

Freedom of speech in Morocco

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SSK 1202 Project

Group C; Section n°2

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Summer 2006

July 19, 2006

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Abstract

The main purpose of this project was to investigate the level of freedom of speech in Morocco regarding many aspects like society, religion, and government. This research paper also tried to explain the relation between freedom of speech and development. The literature review demonstrated that the level of freedom of speech in Morocco is very low and that religion and democracy are the basic rights of a citizen. Regarding the tools used in this research project, the team handed out 40 surveys to AUI students from different Moroccan cities, and gave 10 surveys to AUI foreign professors who are from developed countries. In addition to that, three interviews were conducted with the inventor of the Moroccan e-government system, the Basha of the municipality of Ifrane, and the Imam of the AUI mosque in order to have professional points of views towards the issue. The responses of the respondents and the subjects confirmed that there is a lack of freedom of speech in Morocco in all the domains stated above and that freedom of speech can help Morocco develop both economically and mentally. Ultimately, Morocco has a low level of freedom of speech, but there are many solutions that can certainly increase the level of freedom of speech.

Introduction

One of the gravest problems that any society in this world can deal with is the lack of freedom of speech. As a third world and a Muslim nation, Morocco has known a high level of this devastating form of oppression that is the non existence of freedom of speech, especially in the TV media, regarding social facts such as cohabitation, alcohol, or prostitution, and also towards religion and authorities. In Morocco, there are two main TV stations, which are RTM and 2M, and they are controlled by the government, so there is no chance for a reporter who is working there to talk openly about an important politician. There is another channel which is called the Mohamed VI channel for broadcasting Koran which shows that the state is promoting Islam. The main reasons why the team has decided to do this research is that, first, the purpose is to introduce Moroccan people to liberty. Effectively, like all developed countries, even if everything is relative, the team members want Moroccans to be free to talk about anything as long as it is useful for the welfare of the country and harmless to the nation. The group also thinks that willing to gain freedom of speech is a prerogative and a human right. Unfairness is another reason for the team fight. In the twenty first century, the freedom of expression is necessary. Freedom of speech will help in the emancipation of Moroccans and it will help them to develop their country in all domains. In this research, the team members will interview specific AUI students. The fact that each one comes from a different Moroccan town is very helpful to have a global idea of the social situation in their respective cities and inform the group about what is considered as taboo or not. The team will question the foreign professors who come from developed countries as well to know the impact of freedom of speech in development. The next step will be to ask the Imam of AUI about the real position of Islam towards choosing a religion and criticizing Islam. Finally, the team members will have a meeting with the governor of Ifrane so he can give the group an idea about how far a Moroccan can criticize a person in charge of the state of any rank. In this

research, the team members assume the following:

-Moroccan people have the right to freedom of speech without any consequences.

-This right is obviously not given to Moroccans.

Ultimately, in this project, there is one main question and two sub-questions. Why can Moroccans not talk openly about society? Should Moroccans have the right to choose their own religion and criticize any religion? And can Moroccans criticize the government to improve their situation?

Literature Review

If a foreign citizen sees the perfect image of democracy that Morocco shows and claims, he or she will probably say that Moroccans are hallucinating regarding the lack of freedom of speech. Obviously there is a great difference between what the nation claims and what is really going on behind the scenes. First, a view of the era of Hassan II would be informative. Long and Reich's (2002) study found the following:

The political culture of that time facilitated the maintenance of the monarch's power, wherein *lèse-majesté*, or criticism of the monarch, was entirely forbidden. What is more, for years, the Ministry of the Interior was headed by Driss Bassri, a confidant of Hassan's from Settat. He controlled such a wide array of government powers like human rights, media, and information. (p. 409)

