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Between courting and
controlling: The Moroccan
state and 'its' emigrants

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Abstract

The Moroccan state has long attempted to maintain tight control on “its” subjects living in Europe. Since the 1960s, the state has actively discouraged migrants’ social and political integration because this was seen as endangering the flow of remittances and creating political opposition from outside. However, the failure of these remote control policies and an ominous stagnation in remittances prompted the state to change course over the 1990s. On the surface, repression has given way to the active courting of the rapidly expanding Diaspora. Along with policies to facilitate holiday returns, remittances and to co-opt former exiles, the state adopted a positive attitude towards migrants’ dual citizenship and integration. Despite the apparent success of these policies, the recent spectacular increases in remittances and holiday visits could only be achieved because of continuing emigration and because these targeted policies were an integral part of a more general process of political reform and liberalisation. Reform has only been partial and the state has not given up a number of instruments to control and foster links with ‘its’ emigrants. While the state tries to strike a delicate balance between courting and controlling the expanding Moroccan Diaspora, some European politicians see these policies as running counter to integration policies. This can result in conflicting sovereignty claims made by Moroccan and European states.

Keywords: Emigration, transnationalism, Diaspora engagement policies, citizenship, development, sovereignty, remittances, Morocco, Europe

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Introduction¹

Until the late 1990s, when Moroccan migrants living in Europe crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and arrived in the northern port of Tangier they would invariably have to deal with corrupt customs civil servants who wanted to profit from their alleged wealth. In the car travelling through Morocco to their native village, again they encountered numerous controls by *gendarmes* and policemen often demanding their own toll fee. And to obtain documents such as passports or birth certificates a difficult path had to be trod to pass through a maze of rent seeking civil servants (De Haas 2003, Strijp 1997).

All this gave migrants the impression that they were not really welcome in their own country and that the Moroccan state seemed only to be interested in the contents of their wallets. When on vacation in Morocco migrants did not perceive that they were being protected, but more that they were being stripped bare. For the rest, migrants were expected to remain silent. Those who voiced their criticism in Europe about the Moroccan king or government were frequently harassed or threatened during their vacation in Morocco.

This has changed in recent years. Customs procedures work more smoothly and seem less corrupt than in the past. There are welcoming adverts on the radio and television, and the Moroccan, Spanish, Italian and French motorways even have service centres specially fitted out for Moroccan migrants-on-vacation. And the politically critical migrants are hardly ever bothered anymore. There is less harassment and corruption inland too. Everything seems to be focused on allowing the collective annual summer vacation trip, which is known in Morocco as the *opération transit* or the *opération marhaba* ('welcome'), to run as smoothly as possible.

This signifies a striking shift in the attitude of the Moroccan state towards Moroccan emigrants. This seems in line with what seems a global

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trend of migrant sending states increasingly trying to court emigrant or "Diaspora" communities in the hope that migrants will contribute to national development, in particular through remitting money and investing in private enterprises (Barry 2006, Gamlen 2006, Newland and Patrick 2004, Østergaard-Nielsen 2003)².

According to Gamlen (2006), diaspora engagement policies can be broken down into three main categories (1) capacity building policies aimed at developing a set of state institutions to govern the diaspora (for example, emigrants ministries, homecoming conferences); (2) extending rights to the diaspora (for example, voting rights, dual nationality); and (3) extracting obligations from the diaspora (for example, mandatory remittance payments; knowledge transfer). Emigrants themselves have increasingly asserted political claims in origin countries, and some states have extended political rights to their emigrant populations (Barry 2006, Gamlen 2006).

However, the strong interest of the Moroccan state in maintaining relations with migrants living abroad *as such* is not new at all. Ever since independence in 1956, the Moroccan state has first openly and then tacitly stimulated large-scale migration to Western Europe, because the experience and savings of migrants were seen as an important tool for national economic development and modernisation. It is rather the *nature* of the links between the Moroccan state and emigrants that has recently shifted from a focus on controlling to what appears to be an active courting of the Moroccan Diaspora.

The first aim of this paper is to analyse the nature and the underlying causes of this changing relationship between the Moroccan state and the expanding Moroccan Diaspora living in Europe and North America. The second aim is to assess to what extent the recent change in

² The commonly used term "diaspora" is a highly contested concept, many definitions of which exist, but the common element is the long-term orientation on the real or imagined homeland. Van Hear, Pieke and Vertovec (2004: 3) defined Diaspora as "populations of migrant origin who are scattered among two or more destinations, between which there develop multifarious links involving flows and exchanges of people and resources: between the homeland and destination countries, and among destination countries". The Moroccan emigrant population, which includes significant and interconnected communities living in France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Scandinavia and the UK, seems to fit such a definition.

attitude of the Moroccan state has enhanced the desired positive development impact of migration through increasing remittances and investments by migrants. However, in order to contextualise this relationship, the following section will first give a brief overview of Morocco's recent migration history.

Moroccan migration: From 'Guest Workers' to Settlers

Over the past four decades, Morocco has evolved into one of the world's leading emigration countries. Since the mid-1960s, it has experienced large-scale migration of mostly unskilled migrants to Western Europe. Contemporary Moroccan labour migration is rooted in migration patterns that emerged in colonial times. The French colonization of neighbouring Algeria in 1830 heralded the beginning of a period of economic and political restructuring, which created entirely new migration patterns from Morocco.

