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The Impact of Male Migration from Morocco to Europe on Women: A Gender Approach

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INTRODUCTION

Research in the field of migration in Morocco is relatively thriving, yet research on the impact of this migration on women is still very scarce. Male migration has made a great impact on the women left behind. In order to understand the extent of this impact we need to be informed about the profile of the migrant, the situation of women and the way their survival is seen within the overall Moroccan socio-cultural context. Moroccan women constitute a complex category where various variables, such as social class and level of education, are at stake. In order to understand this impact we need to understand the nature of Moroccan migration. In this paper, we have surveyed the major impacts of migration on women, while hoping that this work will attract more research in the field.

I. MOROCCAN MIGRATION

1. A Brief Review of the Literature

In theory, migration is the movement of human beings from one region to another or from one country to another. As such, migration may be voluntary or compulsory, internal or external (international), individual or collective, and legal or illegal. Migration has been attested to throughout the history of human kind and has developed in extent and nature with the evolution of human communities. According to the mainstream literature on migration (THOMAS, 1961; APPEYARD, 1988; ANTHIAS, 1998), migration always engenders complex consequences, especially for the host countries. This literature shows that, although migration concerns a relatively small portion of the overall population of a country, it has an everlasting impact on the environment in which migrants settle. After the Second World War, migration has greatly increased and, currently, it remains on the rise (CASTLES and MÜLLER, 2003).

There are many theories of migration but hardly any global explicative ones. There are only partial, mainly classificatory, theories of migration, the main reason being the sociological nature of migration. Indeed, the particular sociological conditions of various waves of migrants makes it difficult, if not impossible, to offer a unique universal explicative theory of migration. In this respect, of interest is the social science approach to migration (MASSEY *et al.*, 1998; SASSEN, 1988; FAIST, 1997; ARANGO, 2000). These studies explain international migration in global terms by stressing the role of economy, sociology and geography. Progress in the understanding of migration is said to largely depend on empirical sociological research.

However, in the present state of affairs, most of this research seems to be located in the host countries (Europe and Canada) and very little is produced in the countries from which migration originates (i.e. Morocco, Algeria and

4. The 1960s and 1970s

Moroccan migration witnessed a period of stagnation from 1954 to 1962. However, this migration started to gradually take on larger proportions in the 1960s and 1970s. Pre- and post-Second World War migration changed from being temporary to being permanent in this period, and involved all social categories, not only tradesmen. A great wave of migrants from both the south and the north of Morocco targeted Europe, mainly France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. Most of these migrants originated from the Rif region and spoke Berber as their mother tongue. The migrants of the 1960s and 1970s were younger and more rural in origin. As most of these migrants were single, family reunification drew more migrants. Migration started to be both permanent and illegal. In fact, in prior waves of migration, migrants left Morocco both legally and illegally, and the host countries were tolerant, as Europe needed manpower and jobs were available.

It is worthy to note that, in the 1960s, important waves of Moroccan migrants targeted Libya, following bilateral accords between Morocco and Libya.

5. The 1980s to the Present Times

From the 1980s onward, migration has been characterised by a spectacular increase in the number of migrants and a diversity of destinations. In addition to France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany, migrants target Spain and Italy. Economic crises worldwide have resulted in soaring unemployment in Morocco. According to recent official statistics, the overall unemployment rate in Morocco in 2001 was 14.5 per cent. Despite Morocco's overall economic progress, poverty is on the rise as a result of globalisation. In the eyes of migrants, the proximity of a prosperous Europe² makes the dream of overcoming poverty possible to realise. On the other hand, dramatic international events such as the fall of the Soviet Union and the rise of fundamentalism in both Europe and the Maghreb have increased both migration and feelings of insecurity, hostility, and xenophobia. In spite of this, Moroccan migration has never ceased to increase. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1984), no less than 73.9 per cent of Moroccan migrants targeted Europe. Likewise, according to the ministry responsible for Moroccans living in Europe (1992), this percentage reached 77.5 per cent. These figures do not take into consideration illegal migrants and Moroccans who became European citizens by virtue of being born in one of the Europe countries or by acquisition of citizenship in one of them. The latter two types of Moroccan migrants are considered to be 'Moroccan' by Moroccan officials.

