



**Sub-Saharan immigration to Morocco :**  
**Some impacts of human mobility on a state's domestic policy and geopolitics**

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## Résumé

Depuis plus d'une décennie le Maroc est confronté à la question de l'immigration subsaharienne. La fermeture des frontières européennes et les crises que connaît le continent africain accentuent les pressions sur le Maroc et partant sur l'Europe. Le phénomène migratoire semble alors agir pleinement sur ces frontières.

Il est question dans cette contribution des effets de l'immigration subsaharienne, d'installation ou de passage, sur les décideurs marocains, d'une part pour faire de l'immigration une question de politique interne et d'autre part pour bâtir une approche géopolitique africaine du Maroc. Ainsi, face à cette mobilité humaine l'Etat marocain a construit une politique publique migratoire qui se décline, en interne, en une série de mesures politiques, économiques et sociaux, alors qu'en externe, les pouvoirs publics ont tenu à inscrire la question migratoire sur l'agenda de l'Union Africaine et à l'inclure dans ses négociations avec l'Union Européenne.

**Mots-clé :** Maroc, politique publique migratoire, migration, migration subsaharienne au Maroc, l'Union Africaine, Union Européenne.

## Abstract

For more than a decade, Morocco has been confronted with the issue of sub-Saharan immigration. The closure of European borders and the crises on the African continent have increased the pressure on Morocco and therefore on Europe. The migration phenomenon seems to act fully on these borders.

This paper examines the effects of sub-Saharan immigration, whether settled or transient, on Moroccan policymakers, both to make immigration an internal policy issue and to build an African geopolitical approach to Morocco. Thus, in the face of this human mobility, the Moroccan government has developed a public policy on migration which, internally, consists of a series of political, economic and social measures, while externally, the authorities have insisted on placing the migration issue on the agenda of the African Union and on including it in its negotiations with the European Union.

**Keywords:** Morocco, migration public policy, migration, sub-Saharan migration in Morocco, the African Union, European Union.

## Introduction

For more than two decades, Morocco has been facing constant migration dynamics from Sub Saharan Africa. The closure of European borders as well as the political, economic and social crises in some African countries are major factors that have caused outflows of young populations to leave their countries for Morocco and eventually towards Europe.

These departures have fuelled the development of new migratory flows, mainly from West Africa. In response to the pressures exercised on the southern, eastern and northern borders of Morocco, governmental authorities have expanded policy initiatives to adapt to this new situation while trying to limit the number of illegal immigrants entering the territory and reduce their willingness to leave for Europe.

We will focus on two major dimensions. The first being strictly national and societal, and it pertains to the populations whose presence within the territory has become permanent. Within the cities and their suburbs, we will observe the configuration of spaces with invisible boundaries where these young migrants live. The precarity of their status as immigrants encourages them to develop bonds of solidarity.

For Morocco, it is a new social phenomenon that needs to be addressed by the public authorities. The difficulties encountered by illegal migrants challenge the government and society equally and put their hosting capacity to the test. The inefficiency of the security response has driven the political authorities to design a public immigration policy. Here, it is highly important for us to analyze the context of its emergence, its implementation and multiple effects on the domestic and external state policy and on the cohesion of Moroccan society.

Our objective is to demonstrate that immigration can be capitalized on by the Moroccan State as a factor that underpins and reinforces the internal political changes (entrenchment of the ideals of human rights) and as a perpetuation of the reforms. Externally, the issue of migration seems to be considered as an essential component of the geopolitical vision of the state.

Here, we will examine the possible impacts of sub-Saharan immigration, either permanent or transitory, on the behavior of the Moroccan authorities. Has consensus been reached to make immigration a domestic policy issue ? We

believe that the transnational and continuous mobility of populations ends up, on the one hand, by relativizing the impermeability of interstate borders. On the other hand, newcomers become, despite the precarity of their situation, a component of society that prompts public authorities to make political adjustments and ensure their integration into society in order to maintain social cohesion.

The second dimension of migration dynamics is geopolitical in nature. Due to the geographical position of Morocco, its public authorities evidently play a crucial and unprecedented regulatory role between Europe and Africa. So how did these authorities introduce the issue of migration into their relations with the European and African states ? In other words, has the issue of immigration become part of the geopolitical approach that the Moroccan authorities are trying to construct?

To answer these questions, we will analyze the impacts of hosting immigrants, regardless of their small numbers, on the geopolitical conception of Morocco in its international environment, mainly with regard to Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa.

