

# The Maghreb-Europe Paradigm



# The Maghreb-Europe Paradigm:

*Migration, Gender  
and Cultural Dialogue*

Edited by

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*To Aicha Chenna*



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# INTRODUCTION

MOHA ENNAJI

The Maghreb has for centuries constituted a bridge between Europe and Africa. Relations and exchanges between Europe and the Maghreb have always been very intense and rich, but impregnated, sometimes, with conflicts and tensions. While globalization presents both advantages and obstacles to development in the Maghreb, the Schengen agreement and the enlargement of the European Union have led to more complex relations between both regions, but not to the development of the Maghreb, hence the flow of migration to Europe.

The main aim of this book is to discuss the current socio-cultural situation on the basis of differences characterizing the cultures of the Maghreb and Europe, and to analyze migration and socio-cultural diversity in these regions. It also aims at offering alternatives in terms of developing and deepening intercultural dialogue, consolidating values of communication and understanding between North African and European countries.

The Maghreb—particularly Morocco, which has always been a privileged crossroad of civilizations, with an ancestral tradition of diversity (cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious)—can contribute fundamentally to the rapprochement of the peoples of the region.

The authors participating in this volume discuss certain postcolonial international theories on hybridity, offering a rereading of fundamental cultures of the Maghreb, namely, Arab, Amazigh, Jewish, Christian, Andalusian, Spanish, and French cultures, especially regarding their relations with Europe. They show how the cultural diversity of the Maghreb has been influenced by migratory movements towards Europe. Theories like those of Edward Said (*Orientalism*) and Homi Bhabha (*The Location of Culture*) show that cultural processes condition and affect each other, but only within hegemonic discursive structures.

Another major objective of this volume is to discuss cultural diversity and exchange in the Maghreb and Europe as a promising way to strengthen democratization and tolerance, via a reassessment of speeches on identity, migration, nation, language, and culture. Between Europe and

the Maghreb, as inside the Maghreb itself, movements and contacts—of persons as well as of discursive models—are numerous, thus partly forbidding not only fixed, self-defining identities but also discourses, particularly literary discourses, which are always in movement and in mutation, in a context of dynamic hybridity, where a different future is elaborated, and where a history in mutation is re-appropriated.

Migration is certainly the most obvious illustration of movements of persons which engender movements of cultures, thoughts, and words. But curiously, migration is also, as Jacques Berque stated, a “space sub-represented in literature”. Indeed, since the 1980s, many writers in the diaspora have published interesting works, in fact a literature comparable to the literature produced forty years ago by Francophone Maghrebi writers. Is this due to a change in era, of which the corollary is most often a change of perception of the political and cultural spaces, and of their encounter? Is this due to an identity quest in a postmodern or postcolonial space of migration?

This book attempts to answer these questions; it comprises chapters that range in subject matter from sociological and anthropological studies of the Maghrebi diaspora and migrants in Europe to reflections on transnational Maghrebi literature. It is an analysis of migration, with all its complex aspects and multiple expressions of “exile”, “otherness”, and “pain”.

While much has been published on Maghrebi migration, this volume aims to contribute to the study of its multiple dimensions, consequences and expressions, which range from sociological approaches to culture and literature. The major scope of this book is to explore the advantages and disadvantages of migration and to embrace the triple foci of the sociological, the theoretical and the literary dimensions.

The chapters discuss the topic of migration and culture from various angles, making this volume a forum where notions of dispossession, cultural identity, and otherness are debated.

The chapter by Mehdi Lahlou outlines the mutual commitments of Morocco and the European Union (EU) for collaboration in the field of migration and for the progressive sustainable development of bilateral relationships in the political, economic, and cultural domains. Morocco’s advanced status and partnership with the EU provides a new impetus for cooperation to curb illegal migration and foster political and cultural dialogue between the Maghreb and Europe.

Moha Ennaji deals with Maghrebis in Europe who are torn between modernity and Islamization. He shows that cultural diversity in host countries is partly the result of migration flows to Europe. In his view, this

diversity is a source of wealth and should not be perceived as a threat, provided it is well managed by governments and communities. The chapter highlights the benefits and role of multiculturalism in the integration of immigrants in host countries. It reveals that respect for cultural diversity protects minorities in democratic countries and contributes to the integration of immigrants. As to the solution of migration and identity problems, emphasis is placed on the importance of education and the media in training young people in the Maghreb and immigrants in the host countries.

Fatima Sadiqi's chapter on women and migration reveals that given the general social, economic and political situation in Morocco and Europe, and given the major tensions that people have to live with and monitor, it is imperative that the women left behind by migrants are allocated due attention. They do not only guarantee family stability in the absence of males, but they also have a direct and everlasting impact on children. The author argues that both the positive and negative impacts of migration on these women need to be seriously taken into account. Women's agency in Moroccan society has been attested over the years, but illiteracy and lack of access to the spheres of power still constitute hurdles for these women. Sadiqi argues that State assistance for both women and their children will certainly help them carry out their mission more appropriately.