The demand for labourers on the farms of French *colons* (settlers) and in the expanding Algerian coastal cities attracted a rising number of mostly seasonal and circular migrants from Morocco. The French occupation of Morocco (1912 to 1956) also marked the beginning of migration to France. During World War I and World War II, labour shortages in France led to the recruitment of tens of thousands of temporary Moroccan migrants for factories, mines, and the French army. Much of this migration took place via Algeria, which remained a French colony until 1962.

Yet this post-colonial migration was modest compared with the 1962-1972 decade, when the magnitude and geographical scope of Moroccan emigration dramatically expanded. Strong economic growth in Western Europe resulted in a great demand for low-skilled labour. Morocco signed labour recruitment agreements with the (then) West Germany (1963), France (1963), Belgium (1964), and the Netherlands (1969). This was the onset of a spatial diversification of Moroccan emigration, which had been mainly directed towards France (De Haas 2007b).

Although the Moroccan state, most receiving states, and most migrants themselves expected this migration to be temporary, many

'guest workers' did not return, but ended up settling permanently. The 1973 Oil Crisis radically changed the political and economic context in which migration took place. Morocco suffered even more than the European countries from the high oil prices and the global economic downturn. The economic situation in Morocco deteriorated and, following two failed coups d'état against King Hassan II in 1971 and 1972, the country also entered into a period of increasing political instability and repression.

Simultaneously confronted with a progressive tightening of immigration policies in Europe, many migrants decided to stay on the safe, European, side of the Mediterranean. Large-scale family reunification heralded this shift to more permanent settlement. Although the late 1980s and early 1990s saw significant return migration peaking at 40,000 in 1991, return migration has fallen to less than 20,000 per year. Return migration rates among Moroccans have been among the lowest of all immigrant groups in Europe. Naturalisation rates are equally high. From 1992 to 2001, about 430,000 Moroccans living in Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Norway were granted the nationality of an EU member state (De Haas 2007b).

A second consequence of the restrictive immigration policies was an increase of undocumented migration after 1990, in particular to the new destination countries of Italy and Spain, where there is a high demand for unskilled migrant labour, and which have replaced France as the primary destination for new Moroccan labour migrants. An increasing proportion of independent labour migrants to Southern Europe are women who work as domestic workers, nannies, cleaners, or in agriculture and small industries. Undocumented migrants often managed to obtain residence permits through large-scales legalisations or marriage with partners in the destination countries. Between 1980 and 2004, the combined Moroccan population officially residing in Spain and Italy increased from about 20,000 to 650,000.

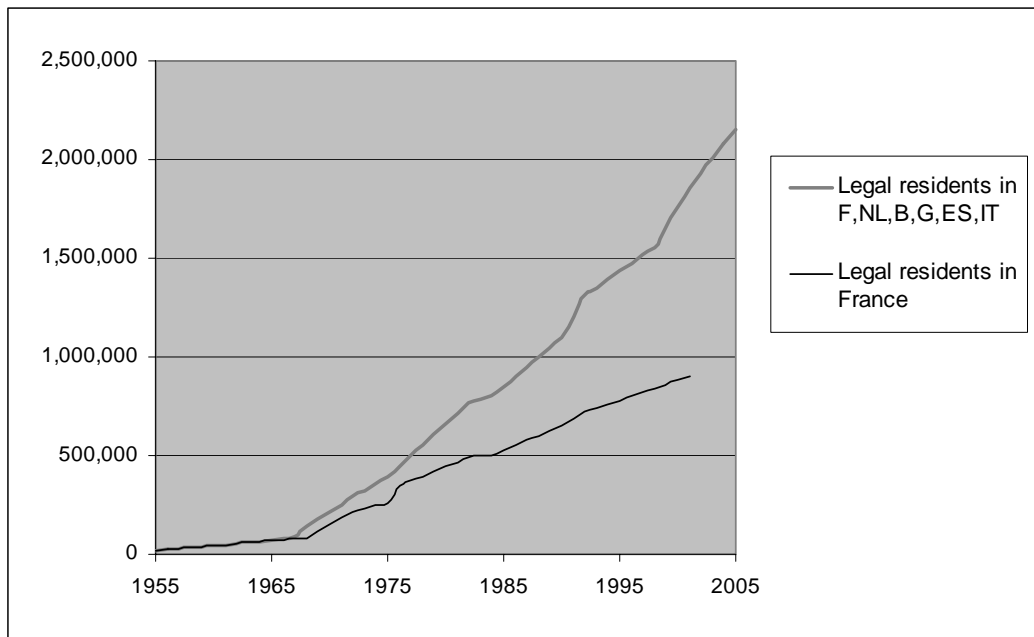
While family reunification was largely complete at the end of the 1980s, family formation as the result of new marriages between the second generation and native Moroccans gained significance as the major source of new migration from Morocco to the classic destination countries

in north-west Europe over the 1990s. While tight migrant networks continued to facilitate family and undocumented migration, there was sustained demand for migrant labour, particularly in Spain and Italy. These factors explain why policies by receiving states aiming to curb migration had only limited effect.

The combined effects of family reunification, family formation, natural increase, undocumented migration, and new labour migration to Spain and Italy explain why the number of Moroccans officially living in Europe has increased more than almost ninefold from 300,000 in 1972, on the eve of the recruitment freeze, to at least 2.6 million in 2004. This does not include undocumented migrants as well as at least 280,000 Moroccans living in Arab countries and at least 180,000 migrants living in North America, as well as the approximately 700,000 Jews of Moroccan descent living in Israel (De Haas 2007b).