It is a question of how the recent Moroccan diplomatic dynamics towards the African Union have taken migration in charge and made it a priority. The same is true for Europe, which is trying to bring the issue forward in the rest of its negotiations with this country seeing its strategic position.

The concern that a considerably large number of migrants would arrive has encouraged Europeans and Moroccans to assign a more flexible understanding to the notion of border. Beyond the physical interstate boundaries, they express their willingness to circumscribe the phenomenon by negotiated political decisions. It is about reinforcing the deterring limits that act as borders to restrict human mobility to the north. In this process, which falls within the exclusive competence of interstate relations, each of them is conditioned by the defense of their national interest in a context where the leeway to act is relatively restricted.

By launching the public immigration policy, the Moroccan state has contributed to lowering the pressure on the European borders, but on the other hand, it has also called for more efforts from Europe to assist in developing the countries from where the migrants originate.

Cross-border human mobility establishes links between states and permanently marks them to transcend institutional frameworks and forge links between the

origin and host societies. Whether the mobility of populations is regular or irregular, states are obliged to find solutions to face this phenomenon that is exponentially increasing.

Globally, human mobility has accelerated considerably since the second half of the 20th century. Migration is a quintessential byproduct of globalization. The development of means of communication and the increase of wars and crises of all kinds are all amplifying effects.

Migration is substantially affected by various factors that can be geographical, political, economic and cultural. These factors are embedded in the country of origin; as a result, the decision to migrate is typically made by constraint rather than by choice.

These factors also come into play in the areas of mobility and transition, which puts the migrants at high risk in the areas crossed. The same factors often continue to impact the lives of migrants in the country of their destination.

Thus, the evolution of migration around the world has attracted interest from state actors who are increasingly taking into account these populations in the development of their public policies. This complex evolution of the phenomenon of migration has generated, within the social sciences, an independent transdisciplinary scientific field. In its simplest manifestations, migration is one reflection of international relations that creates links between different states (origin and host states), and even if this phenomenon is highly embedded in this discipline, it has gained complexity, notably by enabling a higher level of interconnectedness between societies, to challenges all the components of the human sciences. While it can sometimes be a vector of tension, it can well be a source of cooperation and mutual enrichment between nations.

## **1- Morocco in the international context**

### **1-1 Renewal of the migratory issue**

Formerly a country of emigration, mainly to Europe, Morocco has gradually become a host country and settlement area for immigrants in transit to Europe. Faced with this increased pressure of migratory flows and European states,

Morocco is now facing a new reality that makes it a necessity for public authorities to take new and unprecedented responsibilities.

## 1-2 The basis of moroccan migratory policy

Morocco and, more generally, Africa are accustomed to migratory flows. The continent is part of a growing global trend, but more Africans migrate within the continent than abroad. The overall number of migrants established outside Africa is infinitely smaller than migrants from other continents. In 2015, the UN announced 244 million migrants worldwide, an increase of 41% over 2000. The total number of sub-Saharan migrants is 23.2 million, of whom only 26% live in developing countries, and 65.6% migrate within Africa.

In this context, the Moroccan state, because of its history and geography, began to learn about the issue of migration shortly after its independence. Its historical relations with France and Spain have made of it a country emitting emigrants within the framework of agreements and conventions between the states. Its geographical position near Europe has made it a transit and circulation territory inside and outside the continent, at a time when migration began to change in nature. These are more individual choices, in network logic, which take precedence over state conventions. Henceforth conventional approaches have tended to focus more on the establishment of measures to combat irregular immigration than on conventions on the immigration of workers who prospered after the Second World War.

This new migratory dimension, which the Moroccan state has to address, is added to two other dimensions : one constituted by the Moroccan community abroad and mainly established in Europe, and the other one is constituted of Moroccan youth, whether they are unemployed, higher education graduates or non-graduates and who continue to consider leaving the country in search of work opportunities abroad.

This three-fold issue explains the proven experience in management of these types of migration acquired by the public powers over time.

It is mainly the fact of the management of the Moroccan community abroad. The end of the "conventional" immigration of Moroccans in Europe and the sociological evolution of this community have profoundly changed relations with

both the host countries and the countries of origin. The integration of these new European citizens has pushed the Moroccan authorities to set the first up steps for a public policy at their address, consisting of hosting and maintaining the links of this community with its country of origin.

As a result, public authorities are not taken by surprise when the passage of illegal immigrants through Morocco to Europe began at the beginning of the 1990s. Sub-Saharan migrants began to flow north after a long Sahelo-Saharan journey from a crossroads in northern Mali and whose center is the city of Agadez, to go either towards the west of the Maghreb and eventually reach Morocco by crossing "closed" borders between Algeria and Morocco or by going east towards Libya . An overwhelming majority of these illegal migrants do not have the initial intention of settling in Morocco. The nature of these migratory flows marked mainly by the "aggregation of individual choices" and outside of any collective strategy, exposes the states to the fluctuating evolutions of these flows.

