

by Community's Foreign Ministers as they did not consider Morocco to be a European country. The rejection was expected as the late Moroccan King, Hassan II, had sent messengers two years before, who received such as response as expressed at the beginning by 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 relationships between France, Morocco and Algeria, with respect to the Sahara conflict.

Since then, the successive Moroccan governments didn't cease requesting from Europeans an "advanced status" which would be situated at a higher level than a simple "association". King Mohammed VI, who took power in July 1999, launched another call⁽⁴⁾ 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".

The efforts undertaken by the Moroccan authorities to meet European expectations in terms of reducing the crossing of migrants from Morocco – and all the north-western part of Africa over to Europe – seem to have borne fruit as of end of 2005 beginning of 2006⁽⁵⁾.

(3) This element can be counterattacked when one know that Ceuta and Melilla, which are considered by EU as European cities, are situated at the North of Morocco, somewhere in Africa, out of Europe.-

(4) From Paris, France, on March 2000. See Afkar (Ideas), Spanish revue – IEMed – Barcelona, June 2007.

(5) This is probably also due to the entry into force of the SIVE – the system Spain established since 2002 in the south of the Iberian peninsula and then off the Canary Islands, close to Morocco but also to Mauritania and Senegal - and the means implemented by the Frontex Agency, established in October 2004, to help protect the external borders in the southern part of Europe.

Given its geographical location, being separated from Europe by only 14 km, and because of its own economic and social deficits, Morocco is in fact situated in the outposts of the migratory question, regarding its proper migrants and also Subsaharan migrants. This way, Moroccans settled in a position of relative comfort compared to previous years 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, implies several remarks:

- The strategy Morocco followed, and its active partnership with Spain, and in fact will all Europe, made the transit through its territory extremely difficult, both through the Mediterranean Sea or the South Atlantic waters.
- This led obviously to a decrease in the attempts to cross Morocco and, therefore, in the number of migrants on Moroccan territory. Morocco is no longer playing the role of a transit place for migrants on their way to Europe. Hence the number of irregular migrants in Morocco does not exceed more 10.000 people, as of 2007.

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 of the EU.

Moroccan authorities could proceed to a stronger rapprochement with Spain, France and the European Union in general, explaining in particular that Morocco was "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, whose common interests vis-à-vis the other EU countries, Algeria and sub-Saharan countries of departure, were increasingly emphasized, at least more than before: the attempts to force passage to the cities of Ceuta and Melilla in autumn 2005 and even compared to the climate of animosity that prevailed in the relations between Morocco and Spain, especially between summer 2001 and the end of 2002.

- The dominance of strictly European concerns such as fighting illegal migration or terrorism, energy issues (supply and cost) and also the penetration of the Arab markets by the EU companies.
- The return of religion in the political discourse, thus providing arguments to those who, on both sides of the Mediterranean, advocate a war of "civilizations".

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

- That the lack of democracy and rule of law is still characterizing practically all the southern Mediterranean countries;
- The absence, till now, 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, till now say, more urgent.
- The weakness of intra-Med and the south-south intra-trade, mainly for political reasons, such as the conflict between Morocco and Algeria, that led to the closure of borders⁽⁹⁾.
- No progress has been made in the south regarding "region-building". Until now, no political or economic regional institutions are in force, even the so-called Arabic Maghreb Union, which was proclaimed in Marrakesh in 1989.
- As a consequence of the absence of democracy, the disrespect of the public opinion and the social and economic situation of which most of the population suffers, there is a continuous rise of political and religious radicalism whose elements feed violence and terrorism, not only against Europe but also against south countries.

(9) The land borders between Morocco and Algeria are officially closed since July 1994. But, in the facts, through this border much traffickers of goods of all kinds and migrants operate (one estimates that 90% of the irregular migrants living in Morocco come starting from its border with Algeria).

On another level, one can also mention that :

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

The facts above, of course, strongly correlate with the paramount importance of immigration from Africa and the Middle East to Europe.

The States of the North and the South of the Mediterranean should have taken the necessary time to analyze the reasons for the great 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 Arabic-Israeli conflict.