² There is a wide discrepancy between the income of the inhabitants of the southern part and those of the northern part of the Mediterranean. The income per capita in Morocco is 19 times less than in Western Europe.

the Moroccan national media (i.e. television, newspapers, etc.) occasionally report that one or more young Moroccan women are among the dead when small boats carrying clandestine migrants from Morocco to Spain sink. These women are, in general, very young, unemployed and single. Furthermore, the media also report on the abominable conditions in which clandestine migrants live and shows pictures of young men and women living in shantytowns around agricultural areas in Spain. The women who spoke to the reporters often said that they migrated because they wanted to support their ageing parents and younger siblings. Research in this particular area is sorely needed.

II. THE GENERAL PROFILE OF THE MOROCCAN MIGRANT

The profile of the Moroccan migrant may be described by taking into account the variables of age, geographic origin, class, level of instruction, marital status, socio-economic situation before migration, skills, size of household, and duration of migration.

Available studies show that, so far as age is concerned, migrants are usually young: their average age is 28.5 years, with 75 per cent of them being between 20 and 39 years old. As for their geographic origin, migrants may originate from rural or urban areas: 60 per cent were born in rural areas and only came to the city on their way to Europe. Concerning class, most migrants belong to the poorest sections of Moroccan society, coming from slums and medinas ⁴. A great portion of migrants lives in traditional houses. The average rate of migration per family is 1.72 in cities, 1.12 in slums, and 1.00 in medinas (CHATTOU, 1998).

Concerning the marital status of migrants, some marry before migrating. So far as migrants' level of education is concerned, it is weak before migration in comparison to the total population of the same age in Morocco. Urban migrants tend to have a better level of education than rural ones. As for the professional activities of migrants, they come from backgrounds in the agricultural sector, commerce, services, construction, industry, and traditional skills. The level of education and the degree of skill have improved in the last decades.

The duration of migration depends on whether migrants originate from rural or urban areas, whether the migrant is a head of a household, literate or illiterate, etc. Migrants originating from rural areas stay twice as long in Europe than those originating from urban areas because they can do hard labour. The level of education is pertinent here, as illiterate migrants stay longer than literate ones. Furthermore, agricultural workers do not stay long in comparison with migrants who have other qualifications because they are strongly attracted to their homeland.

⁴ Medinas are the old, traditional parts of Moroccans cities, characterised by dense settlement, commerce and labyrinthine streets. They exist in contrast to the new parts of the cities that were oftentimes planned and constructed by the French during the time of the Protectorate, parts characterised by wider streets and more 'western' layouts.

Moroccan women do not constitute a homogeneous group. They may be socially categorised along six parameters (SADIQI, 2002): geographic origin (urban vs. rural), class (rich vs. poor), education (educated vs. uneducated), job opportunity (working vs. non-working), language skills (multilingual vs. monolingual), and marital status (married vs. non-married). These social categories are not clear-cut or easily discernable; they may be best qualified as loose 'bundles' of social 'traits' that may themselves be subject to further sub-categorisation. In fact, the two poles of each social category constitute extremes of a spectrum of 'social states' and the area between the extremes is filled with relative 'nuances' of either pole. For example, the boundaries between urban and rural areas in Morocco are not always discernable in a straightforward way by virtue of the fact that semi-rural and semi-urban areas, which combine characteristics of both, exist and are operative. Furthermore, the difference between women that qualify as 'rich' and the ones that qualify as 'poor' is relative given the existence of the categories 'less rich than...' and 'less poor than...'. The same degree of flexibility is attested in the oppositions 'educated/non-educated', 'working/non-working', 'multilingual/monolingual', and 'married/non-married'.