Moroccans form not only one of largest, but also one of the most dispersed migrant communities in Western Europe. In 2004, France was still home to the largest legally residing population of Moroccan descent (more than 1,100,000), followed by Spain (424,000), the Netherlands (300,000), Italy (299,000), Belgium (293,000), and Germany (102,000). Smaller but rapidly growing communities of higher-skilled migrants live in the United States (100,000) and Canada (78,000) (consular data cited in Fargues 2005).

Figure 1. Evolution of the number of Moroccan descendants living in main European receiving countries 1955-2004



Source: De Haas 2003, 2007b.

Migration and migrants as political and economic instruments

Migration as a safety valve for ethnic tensions

Out-migration from Morocco has not been an autonomous process. Both the colonial and the independent Moroccan state have actively stimulated international out-migration from particular regions for political and economic reasons³. In particular at the onset of large-scale migration, these policies have been hugely important in 'setting the stage' of migration patterns, which would later on gain their own momentum through migration networks.

In spatial terms, international migration from Morocco has been anything but a random process. There is a concentration of migration from particular sending regions within Morocco towards specific countries, regions and even cities within Europe (Ben Ali 1996: 348). On the basis of

³ Although international migration was stimulated, the opposite was true for internal rural-to-urban migration, which was perceived as a threat to political and economic stability. The so-called 'rural exodus' was perceived to lead to the

an analysis of migration rates at the provincial level (Refass 1990:228), we can distinguish three principal Moroccan migration belts: the eastern part of the Rif mountain area; the southwestern Sous region; and the (usually river) oases located southeast of the High Atlas (De Haas 2003). Ever since independence, the Moroccan state has encouraged emigration from particular regions. This choice was motivated by domestic political and economic concerns.

In the post-independence years, economic crises, political discontent and perceived discrimination resulted in several insurrections in these regions. This mainly concerned the mountainous and/or semi-desert regions in the north, south and east of the country, generally located in the part of Morocco which the French colonisers called *le Maroc inutile* ('redundant Morocco') (Obdeijn 1993, Reniers 1999).

It is important to put this in a historical perspective. Until colonisation, the independent tribes of these interior regions had remained largely autonomous from the *makhzen*, the state-related and largely urban-based class associated with the sultan's power. Although these tribes often nominally recognized the (religious) status of the sultan for certain periods, they remained largely independent in practice and generally refused to pay tribute to the sultan. It was only under French rule, that the independent tribes of what the colonizer called the *bled es-siba* ("land of dissidence") were 'pacified' in 1933 after a military campaign of two decades. On the eve of independence in 1956, this 'pacification' was only two decades old.

The post-colonial Moroccan state inherited the political-military infrastructure installed by the French, which enabled the *makhzen* to effectively control all the tribes of the interior for the first time in history. Several tribes and their chiefs—who played an important role in the struggle for independence but were now expected to obey to the sultan—were reluctant to submit to the sultan's power. In the post-independence years, economic crises, political discontent, and perceived discrimination resulted in several insurrections in such regions.

decline of agricultural production and contributing to urban overpopulation. The Moroccan state has therefore aimed, largely in vain, at curbing internal migration.

In this context, the Moroccan government quickly recognized the possibilities that a migration policy could have in terms of relieving tensions by promoting emigration from these Berber speaking regions, and in particular from the notoriously turbulent Rif region (De Mas 1978, Obdeijn 1993, Reniers 1999).

To a considerable extent, this was a continuation of earlier French policies to recruit military and migrant workers in relatively marginal rural regions of *le Maroc inutile*, as it was expected that this would alleviate poverty and prevent potential internal political unrest (Obdeijn 1993). Both the colonial and the Moroccan states actively stimulated migration from previously autonomous, generally Berber-speaking regions

The French opposed recruiting in the more central, Arabophone areas of *le Maroc utile*, because they intended to deploy those workers on the farms of the French colons in the Atlantic plains (De Mas 1978). Recruitment for the army and migrant labourers (in the cities and France) only took place in relatively marginal areas of *le Maroc inutil*, and in particular in the southwestern Sous region (De Mas 1978) International migration was thus seen as a 'safety valve' to decrease political tensions. Giving young men the opportunity to work abroad against relatively high wages was expected to dampen the rebellious tendency and to make a significant contribution to prosperity.

In the northern Rif, which was occupied by Spain, decolonisation implied the end of large-scale recruitment for the Spanish army, while seasonal migration to Algeria diminished rapidly due to the Algerian war of independence. Against the background of low harvests in 1956-1958 and the 1958-1959 rebellion in Al Hoceima, the Moroccan state started directing Dutch, German and Belgian recruiters to the Rif in the hope that this would decrease unrest (De Mas 1978, De Mas 1995). The fact the Rif was not colonised by the French probably explains why migration from there has been less oriented on France. Following colonial traditions, post-colonial migration from the southwestern Sous region did remained directed to France.

Instruments for steering migration

These policies were mainly implemented through directing recruiters to these areas and through selective passport issuance policies. Recruiters tended to prefer lowly skilled and often illiterate workers because they wanted to prevent the import of left-wing and potential trade union activists. Selective passport issuance was another instrument the state employed in influencing initial international migration patterns (De Haas 2003).

