



The Evolution Of Scientific Publishing Platforms And Their Relationship With The Electronic Portal - Algeria As A Model

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Abstract:

Most scientific studies during the colonial period were limited to a small number of researchers, such as "Ibn al-Shenb," a university professor at the University of Algiers in the early 20th century, who published scientific studies in several journals at the time, including "The African Journal." After independence, the state supported the journals "Al-Asala" and "Al-Thaqafa" within the official framework of scientific research. Following the financial economic prosperity in the 1980s, the field was opened to the freedom to establish scientific journals, research centers, and scientific laboratories, especially those associated with universities and institutions of higher education and scientific research. At the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the new millennium, peer-reviewed

scientific journals were regulated within the classification (A, B, C). Subsequently, the electronic portal was imposed on classified peer-reviewed journals to receive articles and scientific research. This development had an impact on publishing in humanities journals in general and historical journals in particular.

Keywords: Scientific Publishing, Peer-Reviewed and Classified Journals, University, Electronic Portal.

Introduction:

The evolution of scientific publishing platforms in Algeria has gone through several stages. The first stage was before independence when the limited number of journals was predominantly controlled by the French and a few Algerians who had access to higher education. In the early days of independence, publishing platforms were linked to official institutions within the framework of official history. In later stages, following economic prosperity and the opening of competition, publishing platforms and printing houses associated with universities, laboratories, and scientific centers flourished before the intervention of the supervisory authority (the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research), which classified some peer-reviewed journals, whether national or international (A, B, C), to publish peer-reviewed articles within the framework of thesis discussions and scientific qualification files. This was followed by updates and the imposition of the electronic portal in the publication and governance process.

1. The Emergence and Development of Algerian Publishing Platforms:

Many of Algeria's initial publishing platforms are tied to the colonial period (1830-1962). The publication of El-Moubashir newspaper in 1847 in both French and Arabic served as the voice of the French administration in Algeria, followed by the establishment of the "Revue Africaine" in 1856, which continued for decades and published several studies on Algeria by Frenchmen, orientalist, officers, and even some Algerians like Ibn al-Shenb. This opened the field for conservatives and the Algerian elite to enter this arena at the end of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century with newspapers and journals ranging from scientific and cultural to political and media-oriented. The reform movement had the largest share of this endeavor.

After independence, we cannot overlook the experience of the "Al-Asala" magazine, published in 1971 by the Ministry of Religious Affairs during the tenure of thinker Mouloud Qasem Naït Belkacem, which opened the field to Algerian and foreign academic writers and accompanied Islamic thought conferences that continued until the early 1980s. Additionally, the "Al-Thaqafa" magazine, published in the same period by the Ministry of Information and Culture, also published numerous scientific articles and continued until the 1990s, benefiting from the period of economic and financial prosperity. Besides, university, laboratory, and press publishing platforms expanded further after the liberalization phase in 1989. The Ministry of Higher Education intervened by regulating peer-reviewed journals and requiring the publication of articles in scientific journals for discussing theses and university qualification. This was followed by the classification of peer-reviewed journals (A, B, C) according to decrees in the official gazette repeatedly, before imposing the electronic portal in the process of publishing and reviewing articles (*see appendices: El-Mouhassir, Revue Africaine, Al-Asala, Al-Thaqafa, Journal Classification Decree). The emergence and development of publishing platforms in Algeria cannot be separated from the colonial influence and interaction with both Western and Eastern worlds (Ouhaybia, 2014, pp. 247-259).

2. Written Media in Algeria Before Independence:

The Algerians kept pace with communication, publishing, and media channels influenced by their surroundings (Abdulrahman, 1989, p. 58). However, modern journalism as a medium of communication is a Western discovery that appeared in Europe before spreading to the Arab world in the early 19th century, starting with the French campaigns in Egypt and then Algeria. Some researchers believe the first newspaper in Algeria was "L'estafette de Sidi Ferrage," prepared on the colonial ships that invaded Algeria in 1830. After the 1871 revolution, repression and oppression against the Algerian people intensified. Some free French individuals were upset by this and tried to assist the Muslims, believing it was necessary to allow them to speak and express their demands, with the press being the best medium for this. Thus, the newspaper "Le Mot d'Ordre" was founded in 1882. However, it did not last long, failing under French pressure, but it succeeded in delivering a message: using words to defend Algerian rights. The situation quickly changed, and journalism became one of the most influential means of communication, establishing its place in Algerian society.

