, and historical identity of Moroccans.

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