In this context it is important to remember that before 1973, in a striking reversal of the current situation, the greatest legal constraint on migration was not restrictive immigration policies by European states, but the difficulty of obtaining a Moroccan passport. An illustrative case of how selective passport issuance policies enabled the Moroccan government to influence initial migration itineraries is the migration chain from the town of Settat south of Casablanca to Italy. Settat was the birthplace of the Driss Basri, the powerful interior minister under King Hassan II, who boosted the development of his home town in various ways, not least by favouring locals by issuing them with passports (Salih 2001:660-1). In the northern provinces (e.g., Oujda, Nador and Al Hoceima), the issuance of passports was the privilege of the often military *gouverners*, which was often a major source of private enrichment⁴.

The system of formal recruitment was only important in the first years of labour migration. The capacity of the Moroccan state and recruiters rapidly to steer migration rapidly declined. Once migration movements were set in motion, they started to gain their own momentum. Administrative obstacles, long waiting lists, and the accompanying bribery encouraged people to migrate as 'tourists'. These 'spontaneous' migrants were often assisted by networks of relatives or friends already abroad, who also acted as intermediaries with employers (Reniers 1999). As there was a high demand for migrant labour, many spontaneous migrants did not experience too many problems in finding work and accommodation. Most migrants succeeded in obtaining

⁴ Personal communication with Paolo De Mas, Netherlands Institute in Morocco (NIMAR), Rabat.

permanent residence through a series of legalization campaigns in the Netherlands (1975), Belgium (1975) and in France (1981-1982).

Formal recruitment by specialized agencies was only important in the initial years of labour migration and in determining initial migration patterns. Even in the 1960s, spontaneous settlement and informal recruitment by companies was more important numerically. In 1976, only 13 percent of the Moroccans living in the Netherlands had migrated through formal recruitment, 43 percent through personal relations ('networks'), and 24 percent through direct recruitment by companies (Shadid 1979: 165). Another, more recent study demonstrated that only 3.5 percent of the Moroccans in Belgium had been recruited through official selection (Reniers 1999: 684).

Thus, recruiters and the state had a significant influence on setting migration itineraries, as subsequent migrants tended to follow the beaten track. Migration-facilitating networks and widespread corruption (which allowed for obtaining travel documents as long as one paid bribes) rapidly decreased the influence of the state on *who* was emigrating. The Moroccan state could also not prevent that that this group of 'labour migrants' would also contain a group of left-wing political opponents (cf. Lacroix 2005). Once in Europe, these refugees "in disguise" re-organised themselves in Western Europe to form a left-wing political opposition from outside.

Migration as tool for national economic development: from optimism to deception

Besides being an instrument to mitigate rebellious tendencies in several Berber areas, the state also saw migration as a tool for national economic development. In the 1965-68 Three-Year Plan, the utility of migration was primarily seen through the skills and knowledge that migrants were expected to acquire through work and education abroad. It was expected that this experience would be beneficial for national industrial development (Heinemeijer et al. 1977). Migrants, whose stay abroad was considered as temporary, were explicitly seen as innovative agents of

development. In this optimistic 'developmentalist' era, return migrants were seen as actors who would help Morocco in its economic take-off.

This optimism was part of an international trend. In the 1960s and 1970s several emigration countries north and south of the Mediterranean Sea became involved in the migration process amidst expectations of the "dawning of a new era" (Papademetriou 1985:212). In this period, governments of emigration countries such as Greece, Turkey, Tunisia and Morocco actively encouraged emigration, since they considered it one of the principal instruments to promote modernisation and economic development (Adler 1981, Penninx 1982). It was expected that labour migrants, who were generally assumed to return after some years, would re-invest large sums of money in industrial enterprises in the region or country of origin. Expectations ran high. As Beijer (1970:102) voiced this development optimism, migrant workers "can also represent a hope for the industrial development of their native land". In the same vein, Kindleberger (1965:253) argued that "large-scale emigration can contribute to the best of both worlds: rapid growth in the country of immigration . . . and rapid growth in the country of origin".

However, this initial optimism would soon fade in many Mediterranean emigration countries, including Morocco. The Moroccan government's Five-Year Plan 1968-72 largely suppressed the education and training argument and emphasized the quantitative aspects of migration in relieving pressures on the labour market and the positive monetary effects of remittances. This shift in attention can be explained by the increase in unemployment and increasing deficits in the balance of payments witnessed in that period (Belguendouz 2006, Heinemeijer et al. 1977).

The belief that migrants would be particular actors of change, importing new ideas, attitudes, and skills, gradually faded. Partly, this was the result of disappointing experiences with migration and development programs. The Moroccan government had implemented policies, often in cooperation with European receiving countries in Europe, in order to stimulate return migration and the participation of returned migrants in the development process through investment-stimulating programs. Such programs generally failed, partly through bad implementation, partly due

to a lack of commitment among migrants and feelings of distrust vis-à-vis government agencies (Fadlollah, Berrada, and Khachani 2000, Fellat 1996, Obdeijn 1993), but first and foremost due to a generally unattractive investment environment.