Journalism was the third priority after political and military organization, but media, in its communicative and advocacy sense, was the main weapon for spreading awareness before real weapons. During the armed struggle, propaganda went hand in hand with battles, preceding and following them. This importance was evident in two stages:

- Mobilizing the masses sometimes revolved around supporting a national newspaper like "El Iqdam," "El Oumma," "El Basair," or "Free Algeria."

- The National Liberation Front focused on issuing modern media tools: newspapers, radio, and news agencies.

The activity of the European press, representing the colonizers in Algeria, undoubtedly influenced Algerians to enter the journalism field. These colonial newspapers were prolific and widespread, with over 150 newspapers published between 1847 and 1939. In contrast, Arabic newspapers in Algeria numbered only sixty-six, including those published in both Arabic and French, regardless of their different orientations, including those issued by colonial circles (Ahaddaden, 1991, pp. 91-92).

The widespread movement that covered the entire country east to west caught the attention of Algerian Muslims. They were amazed by the fiery tone some colonialist newspapers used to address or defend the ruling authorities. This taught them to benefit from this experience, pushing them to use this new medium to demand their rights. While this was initially for the French-educated elite who started this journalistic movement at the beginning of the 20th century, Arabic-educated intellectuals soon joined this wide field, benefiting from the Arab press coming from the eastern Arab world, particularly Egypt, which provided a living model they followed. The connection of Algerian writers to eastern newspapers dates back to the early 20th century, with pioneers of the reform movement in Algeria like Mohamed Ben Mustafa Ben Khodja, Abdelhakim Ben Smayah, and Abdelkader Al-Majawi with the magazine "Al-Manar."

These newspapers and magazines reached Algeria via Tunisia, where French oversight was less severe, or via Morocco, which still enjoyed its independence, or through pilgrims' luggage. A French writer described these secret routes by saying: "There was a secret, but abundant and continuous flow of eastern newspapers and magazines that helped the Maghrebis in their reform efforts and kept them always connected to the Arab world." Thus, pioneering Algerian journalists always acknowledged the eastern Arab press's favor, whether in providing intellectual nourishment, information about the Arab and Islamic homeland, or in the refined rhetoric styles they printed. The internal and external political and social climate was a major factor in the revival of national press, as the conditions in the Arab and Islamic world before, during, and after World War I opened the eyes of Algerians and taught them how to use the press to mobilize the masses with their reform ideas.

These factors helped the emergence of the Arabic press in Algeria, but the path was neither easy nor smooth. The struggle of the national Algerian press in this regard shaped its history and reality with continuous resistance, marked by perseverance and defiance. To understand the history of the Algerian Arabic press, especially the national one, it is crucial to recognize the stifling environment in which it emerged. The most notable feature for anyone following its history is the continuous interruption, with most of them lasting not years but months and days. Despite this, Arabic journalism in Algeria only knew one daily newspaper, "An-Najah," throughout the period from 1847 to 1939. This is mainly because the Arabic press in Algeria suffered from the abnormal social and political reality imposed by French colonialism. Consequently, this press had to live in a perpetual struggle for survival, fighting to carve out its path. It faced, simultaneously, a vindictive colonizer threatening to suffocate it whenever he pleased, and an illiterate, ignorant population rarely offering literary or financial support. They sought to undermine it through slander and numerous technical and administrative obstacles, starting with the concession license that locals only obtained after much suffering and ending with the scarcity or loss of Arabic press means. These obstacles were set by the colonial rulers who

blocked the spread of Arabic newspapers and hastened to confiscate national ones without trial (Nasser, 1980, pp. 5-6).

3. Written Publishing Media in Algeria Near Independence:

During the liberation revolution, the mission of Algerian media was to convey the voice of the revolution both domestically and internationally. This involved mobilizing citizens to expel the colonizers and informing the international public about the justice of the Algerian revolution. After independence, the National Charter defined the media's role as promoting a high culture to meet ideological and aesthetic needs while raising the intellectual level of citizens (Bleybel, 1992, p. 25). During the colonial era, Algeria experienced a liberal media system characterized by press freedom as stipulated by French law. This system was not abolished after independence, but it conflicted with the new political system. The Algerian authorities aimed to establish a socialist media system, eliminating private ownership of media, particularly the press, and establishing a socialist framework for media activities.