Ennaji and Sadiqi's chapter on Moroccan women in the UK underscores female agency in international migration, and shows that Moroccan women take such brave decisions as migration, despite its challenges, in order to better their lives and to be free and independent. The chapter corroborates recent research suggesting that Moroccan women regard migration as an opportunity to build a new life.

Marjo Buitelaar narrates the life story of a Moroccan-Dutch woman. She discusses agency in postmigration life storytelling. On the basis of excerpts from the life story of a highly educated Moroccan Dutch woman, initially set down in 1999 and followed up with an interview in 2008, it is demonstrated how the narrator responds to various audiences who inform her sense of self in order to find a satisfactory balance between behavioural and relational forms of (in)dependence.

In his chapter "Democratic Access and Integration of Multilingual Non-indigenous Minorities: Reference to Euro-Moroccans", Abdeslam Jamaï reviews the nature and extent of support given to second generation Moroccans in a number of European countries. He shows that these Moroccans lack democratic access to services, and thus are usually victims of unbalanced cultural and linguistic situations. Due to several factors leading to a breakdown in communication, the Moroccan minority fails to

mix and integrate in harmony in the two cultures and acquire good commands of both languages.

Mohammadi Laghzaoui's chapter is about language development among Moroccan Berber children in the home and school environments in the Netherlands. The aim of this study is to examine which aspects of academic language are acquired, how and when. Some results show clear differences between the input of mothers and that of teachers. While mothers carry out a book reading task in the way they usually do in their daily activities, teachers tend to adjust their language use. They do this according to the composition of the classroom in terms of the number of children learning Dutch as a second language, as well as the differences in terms of vocabulary knowledge.

In his chapter "Religious Hospitality and Common Essentials", Johan Goud discusses some problems concerning the search for common grounds in religion and tries to formulate some postulates of "religious hospitality". For clarification, he brings in experiences of diasporic authors with the precariousness of living/writing "in-between".

Nabil Cherni discusses Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity and the Maghrebi postcolonial condition. He outlines Bhabha's theory of cultural difference in the concepts of hybridity and the third space (Bhabha, 1990a, 1994, 1996). The chapter is a critique of Bhabha's theory, analyzing some manifestations of local and immigrant cultures which unveil the complexity of the Maghrebi postcolonial cultural experience and the limits of Bhabha's theory of hybridity.

In her chapter "The Maghrebi Experience of the East-West", Zahia Smail Salhi provides an overview of the literature on orientalism and of the Maghrebi literature produced about migration in the 1950s and 1960s. The focus here is on depicting the views of the Orient about the Occident. The main questions addressed in this chapter are: Is Occidentalism a rejection if not a rebellion against Orientalism? Have Occidentalist authors produced their texts as a counter-discourse against Orientalism? If so, are they motivated by a desire to change the negative and stereotypical images produced about them? Is the Orient engaging in a war of words, which often justifies, whether in a direct or an indirect manner, the many political wars which exist today between Orient and Occident?

Adopting Bhabha's theory of hybridity, Leezenberg's chapter debates the experience of Moroccan immigrants in the Netherlands, which he usefully contrasts with that of Turkish-origin immigrants. The study shows that while Moroccan-Dutch people manifest a slightly less successful socio-economic integration than the Turkish, culturally, Moroccans appear better placed to engage with mainstream Dutch culture. Thus, there are

more successful young authors and journalists with a Moroccan background than with a Turkish-speaking origin. However, in terms of religion, Moroccan youths appear more amenable to fundamentalist ideas of the Salafi variety. In other words, among Moroccan youths, there appears to be a relatively greater tendency to create forms of what one may call do-it-yourself Islam which do not rely on religious authorities from the community of origin, let alone the great corpus of Islamic learning, but rather on the internet, and which display a greater affinity with Salafi ideas.

Abdelkader Benali's chapter "An Issue We Can All Relate to" is an open dialogue with the world. The author attempts to show that by acknowledging migrants' mother tongue and cultural roots, Europe will cope better with identity and diversity issues.

"Cultural Dialogue and Writing in the Interstice" is the title of the chapter by Jilali El Koudia. It underlines the importance of cultural dialogue and the role of writing in a foreign language. Writing in the interstice and in translation deals simultaneously with two or more languages and cultures. Both writer and translator operate in the interstice and have the same purpose: to create a dialogue between different cultures and civilizations. This chapter tries to answer the question of what happens in the encounter between different cultures and its implications. The argument focuses on the space occupied by both acts of writing.

## CHAPTER ONE

# MOROCCO AND THE EUROPEAN UNION: FROM EURO-MED 95 TO ADVANCED STATUS FOR MOROCCO, AND FROM POLITICAL AND CULTURAL DIALOGUE TO THE EUROPEAN PACT ON MIGRATION

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### **Introduction**

The relationships between Morocco and the European Union (EU), formalized since 1969 by a first agreement of association with the former European Economic Community, are extremely strong. Two basic elements indicate the intensity of these reports on the Moroccan side. Firstly, the EU represents the main customer of Morocco: it is the recipient of 74% of its sales abroad. It is also its leading vendor, since Morocco receives 52% of its imports from EU countries. Secondly, EU countries also constitute the principal area of residence of Moroccan migrants living abroad. Over 2.5 million Moroccans live today in the EU, close to three fifths in France and one fifth in Spain. Besides, hundreds of French and Spanish enterprises are operating in various economic, financial, and commercial sectors in Morocco.