Thus, the Moroccan state becomes challenged by a dilemma : the entitlement of migrants to their "right" to mobility and the Europe's prerogative to prevent the entry of these migrants by any means at its disposal.

Similar to others, the Moroccan state has to deal with this feature of international relations. The state is "...required to elaborate more or less effective and efficient immigration policies, confronted with the effects of a social dynamic that tends to break down, directly or otherwise, several fundamental attributes of its sovereignty as well as the relations of citizenship on which it rests " . Also, the issue of migration is becoming increasingly inevitable, and the Moroccan State is entailed to deal with this recent element which accentuates the complexity of its international relations, especially because the issue has challenged Morocco in a geopolitical regional context charged with tensions without prospects of significant evolution.

To a certain extent, geography dictates the political choices. When the closure of the Moroccan-Algerian borders took place in 1994, it imposed a form of geographical isolation of Morocco in the East as in the South and fanned the geopolitical competition between the two states of the Maghreb even if it has not totally prevented the cross-border informal activity . This not only makes it impossible to develop a common management strategy for the issue of migration

between Morocco and Algeria, but exacerbates the tensions that lasted for more than forty years around the Sahara issue.

To circumvent this blockage, Morocco is directing its efforts beyond its Eastern and Southern borders. On the one hand, it has reintegrated into the African Union and articulated the issue of migration to the overall process of pan-African cooperation. On the other hand, and towards the North, it has turned to the strengthening of the southern borders of Europe, which are part of the Moroccan territory, since it concerns the cities of Ceuta and Melilla occupied by Spain.

Between Morocco and its European neighbors, migration unfolds on institutional and societal levels ; On the one hand, the established Moroccan community has long been the subject of a wide debate between Morocco and Europe, both with each of the European countries, and with the institutions of the European Union. But beyond the institutional level, these communities, which could be described as the Euro-Maghreb, lay the foundations for a civil society operating between the two shores.

The profound transformations of the Moroccan community in Europe call for mutual aid between the two parties. Also, flows of irregular migrants from sub-Saharan Africa affect Morocco and Europe and ; therefore, encourage the two parties to expand the scope of their cooperation in this area.

The apprehensive attitude of Europe, increasingly fed by internal security problems and migrants arriving from the southern shores of the Mediterranean ; mainly from Libya, is constraining European leaders to extend their borders southwards by delegating to third countries the control of immigrants before they arrive at the gates of Europe.

Within this new context, the decision of the Moroccan authorities becomes largely dependent on the fate of the irregular migrants. From the European perspective, the stance of these authorities has been received with a mixed attitude. In these conditions, the Moroccan authorities have opted for a median position that proceeds from a global vision. While looking for the least restrictive solution, for the Moroccan public authorities, restraining the phenomenon of migration can only take place in cooperation that is in favour of development, which is only likely to retain the populations in their country.

It is evident that human mobility, through direct and indirect channels, exerts a significant influence on the internal politics of the state. Indeed, Moroccan officials have opted for an appropriate political response that fundamentally changes the current situation but whose impact on Moroccan society will have important consequences in the future.

## **2- The public policy of immigration as a major effect of mobility**

As we have seen previously, the roots of the sensitivity of the Moroccan public authorities to immigrant populations are numerous and, for some, they are old. First there are Moroccans from abroad to whom these authorities are granting increasing interest. Then there is the political evolution of the country, marked by the democratic transition and initiated by the civil society to improve the relationship between the government and the people with the universal norms of human rights. For public authorities, public immigration policy is in line with the evolution of the rule of law in Morocco.

Indeed, as soon as it emerges, the issue of immigration will be addressed at one of these contexts, and any act of the public authorities is scrutinized by the human rights associations, ready to castigate any act of human rights violation towards these people.

Thus, the security approach, as an attempt to contain migratory flows, revealed its limits and came up against a convergence of struggles brought by different actors.

It is noteworthy that the gradual arrival of migrants and their illegal settlement in Morocco has created a context of particular tension whose effects have been steadily increasing. Europe on one side and public opinion on the other have not manifested leniency in their pressure on the authorities.

At the political level, the regularization results from a long process of interaction between different actors involved in the issue.

In the first place, the public authorities that exercise the sovereign powers of the state are concerned with border control, the maintenance of public order and respect for the fundamental rights of migrants in accordance with Morocco's international commitments.