Nowadays, things have changed regarding the monarchy, like the release of the 2004 *Telquel* edition where journalists have talked openly about the king's salary. However, Moroccans still witness the punishment of some reporters that speak about the monarchy or government authorities. According to Arabic news (2000), "Khalid Mechbal, an editor in chief of the *Ashamal* weekly, was sentenced in the court of Tangiers to a six month suspended jail term for a libel against Foreign Affairs minister, Mohamed Benaissa," (p. 1). Amnesty International (2004) reported, "Ali Lmrabet has been imprisoned because he said

that the royal palace of Skhirat is reportedly for sale,” (p. 1). Evidently, the government is monopolizing the information sector. The U.S. Department of State (2005) argued “In Morocco, the law generally provides for freedom of expression with restrictions, and throughout the year 2005 several publications tested the boundaries of press freedom,” (p. 1). This is mainly due to the fact that the government owns all television stations. The Link TV (n.d.) stated “some Moroccans say that 2M does not have the same freedom it once enjoyed when it was privately owned,” (p. 1). Bennani, et al (1995) argued, “Although abolished in practice since 1998, the preliminary censure, made possible by the registration of copyright of each publication, can always occur,” (p. 132). The paradox is that censorship exists although the law has forbidden it since 1988. One of the most recent censorship facts is the movie Marock. Due to the restrictions in Morocco, the director Laila Marrakchi was obliged to ask the French government to finance the film. Fortunately, the movie is a huge success now in the Moroccan movie theaters. Gauch and Lindsey (2006) reported “Marock has pushed the bounds of cultural candor,” (p. 1).

In spite of the fact that it has not been explicitly shown, gaining freedom of speech has always been every Moroccan's fight. This is a waste of time. Effectively, instead of focusing on the development of Morocco, Moroccans are searching for a prerogative. Altman (2003) said “the law must secure for each citizen an equal and extensive scheme of basic liberties, including the liberties of speech and religion,” (p.358). This liberty is obviously not given. The other factor that makes the situation even worse is the point of view of foreign specialists towards the censorship in Islamic societies like Morocco. Mostyn (2002) argued “in most of the Islamic world press freedom remains a dream,” (p. 159). This is very disappointing, but it doesn't affect the will of Moroccans. Things have begun to change. Long and Reich (2002) stated “riots in 1998 and 2000 by Islamist opponents of the religion show that people may no longer respond to symbolic appeals based on historic or religious criteria,” (p.

411).

Ultimately, Moroccan people need the right of freedom of speech to develop their country. They have to talk openly about their society, and also about religions and people in charge of the nation. The team members see some good changes like the salary of the king made public, or the new moudawana that gave women their rights. The research team is sure that a religious democratic government can be a problem. Soroush (2000) argued “the problem of religious democratic governments is three fold: to reconcile people's satisfaction with God's approval, to strike a balance between the religious and the non religious, and to do right by both the people and by God, acknowledge at once the integrity of human beings and of religion,” (p. 122). Moroccan government has to overcome the religious dependence and to let the media be free of talking openly about society and people in charge of the state.

Design

In choosing the most appropriate tools to solve the research problem, the team members followed both positivist and postpositivist traditions. Using both methods helped in getting better results. The quantitative approach, which was reflected by doing surveys, helped the group to get data that will be very important to investigate the issue. The research team assumes that this data is reliable due to the fact that each student provided the group with information related to her or his observations and in her or his respective city. Concerning the qualitative method, which was reflected by interviews, it will be a great support to the research project. In effect, the team members have chosen to interview three people who are extremely related to the subject and each one of them is a suitable authority which will be useful to the research.

The research is mostly descriptive, but it is also correlational. It is descriptive because it will focus on the description of the representative students' satisfaction towards the level of freedom of speech in their towns. The group will also describe the respondents' opinion

regarding freedom of speech when it is about society, government, or religion especially Islam. In addition to that, the team will describe any event related to oppression that happened in their respective cities. The research is also correlational because it attempts to figure out the relation between the increase of freedom of speech and the development of Morocco regarding economy and mentality. This is why the survey of foreign professors is important. They are from developed countries, so they are more able to tell the group if freedom of speech can improve a nation's situation.