Politically, the failure of the Union of the Arab Maghreb (UMA, instituted in 1989 between the five Maghreb countries of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, and Libya) and the withdrawal of Morocco from the Organization of African Unity in 1984—in addition to the political and institutional brittleness of the Arab League—pushed Morocco to consolidate economic, human, and political relationships with the EU as

a strategic approach allowing it to ‘protect’ itself from an immediate geopolitical environment which was not particularly friendly.

For the EU, and mainly for countries like France and Spain, Morocco represents a good customer and its economy offers good business. Additionally, it is one of the most stable countries in the region, which has advanced with the process of democratization at the regional level; thus, it represents a country worth approaching and encouraging.

Furthermore, with the increase of the phenomenon of irregular migration since the 1990s, starting from sub-Saharan Africa, Morocco is regarded as a country on which Europe can rely for ‘protecting’ the part of its borders that start from the south of the Mediterranean Sea.

Globally and politically, for the EU, Morocco is well placed to become the lead country in the democratic reform process across the Maghreb, in the sense that it might inspire and stimulate its neighbours—not only in the Arab world, but also in many countries in the south of the Sahel, such as Senegal, Mali, Niger, and Guinea, considering that Morocco has strong political, economic, and cultural ties and diverse links with these countries.<sup>1</sup> For that to happen, greater political and financial support from the EU is needed.

## **Morocco / European Union: The global context**

In this vein, in the interest of Morocco itself, but also in the interest of Europe and the other Maghreb countries, there are today many reasons which push Europeans and Maghrebis to work together in close cooperation, to address shared problems and similar threats, and to find and offer relevant and appropriate answers.

Among the existing problems, there are of course those relevant to climate change: increasing desertification, deforestation, and the pressure on water supplies and the importance of safeguarding this vital resource. As to the security threats, the recent terrorist attacks in France, Belgium, the UK, Spain, Tunisia, and Algeria show that the North of the Mediterranean Sea, as much as the countries of the South, are targeted by terrorist organisations, regardless of nationality or religion.

This implies that it is imperative, for all the countries in the region, to thwart the sources which feed violence and terrorism. One of the root causes of these threats is the widening gap between the level of development in EU countries and those of the Maghreb.

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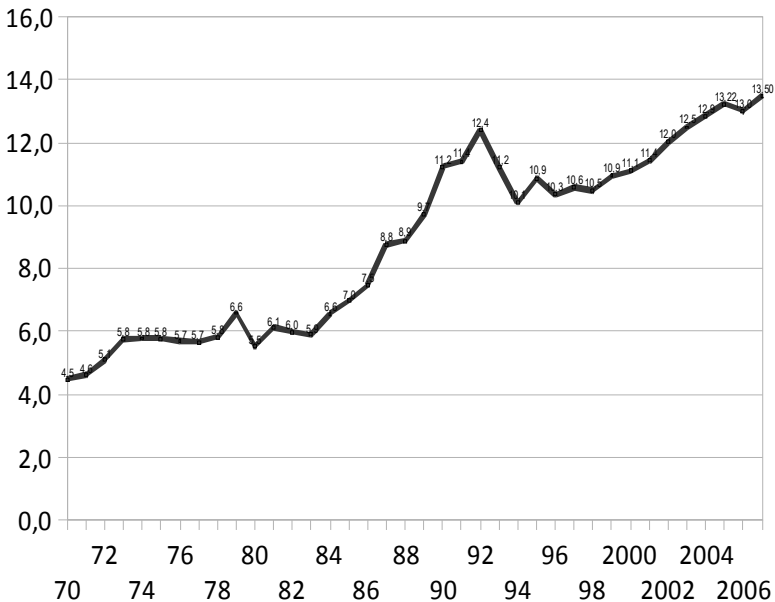
<sup>1</sup> A zone which interests Europe very much, particularly because the majority of the migrants that it receives from Africa originate from this region.

Thus, a comparison of Morocco and Spain (used as proxies for the Maghreb and Europe as a whole) indicates that these two countries (and through them, these two zones) represent today one of the most unbalanced borders in the world in terms of discrepancy in GDP per capita of their populations.

Moreover, not only is the variation of income over this border very important today, but it represents—as shown by the two figures below—perhaps the widest border in the world which marks the gap between a rich zone and a poor one, and where the difference of income per capita has been increasing during the last thirty years.