Nobody has, for example, evoked the disproportion between the objectives retained in Barcelona and the institutional and financial means mobilized to achieve these objectives.

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

According to Henri Guaino, French president adviser (July 2009)⁽¹⁰⁾, "Barcelona was designed by Europe like an instrument to dialogue with the South. For the first time since the decolonization, Europe showed its interest for the South. But, in Barcelona, there was an imbalance to the benefit of the North. Barcelona process was the property of Europe which spoke to the South, offered its assistance and sometimes gave lessons to the South. The Union for the Mediterranean wants to be a joint ownership, a partnership on the basis of equal rights and duties to assume together their common destiny which is called the Mediterranean.

(10) Interview with French newspaper "Le Monde". www.lemonde.fr

and to reinforce the attractiveness of the EU for the high qualified workers. As regards employment, the "Community preference" will have to be respected. Lastly, before accommodating immigrants, the Member States will have to make sure that the latter have necessary incomes to settle in the host countries and to be integrated.

b/ To fight against illegal immigration: the objective is to ensure the return of the foreigners in irregular situation to their countries of origin⁽¹⁶⁾. Thus, EU will have to coordinate their actions and to give up the "general regularizations".⁽¹⁷⁾ In addition, readmission agreements will be concluded "with the countries concerned".

c/ To reinforce the effectiveness of the frontier checks/controls: accordingly, France asked its European partners to commit themselves generalizing the delivery of biometric visas at the latest on January 1, 2012 and to reinforce the capacities of the Frontex agency⁽¹⁸⁾, charged with coordinating the action of the police forces at the European south borders.

d/ To build "Europe of asylum": as from 2009, an office whose mission will be to facilitate the exchanges of information will be set up. The Commission is in addition invited to formulate proposals in order to found in 2012 a "procedure of single asylum" and to adopt "uniform statutes of refugees".

e/ To stress co-development: the European Council commits itself to support 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.

(16) Morocco, in particular, is known at the same time like transit and starting country for irregular migrants.

(17) As that had occurred in Spain during spring 2005 or in Italy in 2002.

(18) "Frontex" for External borders agency, founded in October 2004 whose general headquarter is installed in Warsaw since then, Poland.

EPoM, some preliminary comments

Representing in the content and the form a fundamental contradiction compared to the declared philosophy of the Union for the Mediterranean⁽¹⁹⁾ or, more generally, of the total principles at the origin of the agreements for the institution of Zones of free trade (FTA) signed since the years 1990 with many countries of the south, of which those of the Maghreb. The drafting of this pact allows a certain number of comments, of which the principal following:

1/ This pact very clearly carries the seal of the former Interior Minister and the French president; it's strongly tinted with "security ideology" and is based on a one-dimensional approach, where, for example, the negative effects on the starting countries of the migrants of the globalization and/or the FTA signed by the EU with various countries of the south are not anywhere taken into account, or at least, are not mentioned.

2/ This pact goes against the course of the history and the calls to the opening and the liberalization of economic, financial and human exchanges as it appeared within the philosophy of the origin, for example, and in conformity with the World Trade organization. Additionally, its reference to the "Community preference" is politically and ideologically dangerous, and factually erroneous. A country like France, for example, receives nearly 3 times more money transfers from its residents abroad than does Morocco from its own immigrants. What would one thus say in Europe if governments of countries like Morocco, Senegal or Egypt, start asserting a sort of "national preference", and reconsidering privatization policy, for example?⁽²⁰⁾

3/ This pact is, in the same approach, strongly unbalanced. The objective of advanced co-development like a means of reabsorbing the irregular migrations directly in the starting areas appears only for

(19) See the declaration of H. Guaino Ci-high.

(20) According N. Sarkozy terms used in certain speeches made with the beginning of the year 2008. www.lemonde.fr

Moroccan Royal Gendarmerie and Royal Navy have already joined their energies. This cooperation was not made public but it generated quite encouraging results".

In the impetus of his explanations and his presentation of the results obtained about the migratory question, the king will launch another call to the EU to obtain from them more means, financial and political, and will ask Spain to be the advocate of Morocco 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 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 this engagement of the king of Morocco in a subject considered by Europe as essential, the "Advanced status" appears as a political projection for Morocco. A sort of recognition of a special place allowed to that country by the 27 states of the EU.