So far as geographic origin is concerned, rural and urban women relate differently to language, space, traditions, household economy, and education. Rural women are more associated with orality and illiteracy in the wider Moroccan socio-cultural context that favours modernisation, literacy, and multilingualism. Furthermore, unlike in urban areas, rural communities are often organised in simpler but larger sizes. Consequently, large families often result in everyone knowing everyone else within local communities. It is this social organisation that explains the fact that women in rural areas are more 'watched' but, on the other hand, less subject to public sexual harassment, than urban women. The rural social organisation is also characterised by less anonymity in public space, a fact that strengthens the grip of patriarchy as women often fall under the 'protection' of any male member of their community. Likewise, generally speaking, rural women in Morocco are more often victims of traditional customs, rigid kinship relations, and a strong code of honour than urban women. For example, these women are more affected by early marriages, multiple pregnancies (especially in the absence of a son), polygamy, and accountability to the larger family and community units. Moroccan rural women as a group rely less on their men's (fathers', husbands', sons') income and participate more in their household economy than urban women. In Moroccan rural areas, there is a sex-based division of labour as men and women are separated in daily tasks (BELARBI *et al.*, 1995; BOUKOUJA *et al.*, 1996; CHLEBOWSKA, 1990). Rural women's labour includes domestic chores, work in the fields, buying and selling in the *souqs* (local markets), smuggling goods across borders, and working as maids in urban areas.

A consideration of the types of activities that Moroccan rural women perform reveals that these women are excluded from the benefits of modernisation, as modernisation is essentially urban. For example, investments in the health care and education sectors have benefited urban women more than rural

and reached 33 per cent in 1990. Women's work in industry greatly helped Morocco's development. The greatest majority of salaried women has and still constitutes the lower and middle rungs of the job ladder. Very few women have managed to reach top positions in their jobs.

In addition to salaried jobs, personal and domestic services have been highly feminised in urban areas. The more urban women take jobs outside the home, the more domestic services they need in households to keep the balance between outside work and daily domestic chores. According to MERNISSI (1982), in 1971, a quarter of maids were children (under 15 of age). In 1993, this percentage went down by about 10 per cent. Maids receive small salaries that differ per family. Maids are not only economically marginalised, they are also marginalised by the law, as they are neither included in the work legislation nor in social security. Most very young domestics are not paid directly; the money they earn goes directly to their parents.

It is commonly the housewife who pays the maid. In this way, housework primarily remains the responsibility of women: it is shared by women of different social classes (the housewife and the maid) who sometimes belong to different age groups (housewives are usually older than domestic servants). It is as if urban women's participation in the household economy and their integration in official development depends on the exclusion of other women who come from rural or poor urban areas to work as maids. However, paradoxically, it is urban women in various political parties and civil society that fight to improve the social status of maids by incorporating the maid status in the Work Code (*Code du Travail*). These militants also call for a strict application of the work law that forbids recruiting children under 12 years old and under 14 years old without the consent of their parents. Indeed, as maids are hired on the basis of 'minimal wages for maximum service', service relations between women is nowadays characterised by an emerging struggle for independence and identity in the labour force for both maids and their employers. This is also a struggle for social recognition of rights in the face of gender and class prejudice (see MERNISSI, 1982).

Given these facts, urban and rural women are not given the same choices in the economy (see FOLBRE, 1994) and, hence, resist patriarchy differently. Economically well-off urban women often exploit economically-weak rural women. Furthermore, as a social group, urban women are offered more chances to acquire an education than rural women, and hence, the former have more access to language skills and job opportunities than the latter. It is on the basis of this asymmetry in chances that rural women are socially categorised as 'subordinate' to urban women.

As a social category, class is based on social and personal network ties (see MURROY and MURROY, 1992). It is through these network ties that interactions create class. Like geographic origin, class is a social variable along which Moroccan women are categorised into groups. Class is, thus, a social factor that explains the heterogeneity of Moroccan women. The modern capitalist system

up in a traditional Muslim environment that venerates patriarchal values and, thus, find it very difficult to accommodate the image of an obedient and hard-working housewife with a modern and independent career woman.