The summer session in AUI involves approximately 400 students, so the sample size is 10% of the population size which is 40 students. The subject of the research involves all Moroccans. The Moroccan population is 30 million. Obviously, it is impossible for the team to do a survey for three million Moroccans, which is why the group has decided to choose randomly four students from ten different Moroccan cities. The cities are: Tangiers, Tetouan, Oujda, Fes, Meknes, Rabat, Casablanca, Marrakech, Agadir, and Laayoune. The strength of this choice is that the team members will have a mini Morocco to survey, but the problem is that the group was not sure to find four students who belong to the same city especially towns like Laayoune. Fortunately, the AUI student from Laayoune gave the team the phone numbers of three high school students in this town. The group succeeded in surveying them. For the foreign professors, the research team decided to choose randomly 10% foreign professors from the foreign professors' population present this summer in AUI. In fact, the group has found that this population is 29, so the team surveyed 10 of them. The strength of this choice is that all foreign professors in AUI are a suitable authority because they are highly educated, but still some of them are not necessarily from developed countries.

The data was collected from students in the AUI campus just after the mid-term exams so the group was sure that they would not be busy. The team divided into four and each one dealt with two or three cities. Collecting data from respondents was not an easy task

because each team member had to be very polite and patient with each one. Fortunately, the team developed an efficient strategy. The group told all the respondents that they would be surveyed one week before the survey. This method permitted the team to survey all the respondents during one afternoon because they were aware of the event. Concerning foreign professors, the team also divided into four, and then each one dealt with two or three professors. Some of the team members surveyed them in their respective offices during the mid-term week, and some waited for them in the AUI restaurant to give them the survey. Both methods worked, and the professors were interested in answering the survey due to its topic. Concerning interviews, one team member interviewed an engineering professor on June 23, in his office. The inventor of a system for Moroccan e-government was very kind and he gave the team member all the requested information. The interview lasted for 35 minutes. Another team member interviewed the Imam of the AUI mosque on July 4. He was very helpful, and answered all the questions. The two other team members wanted to interview the governor of Ifrane, but his secretary asked for an authorization from the university. The team sent an email to the Dean of students' affairs to get the authorization, but the group did not get any answer. After that, the two team members went to the municipality in order to interview the Basha who was very subjective according to the team.

The research questionnaires are in English, and consist more of closed questions than the open-ended questions. Regarding the information about informants, the team was only interested in their city. The city is an important variable, because as it is already stated, the team wants to survey a mini Morocco. The closed questions will provide the research team with answers to the research questions. Effectively, the group will be informed about the presence of the right of talking openly about negative aspects of society, the choice of religion, and the criticism of government authorities. The respondents also gave their opinion concerning the censorship of Moroccan TV. The open-ended questions cover both evaluation

and justification. They are designed to get simple and short answers from the respondents in a qualitative way. The pilot study of the surveys that was conducted in the SSK1202 classroom in order to improve the questionnaires was very helpful to the team. The SSK1202 professor and the students' feedback increased the quality of the team's survey. Regarding the interviews, four or fewer open-ended questions were given to an engineering professor of AUI, the Imam of AUI mosque, and a responsible from the Ifrane municipality. The Imam and the basha will be interviewed in Arabic. The team assumes that this number of questions can give efficient answers and will not consume the subjects' time.

Results

As it is already stated in the design section, the team collected data from both students and foreign professors with the help of surveys. First, the results section will deal with the students' answers and will explain what the data means in terms of the project or question and make a synthesis of the collected information. The team surveyed four students from each city. After that, the foreign professors' responses will be presented and summarized as well. Finally, the last part will involve the three interviews conducted with the AUI engineering professor, the Imam of AUI mosque, and the Basha of Ifrane's municipality.

The table below shows if students from different Moroccan cities are satisfied with the level of freedom of speech in their respective towns. City names are abbreviated in the tables.

Table 1: Satisfaction towards level of freedom of speech

	Tan	Tet	Ouj	Mek	Fes	Rab	Cas	Mar	Aga	Laa
Yes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
No	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	4
n=40										

In all the cities except Agadir and Marrakech, the respondents claimed that they are not satisfied with the level of freedom of speech in their towns which is alarming.