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

For the Europeans, the deepening of Morocco's relationship with the European Union, which will help to identify new cooperation measures and to strengthen political ties, is a practical response that will allow Morocco to progress towards advanced partnership with Europe. This position, will be more that the "Association" but never the "Membership".

In all cases, for many European and Moroccan observers the advanced status already opens up new partnership perspectives between Morocco and the EU, among which one can quote more particularly :

- 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, which will stimulate investment and growth;
- An increased financial support: the EU will grant additional financial assistance to Morocco to support the implementation of all the sections of the Association Agreement and the operations identified in the Action Plan⁽²²⁾. The European Investment Bank will also help support infrastructure investment and private sector development. The Commission will be proposing a new European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), which will also cover the key issue of cross-border and transnational cooperation between Morocco and the EU so as to promote integration and economic and social cohesion and lessen development gaps between regions;
- The possibility of gradually opening access to or increasing participation in certain community programmes, particularly in the areas covered by the Action Plan;
- Deepening trade and economic relations⁽²³⁾;

Before reaching this statute, whose political and especially economic results for the country will be felt only well later, Morocco obviously has – as announced above – to follow-up the European applications as regards migratory policy. Now, one can consider that Morocco had put its migratory approach in total conformity with the wills of Europe, and in all the cases with the requests of the European countries particularly Spain and France.

(22) The Action Plan identifies the principal actions and projects to be undertaken within the framework of the new advanced status obtained by Morocco

(23) <http://www.theparliament.com>

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FROM IMMIGRATION TO MINORITY STATUS : A MOROCCAN JOURNEY TO BRITAIN

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Introduction

This article introduces the Moroccan minority in Britain. The minority has deep-rooted socio-cultural as well as socio-economic problems. These problems have an impact on the lives of the members of the minority, especially the second and subsequent generations in their quest to use and maintain their ethnic languages and culture.

Modern Moroccan immigration to Britain is relatively recent and small in size as a minority community. There is an ongoing and passionate debate about the numbers and statistics with respect to the Moroccan minority. The parties involved cannot agree on the figures for different reasons, and as a consequence the first victims of this lack of understanding are members of the Moroccan minority itself. In addition to the issue of statistics and its importance to the minority, this article looks also into the socio-economic situation of the Moroccan minority.

The article concludes by examining the issue of social exclusion and to what extent the British government standards or definition of social exclusion might apply to the Moroccan minority. To help establish this argument as objectively as possible and in the absence of reliable statistical figures on the Moroccan minority *per-se*, I shall rely on deduction and use statistical data compiled from the wards (districts) where it is known that the Moroccan minority forms a majority of the population (Jamaï, 2008).

The largest section of the Moroccan minority in Britain lives in the poorest parts of the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, namely the wards of Golborne, Colville and St Charles. Generally speaking, this can be seen as a representative sample of the Moroccan minority in Britain. The statistical data appears in a number of reports and studies, and presents

law was formulated in 1889. It stipulates that only native Gibraltarians have the exclusive right to residency on the Rock that even British citizens cannot claim. Like all non-Gibraltarians, the Moroccans who found work on the Rock since 1969 can never gain full residency rights under such law and therefore will never be naturalised, resulting in the loss of many social benefits and rights one would normally gain. Many Moroccans were living in barrack-like dormitories, while others took the ferry daily from and to Tangier. (This proximity of 14 Km across the straight of Gibraltar which explains why large numbers of the Moroccan minority come from the North West of Morocco.) This situation had its negative bearing on the social as well as moral well-being of the Moroccan community. For these and other reasons, many of these workers immigrated to the United Kingdom for a better and more stable mostly economic life.