Secondly, there are the actors of civil society. With three decades of tremendous growth, civil society organizations have come to the fore when the phenomenon of migration has grown. The associations showed great reactivity and mobilization when the authorities increased their fight against illegal immigration by proceeding with the first evictions. The first reaction of these associations was to rescue the migrants pushed back from the national territory and abandoned in the desert on the borders of Moroccan-Algerian borders. Therefore, they were the first to denounce the security approach of the public authorities towards migrants.

For these associations, the defense of immigrants, regardless of their legal status, is part of the natural order of things since this new fight is a continuation of the struggles they lead in favor of human rights in Morocco. They gave the first warning of human rights abuses suffered by undocumented migrants from the security forces. If they act as a watchdog to prevent possible human rights violations, their involvement has resulted in the accompaniment and support of migrants in their approach. They are also active in raising public awareness of the new issue through continuous information and thematic reporting on the issue.

Moreover, on this occasion, Moroccan civil society has become enriched and internationalized.

On the one hand, associations for the defense and the promotion of human rights have largely contributed to the creation of associations specialized in the rights of migrants advocate with the participation of sub-Saharan activists, whose contribution is considerable in terms of their experience and daily needs as immigrants.

On the other hand, some migrants have created their own associations under the leadership of the CNDH with the help of existing entities at the meeting of the Appeals Board for people who have not been regularized. Held on January 23, 2014, this meeting was organized by the Ministry in charge of Moroccans Residing Abroad and Migration Affairs and attended by the Interministerial Delegate for Human Rights and the President of the National Council for Human Rights Man. The CNDH considered that the role of migrant associations is crucial for the success of the new migration policy. The Commission recalled that the regularization of the status of migrant association founders was of paramount importance. The CNDH President goes further, stressing that to reach their

maximum potential; migrant associations must be regularized in accordance with the recommendation contained in the CNDH's initial report.

Thirdly, there is the increasing European pressure on the Moroccan state to put barriers against the entry of migrants into European territory. We will see later how the issue of migration has been and is how it is increasingly shifting towards the center of the ongoing negotiations between the two parties.

The Moroccan public authorities have gradually moved towards a change of course in their migration policy by setting up a credible public migration policy whose first step is the regularization of illegal immigrants.

Like all major decisions that affect the future of the country, the decision to regulate the legal status of migrants has been made by the King who relied on the thematic report produced by the National Council of Human Rights (CNDH).

### 2-1 The precursor role of the CNDH

The position of the CNDH as a constitutional institution that works for the protection and promotion of human rights in the country has made it the appropriate central institution to overcome this impasse and make a decisive turning point. It laid the foundation for public immigration policy. The CNDH produced, in September 2013, a report, submitted to the King, entitled "Foreigners and human rights in Morocco : for a radically new asylum and immigration policy". This proposal for a new policy includes an exceptional process to regularize undocumented migrants.

If regularization is the basic recommendation, allowing migrants to have access to the right to have a valid residence permit, the CNDH report creates a comprehensive public policy. The success of such a policy requires the involvement of state powers through legal, economic and social reforms allowing the integration of migrants within Moroccan society.

The CNDH calls on the government to officially support an exceptional regularization operation for certain categories of migrants in an irregular administrative situation, "according to criteria that take into account the length of residence in Morocco, the right to live with the family, the conditions of integration into Moroccan society and the establishment agreements concluded by the Kingdom with friendly countries, ... »

According to the CNDH, this policy must integrate four major components ;

- The situation of refugees and asylum seekers, foreigners in an irregular administrative situation,
- Legal foreigners and the fight against trafficking in persons.
- To do this, the CNDH recommends that public authorities involve all parties concerned by the issue of immigration.
- Thus, social actors and international partners are called to cooperate for the establishment of a credible public policy protecting their rights.

Based on the principles outlined in the report, the king gave an uncompromising assessment that underpinned his decision; "Faced with the significant increase in the number of immigrants from Africa or Europe, We invite the government to develop a new comprehensive policy on immigration and asylum issues, based on a humanitarian approach in line with international commitments of our country and respectful of the rights of immigrants".

This operation is part of a significant politico-normative evolution even if these new rules may not contain the unpredictable aspects of the dynamics of migration which accelerated in recent years.

Despite the developments introduced by the law 02-03 regarding the entry and stay of foreigners in the Kingdom of Morocco, whether that concerns emigration or illegal immigration, it remained below the expectations of lawyers, specialists in migration and civil society actors as it does not refer to the political, economic and social rights of foreigners: freedom of expression and opinion, freedom of trade union membership and the right to health. These rights are stipulated in the International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

They collectively stressed its repressive nature and the fact that it was adopted, under pressure from the European Union, at the same time as the 03-03 law on the fight against terrorism.