Effectively, in Agadir and Marrakech one of the four respondents belonging to each of these two towns claimed that she or he is satisfied with the level of freedom of speech in her or his city which, according to the team, is a minority. Actually, 95% of all the surveyed students think there is a lack of freedom of speech in their towns. Some of them gave the team information about a form of oppression that they noticed in their cities. In Tangiers, a student said that she or he faced some problems when wearing the American flag t-shirt in the street. Another one claimed that in her or his high school, there was no chance for a student to complain about any negative aspect of the establishment. In Casablanca, three respondents said that they noticed that religious and political talks were avoided. In Rabat, a student said that it was a shame that the director of the newspaper Assahifa was taken to prison because of his thoughts. In Oujda, a student claimed that nobody agrees with the authorities of the city, but everybody is afraid to complain. In Meknes and Fes, some argued that sex, hidden businesses, or religion are taboo and therefore people are oppressed when they want to talk about it.

Table 2: The possibility of talking openly about negative aspects of society

	Tan	Tet	Ouj	Mek	Fes	Rab	Cas	Mar	Aga	Laa
Yes	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	2	0
No	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	3	2	4
n=40										

The table above shows if the respondents think that Moroccans can talk openly about negative aspects of society or not. In Agadir and Fes, half of the respondents think that it is possible whereas in Marrakech, only one student think it is plausible. All the other respondents claimed that Moroccans can not talk openly about negative aspects of society. In other terms, 87.5% of the surveyed students argued that Moroccans do not feel they are free to talk about society.

The table below shows if surveyed students think that Moroccans should or not choose their religion.

Table 3: The right of choosing religion

	Tan	Tet	Ouj	Mek	Fes	Rab	Cas	Mar	Aga	Laa
Yes	4	3	4	4	2	4	4	1	4	3
No	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	3	0	1

n=40

While in some cities students think Moroccans should have this basic right, others in cities like Marrakech, Tetouan, Fes, and Laayoune think the opposite. The team assumes that this judgment is subjective and it is due to their attachment to Islam. Despite this fact, 82.5% of all the respondents are with the right of choosing religion which is a significant percentage.

Table 4: The right of criticizing any religion including Islam

	Tan	Tet	Ouj	Mek	Fes	Rab	Cas	Mar	Aga	Laa
Yes	4	2	2	2	1	4	4	1	3	3
No	0	2	2	2	3	0	0	3	1	1

n=40

Table 4 presents the opinion of the respondents regarding the criticism of any religion including Islam. Effectively, 64% of all the respondents agreed, but 38% disagreed. Those who disagreed with the criticism of Islam were for the other aspects of freedom of speech which suggests once again that their opinion is subjective due to the nature of their religion.

The table below shows if the respondents think that Moroccans can criticize a government authority or not.

Table 5: The possibility of criticizing a government authority

	Tan	Tet	Ouj	Mek	Fes	Rab	Cas	Mar	Aga	Laa
Yes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
No	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	3	4

n=40

In Marrakech and Agadir, some said that it was possible, but in the other cities everyone argued that it is impossible. In effect, 92.5% of the surveyed students argued that it is difficult for a Moroccan citizen to face, or criticize a person in charge of the nation and think that it is wrong. They argued that this is against democracy and that people should feel

free to speak up for their rights.

Regarding the censorship in Moroccan TV, the table below shows how many students think this true or not.

Table 6: Presence of censorship in Moroccan TV

	Tan	Tet	Ouj	Mek	Fes	Rab	Cas	Mar	Aga	Laa
Yes	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	4
No	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

n=40

According to these results, 95% of the respondents think that Moroccan TV is censored which is a big percentage. It is obvious that it is true because obscene scenes are always deleted from movies and the news rarely criticize a government authority.

The respondents were asked if the freedom of speech will develop Morocco, especially regarding economy and mentality. The results are shown in the table below.