### Economic Step between Spain and Morocco

Spain's GDP per capita divided by Morocco's

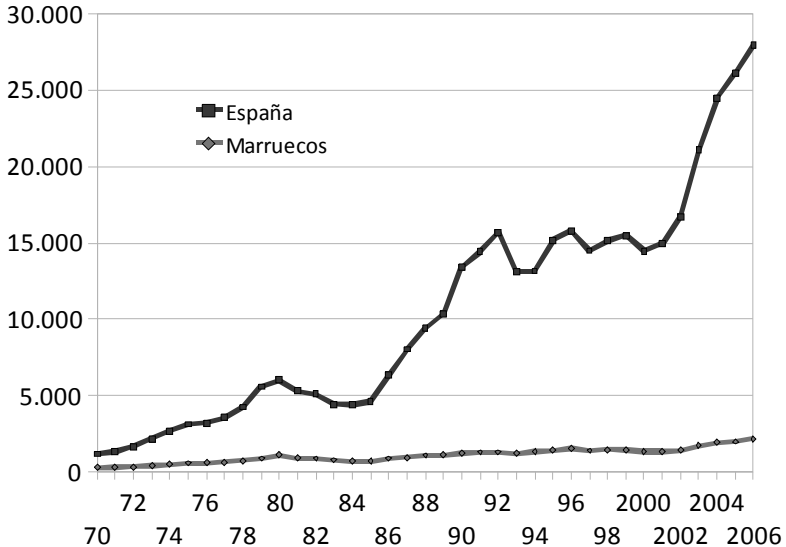


Source: Iñigo More/LA VIDA EN LA FRONTERA



## Spain vs. Morocco

GDP per capita in US\$ 1970-2006



Source: Iñigo More/LA VIDA EN LAFRONTERA

Regarding this global (political, social, economic, and geo-strategic) context, Morocco has constantly requested more political and economic proximity with respect to the EU. This request was often supported by the European countries that are geographically and historically close to Morocco, especially France, and to a certain extent Spain, particularly since the establishment of a socialist government in Madrid in 2004.

Well before all the changes that the eastern part of Europe experienced after 1989, Morocco officially applied to join the European community on 20 July 1987, one year after Spain became a member of this community. The application was rejected by The European community's foreign ministers, as they did not consider Morocco to be a European country.<sup>2</sup> The rejection was expected, given that the late Moroccan King, Hassan II, had sent messengers two years before and received the same response,

<sup>2</sup> This argument can be countered by pointing out that Ceuta and Melilla, which are considered European cities by EU, are situated in the north of Morocco, that is, on the African continent, not the European one.

expressed in the beginning by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Claude Cheysson: the main reason for the rejection was that Morocco was not geographically part of Europe and also because, at that time, the socialist French government wanted to set a more balanced relationship between France, Morocco, and Algeria, with respect to the Saharan conflict.

Since then, successive Moroccan governments have not ceased requesting from Europeans an ‘advanced status’ which would operate at a higher level than a simple ‘partnership’. King Mohammed VI, who took power in July 1999, launched another call<sup>3</sup> for a stronger and deeper partnership between Morocco and the EU. He proposed this partnership to be at “a level ranging between association and pure and simple union”. Something similar was advanced a few years before by the former president of the European commission, Romano Prodi, “All except the institutions” (see Jaïdi, 2009).<sup>4</sup>

The efforts undertaken by the Moroccan authorities to meet European expectations in terms of reducing the crossing of migrants from Morocco—and from the entire northwestern part of Africa—over to Europe seemed to bear fruit, as evidenced from late 2005 onwards.<sup>5</sup>

Given its geographical location, being separated from Europe by only nine miles, and because of its own economic and social deficits, Morocco is in fact situated in the heart of the migratory question, regarding its proper migrants and also sub-Saharan migrants who pass through. Thanks to the efforts made to curb migration, Morocco settled in a position of relative comfort compared to the late 1990s, with a decreasing number of migrants since 2005.

Indeed, the shift of migration routes further south of its borders, to Mauritania and Senegal more specifically, can be attributed to Morocco’s migration strategy and its active partnership with Spain—and in fact with all Europe—which made the transit through its territory extremely difficult, both through the Mediterranean Sea and the South Atlantic

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<sup>3</sup> From Paris, France, March 2000. See Afkar (Ideas), Spanish revue - IEMed - Barcelona, June 2007.

<sup>4</sup> For more on this, see: <http://www.iemed.org/anuari/2009/aarticles/a149.pdf> (accessed 10.8.18)

<sup>5</sup> This is probably also due to the coming into force in 2002 of the integrated external surveillance system (SIVE)—the maritime border controls Spain established in the south of the Iberian peninsula and off the Canary Islands, close to Morocco but also to Mauritania and Senegal—and the means implemented in October 2004 by the Frontex (also known as the European Border and Coast Guard) Agency to help protect the external borders in the southern part of Europe.

waters. This, obviously, led to a decrease in attempts to cross Morocco and, therefore, in the number of undocumented migrants on its territory. As a result, Morocco is no longer playing the role of a transit hub for migrants on their way to Europe, and the number of irregular migrants in Morocco has not exceeded 30,000 people since 2016. Regarding these various elements, it seems that Morocco opted for a migration policy totally in line with the European approach of “outsourcing” the management of migration flows. Similarly, Morocco gradually improved its political and diplomatic position vis-à-vis the EU.