## 2-2 The favorable state response to pressures

The government launched the regularization process following the royal speech and in accordance with the recommendations of the CNDH. In September 2013,

the government created two commissions ; one responsible for regularizing the administrative situation of certain categories of irregular migrants while the other addressed the status of asylum seekers recognized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The work of this commission ended on November 21, 2013.

The government has expressed its commitment to address the issue in close collaboration with civil society actors. A meeting was organized by the Ministry for Migration Affairs as in 14 November 2013 during which the Minister stated that the choice of criteria for regularization was made on the basis of "best practices". These criteria were not specified until the signing of the joint circular of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Moroccans Residing Abroad and Migration Affairs on December 16, 2013.

In parallel with the administration's preparations for the launch of the operation, the President of the CNDH, "The Migrants Protection Platform" and migrant associations had a meeting on the 3rd of December 2013. In accordance with the recommendations of its report, the CNDH compiled the positions of civil society, particularly regarding the criteria proposed by the government and its proposals on the entire process. The aim of CNDH is beyond regularization since it is concerned with the next phase of immigrant integration and the possible contributions of civil society at this stage through concrete actions in areas such as education, vocational training, health, housing ... .etc.

The members of the platform were quick to react to the impetus given by the CNDH since they submitted a memorandum to the CNDH president in December 13, 2013. If they praise the responsiveness of the government, they consider that the illegitimacy criteria for regularization to be very limiting, and they demand the regularization of all resident migrants in Morocco who have expressed their wish to benefit from a residence permit. On this occasion they set up a wider coordination of associations whose claim is "Papers for all".

The regularization process, which took place in 2014, was supervised by the joint circular between the involved ministries. The Ministry of the Interior has opened 83 foreigners' offices throughout the country.

The results of this operation have been a matter for debate and generated different opinions among the multiple stakeholders involved based on their role in this process and more generally on their position in society. Statistically, the

differences between the number of applicants and the number of regularized persons are not wide. At a press conference, the Ministry of the Interior announced on the 9th of February, 2015 that 17,916 applications were admitted out of a total of 27,332 applications. In February 2015 president of the CNDH announced a slightly lower figure, since until 31 December 2014, out of a total number of requests of 27,130, 16,180 received a favorable response from the administration. Among the beneficiaries of a favorable opinion, there are 9,202 women and 6,232 men.

- The CNDH is the instigator of this policy and the designer of the vision that should lay the framework for its development. At the same time, the council chaired the Appeals Board for denied applications. The commitment of this institution was decisive for the cause of migrants. The council also ensured the credible participation of civil society actors in this process. Given its position, the objective was to temper the positions of certain elements of the administration and to strike a balance between the rigidity of the administration and the advocacy of the associations.

- Lastly, driven by their activism and advocacy, the associative actors criticized the progress of the operation and advanced many in their positions in line with the concerns of the CNDH which took into account these recommendations.

They took the opportunity of the first official meeting with the authorities in charge of the operation to identify a number of dysfunctional elements during the processing of requests by the administrative authorities, including:

- The abnormally high number of denied applications for regularization by the candidates at the level of foreigners' offices, whereas such a decision is the sole responsibility of the regularization commissions ;

- Continuing arrests of migrants in the north and in the region of Nador and their forced displacement to the towns of the interior;

- The very strict interpretation by the territorial administration of the criteria established for the regularization of illegal immigrants

Faced with all the comments made by the associations, the CNDH president, who is also chairman of the commission, praised the effective participation of the associations in the regularization process and responded favorably to their grievances. The attitude of the president of the CNDH, clearly in favour of a

flexible and benevolent attitude in the processing of regularization files, shows the diversity of the apprehensions between the actors concerned by the implementation of this public policy. The CNDH, as a designer and locomotive of public policy, has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to its success.

The associations have fully undertaken their activist commitments while the administration has been reluctant in the implementation of the new policy while it has not been associated with its design.

In terms of results, fewer than 40 000 immigrants regularized during the two regularization operations of 2014 and 2016. It becomes quite evident that the importance of these operations resides less in the number of beneficiaries than in the political and symbolic significance they carry. The number of immigrants in Morocco reaches 74,000, 40% of whom are European and 14% are Algerians out of an entire population of 33,848,242 according to the 2014 census.

