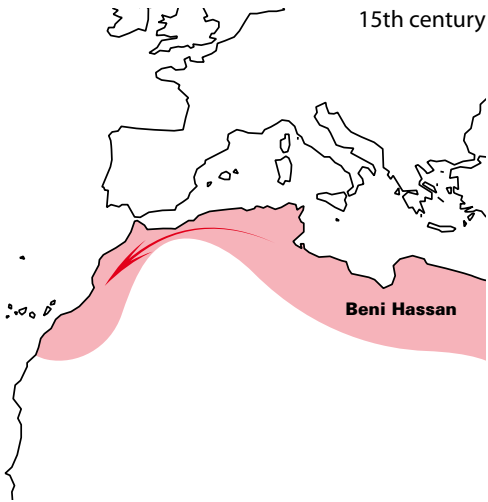
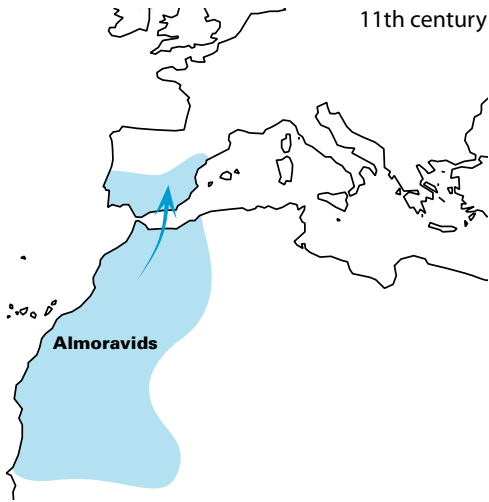
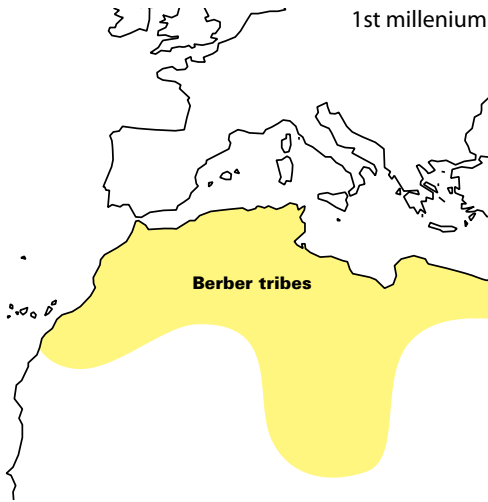


HISTORY OF THE WESTERN SAHARA

THE PRECOLONIAL PERIOD

Student: Jonas Wirth

Around 2.500 BC the territory turned from savanne to desert. After 1.000 BC some \$hanhajan Berbers tribes populated the desert. Between the 7th and the 15th century diffrent influences brought the Islam into the territory of todays Western Sahara. With the European exploration of North Africa the territory got into the focus of European economic interests, especially because of the large fish stocks on the coast. In 1884 Spain proclaimed a protectorate along the Western Sahara coast.



50 - 700 Because of the arrival of the camel the Sanhajan Berber tribes were able to control the trans-Saharan trade routes periodically

economy



600 Zenta Berbers also claimed the territory and eventually took over the trans-Saharan trade routes



politics

< 5.000 to 2.500 BC The western stretches of the Sahara were savanne and populated by stockbreeders and agriculturalists

< 1.000 BC First Sanhaja Berbers, one of the largest Berber tribal confederations of the Maghreb, claimed the territory

society



7th to 8th century Islam was introduced by the first Arab expeditions to the Maghreb

1040–1147 The Almoravids, a Berber-Muslim dynasty, spread over large parts of North Africa. They were affiliated to the tribes of Sanhaja and Lamtuna. Marrakech became the capital of the dynasty



16th to 19th century On European maps the territory was known as a part of the „Sahara Desert“ or „Great Desert“



1885 Spain is recognised as the colonial power of the territory Western Sahara at the „Berlin Diplomatic Conference“



1869 Founding of the first and only pre-colonial town Smara as a sacred center of learning by Ma al-'Ainin, a religious leader who fought against French and Spanish colonization.