One telling example of such early 'migration and development' programmes was the Moroccan part of the Dutch REMPLD (Reintegration of Emigrant Manpower and the Promotion of Local Opportunities for Development) project. The REMPLD project was initiated and funded in 1974 by the Dutch Ministry of Development Cooperation in order to explore the ways in which international labour migration could contribute to development and combat the causes of emigration in Turkey, Tunisia and Morocco (Van Dijk et al. 1978). This was in a time when it was generally expected that labour migration from Mediterranean countries would be temporary, and, consequently, that most migrants would return. Large-scale emigration to Europe, which gained full momentum in the late 1960s, was still relatively new. The idea was that return migrants were to be included in local development projects as founders of new businesses, which would help to create the structural conditions needed for rural development. However, after two years of research and efforts to implement projects it was recommended that the programme be halted (Aumüller 2004).

Extensive field research done for REMPLD in the Moroccan Rif and Sous indicated that the investment opportunities for migrants in their regions of origin were very limited, and that, in fact, development in migrant-sending regions was a prerequisite for return and/or investment rather than a consequence of migration (Heinemeijer et al. 1977). A REMPLD study conducted in northern Morocco showed that political repression and the endemic corruption strengthened the historical mistrust of migrants (and nonmigrants) against the central government and its regional and local representatives. This lack of confidence also hampered potential initiatives and concomitant investment of migrant workers in Morocco (De Mas 1978). This demonstrated that in order to stimulate development processes in regions of origin, more structural changes are necessary than migrants can effectuate (cf. Penninx 1982).

Moreover, an increasing number of studies indicated that migrants were not willing to invest in productive enterprises, and that most money was spent on housing construction and consumption. This was part of a broader international trend, in which former migration and development optimism was taken over by widespread pessimism in the 1970s. In fact, this reflected a general paradigm shift in social theory from modernisation and functionalist to structuralist and dependency thinking (De Haas 2003).

Instead of contributing to development, migration and concomitant changes, such as growing inequality and individualism, was increasingly believed to lead to the breakdown of traditional, stable village communities and regional economies, provoking the development of passive, non-productive communities, which become increasingly dependent on remittances. In this perspective, South-North migration was perceived as discouraging the “autonomous” economic growth of migrant-sending countries (Lipton 1980, Rubenstein 1992). Therefore, the impact of migration on development in the regions of departure was increasingly seen as negative and contributing to the ‘development of underdevelopment’ (cf. Frank 1966).

Likewise, research in Morocco seemed to indicate that remittances were primarily used for daily expenses, conspicuous consumption and so-called ‘non-productive’ investments, such as the widely criticised construction of palatial houses, which would spur inflation and not create employment. Productive investment in agriculture or industry, by contrast, seemed to be very limited. In many instances, migrant households appeared to withdraw from productive activities in and outside agriculture, which was seen as leading to a dangerous, passive dependency on remittance income (cf. Fadlollah, Berrada, and Khachani 2000). Instead of contributing to development, a new consensus emerged in which researchers tended to evaluate migration as *increasing* underdevelopment (Hamdouch et al. 1979).

Securing remittances

It seems useful to distinguish (1) policies that specifically aim to encourage return and investments by migrants and (2) policies that aim to stimulate remittance transfers. Following the disappointing experiences

in the 1970s with policies aiming to stimulate investments (and return) by migrants, these were largely abandoned until the renewed investment-stimulation policies of the 1990s. Against the background of growing deception with migrants' perceived lack of rational entrepreneurial attitudes and low return migration, the emphasis shifted to maximising remittances as a tool to cover Morocco's increasing trade deficit and for national macro-economic development.

Morocco's remittance policies have been relatively successful. In comparison with other migrant sending countries in North Africa, it has been successful in facilitating and channelling remittances through official channels (De Haas and Plug 2006). Since the late 1960s, the Moroccan state has encouraged the creation of a network of consulates, post offices and bank branches (in particular the *Banque Centrale Populaire*) abroad and throughout Morocco to facilitate the transfer of remittances (Belguendouz 2006, Lacroix 2005). Since the early 1980s, remittance transfer via banks has progressively replaced postal orders as the primary means of money transfer (Refass 1999:98).

In 1971 the Moroccan government had undertaken to maintain the parity of the Moroccan Dirham with the French Franc by adding three percent to all funds deposited by emigrants in Moroccan banks (Charef 1999). Although this soon became too costly the government continued to add a *prime de fidélité* to deposits made by emigrants that ranged from two and a half percent to as high as ten percent in response to even slight fluctuations in the amount of remittances transferred (Collyer 2004). Also the *prime de fidélité* became increasingly costly during the 1980s and in 1987 it was removed altogether, resulting in a significant fall in remittances in 1988 (Belguendouz 2006, Collyer 2004).

Nevertheless, the relatively stable macro-economic environment, comparatively low inflation and the absence of a large black market for foreign exchange contributed to the relative overall success of Morocco's remittance policies over the 1970s and 1980s. In neighbouring Algeria, for instance, most remittances were sent through unofficial "parallel"

channels as the official exchange rates do not reflect those on the black market (Mezdour 1993)⁵.

Notwithstanding some relapses, the total amount of officially registered remittances sent back steadily increased from \$23 million in 1968 to approximately \$2 billion in 1990. In 1991, the value of official remittances represented 84.5 percent of the total amount of foreign investments, development aid, and private loans received by the country (De Haas 2003).