Table 7: The relation between freedom of speech and development in Morocco

	Tan	Tet	Ouj	Mek	Fes	Rab	Cas	Mar	Aga	Laa
Yes	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	3	4
No	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0

n=40

According to this table, 92.5% of the surveyed students think that freedom of speech might be an important factor of development for Morocco. They argue that the mixture of opinions develop a country. The others think that Moroccans are not ready yet for freedom of speech, and even development.

As it is stated above, the second part of this results section will evaluate the answers of the foreign professors of AUI in the summer section. The table below shows their reactions towards:

- The level of freedom of speech in Morocco (represented by **S**)
- The fact that Moroccans can openly talk about negative aspects of society (represented by **O**)

- The right of choosing religion (represented by **RC**)
- The right of criticizing religion (represented by **RCR**)
- The right of criticizing government (represented by **GC**)
- The relation between freedom of speech and development (represented by **RFD**).

Table 8: The foreign professors' reaction towards the survey

	S	O	RC	RCR	GC	RFD
Yes	3	3	10	9	10	9
No	4	5	0	1	0	1
No opinion	3	2	0	0	0	0
n=10						

When the foreign professors were asked about their satisfaction towards the level of freedom of speech in Morocco, or if Moroccans can openly talk about negative aspects of society, there were different answers due to the fact that they have not lived in Morocco for all of their lives, so they do not have much information about the subject. However, they all agreed that Moroccans should choose their religion, and that they should have the right to criticize any government authority. Nine of them argued that the right of criticizing any religion should be given and only one of them disagreed. Actually, this information is not of a big importance to the team because the main reason the group did the survey with the foreign professors was to see the relation between freedom of speech and development. Effectively, 90% of the surveyed professors argued that freedom of speech is helpful to the development of Morocco. They also explained how freedom of speech was beneficial to their respective countries. One of them said that it encourages creativity, which leads to the creation of

intellectual property, and therefore mental development. In Canada, the media maintains a role for keeping the government honest which helps people in being engaged in their civic responsibilities. When people are free of the social obstacles, they can spend energy on positive development. Another professor argued that when people can speak freely, they feel more motivated to contribute to the society. In Germany, journalism is of a fundamental importance to detect economic and political problems. In France, freedom of speech makes the task of the government more transparent. In fact, all the foreign professors answered this way. They also suggested some solutions to the lack of freedom of speech in Morocco like improving education, training in critical thinking, creating institutions that are willing to change the society, and asking for political changes.

As it was mentioned in the design section, three interviews were conducted with people closely related to the topic. The first interview was with the inventor of the Moroccan e-government. This person has invented a digital computer which is available 24/7 and speaks the Moroccan Arabic dialect, and it is a touch screen. It helps in increasing democracy and freedom of speech. It is a tool to help everyone to get whatever she or he needs from the government like information, or documents without any complication. This machine will be soon available in most Moroccan towns. This inventor thinks that communication is very important and citizens will be treated equally from the authority thanks to the direct contact. The AUI engineering professor argued that some governors are disturbed by the project, but some were helpful. The professor is about to create what he called the e-journalism which is a Moroccan source of information that will not be censored.

The second interview was with the Basha of Ifrane municipality. As the team has predicted, the answers were very subjective. This government authority claimed that he is very satisfied with the level of freedom of speech in Morocco. He also said that journalism has gained power and the government does not interfere anymore in any information

released. The Basha argued that Moroccans can criticize any government authority as long as it has nothing to do with her or his private life. Actually, he said that he was ready for any criticism.

The last interview was conducted with the Imam of the AUI mosque. The team member asked him if Islam allows people to choose their religion. The Imam said that everyone is free to choose her or his religion, but when you are a Muslim you do not have this right. He claimed that you have to keep on being Muslim otherwise you will be severely punished. Another question was if people can talk about Islam. The Imam argued that everyone has the right to talk about Islam, but nobody has the right to change what God, or the Prophet said. The last question was if Islam supports freedom of speech. The Imam argued that Islam supports freedom of speech, encourages the evaluation of government authorities' work without the fear of being oppressed, and asks for the respect of all opinions.