15th century Invasion and Arabization by Beni Hassan, a Bedouin group from East, related to the Banu Hilal, a confederation of Arabian Bedouin tribes that migrated from Upper Egypt into North Africa.

military



context



570 - 632 Muhammad founder of the religion Islam

632-732 The first Muslim conquests startet after the death of the Islamic prophet

5th century Start of the European Middle Ages

11th - 13th century European Crusades



1521-1643 The Spanish Empire: The Golden Age

1497-1499 Vasco da Gama's first voyage to India via the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa

15th century End of the European Middle Ages

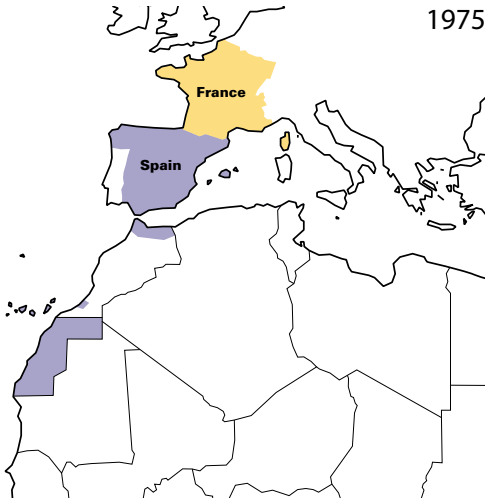
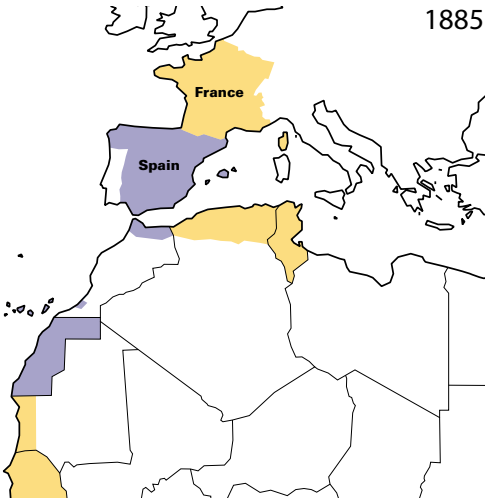
1830 First French conquests in Algeria

1873 The First Spanish Republic

1874–1931 Spain under the Restoration of King Alfonso XII

THE COLONIAL PERIOD

After the Berlin Conference in 1885 Spain was accepted as the colonial power of todays Western Sahara. At first the Spanish interests were restricted at the coast and the profitable fish stocks. The indigenous Saharawi tribes continued to live in the inhospitable inland. In 1945 the Spanish discovered the biggest high-grade phosphat deposit of the world and started to exploit the mineral wealth until they withdrew in 1975.



1884 Spain proclaimed a protectorate along the Western Sahara coast and set up a trading post in Dakhla.



economy

1885 Spain is recognised as the colonial power of the territory Western Sahara at the „Berlin Diplomatic Conference“

politics

society

1885 Spain could not control the whole territory because of the heavy resistance of the indigenous Saharawi tribes

military

< 1830 First French conquests in Algeria

1874–1931 Spain under the Restoration of King Alfonso XII

context

20th century Spain expanded the fishing industry on the coast of Western Saharan



1928 Founding of the city El Aaiun by the Spanish



1919 Only about 460 Europeans lived in Western Sahara



1945 Discovery of the biggest high-grade phosphate deposit of the world in the territory of Western Sahara by the Spanish geologist Manuel Alia Medina