Moroccan authorities could thus proceed to a stronger rapprochement with Spain, France, and the European Union in general, explaining in particular that Morocco was a “victim” of its geographical position, and that the migrants were only on its territory on their way to Europe. This resulted, in particular, in a great convergence of views between Moroccan and Spanish officials, who have common interests vis-à-vis the other EU countries. Algeria and Sub-Saharan countries of departure, were increasingly emphasized, at least more than before. Recall the attempts by illegal migrants to infiltrate into the cities of Ceuta and Melilla in Autumn 2005 and, more recently, in the summer of 2018, and the climate of animosity that prevailed in the relations between Morocco and Spain, especially between summer 2001 and the end of 2002 (Ennaji, 2012).

## **The Barcelona Process**

It is difficult to consider the full social, political, and economic consequences for Morocco of the various agreements of partnership which it has signed with the EU since 1969; in particular, the agreement on the institution of the Free Trade Zone (FTZ), which was signed in 1996 and came into effect in 2000.

Nevertheless, as Morocco was an important actor in the Barcelona Process, it will be useful to present some ideas about the results reached overall. Additionally, since Morocco is very interested in the project of the Union for the Mediterranean, it is useful to make some general observations about this new “Union”, whose structures were set up in November 2008.<sup>6</sup> After that, Morocco was granted advanced status with regard to the EU,<sup>7</sup> which it has been seeking to join for many years (see Jaidi, *ibid*).

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<sup>6</sup> Following a meeting of the foreign ministers of the countries constituting the Union for the Mediterranean (held in Marseille at the beginning of November 2008), Barcelona was appointed the seat of the General Secretary of the Union.

<sup>7</sup> Announced in Brussels on 13 October 2008.

### ***The main objectives and the assessment of the Barcelona Process***

Signed at the end of 1995 in Barcelona, this process had three principal objectives:

- i) To create a shared area of prosperity and co-development between the North and the South Mediterranean countries, aiming to reduce the economic gap between those countries by increasing inter-Mediterranean commercial and financial exchanges and, thus, diminishing the desire of a significant number of youth from the south to migrate (irregularly!) to the north.
- ii) To build a balanced and mutually profitable political, social, and cultural dialogue between the countries from both sides of the Mediterranean.
- iii) To constitute a space of security and stability between northern and southern parts of the Mediterranean, mainly by resolving the Palestinian conflict and reducing illegal migration flows.

During the Euro-Mediterranean summit held in Barcelona in 2005—with the presence of only one president from all the Arab countries—the hope of building a co-prosperity space appeared to be a myth. It could be said that even if the Barcelona process did allow a relative reinforcement of civil society in countries like Morocco and Jordan, the cultural and social dialogue between the north and the south of the Mediterranean has not really advanced. Indeed, this dialogue has often seemed to go in a completely contrary direction to that hoped for back in 1995. The scandal of the Danish cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed (even if Denmark was not a part of the Barcelona Process) and the reactions they caused in the Arab world, in particular in countries like Libya, show that there was indeed a lack of dialogue (Ennaji, 2014).

Political dialogue remained blocked because of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict and, to a certain extent, because of the second war against Iraq<sup>8</sup> and the American “War on Terror” which escalated from September 2001.

In all cases, and mainly for researchers and civil society actors in the southern Mediterranean, the results achieved within the framework of the Barcelona process and all the Euro-Med relationships are at best ambivalent.

On the European side, there is focus on:

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<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that major European countries, including the UK, Spain and Portugal were engaged in this conflict from the outset.

- Closer relations with the American administration, which opposes the interests of many Arab countries, especially with regards to the Palestinian, Syrian, and Iraqi questions.
- The dominance of strictly European concerns, such as fighting illegal migration or terrorism, energy issues (supply and cost) and also the penetration of Arab markets by EU companies.
- The return of religion into the political discourse, thus providing arguments to those who, on both sides of the Mediterranean, advocate a “war between civilizations”.

On the other hand, among the countries of the southern Mediterranean, many observers and politicians note:

- That the lack of democracy and rule of law still characterizes practically all the southern Mediterranean countries;
- The absence of a coherent and/or complementary economic and social policy in and between these countries. This issue is still appearing as not urgent for almost all governments in the south. Security and stability seem to be more urgent.
- The weakness of intra-Mediterranean and south-south trade, mainly for political reasons, such as the conflict between Morocco and Algeria, which led to the closure of borders.<sup>9</sup>
  - That no progress has been made in the south regarding “region-building”. To date, no political or economic regional institutions have come into force; even the so-called Arab Maghreb Union, which was proclaimed in Marrakesh in 1989, is not functioning.
- As a consequence of the absence of democracy, the disrespect for public opinion, and the dire social and economic conditions under which most of the south Mediterranean population suffers, there has been a continuous rise in political and religious radicalisation, feeding violence and terrorism, not only against Europe but also against southern countries.

On another level, one can also mention that:

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<sup>9</sup> The land borders between Morocco and Algeria have been officially closed since July 1994. But, in fact, through this border many traffickers of goods of all kinds and migrants operate (one estimate suggests that 90% of the irregular migrants living in Morocco come through its border with Algeria).

- The deficits between Europe and Africa have increased, as a direct consequence of the fact that the development gap keeps growing between North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.
- Africa is still increasingly vulnerable to food, energy, political, and environmental crises.
- The propensity to migrate has never been so strong, mainly in countries like Morocco, Algeria, and those of sub-Saharan Africa.