Working outside the home is often accompanied by all sorts of tensions and stress for which Moroccan women are not often prepared. For example, having a job often involves dressing, appearing, speaking, and behaving in a 'modern' way. These daily gestures are intermingled with a strong social code of behaviour that places considerable pressure on women who often find themselves torn between two clashing systems of values: tradition and modernity. Moroccan women's work creates another paradox: although it is welcomed, it is socially perceived as being the cause of men's unemployment. This is linked to the social attitude towards women's work in Morocco that is still loaded with stereotypes. As a result, Moroccan career women face a dilemma: how to respond to the traditionally masculine norms of the job market and at the same time respond to the traditional feminine role expectations that social norms prescribe? Career women are subject to both the forces of traditional stereotypes and the demands of modern life; they are often 'apologetic' and 'hesitant' in public spheres, because they need to adopt more stereotypically male attributes (i.e. being assertive and task-driven). These women are generally more assertive and forceful in private spheres.

Working women are also more consulted in matters relating to household income management, the education of children, etc. These women are less likely to be in a polygamous marriage than non-working women.

Possessing language skills in the sense of knowing one or more written languages in addition to one's mother tongue is highly viewed in Moroccan society, where multilingualism constitutes a strong cultural component. The mastery of language skills in the Moroccan context is a socially positive factor that may serve to either empower or disempower women. Mastering language skills allows them to resist patriarchy in different ways: multilingual women use written languages to assert themselves and fight exclusion in public spheres, whereas monolingual women are restricted to using orality for the same purpose.

Marriage is an important institution in Moroccan society and culture, as well as in the Arabo-Muslim world (see AFSHAR, 1987). The marital status of women is an important social variable that reflects the heterogeneity of Moroccan women and the discrepancy of choices and chances they have. The importance of this variable cuts across geographic origin, class, level of education, job opportunity, and mastery of language skills. Although each one of these social variables has its value in the Moroccan context, none of them reduces the importance of marital status because women in Morocco are first and foremost socially defined in relation to this variable. Marital status divides women into 'married' and 'unmarried'. Whereas the social category of married women is clear, the category of unmarried women is more complex as the latter may be spinsters, divorced, or widows. While social attitude towards married women is very positive, it is rather negative towards the various sub-categories of unmar-

have less access to the migrant's remittances, especially if they are married, unless the mother is absent or dead. Spinsters in the household (who may be sisters or a member of the family) are also taken care of by the migrant.

In addition, migration often results in a restructuring of the family and the emergence of women-headed households in a heavily patriarchal society. The women left behind in cities may start seeking a job. This engenders change in mentality and behaviour and enhances women's agency. For example, women leave the home for day-to-day purchases and manipulate larger expenditures by allocating funds to cover them. They become economic monitors, which significantly influences their overall status.

Another positive impact of migration on women and on the overall development of Morocco in general is its contribution to the development of the country. Indeed, migrants' remittances constitute the primary source of income for the national budget. Migrants' investment in Morocco represented 2 per cent of the country's revenue in 1960, 10 per cent in 1971 and almost 25 per cent by the end of the 1970s (Bureau des Statistiques, Rabat, 1994). The importance of remittances is linked to (i) the temporary nature of migration, (ii) the fact that the migrant is not accompanied by his family, and (iii) the solid family attachment, especially for the migrants who originate from rural areas or from the poorest sections of the Moroccan population. The Moroccan government has started to take important measures to encourage Moroccan migrants to invest in their country of origin. The Mohamed V Foundation for Solidarity is a royal institution whose sole goal is to take care of Moroccan migrants at all levels. The results that the Foundation has achieved up to now are very satisfactory.

The most positive impact of migration on women is the increase in the income of the migrant's household. Having a husband, a son, or a brother as a migrant in Europe is often perceived as a source of income. In fact, the structure of the resources of the migrant households differs from that of non-migrant ones (CHATTOU, 1998; COURAGE, 1994). This is primarily due to the amounts of money that migrants send to their families, whereas salaried work constitutes the major source of income for non-migrant households. These incomes are often stable because of the regularity of jobs in the host countries. For two-thirds of households, the amount of remittances is superior to the minimum wage. This is due to a change in the nature of migration: from a migration of enrichment to a migration of necessity. The amount was multiplied by 5.3 in the 1960s and by 13.1 in the 1970s.

As far as investments are concerned, rural migrants are more attached to their country of origin than urban migrants. Agricultural resources are more important for the former, and enterprise resources are more important for the latter (see CHATTOU, 1998; HAMDOUCH *et al.*, 1981). Accordingly, rural migrants invest more in land, while urban migrants invest more in housing and commerce. For both types of migrants, investment provides security.