Tight control: The Long Arm of King Hassan II

From the onset of large-scale emigration until the early 1990s, the Moroccan state has pursued policies in which it attempted to maintain a tight control on migrant communities in Europe by explicitly addressing migrants as its subjects and actively discouraging their integration and political participation in the receiving countries. Through a network of a control and spying networks consisting of Moroccan embassies, consulates, mosques, and government-controlled migrant associations such as the infamous *Fédération des Amicales des Marocains*, better known as "Amicales"⁶ (*Widadiat* in Arabic) all across north-western Europe (Belguendouz 2006, van Heelsum 2002),

Moroccan migrants were actively discouraged from establishing independent organizations, joining trade unions or political parties or voting during elections in the countries that the Moroccan and European states considered as their temporary residencies. The 'Amicales' were established by the Moroccan government in 1973 in the Netherlands, Belgium and France. These organisations were officially established to help Moroccans abroad to develop social and cultural activities, but they

⁵ Moroccan remittance figures included cash money taken to Morocco and converted into Dirham. In addition, migrants take many goods (e.g., electronics, household appliances, furniture, cars, car spare parts, clothes) to Morocco as gifts or as merchandise. It has been estimated that in Morocco transfers in kind represent one quarter to one third of official remittances (Refass 1999: 100-102).

⁶ The 'Amicales' were established by the Moroccan government in 1973 in the Netherlands, Belgium and France and in other European countries. Officially these organisations were meant to help Moroccan workers and traders abroad to develop social and cultural activities, but they revealed themselves as a control apparatus of the Moroccan government (Van Heelsum 2002).

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The postcolonial Moroccan state tried to prevent migrants from organizing themselves politically and, as such, from forming an opposition force from abroad. In particular after the failed coup d'états of 1971 and 1972, the state increasingly perceived emigrants as a potential left-wing security threat (Lacroix 2005:146). During the 1970s and 1980s, a period known as the 'years of lead' characterised by severe internal political oppression and wide scale violation of human rights, it was not unusual for left-wing political troublemakers who lived in Europe to be harassed while visiting family and friends in Morocco.

In some cases European states cooperated with the Moroccan state in controlling migrants. For instance, the French state denounced some trade union activists to the Moroccan secret service whose passports were subsequently confiscated during their holidays in Morocco (Lacroix 2005: 146-7). Political opponents living abroad were generally well-advised not to visit Morocco, while the Moroccan state used violence, or rather the (real or perceived) threat of it, against them and their family members living in Morocco as means to silence opponents.

Yet the proverbial long arm of Hassan II could not prevent political opponents who had fled to France, Belgium and the Netherlands from quickly re-organising themselves to form a political opposition from abroad. It was mainly through establishing trade unions for Moroccan migrant workers and affiliated left-wing organisations that this small minority of generally high-educated activists tried to mobilise the masses of Moroccan workers. Their relative success in defending Moroccan workers' rights in collaboration with established European trade unions stood in stark contrast with the non-interventionist attitude of the Moroccan state, which saw such political mobilisation as subversive and threatening (Belguendouz 2006).

In 1962, the *Association des Marocaines de France* (AMF) was created on the initiative of the left-wing leader Mehdi Ben Barka. The AMF was closely associated to the UNFP (Union Nationale des Forces Populaires), then Morocco's main socialist party and principal opponent of the monarch's power. In 1982, the *Association des Travailleurs*

Marocaines de France (ATMF) was established. This trade union for Moroccan migrant workers lacks a direct connection to a political party, but was clearly left-wing in orientation (Lacroix 2005). In the Netherlands, migrants established the KMAN (Committee of Moroccan Workers in the Netherlands) (van der Valk 1996), along with affiliated organisations such as the MVVN (the Moroccan Women Association in the Netherlands) and the UNEM (Union of Moroccan students) (van Heelsum 2002). While defending the rights of the often undocumented, poorly housed and exploited Moroccan workers in Europe, these unions worked in concert with the opposition forces in Morocco (van Heelsum 2002) to promote democratisation and counter the King's power (Lacroix 2005).

The oppressed Moroccan Berber (Amazigh) movement was also able to strengthen its position from abroad. The majority of Moroccan emigrants are Berber. Taking advantage of the freedom to organise themselves in Europe, Berber activists established associations that aimed at recognition of Berber culture and language by the 'Arab' Moroccan state. These associations often have international ramifications to pan-Berberist movements. In particular among second generation migrants, the Berber movement is rather politicised and sympathetic to the progressive and democratic movement in Morocco (Lacroix 2005, van Heelsum 2002).

Meanwhile, the Moroccan state continued to explicitly address all people of Moroccan descent as its subjects, and actively discouraged their integration and naturalisation in the receiving countries until the early 1990s (Obdeijn 1993). While politically active migrants attempted to import revolutionary forces from abroad, the Moroccan state tried to export its sovereignty abroad. The education offered to migrants' children in their own language and culture and sending Moroccan teachers and imams abroad was and is seen as an instrument to prevent integration and the feared alienation of the native country (Belguendouz 2006, De Haas 2005b). The mosques as well as Arabic language and Moroccan culture classes – integrated in schooling systems of most host states through bilateral agreements – also provided platforms to disseminate the Moroccan state ideology stressing the King's role as the uncontested

'Commander of the faithful' and emphasising the inalienability of the Moroccan identity⁷.