The facts above strongly correlate with the paramount importance of immigration from Africa and the Middle East to Europe, following the refugee crises caused by the conflicts in Syria, Libya, and Yemen (Ennaji, 2016).

The states to the north and south of the Mediterranean should have taken the necessary time to analyse the reasons for the yawning gap between the declared objectives of the Barcelona Process and the results to which it led. This was not done, and for some the cause is to be found mainly in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Nobody has, for example, evoked the disjuncture between the objectives stated in Barcelona and the institutional and financial means mobilized to achieve them.

### **The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)**

According to Henri Guaino, advisor to the French president, “Barcelona was designed by Europe as an instrument of dialogue with the South.”<sup>10</sup> For the first time since the decolonisation era, Europe showed its interest in the South. But, in Barcelona, there was an imbalance which was to the benefit of the North. In other words, the Barcelona process was the property of Europe, which spoke to the South, offered it assistance, and sometimes gave it lessons. The Union for the Mediterranean should be a project of joint ownership, a partnership on the basis of equal rights and duties, working together to achieve a common destiny right across the Mediterranean.

The change of name for this entity, from “Union of the Mediterranean” to “Union for the Mediterranean” was imposed by the German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and it implies that the Europeans did not seem themselves constituting a union with the countries of the southern coast of the Mediterranean, instead only signifying their intention to work with those countries on certain projects concerning the Mediterranean.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with French newspaper “Le Monde”, July 2009.

<sup>11</sup> For example, projects relating to water, energy, transport, depollution of the Mediterranean, etc.

A clear sense of the attitudes increasingly prevailing among many Europeans can be sensed from the scathing attack on Turkey's bid to join Europe by Nicholas Sarkozy in a presidential campaign speech on 7 February 2007:

It is from the point of view of this Mediterranean Union that we should consider the relations between Europe and Turkey. Europe cannot extend indefinitely. Europe, if it wants to have an identity, must have borders and, thus, limits. Europe, if it wants to have power, cannot be diluted unceasingly. Europe, if it wants to be able to function, cannot widen without end. Turkey does not have a place in the European Union because it is not a European country.... I want to be the friend of Turkey, but I say that Turkey does not have a place in Europe because it is in Asia Minor.

A Critical analysis of his words and subsequent actions suggest that he had three essential, internal and external, political objectives:

- Sarkozy wished to use the proposal for a Mediterranean Union as an alternative to dissuade Turkey from maintaining its application to join the European Union, an outcome he strongly opposed.
- He also campaigned on “the return of France in Europe”, which appears to be an expression of his will to assert the weight of France's role, especially among the countries of southern Europe and those to the south of the Mediterranean.
- The above concerns were the likely motivation behind Sarkozy's visit to the Maghreb in July 2007 (the day before the French National Day celebrations on July 14), to Morocco in October 2007, and to Algeria in November of the same year, before receiving the Libyan president for a “long week” in France in early December 2007.

Sarkozy argued on December 2007, in the presence of Angela Merkel, that the Mediterranean Union would be a “common space” for the “common management” of “selected migration” (element he did not mention in the aforementioned campaign speech in February 2007). On 30 January 2008, he went even further than Merkel, supporting, on the idea that: “The development of a European pact of immigration will be one of the priorities of the French presidency of the European Union”, inviting Germany to work “hand-in-hand” with France to achieve this.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> [www.LePoint.fr](http://www.LePoint.fr) / Reuters. 30 January 2008.

## **The European Pact on Migration (EPoM): Main objectives**

One week before the proclamation of the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean on 13 July 2008, the 27 EU interior ministers came together in the French city of Cannes to finalize the text of what would become the European immigration pact.<sup>13</sup>

This pact has five declared targets, the most important of which seems to be the control of illegal migration. These targets can be summed up as follows:

- i) *To organize legal immigration*: According to the promoters of the project, the needs of legal migrants should be taken into account, as well as the priorities and the capacities of receiving countries, and the integration of migrants should be supported by Member States. Thus, the pact invites the 27 countries of the EU to develop professional immigration and to reinforce their attractiveness for highly qualified workers. As regards employment, the EU principle of “community preference”—which gives priority to EU nationals over third-country migrants in the job market—must be respected. Lastly, the Member States are required to ensure that incoming migrants receive a suitable income that allows them to settle in the host country and become integrated.
- ii) *To fight against illegal immigration*: The pact aims to ensure the return of undocumented migrants to their countries of origin.<sup>14</sup> To achieve this, EU member states must coordinate their actions and give up the “general regularizations” or documentation processes<sup>15</sup> and establish readmission agreements “with the countries concerned”.
- iii) *To reinforce the effectiveness of the border controls*: France asked its European partners to commit themselves to the delivery of biometric visas by 1 January 2012 at the latest, and to reinforce the capacities of the Frontex agency,<sup>16</sup> charged with coordinating the action of police forces at Europe’s southern borders.

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<sup>13</sup> Adopted by the European Council on 17 October 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Morocco, in particular, is known to be simultaneously a transit and a country of origin for irregular migrants.