3.1. Phase 1: The 1960s:

After independence, Algerian policy toward the developing written press aimed at three main objectives aligned with the state's political orientation:

Algerianization: This meant abolishing all newspapers managed and owned by French or other foreigners, especially daily newspapers, and placing them under Algerian government control. In 1962-1963, there were about 11 such newspapers with a total circulation of 300,000 copies, all in French. In 1963, the National Liberation Front's Political Bureau decided to nationalize these newspapers except for Alger *Républicain*, managed by individuals with Algerian nationality. These newspapers were replaced by new ones like *El Nasr* and *Al Joumhouria*, managed by Algerians under the authorities' supervision. Consequently, the press was Algerianized, but private ownership was not entirely eliminated as some private newspapers continued to exist.

Public Monopoly: The press laws from the colonial era, which included provisions for press freedom and private ownership, remained in place. After independence, numerous newspapers owned by Algerians with no government or party affiliations emerged and operated freely. Researchers classified newspapers into three categories: state-owned, party-owned (National Liberation Front), and privately owned. The government's intent to replace private newspapers with state-owned ones was hindered by its inexperience, particularly regarding daily newspapers. The National Liberation Front's weekly *El Moudjahid* became the first state-owned daily newspaper, later named *El Shaab*. Regional dailies such as *El Nasr* and *La République* appeared in Oran and Constantine on September 19, 1962. The Algerian government also established the National Publishing and Distribution Company on August 19, 1962, to control newspaper distribution, allowing only those with government approval to be distributed. This enabled the authorities to dominate the press, eliminating private newspapers by 1966 and establishing a socialist press system.

Under the Socialist System: The establishment of a socialist press system aligned with the country's general policy, involving public ownership of the press and assigning specific roles to each newspaper. Until 1968, Algerian newspapers operated without a clear formative plan, primarily covering international news rather than national events.

By 1968, newspapers began to focus on raising awareness and national activities, attempting to convince readers of national policies. However, their efforts to raise awareness did not match the formative role expected of socialist press, as they often lacked in-depth explanations.

3.2. Phase 2: The 1970s:

After the revolutionary rectification in 1965, the focus shifted, including in the media sector, which emphasized audiovisual means, neglecting the written press while prioritizing the economic aspect. This period saw a rise in Arabization, affecting numerous newspapers. However, this era also stifled journalistic creativity and distorted media content, which became disconnected from public concerns. The 1976 Constitution affirmed citizens' right to information and emphasized public ownership of media, making media a state function. The media's role in political campaigns, particularly promoting development projects, became prominent. This period also saw the introduction of the Information Law, which mandated diversifying the written press by issuing regional and specialized newspapers, although the press did not flourish significantly despite societal transformations.

3.3. Phase 3: The 1980s and 1990s:

The October 1988 protests marked a turning point, impacting all sectors, particularly politics. Analysts view this as a new beginning and a radical transformation in Algerian history. The February 23, 1989, Constitution introduced political pluralism for the first time, impacting the media. The July 1990 Information Law enshrined freedom of opinion and media pluralism, resulting in the emergence of government, party, and independent newspapers. Independent newspapers like *El Khabar*, *El Watan*, and *Liberté* gained reader trust despite facing harassment, particularly during security crises marked by violence and assassinations. Although political and media pluralism allowed press freedom, challenges remain in technical, political, commercial, and legal aspects.

4. Future of Publishing Outlets in Algeria:

Amidst changing political, economic, cultural, and media dynamics worldwide, and given Algeria's reforms and transformations in various unstable fields, conflicting intellectual currents have influenced the written press. Alongside government and independent press, a new sensationalist press focusing on entertainment and celebrity news, known as the "yellow press," has emerged (Nouari, 2001, pp. 35-37).

Conclusion:

It is imperative for the academic elite to take the initiative to enrich the scientific field with credible publishing outlets. This includes peer-reviewed journals from departments, colleges, laboratories, and universities adhering to scientific peer-review standards to elevate the level of discussion and publication. Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research journals undergo periodic evaluation, implementing a classification system and electronic gateways, including journals focusing on humanities and social sciences, with a significant emphasis on historical studies. Almost every university or research center has a peer-reviewed journal in humanities and history, supported by other ministries, such as the Center for National Movement and November Revolution Studies funded by the Ministry of Veterans, which also has peer-reviewed publications.

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