Discussion

In order to test the authenticity of the assumptions and to provide answers to the research questions made by the team, the results section synthesized the data collected from the respondents to evaluate if they correspond to the group's claims. Freedom of speech in Morocco regarding society, religion, and government is the topic of questions present in the surveys. AUI students, AUI foreign professors, and the three subjects who answered the interviews were the ones who represented the sample which gave the team the necessary data that will be discussed in this section.

AUI students

According to the research team, the most important data collected from the students is that 95% of them say they are not satisfied with the level of freedom of speech in their cities. The reason of this reaction is that these students live in a society where they notice how hard it is for a citizen to criticize a government authority, or to talk openly about the negative

aspects of society with any other citizen. Despite the fact that Moroccans can not talk openly about society, Morocco is a country where people always exchange information informally, so any act of oppression is heard by the majority. It seems paradoxical, but it is true that events related to oppression are more present in Moroccans' conversations than aspects of society like cohabitation, or prostitution. The examples stated in the results section by AUI students who are from different Moroccan towns show that people in Morocco face oppression on a daily basis. It is also evident that Moroccans are in touch with all the forms of oppression present in their country, but they are afraid to stand up for their rights, and this is the problem. This fear is due to all the stories they heard about the punishments that anyone can endure if she or he dares criticize a government authority. As claimed, most Moroccans do not have the possibility to talk openly about negative aspects of society. In effect, the survey confirms this information, and the team's point of view says that if citizens can not evaluate their society, they can never improve their social situation. The main reason why the respondents think this way, is that they know that most of Moroccans are illiterate and are still attached to their traditions. This majority of the society considers many things as a shame, even if it is just about the way of dressing. A positive finding is that most of the surveyed students think that the religion remains a choice which is a sign of tolerance and a step toward the increase of freedom of speech. Morocco has always been a tolerant country and as long as Muslims remain Muslims, Moroccans think that the choice of religion is a right. The lowest percentage found in the survey is when students were asked if Moroccans should have the right to criticize any religion including Islam. The group thinks that this is due to the fact that most of them are Muslim and they are not ready to see their religion criticized. It shows that Moroccans are highly attached to Islam and do not allow any form of criticism towards it. The team thinks that it is the case in all Muslim countries and the world clearly witnessed how Muslims reacted when a Danish newspaper released caricatures of the

Prophet of Islam. What is more, the majority of the respondents claim that Moroccans can still not criticize any government authority. The absence of this right is mainly due to the threats that someone can face if she or he dares confront a person in charge of the state. Most of the students said that Moroccan TV is censored. They clearly see that unlike European or American channels, Moroccan TV never criticize Ministers and Governors, or shows a foreign movie without censoring some scenes classified as obscene. This is an important tool for enemies of liberty to maintain a low level of freedom of speech. The last information from most of the respondents was that freedom of speech can develop Morocco both economically and mentally. To sum up, Moroccans are aware of the lack of freedom of speech in their country, and realize that this is an important factor of development.

Unfortunately, they do not yet know the solution for the problem, and few are those who are trying to make things change. This is to say that this awareness is shallow. Effectively, Moroccans hear about stories that are happening to others, but because it is the story of another person, a Moroccan will not really care as long as she or he is living happily. Those who are trying to improve the situation have either lived an event related to oppression, or expressed compassion towards innocent people who are in jail just because they stood up for their rights. Once again, fear remains the main reason why all Moroccans are not forming a unit against enemies of freedom of speech.