<sup>15</sup> As had occurred in Spain in spring 2005 and in Italy in 2002.

<sup>16</sup> The Frontex Agency for external borders was founded in October 2004; its general headquarters are in Warsaw, Poland.



- iv) To create the European Asylum Support Office Established in 2009, the mission of this office is to facilitate the exchange of information and ensure that asylum cases are dealt with in a coherent way by all member states.<sup>17</sup> Under the 2008 pact, the Commission was in addition invited to formulate proposals for a single universal asylum procedure by 2012 and to adopt uniform statutes regarding refugees.
- v) To stress co-development: Under the terms of the pact, the European Council committed to supporting the development of the countries concerned and build with them a narrow partnership to support “synergies between migrants” and the harmonious development of the countries of origin.

### **EPoM, some preliminary comments**

The declared philosophy of the Union for the Mediterranean<sup>18</sup> goes back to the agreements for the institution of free trade zones under the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) signed in the 1990s with many countries of the south, including those of the Maghreb. The wording of the EPoM invites a number of observations:

1. The pact very clearly carries the seal of the former Interior Minister of France and the French president; it is strongly tinted with the ideology of “national security” and is based on a one-dimensional approach, where, for example, the negative effects on the sending countries of losing migrants to the EU, and of the FTA signed by the EU with various countries of the south, are not anywhere taken into account, or even mentioned.
2. This pact goes against the course of history and against the calls for the opening and liberalization of economic, financial, and human exchanges as outlined within the philosophy of the World Trade Organization. Additionally, its reference to “community preference” is politically and ideologically dangerous. A country like France, for example, receives nearly three times more money transferred from its residents abroad than Morocco does from its own immigrants.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.easo.europa.eu/about-us/what-we-do> accessed 3 March 2019.

<sup>18</sup> See the declaration of Henri Guaino :

<https://www.toutleurope.eu/actualite/henri-guaino-les-peuples-riverains-de-la-mediterranee-doivent-s-unir-pour-assumer-leur-part-de-de.html> (accessed on 2.08.2009)

3. The wording of the pact is, in the same way, strongly unbalanced. The objective of advanced co-development as a means of preventing irregular migration flows from the sending countries is mentioned only in a few lines of a seven-page document. In addition, this objective is expressed in a deeply contradictory way: whereas the pact as a whole aims to reduce flows of migration from the south towards the north, it considers migration paradoxically an instrument of development. Thus, at the same time Europe explicitly requests southern countries—especially African ones—to reduce the emigration of their citizens, it advises them to base their development policies on the resources transferred by migrants.
4. The pact is founded on a profoundly high-handed and paternalistic approach to international relations between rich and poor countries. It would be plausible to rebalance the economic and financial relations between these countries and to provide financial incentives to the sending countries.

### **The place of Morocco**

The EPoM, as presented above, shows how the debates around the migratory question, all around the world and in the Euro-Mediterranean space in particular, are strongly influenced by its weight and the sensitive issues surrounding the movement of people, mainly from poor to wealthy zones. The migration issue is closely tied to political, geo-strategic, and safety problems, such as the fight against terrorism, money laundering, drug-dealing, and other types of trafficking.

However, migration—mainly in its irregular form—appears today to be one of the consequences of the social and economic policies adopted under the mantle of globalization in the countries of the South, and one of the effects of the selfishness of the North.

As a result, migration is a key question in the relations between the Maghreb and the EU, which led the latter to grant Morocco “Advanced Status”. Thus, within this global framework, Morocco signed one of the first agreements with the former European Economic Council (EEC) in 1969, engaged in a free trade agreement in 1996 (which was implemented in 2000), and was granted advanced status on October 13, 2008.

***The New Moroccan migratory policy, the way to “advanced status”***

The new Moroccan migration policy, which was implemented from the end of 2002, was explained in an interview with King Mohammed VI in the Spanish newspaper *El Pais*<sup>19</sup> on the eve of the King and Queen of Spain’s visit to Morocco between 17 and 19 January 2005. The Moroccan Head of State noted in particular that:

*There has always been a will to cope with this problem [of illegal migration]. The approach has in fact evolved in recent months. We are aware of the fact that this type of immigration represents a danger for Spain. The same also applies to Morocco, as half of the sub-Saharan candidates for illegal emigration end up staying in Morocco, and the Spanish public should know that. The various Spanish governments have always asked Morocco to pay the necessary attention to this issue. We have always done so. We indeed try to act with the maximum of efficiency. We have gone through various stages. The first consisted of increasing the staff available for this task by recruiting more forces. The second was to assess the various forces deployed with a view to achieving better coordination among them. To that end, we have set up a new Directorate at the Ministry of the Interior, exclusively in charge of fighting against illegal migration and its related [problems of] human and drug trafficking, et cetera....*

*It is true that we started taking measures at the level of the Straits of Gibraltar, which have constituted until recently the major concern for the Spanish. Now, the migratory pressure is becoming more pronounced in the South, towards the Canary Islands. A few weeks ago, I gave instructions to make security devices in the South as impenetrable as in the North. We [Spain and Morocco] should work together. For some years now, before announcing the creation in 2004 of joint patrols, the [Spanish] Guardia Civil, the Moroccan Royal Gendarmerie and Royal Navy have already joined their energies. This cooperation has not been made public but it has generated quite encouraging results.*

The impetus of the King’s message and his presentation of the results thus far of Morocco’s attempts to tackle migration, was to launch another call upon the EU countries to provide more resources—both financial and political—and to ask Spain to be Morocco’s advocate in Europe:

We have always asked Spain and the whole of the European Union to provide us with the means necessary to combat this plague. Right now, we

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<sup>19</sup> El Pais. Madrid, 16 January 2005.

lack them. I firmly believe that Spain is a good advocate of our cause in Europe. After all, it is the best placed country to inform on the seriousness of this issue.