Migration also has a direct positive impact on the education of children. As Moroccan education is in a transitional period (from public to private educa-

holds headed by mothers represent 8.6 per cent in urban areas and 22.3 per cent in rural areas. Illiteracy is another relevant factor: 89.9 per cent of women in rural areas and 58.2 per cent in urban areas are illiterate according to 1999 official statistics (see Bureau des Statistiques, Rabat).

Serious negative effects of male migration are attested to when the migrant does not find a job or finds a low-paid job in the host country. This situation is becoming increasingly common. This state of affairs may engender more poverty for the women left behind, less education for the children, and changes in the structure of the family (such as divorce) that harm children.

In rural areas, poor women left behind work in the fields, generally in small farms owned by their family. The fact that boys stay in school longer than girls reinforces the need for female labour. Rural women work an average of ten hours a day. In spite of this, it is men who head the farms and who are viewed as full-time labourers no matter how long they stay on the farm. This explains the fact that the rate of women whose work is recognised as such is abnormally low. In 1989, 82.9 per cent of women working in agriculture were counted as family helpers.

Another problem faced by rural women left behind face is their lack of savings. This is mainly due to their inferior status relative to discriminatory inheritance laws. Women's share in land ownership is usually absorbed by male heirs. As a result, these women face difficulty in obtaining bank loans because of lack of guarantees. The devalorisation of women is, thus, perpetuated because of the discrimination sanctioned by law.

Poverty is aggravated by lack of infrastructure, facilities, unemployment, under-employment, and droughts. In Moroccan cities, the social sectors of health care and education are the most hit by budget cuts. Education expenditure per capita decreased by 11 per cent from 1983 to 1989, resulting in a general decline of 8.7 per cent in school enrolment rates between 1985 and 1990. In a society where female education is considered less important than male education, it is girls who are most directly affected by this decline: the school enrolment rate declined at 7.8 per cent for boys and at 10 per cent for girls. Peasant girls are the worst hit with a decline rate of 13.6 per cent.

Likewise, a great percentage of women left behind is found in the lowest levels of vocational schools: 72 per cent of them have primary school educations and 50 per cent have completed three years in the secondary school. However, females constitute one-third of those in the highest levels of skilled technician training. Despite the recent upsurge of computer training and jobs related to computer science, electronics, hotel business, women still opt for typically female activities, such as dressmaking, embroidery, and secretarial work.

Nowadays, the importance of women's work for the economy of Morocco has become a reality. Households need women's financial contributions in order to survive. Women's work is, however, tolerated only if it does not clash with society's gender role assignment (see SADIQI, 2003).

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Considering the Gender Dimension of Moroccan Migration: A "Win-Win" Approach to North/South Migration in the Mediterranean

May 4, 2012

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The concepts of "justice," "equity," "democracy," and "identity" are more and more recurrent in the Euro-Mediterranean and global rhetoric on migration; yet, these are very seldom applied with a gender dimension in mind. This is a serious deficiency in a region where power is unbalanced not only among countries but also among



sexes. Identity is a matter of choice - a choice that is linked to the freedom to choose. In general, women have less freedom to choose because more women than men are poor, illiterate, and culturally marginalized. In a world where political and economic events are moving faster everyday with the advent of globalization, it is urgently necessary to take gender issues into consideration when dealing with migration. A gender approach to migration can help to foster a "win-win" approach to North/South migration. In this essay I focus on Morocco and deal with two relevant aspects: 1) the overall situation of women in Morocco and 2) the ways to achieve a "win-win" approach to migration.