State-dominated discourses portrayed the acquisition of European citizenship as a form of betrayal towards the mother country. In the same vein, political participation was actively discouraged. So it was that former King Hassan II expressed his displeasure at the introduction of voting rights for foreigners in Dutch municipal elections in 1986 and he advised Moroccans against going to the polling stations (De Haas 2005b). In 1989, King Hassan II stated that he was opposed to the granting of the right to vote to immigrants in France, even at local level, emphasising "Morocco's fierce and persistent determination not to interfere in French internal affairs and not to fight the quarrels of the French". In his view, participation in elections in France was "in a sense, a betrayal of one's origins"⁸.

Such control and integration-discouraging policies served a double goal. First, the government wanted to prevent Moroccan migrants from organizing themselves politically, and thus from becoming a potential factor of political opposition "from outside". Second, and equally importantly, integration was perceived as endangering the vital remittance transfers (De Haas 2003). After all, remittances had become increasingly important taking into consideration the economic stagnation and growing unemployment of the 1970s and 1980s. The Moroccan state became increasingly dependent on remittances as a source of foreign currency to cover the country's growing trade deficit.

From controlling to courting the Diaspora: new institutions and symbolic policies

The expectation and fear of a future decline in remittances has long dominated Moroccan public debate. In the 1980s and early 1990s, it seemed that the great age of Moroccan emigration had ended, and that the ageing migrant population in northwestern Europe — most of whom

⁷ The Netherlands has refused to integrate Arabic languages and Moroccan culture classes in normal school hours (Belguendouz 2006), as this was seen as undesirable interference of a foreign state in the national curriculum

⁸ Interview with King Hassan II, *Nouvel Observateur*, 12-18 January 1989. Translated version quoted in Giubilaro 1997.

had reunified their families — represented a declining potential in terms of remittances. In particular, the socio-economic integration of the “second generation” has been predicted to almost inevitably lead to declining remittances (Fadlollah, Berrada, and Khachani 2000: 58, Mezdour 1993: 189). This was a frightening perspective considering the important role of remittances as a safety valve in maintaining Morocco’s economic and political stability.

In line with these expectations, an ominous stagnation in remittances occurred at around \$2 billion per year in the early 1990s. The fear of declining remittances prompted the Moroccan state to revise their attitude towards emigrants from a focus on controlling to what appears to be an active courting of Moroccan emigrants. This concurred with a process of general political change leading to an improvement of Morocco’s human rights record. This policy shift also coincided with a change in consciousness on the alleged “temporariness” of Moroccan emigration. Both Moroccan and European authorities not only realised but now also accepted the fact that the majority of migrants would stay and started to incorporate this in their policies. While European receiving states that embarked upon more active integration policies, the Moroccan state gradually shifted from a control-focused emigrant to a diaspora engagement policy.

From workers to residents abroad

In this context, the Moroccan integration-discouraging policies were increasingly criticized by European governments, which perceived them as running counter to their policies to integrate settled migrants in the receiving societies. More importantly, on the Moroccan side, there has been growing consciousness that the repressive policies of the past and the negative experiences with corrupt state officials while visiting Morocco had alienated the migrant population from Morocco’s state institutions rather than binding them closer to their home country (De Haas 2005b, Lacroix 2005). Years of repression and a climate of widespread suspicion, fear of infiltration and retribution tend to scared off Moroccan migrants from joining organisations (van Heelsum 2002), to set up enterprises in Morocco, to set up development projects in the region of origin, or,

indeed, to return. Growing awareness that these policies had been counterproductive is likely to have played an important role in the recent change in policies.

Subsequently, the Moroccan state changed course as of the early 1990s (Table 1). Along with the dismantling of part of the control apparatus in Europe and a decreased role of the *Amicales*⁹, this has meant a more positive attitude towards naturalization and dual citizenship. In this context, the new official term ‘Moroccans Resident Abroad’ (MRE) to designate migrants marked a significant change in orientation from the previous ‘Moroccan Workers Abroad’ (TME).

Table 1. Main post 1989 shifts in the Moroccan emigrant policies

<i>Until 1989</i>	<i>After 1989</i>
Moroccan Workers Abroad (TME, <i>Travailleurs Marocains à l'Étranger</i>)	Moroccans Residents Abroad (MRE, <i>Marocains Résident à l'Étranger</i>)
State repression	‘Courting the Diaspora’
Avoid naturalisation	Encourage double citizenship
Integration endangers link with Morocco	Integration favours remittances and investments
Migrants as a political threat	Migrants as a political tool

This marked a striking reversal of policy analysis, in which integration of migrants abroad was no longer necessarily seen as a danger, but as a potentially beneficial process that enables migrants to send more money home, to invest and to defend the interests of the Moroccan nation abroad. The Moroccan government therefore changed course through adopting a more positive attitude towards the economic and, albeit only to a limited extent, the social and cultural integration of Moroccans abroad.

⁹ In 1991, the Moroccan government publicly acknowledged that the control-focused, government-led *Amicales* associational infrastructure was “closed”, not effective and even counter-productive, and that migrants preferred to become active in independent associations. This process of discrediting culminated in 2005, when the Equity and Reconciliation Commission investigating Moroccan human rights even recommended to suspend their activities because of the role they had played in violating migrants’ rights (Belguendouz 2006: 9).