In my UK field-study (Jamaï, 2008) involving 219 respondents who were randomly selected and which I conducted between October 2000 and June 2001, the percentage of male Moroccan immigrants jumped from 7.3% in 1963 to 14.6% in 1969 – the year Spain blockaded Gibraltar – while that of female Moroccan immigrants went up from 7.3% in 1969 to 21.9% in 1971 – two years respectively after the men immigrated. This suggests family reunion once the men secured their positions and made their situation favourable for family reunion. But the wave of female immigrants in 1971 suggests more than merely members joining their spouses. Many females came to the United Kingdom in their own right – in many cases as singles – to seek their own fortune.

The large majority of these immigrants took jobs in cleaning and catering in the public sector industries such as the National Health Service and in the private sector mostly in tourism. Most of these Moroccan immigrants formed a Moroccan minority in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in London, and another comparatively recent one at St Albans in Hertfordshire north of London.

Establishment of the Moroccan minority

The Moroccan immigrants to Britain come largely from the north west of Morocco, an area that historically enjoys strong links with Britain. Britain is not perceived as a traditional destination for Moroccan immigration in general. This is reserved for France and Belgium, and to a lesser extent Germany, Netherlands, Italy and most recently Spain.

Moroccan immigration to Britain picked up in 1969, but it started in the late 1950s and early 1960s when Spanish agents based in London and Tetouan (a city in the north West of Morocco) started recruiting Moroccans mainly from the former occupied Spanish zone in the north of Morocco to work in the catering industry in Britain (Haousa, 1992). This first group of Moroccan immigrants, who had to pay the equivalent of £15 in 1970 and about £100 in 1973 for the work permit (Pamplin, 1993), started a chain reaction by arranging work permits for their relatives and friends in Morocco to come and work in Britain, which explains the fact that the majority of them originate from the same geographical area, the north west of Morocco. Another group of Moroccan immigrants came via Gibraltar after working there on the building of a naval base and other military installations on the Rock.

Statistics of ethnic Moroccans in Britain

It is impossible to determine how many ethnic Moroccans there are in Britain at any given time. This is due to the way censuses are organised and figures are compiled in Britain. Although all numbers must be taken with caution as they rarely reflect the strength in numbers of the Moroccan minority which I estimate to be between 35,000 and 50,000 strong. The figures from the Moroccan sources are based on consular registrations of Moroccans living in Britain. However, many immigrants do not register and therefore they do not show up in the Moroccan statistics. On the other hand, as it is discussed at some length in the following paragraphs, there is no clear provision for ethnic Moroccans to register themselves as such in the British census or the equal opportunity monitoring form.

4. Aspects of the socio-economic situation

4.1. Communication

The minority relations' adviser on the Moroccan minority in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea concludes in an internal report dated 17 February 1994 that one of the major obstacles to socio-economic development of the Moroccan minority is communication, as the vast majority among the first generation immigrants in particular have very poor or no command of the English language. This has a negative effect on their access to services and jobs. The author of the report, Rumman (1994:5), remarks that:

Another factor common to many responses concerned the issue of language difficulties experienced by clients and staff, compounded by the inability of many organisations to employ a translator or interpreter because of financial constraints. This was perceived as inevitably affecting the quantity and quality of service offered and received by Moroccan clients.

The report draws a very interesting picture, which must be seen as an example of the problems faced by the Moroccan minority not only in the area which the report concerns itself with, but also a reflection on the plight of the Moroccan minority all over Britain. Many local authorities and agencies claim that they do provide services for the Moroccan minority, and yet they fail to provide what could arguably be considered as the most important service, i.e., translation and interpreting. Lack or inadequacy of this particular service deepens the isolation and marginalisation of the Moroccan minority. The integration of the 1998 European Human Rights Act within the British law with effect from October 2000 makes it an obligation for public services providers to provide unfettered access to public services. This also means interpreting services in their native or preferred language for members of minority groups who have little or no command of English. However, from personal experience and during my field study between October 2000 and June 2001, I have noticed that many authorities and agencies are still failing the minority groups in this

duty. This is made worse by the fact that many members of the Moroccan minority are ignorant of their basic rights such as the right to an interpreter. If the parents have inadequate access to services, this has a domino effect not only on them but also on their children and the quality of services they receive. More often than not this means a continuous cycle of social exclusion from one generation to another. Skali (1998:13) notes that:

All statutory and voluntary agencies agreed that language is the main barrier to education and training areas and stressed that something should be done to help alleviate this barrier which has an impact on communication between home and school, and between schools and their pupils.