As a southern, emigrant sending country, Morocco is classified as a host country within a south/south migratory dynamic which exceeds 50% of total global migration flows. In this regard, Morocco intends to be a "model of immigrant integration" and an exception among the countries of the South in terms of the policy implemented.

By responding to external and internal expectations (European and African), Morocco has taken part in the management of this migratory dynamic. Internally, state practice in this area has manifested a new mode of governance in the management of public affairs with the active participation of civil society actors. Despite not participating in the development of this policy, civil society actors were steadfast supporters of the CNDH proposal and the linchpin of this public policy, as the CNDH has called for it in its report.

These civil society actors have acted as stewards for public authorities, drawing on their knowledge of the field, the target populations and international experience in this area. Through their presence on the ground, they mediated between the public authorities and society at a time when political parties did not take the initiative to bring the debate around this issue to the public space.

The goal of some international associations (mainly from Europe) based in Morocco is to provide assistance to migrants in a precarious situation (food shortage, health issues ...). Like Caritas Morocco (Social Action of the Catholic

Church in Morocco), or to participate in advocacy and provide technical and administrative support. All these associations organized themselves in the collective which had been put in place at the start of the first regularization campaign.

### 2-3 At the External Level

The issue of immigration is highlighted by The Moroccan government in a global geopolitical vision that unfolds at two major levels and relates domestic politics with the foreign policy of the state.

The first level is towards Europe which is a historical partner of Morocco. Morocco has strong relations with several European states. But it maintains particularly privileged relations with certain historical partners such as France or Spain. The Moroccan state and the European Union are building on these achievements and strengthening at the economic and strategic levels. As we have seen above, the geographical proximity and the long-term establishment of Moroccan communities in Europe are the pillars of these relations. So the question of migration management is not a new one. Indeed, for decades, the Moroccan communities established in Europe travel to Morocco for the summer holidays.

In addition, the issue of terrorism, which is of great concern to both parties, has imposed a security dimension, notably through the exchange of information, judicial cooperation and the sharing of particular experiences. As a result, the partnership between these two parties has become progressively multifaceted.

When Europe closed its borders, Morocco became one of the preferred routes to illegally enter European territory. Sub-Saharan migrants, who could not reach it by land or by sea, remained with the sole option to stay in Morocco in the hope of resuming their journey. Therefore, the decision of these migrants to settle in Morocco is, in one way or another, the byproduct of aborted migration journeys.

Europe supports the efforts made by the Moroccan authorities, particularly with regard to the policy of controlling illegal emigration attempts they have put in place.

This issue of illegal migration has become over time an essential matter in all negotiations between the two parties. It is a shared concern used by both parties to pressure one another directly or indirectly into gaining national strategic advantage.

The fact is that whenever the European Union, or one of its Member States, issues a decision on the subject matter, it raises the attention of Morocco. How will Morocco react? In what ways could Morocco be involved ? And what efforts could the Moroccan State make ? Beyond the closure of the borders, the focus of European policymakers is on the protection of their external borders and how they can be extended further towards the south.

European decision-makers feel primarily involved when Moroccan authorities implement preventive measures against illegal emigration upon entry in Moroccan territory or at exit points towards Europe. More pressure is exerted from Europe on Moroccan authorities dealing with this issue with an additional requirement relating to the protection of human rights. This requirement is stressed internally by human rights movement in general and by the associations that advocate for the rights of immigrants in particular.

We find the same attitude among the Moroccan authorities who note that, from the beginning of migratory flows, Moroccan territory has been a transit to Europe. Therefore, Europe is, directly or indirectly, a stakeholder in all the decisions that the authorities have to make in this area. What additional efforts can Europe bring to these struggles ? How can Europe contribute to security and stability in Africa ? According to Moroccan public authorities, these are the only conditions likely to limit the departure of migrants to Europe and elsewhere.

Faced with these realities and the expectations that they generate, the authorities have chosen to opt for the regularization of illegal immigrants that we have explained above.

At one level, this public policy is a direct response to the population targeted and the associative actors who are their primary supporters. At another level, the decision of regularization, which must be followed by the process of social integration and the economic integration of the undocumented populations, is a direct response to the expectations of the European counterparts because it allows the long term settlement of these migrants far from Europe. In return for the public policy decided by Moroccan authorities, the European decision-makers, at the state level as well as at the level of the European Union are committed to accompany and support Morocco in its new public policy, taking into account the economic, social and cultural impact of this integration that Morocco must support

It is in this context that the "Partnership for EU-Morocco Mobility" was signed between Morocco and nine members of the European Union in June 2013 and launched in 2015. This memorandum of understanding around the implementation of the policy of integration is of interest because it took place while public immigration policy in Morocco was still being elaborated. The responsiveness of the European decision-makers clearly indicates the state of expectation in which they were facing the Moroccan public authorities. The interest also lies in the fact that the financial allocations granted by the European Union are intended for the ministries according to the projects which they presented and on which they contracted. It can thus be noted that the integration of immigrants into Morocco has become one of the components of Euro-Moroccan cooperation.