1950s and 1960s Spain exploit the mineral wealth



1969 Amount of fishing reached 1.281.500t in Western Saharan waters

1966 The UN adopted resolutions on Western Sahara calling for independence

1967 Founding of the Harakat Tahrir movement for liberation

26 Feb. 1976 Spain withdraw

March 1958 Up to 13.000 Saharawi refugees reached Morocco's territory

1958 The Saharawi wing of the Liberation Army was defeated by military force of Spain



1975 Invasion by Morocco and Mauritania

1956 First Saharawis tribes called for interdependence

1973 Founding of POLISARIO and attacks on spanish targets

1885

1895

1905

1915

1925

1935

1945

1955

1965

1975

< 1830 First French conquests in Algeria

1874–1931 Spain under the Restoration of King Alfonso XII

context

1914 - 1918 1st world war

1912 Morocco became a French protectorat



1939 - 1945 2nd world war

1939 Francisco Franco got the power in Spain



1954-1962 Algerian independence War

1956 Morocco became independent of France

1960 Mauritania became independent of France

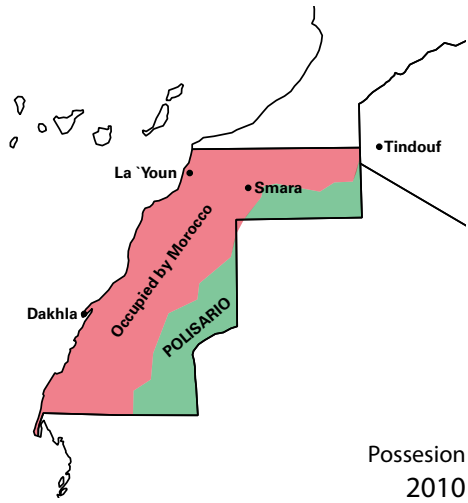
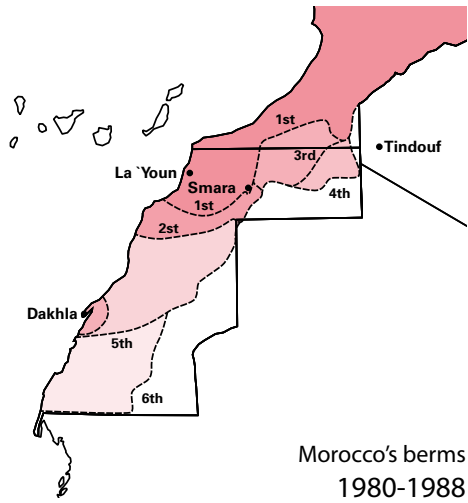
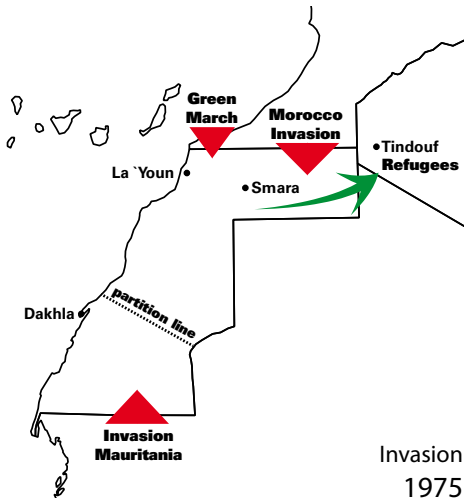
1961 Hassan II of Morocco became King

1970 Morrocco and Mauritania signed a friendship treaty

1975 Francisco Franco died

THE CONFLICT PERIOD

After Morocco's independence, King Hassan II of Morocco tried to expand for a Greater Morocco. Morocco invaded the territory at the same time as Spain withdrew and took over Spain's activities in fishing and mining. In 1973 the Saharawi efforts to get liberty ended up in a war against the Spanish government and in 1976 against the Moroccan power. In 1976 most of the Saharawi took refuge in Algeria. After sixteen years the UN and the OAU could get a cease-fire between the Saharawi liberation movement POLISARIO and Morocco. Today, Morocco occupies large parts of the territory and has big economical benefit of mining and fishing.



economy

1950s and 1960s Spain exploit the mineral wealth



1972 Inauguration of the above-ground mining of Bou Craa and the 92km long conveyor belt to the coast

1976 Spain claimed economy interests including fishing rights and a continued 35 percent stake in phosphate production

1982 Reinauguration of the Bou Craa conveyor belt and restart of the above-ground mining

politics

society

military

context



1963 UN Special Committee on Decolonization declared Western Sahara as a „non-self-governing territory to be decolonized“



1956 Sovereignty claim by Morocco's Istiqlal party of the territory and launch of the ideology of Greater Morocco

1957 Sovereignty claim by Mauritania's Moktar Ould Daddah of the territory of Western Sahara

1966 The OAU and the UN General Assembly adopted resolutions on Western Sahara calling for independence

1966 Morocco supported the UN Special Committee on Decolonization

1967 New anti-colonial movement against Spain with the founding of the Harakat Tahrir movement for liberation

1970 Collaps of the Harakat Tahrir movement after a bloody defeated civil demonstration



1974 Morocco asserted again its right on annexation over territory

26 Feb. 1976 Spain's official withdraw
27 Feb. 1976 Selfproclamation of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic SADR

May 1976 The first refugee camps were established near Tindouf Algeria

Dec 1975 Invasion by Morocco in the North and Mauritania in the South, begin of the war

1976 Frente POLISARIO destroyed the conveyor belt of Bou Craa and stopped the exploration of the mineral wealth

1973 Founding of POLISARIO Front by Saharawi and first attacks on spanish targets

16 July 1980 The SADR formally applied for membership in the OAU

1982 The SADR was admitted to membership in the OAU during the 69th Council, Morocco withdraw (official in 1984) from OAU

1985 A joint effort by UN and OAU began to work on the „Settlement Plan“ for a peaceful solution of the conflict



9 April 1991 The Security Council established MINURSO (Mission des Nations Unies pour l'Organisation d'un Référendum au Sahara Occidental) to implement the „Settlement Plan“ and to monitor the cease-fire after Sept 1991



1998 Limited opening of the territory for journalists and NGO's under close monitoring



6 September 1991 Suspend of the military operations and cease-fire between POLISARIO and Morocco



20 July 1969 Moon landing

1970 Morocco and Mauritania signed a friendship treaty

10 July 1978 Mauritania's President Moktar Ould Daddah was removed by Lieutenant-Colonel Mustafa Ould Salek



17 Oct 1975 Francisco Franco became incapable and died on 20 Nov 1975

1962 Algeria became independent of France

1963 Moroccan and Algerian border war

1963 Founding of the OAU (Organization of African Unity)