4.2. Education

Often the tragic consequence of the predicament of inadequate or total lack of communication is that:

A large number of Moroccan pupils leave school with no qualifications at all, some are not able to sit GCSE exams although they have been born or brought up in the UK. (Skali, 1998:13)

Moreover, the level of illiteracy of the parents who are in their vast majority uneducated first generation immigrants compounds the problem, and even for those with some level of education since theirs is not compatible with the British one. This fact has a negative impact on the education of their children. The parents find themselves unable to help with the homework; others feel intimidated by the experience and simply become disinterested in the process of education. This may explain the findings of a report by Al-Hasaniya Moroccan Women's Centre (1999:12) in London which states that:

Moroccan students are much less literate in Arabic compared to other Arab students – only 16% claim that their written and oral skills are both very good, as compared to 30% of other Arabs. Overall, 44% of Moroccan students claim

when physically unfit and these Moroccans in the 40 to 50 age group are now unable to work at all due to their poor health.

The professional prospects for most of these Moroccans are uninviting, and it is almost impossible for them to branch out to private enterprise. The issues of compatible education, skills and training come back, time and again, to haunt the Moroccan minority, as Skali (1998:14) points out:

This lack of command of English language and lack of confidence make business opportunities very remote from the Moroccan minority as without them there will be problems with drawing business plans, financial plans and planning permissions which are the basis for any business adventure. Not being able to do all that, the Moroccan minority is marginalized and have no success in business setting like other Moroccan communities living in other parts of the European Union.

With every economic downturn, the first to suffer are the immigrant minority groups. This is owing to their particularities and their inability to access retraining to keep up with the ever-changing work conditions and practices. They are locked into jobs which are usually the first to go during an economic downturn.

There are no precise statistical figures concerning unemployment within the Moroccan minority; however, the nearest picture to a clearer impression can be deduced from the general figures of unemployment in the areas where the Moroccan minority constitute a majority. In a survey by the polling organisation MORI (1999:15) the levels of unemployment in the wards (districts) where the Moroccan minority constitute a majority are as follows:

Table 3: Unemployment rates – trends

Ward (District)	July 1998	December 1998
Golborne	15.4	13.5
Colville	11.8	10
St Charles	14.5	12.4
Great Britain	---	4.4

One can only deduce that the Moroccan minority suffers from high rates of unemployment: 13.5% in Dec 1998 in the Golborne ward compared with the national rate at the time of only 4.4%. Another observation is that there is a decline in the level of unemployment in general as a reflection of good fortunes of the British economy and its emergence from the eighties and early nineties recession. Its positive outcome filters down to benefit the minority groups including the Moroccans, but it does little to bridge the gap between the minority groups and the rest of the general population.

The issue of pay is intrinsically linked to the type and quality of employment. The jobs which the Moroccan minority occupy are unskilled and very low paid. The survey by the polling organisation MORI (1999:17) stated :

At £289 the average weekly earnings of Golborne residents in employment are lower than residents within other wards in the Borough and in the Borough as a whole, although Kensington & Chelsea shows higher earnings than Britain.

Table 4: Average weekly earnings of employees 1996

Golborne	£288.50
Colville	£359.80
St Charles	£317.00
RBKC	£401.20
Greater London	£480.10
GB	£367.60

Source: Figures from RBKC using 1991 Census and 1996 New Earnings Survey

As they suggest, one of the benchmarks by which to measure the health condition of a minority is Standardised Mortality Ratios (SMR). With respect to Golborne, MORI (1999:45) argues that:

Golborne's SMR is considerably higher than the national average, at 153.6. Indeed, the gap between the ward and the national average widened between 1981 and 1991, indicating that Golborne has not kept up with improvements in health and mortality rates seen at a national level. The 20 percentage point increase in SMR for Golborne is also higher than the 10 point increase experienced by the most deprived fifth of wards within Greater London.