AUI foreign professors

It can be understood from the professors' responses that Moroccans should have the right to choose and criticize any religion. They also encourage the evaluation and criticism of government authorities' work. Even of some negative and undetermined answers, the majority says there is a lack of freedom of speech in Morocco and that its inhabitants do not openly talk about negative aspects of society. Most of the surveyed professors argued that there is a big relation between freedom of speech and development. Each of them showed

how freedom of speech has developed her or his country. According to them, this is a major tool to make the government transparent and to encourage creativity. It is a way that leads to improvement and contributes positively to all aspects of society. Ultimately, the point of view of the foreign professors who are from developed countries is of primary importance for this research. It accentuates the relation between freedom of speech and development. It is a critical factor to all Morocco's development problems. The government keeps on saying that the country has to be developed, but it does not give importance to the fact that freedom of speech is an effective way to improve a country's situation. The team has found out that it is a major tool for development and all these surveyed foreign professors have confirmed it. All the developed countries like the United States of America, Canada, or the European Union have freedom of speech because it encourages creativity and keeps the government transparent. Even if China has a low level of freedom of speech, it is a developed country because it has many natural resources and has hardworking citizens which are not the case in Morocco. To conclude, a developed country needs many factors and among these factors there is the freedom of speech which is highly needed in Morocco to achieve development.

Interview subjects

Since the topic of the group's research needed suitable authorities, data was collected from them in a qualitative approach to see if they agree or not with the team's assumptions. Effectively, the inventor of the e-government system claimed that Morocco has a lack of freedom of speech and that his invention was one of the many possible tools that can help in increasing the level of freedom of speech. This will allow the Moroccan citizens to get information and documents from the government easily because most of the time, the authorities oblige citizens to pay for these documents. In effect, the United Nations organization claims that there is a high level of corruption in Morocco. For the team, this work is the perfect example that freedom of speech can be present in Morocco. In effect, with

solutions like his, Moroccans can one day benefit from freedom of speech. What is more, when a citizen gets easily what she or he wants from the government, she or he feels more involved in the development of the nation. The other participant in this project was the Basha of the municipality of Ifrane. With all the respect that the group owes this person, the team claims that his responses were subjective. The group was not disappointed and understands perfectly that he would not have this job if he did not give the answers he gave. He said that he was very satisfied with the level of freedom of speech in Morocco though many events like the imprisonment of Ali Lmrabet, or Khalid Mechbal demonstrate the opposite. The Basha argued that there is a possibility of criticizing the work of government authorities, but it is not the point of view of most of Moroccans. The team thinks that he means that Moroccans can criticize the way of working, but the group thinks that he did not mean the hidden businesses of government authorities made by the public money. The last interviewed person was the Imam of AUI mosque. According to him, people can talk about Islam, but they do not have the right to criticize the sacred speeches of God, or of the Prophet. The team thinks it is correct. The most interesting information the group got is that Islam encourages the criticism of government authorities. This is a very important confirmation of the team's data because it demonstrates the fact that Moroccans should have the right to criticize a government authority. As a Muslim country like the state claims, Morocco should give this right to the citizens, however it is not given.

It is clear from what is stated above that Morocco has a serious problem which is the lack of freedom of speech. What is more, people barely talk about negative aspects of society because of the fact that some things are taboo due to the traditions and religion. Moroccans should have the right to choose their religion, and should not have to face oppression if, for example, they are eating during Ramadan. Moroccans should also have the right to criticize the work of any government authority in order to improve their country. All these rights are

vital for the development of Morocco, and the team claims that Morocco will never get to the rank of developed countries if these prerogatives are not given.

Solutions

The e-government system is one of the most effective solutions to gain freedom of speech. It will allow the citizens to get governmental information without any problems. Another solution related to technology is the e-journalism which is an internet source of information which will not be censored and will be operating soon. Another solution is the increase of magazines like Telquel which dares criticize the government authorities. The creation of associations which encourage the citizens to prosecute any government authority who behaves wrongly will help. Effectively, once Moroccans know that lawsuits like that exist in Morocco, they will gain confidence. The educational system has to create a course called the religious education where students can learn about all religions in order to respect them and it does not mean that Moroccan schools will not continue teaching the Islamic education course. The media has to help Moroccans to be more open-minded, so parents are able to talk openly about negative aspects with their children and if this happens, it will allow the whole society to develop mentally.