***The main points of the Morocco "Advanced Status"  
vis-à-vis of the EU***

In connection with the King of Morocco's engagement on a subject considered by Europe as essential, the granting of Advanced status appears to be a political projection for Morocco: a sort of recognition of the country's special place by the 27 Member States of the EU.

In fact, for Morocco, the rapprochement with the EU represents—as indicated at the beginning of this chapter—a fundamental foreign policy choice. The European neighbourhood policy gives an opportunity to the country to reinforce the strategic foundation of this choice through the conclusion of reciprocal undertakings and to promote regional and sub-regional cooperation, in particular in the context of the Euro-Mediterranean process.

For the Europeans, the deepening of Morocco's relationship with the EU, which will help to identify new cooperative measures and to strengthen political ties, is a practical response that will allow Morocco to progress towards advanced partnership with Europe. This position will further consolidate more the country's "Association" with the EU, but will never lead to full "Membership".

In all cases, for many European and Moroccan observers, the Advanced status opens up new partnership perspectives between Morocco and the EU, among which one can mention in particular:

- The prospect of moving beyond the existing relationship to a significant degree of integration, including offering Morocco a stake in the internal market and the possibility of participating progressively in key aspects of EU policies and programmes;
  - An upgrade in the scope and intensity of political cooperation through enhanced political dialogue;
  - The opportunity for convergence of economic legislation, the opening of economies to each other, and the continued reduction of trade barriers, can stimulate investment and growth;
- Increased financial support: the EU grants additional financial assistance to Morocco to support the implementation of all sections of the Association Agreement and operations identified in the Action Plan. The European Investment Bank supports

infrastructure investment and private-sector development. The Commission has proposed a new European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), which covers the key issue of cross-border and transnational cooperation between Morocco and the EU to promote integration and economic and social cohesion and lessen development gaps between the two regions;

The possibility of opening access to or increasing participation in certain community programmes, particularly in the areas covered by the Action Plan;

- Deepening trade and economic relations.

Before reaching this status, whose political and especially economic results for the country will be felt only later, Morocco obviously had to follow up on its promises regarding migratory policy (as it did; see above). These days, Morocco's migratory approach is in total conformity with the will of Europe, and the requests of European countries, particularly Spain and France.

This did not prevent Europe from insisting, in the document which presents the various clauses of Advanced status, on the need for Morocco to ensure effective management of migration flows, including the signing of a readmission agreement with the European Union.

On this subject—and despite the fact that many Moroccans want to see freedom of circulation between Morocco and the EU, as it is the case for Europeans in Morocco—the only promise which was made to Morocco is the prospect of facilitating the movement of people in accordance with the gains, particularly by examining the possibilities for relaxing the visa formalities for certain categories of persons to obtain short-stay visas.

The maintenance of restrictions on the circulation of Moroccans in EU countries—despite the promise above to reduce the conditions for obtaining short-stay visas—is an element which strongly reduces the real political scope of Morocco's Advanced status.

However, it is clear that access to European markets and deepening trade and economic relations between Europe and Morocco—if the Moroccan authorities carry out the much-needed political, institutional, and economic reforms demanded by the EU—would still need to be in place for two to three decades before we see a reduction of the economic and social development gap between the two zones, which would have as a direct consequence the possibility of a system of circulation of people between these spaces analogous to the one which exists today between the EU and Switzerland, for example.

## Conclusion

It is clear that Morocco is more interested in the consolidation of its political relations with Europe than the Europeans are, given the geopolitical difficulties in the Maghreb and in Africa, and in connection with the conflicts in the Western Sahara region.

However, it appears quite obvious that, given the widening economic gap between Morocco and Europe, the various agreements of association which Morocco has signed to date with the EU have been insufficient to truly develop its economy. This is doubtless related to the ghastly economic and social governance in Morocco, and to the absence of fundamental structural reforms in the country. But it is also related to the fact that Morocco has not benefited from its relations with Europe in the same way that Spain did after 1986.

With the migratory questions which now mark the relations between Europe and the whole of Africa, Morocco seems a major component of the European policy. It is hoped that migration, in spite of the political difficulties that it causes with Morocco's Maghrebi neighbours and with various sub-Saharan African countries, will be the element which will change the European prospect with respect to all the Maghreb region, by helping this area to become—by means of continued economic and social development—more of a relay of development to the benefit of the rest of Africa, rather than a mere new external border of Europe.

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