High levels of SMR within a minority usually are an indication of unacceptable levels of social deprivation. This would qualify Golborne as one of the most deprived areas in Britain. In fact, MORI (1999:45) argues that:

While some of the wards ... have improved their position between 1981 and 1991, SMR scores in Golborne have increased, placing it second amongst the top ten most deprived in 1991.

It seems that the Moroccan minority has been left behind in the process of social improvement and integration. In addition to health issues they have to deal with, crime is another major headache the Moroccan minority has to live with.

4.6 Crime

The wards (districts) where the Moroccan minority form a majority, especially in Golborne, are considered as black-spots of crime, riddled by drugs, burglary, prostitution and anti-social behaviour. MORI (1999:64) reports that:

Key issues in the area include crack cocaine, prostitution, associated harassment and distress to local residents, harassment by local youths (abuse and vandalism), and petty crime (particularly in the Portobello Road market).

Such picture of crime is symptomatic of deprived areas and socially excluded and marginalized communities. The Moroccan minority is not immune from the effects of crime.

Conclusion

The Moroccan ethnic minority is a newly established minority in Britain. It started immigrating to Britain as early as the 1950's, and ever since has grown in strength, although its strength in numbers is debatable. Most members of the Moroccan minority in Britain settled in some of the poorest wards (districts) in Britain, particularly in the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea in London. The area and the minority are burdened by almost every symptom of socioeconomic deprivation and exclusion. Many issues that the Moroccan minority faces could easily be resolved if only a viable system of communication (mostly linguistic ability which means mastering English language) could be established. The social cost in human suffering and financial losses to all parties concerned is far too great to measure. A reliable and integrated system of communication would cost a fraction and it would have an ever-lasting positive impact not only on the Moroccan minority, but also on society at large. This step should be seen as a preventive measure. Socio-economic integration, therefore, begins with, among other elements, communication.

The impression is that more often than not the problem for immigrant minority groups including Moroccans is access to services due to lack of communication, not their inexistence. For politico-financial considerations, some authorities tend to cut services to minority groups on the grounds that these services are underused. The truth of the matter is that these services cannot be accessed, as they ought to be because of the inexistence of a reliable communication system. Most, but certainly not all, problems from which the Moroccan minority suffers can be attributed to the communication issue; in addition to the cultural and religious attitudinal factors that contribute to the isolation of the minority.

The relevance of this paper is to demonstrate that social exclusion can be better understood if we appreciate the linguistic as well as cultural

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The political problems of the Mediterranean region have already spilled over into the Barcelona process. In May 1996 Greece threatened to obstruct the aid package for the Mediterranean countries as part of its territorial dispute with Turkey. Greece finally accepted that the aid programme could go ahead, but indicated that it would still veto aid for Turkey.

Despite the ringing declarations by the Spanish prime minister and French foreign minister at the Barcelona Conference that a new era in history was dawning, the non-Mediterranean EU members such as Germany and the UK remain unconvinced of the importance of Mediterranean cooperation. Such optimistic pronouncements are reminiscent of those at the signing of Lomé I in 1975 that a new partnership between Europe and Africa was taking shape. More than twenty years later, Europe's attention has turned away from Lomé and towards the Mediterranean (see Chapter 4). Whether Europe now has the political determination and the economic generosity to support the Mediterranean region during its long transition period to peace and prosperity remains to be seen.

MOROCCO AND THE EU

As early as 1984 Morocco took a radical approach to its relations with the Community. It decided that cooperation and trade agreements were not enough. As more Mediterranean countries such as Greece, Spain and Portugal gained entry to the Community, their products and their nationals received better treatment than those of outside countries.

The Moroccan minister concerned with the first entry application, Azeddin Ghessous, was particularly concerned over the reduction of Community import quotas for citrus fruit and other products, as well as the second-class status of more than a million Moroccans resident in the Community. He argued:

How can Europe not include Morocco? Spain is only fourteen kilometres away. The southern standard of living in the Mediterranean cannot suffer because of the north. In classical terms this is a setting for war. How can you make one of the great corridors of commerce of history into a barrier, a fortification? This could result in conflict.³⁶

independence movements also received inspiration from this past unity. The continuing vitality of the *grand maghreb* idea was demonstrated in 1958 when the principal North African liberation movements met in Tangier to affirm their commitment to a common future and to the cause of Algeria's liberation.