As a result, human mobility has undeniably produced chain effects. First, there was the regularization of sub-Saharan immigrants, which is a direct consequence of the closing of European borders. This closure did not provoke animosity between the European Union and the Moroccan state ; it did, on the contrary, open new ways of cooperation between the two parties.

The second level is towards Africa. Faced with the challenges hampering the project of the integration of the Maghreb and the intractability of the Sahara issue, the King decided to go on the offensive at the continental level.

Not only does it plan to draw profit from this return with regard to a national issue of paramount importance, which is the Sahara dispute, but it also demonstrates promising prospects of economic and social development in Africa.

This move helped dispel the lack of clarity that had marked Morocco's relations with the Organization of the African Union since it left in 1984 because of the Polisario's membership.

King Mohammed VI has made more than 40 visits to different countries of the continent in order to promote Moroccan investments and prepare Morocco's return to the African Union. These African tours of the King were carried out mainly in West Africa because of the strong ties that the Kingdom maintains with some sub-Saharan African countries, such as Senegal, Mali, Gabon and Ivory Coast. Gradually, the king visited some countries in Central and East Africa. Some of these states formerly showed uncompromised support for the cause of

the separatist group the Polisario, but mutual economic interests eventually softened their position.

Throughout these trips, the Head of State was preparing the reintegration of Morocco into the African Union which took place on January 30, 2017. In parallel and in accordance with the King's will, the Economic Community of the States of the West Africa (ECOWAS) had agreed in principle to the accession of Morocco at its 51st summit held in Monrovia.

This successful return to the AU underscores the Kingdom's intentions not only to diversify its political and economic partnerships but also to reestablish its leader position within the continent, starting with the recovery of its seat in the African Union to eventually regain its geopolitical role in the whole of Africa.

Among the elements of the diplomatic discourse developed by Morocco is the issue of immigration. Upon launching the process of regularization, the King entrenched the principles of a policy "focused on a common African vision and humanitarian principles to be prioritized over migration issues"

« The privileged relations that unite Morocco with the countries of sub-Saharan Africa are not only political and economic. They are, in the end, secular human and spiritual bonds ».

The reception, regularization and integration of Sub-Saharans into Moroccan society are an integral part of Morocco's vision for the African continent. This regularization certainly responds to internal considerations but it is also a positive message addressed to the African States.

Perhaps, thanks to the leading role of Morocco with regard to this matter, the President of the African Union entrusted the King with the mission of coordinating the immigration program within the African Union Commission. In a message addressed to the African Union at its 28th Summit, the sovereign delivered his prospective vision in the form of a roadmap on the issue of immigration. The King expresses a positive approach in coherence with the commitment made at the national level which he intends to project at the continental level. It is a positive view of migration as a natural phenomenon. According to the King, migration is "the solution and not the problem". It is a source of enrichment for both the source and host countries. In his message, the sovereign expressed his intention to deconstruct the persistent myths surrounding

the issue of migration. First, he rejects the idea of a "surge of migration" since migrants represent only 3.4% of the world's population.

In order to change the misconception on migration, the King suggests two proposals; the first is the creation of an African Observatory of Migration (OAM), whose headquarters will be based in Morocco. The mission of this observatory will be the exchange of information between African countries for an optimized management of migration flows.

The second proposal is the creation of the position of the AU Special Envoy for Migration. The incumbent will be responsible for coordinating AU policies in this area.

The King has been granted by the African Union the mandate of "leader of the African Union on the issue of migration".

At the international level, the public authorities are consistent with the measures taken at the domestic level. Also, combined efforts must be deployed in dealing with the issue of migration both internally and internationally. These principles guide the preparation of the International Conference on Migration, which aims to adopt a "Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration", as well as the Global Forum for Migration and Development co-chaired by Morocco and Germany in December 2018.

With regard to the initiatives taken in Morocco as well as at the continental level, it is evident that human mobility challenges policy makers, and it is on the agenda of international negotiations. The implementation of an uncompromising security approach to manage migratory flows seems to be outdated since it only increases challenges for States instead of providing viable solutions. The strict control of the States on the mobility of people has proved to be quite inadequate. Also, the absolute sovereignty of States violates the fundamental right of people to choose and exercise the freedom of movement. This contradiction encourages states to elaborate a common management strategy.