The Overall Situation of Women in Morocco

Moroccan culture is characterized by a gendered superstructure. The larger factors that influence gender perception and gender role assignment are linked to the social organization where women are largely disadvantaged. But these women do not constitute a socially homogeneous group. The social variables that explain Moroccan women's heterogeneity are: 1) geographical origin, 2) class, 3) educational level, 4) job opportunities, 5) language skills, and 6) marital status.^[1] These variables are obtained on the basis of social oppositions and have a direct influence on gender perception, political awareness, self-awareness, independence, critical assessment, and fashioning modes of resistance. Social variables carry significant social meanings and attest to the fact that in Moroccan society, women are not given the same social

newspapers, etc.) occasionally report that one or more young Moroccan women are among the dead when small boats carrying clandestine migrants from Morocco to Spain sink. These women are, in general, very young, unemployed, and single. Further, the media also reports on the abominable conditions of clandestine migrants and shows pictures of young men and women living in shantytowns around agricultural areas in Spain. The women who spoke to the reporters often said that they migrated because they wanted to support their aging parents and younger siblings. Research in this particular area is sorely needed.

Ways of Achieving a Win-Win Approach to Moroccan Migration

Win-win strategies are of two types: those that relate to migration and those that deal more with the "superstructure" of gender relations.

Win-Win Strategies Related to Migration

The win-win strategies that relate to migration mainly include calling upon the media to provide documentation. There is a real deadlock at the level of mentalities on both sides of the Mediterranean and the media is still party-affiliated and largely perceived as male public space in this region of the world. As a result, women are not, generally speaking, depicted as agents. They neither own the media nor are they decision-makers in it. All this translates into the fact that women migrants are still neglected.

Offering more documentation on the interface between women and migration in Morocco is important. It promotes communication between the two shores of the Mediterranean Sea and informs researchers and policymakers of the places where the problems exist and suggests ways to address these problems. There is indeed a terrible lack of information on this topic in the sending and receiving countries. This renders the problems associated with migration more complex and the remedies more complicated. These may be obtained through the creation of mobile units and agents of development to implement field work.

Another issue that the media needs to address is religion in its relation to migration. More work is needed on images of Islam, women and Islam, Islam and human rights, and gender and human rights.

Win-Win Strategies Related to the "Superstructure" of Gender Relations

Giving voice to all women broadens their choices and democratizes approaches to alleviate the problems of migration. The illiteracy problem needs to be considered. For example, we need more use of TV as a means to reach all women, especially the illiterate. All women, especially those who are illiterate (who happen to be the poorest), need to have access to useful information. Radio and TV commentaries, sketches, and comedies can be helpful. Also badly needed is documentation in the field of women, migration, and the media.

Conclusion

The gender dimension cannot and should not be omitted from any serious analysis of migration in the Mediterranean region. Integrating gender issues into such analysis can help pave the way for ameliorating some of the migration-related and deeper structural problems in the Mediterranean region.

[1]. See Fatima Sadqi, *Women, Gender, and Language in Morocco* (Leiden and Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2003).

[2]. Cf. Bureau des Statistiques, Rabat, Morocco, 1999.

plus haut : les crises socio-économiques et la dégradation des conditions de vies résultant du flou des conflits armés, les inégalités et disparités économiques de plus en plus croissantes entre le Nord et le Sud comme conséquence de la mondialisation et l'échec de l'intégration africaine. De ce fait, toute solution qui néglige ces facteurs est vouée à l'échec. En espérant une réorientation des stratégies marocaines et espagnoles, nous plaçons pour une humanisation de la gestion des flux migratoires illégaux. Nous pensons également qu'un programme de formation des corps et forces de sécurité à la déontologie des droits humains pourrait minimiser les violations de ces droits. Enfin, nous considérons que l'accès des associations, des ONG de défenses des migrants ou des droits humains et de la société civile aux zones de détention des immigrants et leur présence à toutes les étapes de renouveau peut largement contribuer à la protection des droits des migrants.

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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Morocco / European Union : The global context of a particular vicinity

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: The EU represents the main customer of Morocco. It's the recipient of 74% of its sales abroad; It is also its leading vendor since Morocco receives 52% of its imports from EU countries.

These EU countries constitute also the principal area of residence of Moroccan migrants living abroad. Nearly 2,5 million Moroccans live today in the EU, close to the 3/5 in France and 1/5 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 5 Maghreb countries) and the withdrawal of Morocco of the Organization of African Unity in 1984 - in addition to the political and institutional brittleness of the League of the Arab States - 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 is not particularly friendly.

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