Conclusion

The discussion section clearly showed that there is a lack of freedom of speech in Morocco regarding many domains. The problem is that this is a study conducted with no more than 70 people. For a better study, powerful organizations should try to survey the real sample size of Morocco which is 3 million people and publish the results in famous newspapers in order to put the pressure on the authorities. This can be an efficient way to make things change and to tell the government that Moroccans are no more able to bear oppression.

Furthermore, there are still some unanswered questions. The team wants to know if

freedom of speech varies from a city to another, and if it does, then what factors are responsible for this. This can be a perfect way of finding solutions to the lack of freedom of speech. If a city has a higher level of freedom of speech than another city, this means that this town has some factors which help on increasing the level of freedom of speech and it can be beneficial for the other city which has a lower level of freedom of speech.

To conclude, Morocco has a low level of freedom of speech. Like all Arab countries, so many factors are contributing to this lack of freedom of speech. The team will not contradict the fact that things are changing, but very slowly. Morocco has to develop its situation quickly, and for this, it has to give all the basic rights to its citizens.

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Appendix 1

SSK 1202 Survey for AUI Students

For the problem-solving project of Study Skills 1202, the group is studying what AUI students, who are from different cities, think of lack of freedom of speech in their respective towns or in Morocco in general. If you could just take a few minutes of your precious time to complete this survey, you will help the team gathering necessary information. Your answers will remain anonymous. Thank you.

1. Gender: Male Female

2. Are you satisfied with the level of freedom of speech in your city?

Yes No

3. Please specify your city:

.....

4. Do you think Moroccans can talk openly about the negative aspects of society?

Yes No

I. Can you think of any example of oppression that happened in your city?

.....

.....

6. Should Moroccans have the right to choose their own religion?

- Yes No

7. Should a Moroccan have the right to criticize any religion including Islam?

- Yes No

8. Can a Moroccan criticize a government authority despite his or her rank?

- Yes No

Do you think this is right or wrong? Why?

.....
.....

9. Is Moroccan TV censored?

- Yes No

10. Do you think that freedom of speech will help Morocco develop both economically and socially?

- Yes No

Why?

.....
.....



SSK 1202 Survey for Foreign Professors

For the problem-solving project of Study Skills 1202, the group is studying what foreign Professors think of the lack of freedom of speech in Morocco. If you could just take a few minutes of your precious time to complete this survey, you will help the team gathering necessary information. Your answers will remain anonymous. Thank you.

1. Gender: Male Female

2. Are you satisfied with the level of freedom of speech in Morocco?

Yes No

3. Why?

.....

4. Do you think Moroccans can talk openly about the negative aspects of society?

Yes No

I. Did you witness any form of oppression in Morocco related to freedom of speech?

.....

5. Should Moroccans have the right to choose their own religion?

Yes No

6. Should a Moroccan have the right to criticize any religion including Islam?

Yes No

7. Should a Moroccan have the right to criticize a government authority despite his or her rank?

Yes

No

Do you think this is right or wrong? Why?

.....
.....
.....

8. In your opinion, what is the solution to improve the increase of freedom of speech in Morocco?

.....
.....
.....

9. Do you think that freedom of speech will help Morocco develop both economically and socially?

Yes

No

I. How did freedom of speech develop your country both economically and socially?

.....
.....
.....

Appendix 2

Interview with the AUI engineering professor

1. What exactly your project is about?
2. Do you think that your project will help in the increase of freedom of speech in Morocco?
3. What was the authority's reaction towards your project?
4. Can you think of any other technology that can help in the increase of freedom of speech in Morocco?

Interview with the Basha of the municipality of Ifrane

1. Are you satisfied with the level of freedom of speech in Morocco?
2. Do you think that Moroccans have the right to criticize the government or any government authority?
3. Can you personally allow someone to criticize you?

Interview with the Imam of the AUI mosque

1. Does Islam allow people, or Muslims to choose their religion?
2. Can Islam be criticized?
3. Does Islam allow freedom of speech especially towards the government?