Further efforts to put flesh on the ideal of Maghreb in unity were made through the Permanent Consultative Committee of the Maghreb from 1964 until 1975 when the parties' conflicting views over the Western Sahara ended these meetings.³⁸ Yves Boyer attributed the foundation of the Union of the Arab Maghreb (UMA) to a process initiated by France in 1983, in keeping with its quasi-hegemonic role mentioned earlier.³⁹ It was a combination of the historical ties among the Arabs and their political aspirations, the diplomacy of France, and the geopolitical challenge of creating a union with the ability to match the Europeans' integration (a challenge also perceived by other regions) which led to the formation of the UMA.

In 1988 the first pan-Maghreb summit since independence which visited Morocco, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia and Mauritania took place in Algiers. The result of the summit was that a Maghreb High Commission was established. Following a series of meetings of its sub-committees, the High Commission drew up a Treaty of Union in 1989. Wounds over Western Sahara were smoothed over as King Hassan II received a delegation from Polisario, an organization seeking the independence of the Western Sahara (now controlled by Morocco), in early 1989 and the President of Algeria officially visited Morocco.

In February 1989 the five presidents signed the Treaty of the Union of the Arab Maghreb which seemed to signal a real desire to cooperate and an historic turning point.⁴⁰ However, the new UMA ran into problems almost immediately. At the Algiers summit of 1990 a seat for the secretariat could not be agreed. The Gulf crisis saw the five countries adopt radically different positions at the Cairo summit, ranging from opposing a resolution condemning Iraq (Libya) to supporting the resolution and sending troops to Saudi Arabia (Morocco).

Despite the internal problems of the UMA, it briefly participated in a wider dialogue with Europe. The '4+5' dialogue included France, Italy, Spain and Portugal plus the five UMA members. In 1991 Malta also joined the European side, making a dialogue of 5+5. The group held two summits in Rome in 1990, and one in

completing

economies are weak. Most of the North Africans' products are competitive rather than complementary and intra-UMA trade comprises only about 3 per cent of the members' foreign trade. Trade with Community is around 70 per cent of the external trade of the UMA, making cooperation with the EU arguably a more important objective than regional integration. By contrast, when the Community was founded in the late 1950s its internal trade accounted for around 40 per cent of its total foreign trade. Moreover, the members' relative wealth is very different, ranging from Libya's per caput GNP of \$US5,310 to Mauritania's of just \$US500.⁴²

Although the UMA might not immediately seem to have the potential for prosperous unification which had been present in the Community, nevertheless greater integration could produce significant benefits. Increasing trade, political cooperation and stability are attractive in a region where fundamentalist religious challenge is strong, and even wars such as the short Moroccan-Algerian war of 1963 are possible. For EU companies anxious to avail themselves of North African labour costs which are a quarter of those in the EU, the UMA is also a bonus. Reducing tariffs between the Maghreb countries would boost their trade.

Since the 1980s the Maghreb countries have pursued more similar, liberal economic policies, following the early example of Tunisia. From the mid-1980s they have adjusted with the IMF and liberalized their trade under GATT. For Tunisia and Morocco their record of economic growth has been positive: for Tunisia economic growth in 1992 was 8.6 per cent while for Morocco it was a lower but respectable 2.3 per cent, outstripping both Germany and Japan. During 1980-92 Tunisian trade grew at an annual rate of 5 per cent and Moroccan trade by 4 per cent. The picture was less favourable for oil-exporters Algeria and Libya whose trade fell by 2 per cent and 6 per cent respectively over the same period. Mauritania, a least developed country, lost 2 per cent of its merchandise trade over the decade 1980-90 (GATT figures).

Up to the present the UMA has little to show for itself. Richard Pomfret argued that the UMA was almost entirely symbolic.⁴³ What could be debated is whether it is symbolic of the Maghreb countries' positive desire to cooperate or of their failure to do so. The economic benefits that were foreseen have not materialized and its political problems have so far kept the UMA from making