The suggested Moroccan proposal for an African consultation to make migration a lever for development on a continental scale seems to be an extension for the public policy implemented at the national level.

The idea of a collaborative management is not new for the Moroccan public authorities who have "combined the management of the affairs of migrants in

Morocco with those of Moroccan communities living abroad", which, in the name of the coherence of public decisions, expressed that "we cannot demand respect for the rights of our community abroad without guaranteeing the respect of the communities hosted in Morocco".

The analysis of the Moroccan experience of managing migration shows that the authorities favored a global approach to deal with this issue. First, their political decisions, both domestic and external, seem intimately linked. Secondly, the decisions taken by the authorities and their outcomes are, more or less, a matter for debate between European and Moroccan public decision-makers. Their reciprocal commitments take into account the constantly evolving migration dynamics between the two shores of the Mediterranean (Moroccan diaspora in Europe, European immigrants in Morocco and the fight against illegal immigration).

The Moroccan proposal for the joint management of migration in Africa only confirms this trend. The control of migration flows within the continent is an opportunity to add a new dimension to the Moroccan-European cooperation and emphasize the significant role of the Moroccan authorities in this issue after its reintegration to AU. For, beyond the institutional and political dimensions, Moroccan authorities are eager to strengthen the societal, economic and cultural dimensions. These dimensions will effectively contribute to the development of Africa and act as a factor accelerating migration towards Europe.

Europe puts a great deal of pressure on Moroccan public authorities. One aspect of this is represented in the diplomatic negotiations surrounding the renewal of the agricultural and fisheries agreements. The financial contribution of Europe is probably assessed according to the efforts made by Morocco in various fields including the support provided by the kingdom in the fight against illegal migration.

Moreover, this European influence is perpetuated inside Morocco through many actors. There are, in particular, diplomatic European chancellors as well as European actors who assist with development in Morocco. These actors act in collaboration with the Moroccan government. Their presence reflects European influence through various technical support programs. Beyond this useful assistance to the state institutions in charge of different public policies, the

influence of these international actors is not negligible among non-governmental Moroccan actors working in the field in support of immigrants.

The importance of the issue of migration largely determines the future of north / south relations and evermore so the South / South relations as well.

## CONCLUSION

The objective of this article was to measure the impacts of human mobility which has become a regular dynamic in Morocco on political decisions both domestically and internationally. First, considering the number of immigrants documented by the Moroccan government, the phenomenon remains of little importance or even insignificant. But it is through the reactions that this mobility incited and the effects it generated that the phenomenon reveals an indisputable scope for Morocco and its geopolitical environment.

Globalization plays a significant role in this. It is not a purely economic phenomenon anymore because, through the weakening of interstate borders, it has accelerated the movement of people who took advantage of this context for increased mobility and, henceforth, foregrounded the human aspect of globalization.

This right to mobility, strongly advocated by those who aspire to migrate, strengthens a little more the reciprocal influences between the decision-making apparatus within the state and the elaboration of foreign policy decisions. The acceleration of human mobility relies increasingly on the freedom of movement that Human Rights conventions advocate for, and more or less challenges the quintessential principles of the modern state, the chief being sovereignty, borders, and the nation-state. (...). Nowadays, these attributes are increasingly overlooked which encourages states to introduce new principles in the implementation of domestic and foreign policies.

At these two levels, human mobility towards Morocco has undoubtedly altered the classical conception of borders, both at the entry and departure.

Human mobility has also convinced the public authorities to implement a public policy that documents these people in Morocco and provides them with basic fundamental rights without violating their freedom to mobility.

On the geopolitical aspect, everything indicates that the public policy of emigration initiated by Morocco has helped boost cooperation between Morocco and Europe without entirely subcontracting to countries bordering Europe, such as Morocco.

In Africa, the mobility of Sub-Saharanans legally residing in Morocco today has been an issue among others after Morocco's reintegration within the AU.

If the impacts of mobility on the domestic and external policies of the Moroccan State are significant and numerous, it will be necessary to measure their extent in the long term. At the domestic level, the valid elements of assessing the success or failure of this public policy are the social and political integration and the economic integration of immigrants into Moroccan society. This public policy, undeniably fair and well-founded, will depend on the degree of openness and acceptance of these populations by Moroccan society.

At the international level, it is important to measure the degree of the European contribution in helping Africa project of development because, as long as the young African populations remain in precarity and with no prospects, they will choose a way out of their continent towards a more promising Europe.

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