These new policies comprised both symbolic and concrete, institutional components. The symbolic shift has been remarkable. Instead of potentially subversive elements, migrants are now publicly celebrated in official discourses as national heroes furthering the cause of the Moroccan nation. While their integration is encouraged and successful Moroccans abroad (businesspeople, politicians, civil society activists, authors, artists) receive extensive coverage in the national media, their "Moroccanness" and loyalty to the fatherland is taken for granted. As we will further see, these positive attitudes towards integration and naturalization are emphatically framed within the context of *dual* citizenship, as is testified by official discourses emphasising Moroccan migrants' allegiance to the fatherland and systematic opposition against migrants relinquishing Moroccan citizenship. There has been a concomitant shift in official discourses which have increasingly characterised Moroccan communities abroad as a *Diaspora*, thereby simultaneously stressing the settled nature of these communities (a shift away from the guest-workers ideology) and the trans-national and trans-generational orientation of migrants towards Morocco.

New institutions and Opération Transit

The change in attitudes has also been visible at the institutional level. While the Moroccan state had kept a very low profile in defending the rights of Moroccans emigrants in Europe, this changed over the 1990s. An important step was the creation of a ministerial department for *Affaires de la Communauté Marocaine Résidant à l'Étranger* in 1990. The tasks of this Minister, who fell under the responsibility of the Prime Minister, included furthering of the interests of Moroccan emigrants living abroad, encouraging associational life and to participating in negotiations on bilateral and multilateral agreements concerning Moroccan migrants (Belguendouz 2006).

Yet in 1995 the Delegate Minister for Moroccans abroad was downgraded to the position of Junior Minister (*sous-secrétaire d'état*) within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1997 the competencies and tasks of the department were entirely integrated in the Ministry. Belguendouz (2006) argued that this restructuring occurred under pressure of the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which felt threatened by the creation of a separate body representing emigrants. Diplomatic authorities and various consuls felt embarrassed and threatened by the fact that this Ministry received complaints and petitions from migrants that questioned the (mediocre and bureaucratic) functioning and (authoritarian) behaviour of consular services.

More significant was the creation in 1995 of *Fondation Hassan II pour les Marocains Résidant à l'Étranger* by the Moroccan state. According to the accompanying law, the aim of the foundation, which is financed out of remittance revenues, is "to work for the preservation of fundamental links [Moroccan residents abroad] maintain with their fatherland and to help them to overcome difficulties that they encounter due to their emigration" (translated from Belguendouz 2006: 7). Facilitating the summer holiday return of Moroccan emigrants, managing the posting abroad of teachers in Arabic language and Moroccan culture are among the most important activities of the Hassan II Foundation. In 1997 the Foundation was restructured to include an observatory, that is, a research structure to monitor the situation of Moroccan migration and migrants abroad (Belguendouz 2006).

The flagship activity of the Hassan II Foundation has become the yearly *Opération Transit*, also known as the *Opération Marhaba* ('welcome' in Arabic), which aims to facilitate the massive yearly summer holiday return of Moroccan migrants. This was prompted by growing awareness that corruption and intimidating behaviour by border and police officials discouraged migrants to visit Morocco. Activities include the reduction of the long delays and harassment migrants used to experience at the borders in the sea ports of Tangiers and Sebta (Ceuta in Spanish) and, to a lesser extent, at the various airports, the simplification of luggage controls, and accelerating various administrative procedures. In particular since 1998, the Moroccan state has started to seriously clamp down on the corruption and abuse migrants suffered when they arrived at the Moroccan border. Since 2000, the *Fondation Mohammed V pour la Solidarité* has taken over the responsibility for the *Opération Transit*. Everything seems to be focused on allowing the annual summer vacation trip, which is known in Morocco as the 'transit' operation, to run as

smoothly as possible. And indeed, customs procedures seem to work more smoothly and are less corrupt than in the past, and the Moroccan and even Spanish, French and Italian motorways even have service centres specially fitted out the Fondation Mohammed V for Moroccan migrants-on-vacation on their way to and from their fatherland.

Customs officials have received instructions not to harass migrants and there are welcoming adverts on the radio and television. Instead of being treated as potential subversive elements, the Moroccan state does its best to show that migrants are welcome. Migrants who criticize the government are rarely bothered now when visiting. To symbolise the importance the Moroccan state attaches to maintaining links with Moroccan descendants abroad, the King occasionally goes to the port of Tangier, to personally welcome migrants arriving for holiday. Such measures to facilitate the massive holiday return of Moroccans alongside with serious measures to clamp down on inland harassment of tourists and migrants by so-called faux guides ('bogus guides'), corrupt policeman and gendarmes have made Morocco a more pleasant country to visit in general.

In the early 2000s the Moroccan state established Al Maghribia ("the Moroccan"), a public satellite channel with programs presented in Arabic, French, and Tamazight (Berber) dedicated to the Moroccan community residing abroad, with the objective of maintaining the link between Moroccans around the world. Since the end of the 1990s, Moroccan state and private television, which is watched by Moroccans throughout Europe via satellite, had regular broadcasts specially geared towards migrants abroad, portraying successful migrants and encouraging migrants to visit Morocco during the holiday season (De Haas 2003).

Figure 2. "Opération Marhaba" advert welcoming homecoming migrants

Sous la présidence effective de Sa Majesté le Roi Mohammed VI
La Fondation Mohammed V pour la Solidarité participe à l'opération **MARHABA 2004**

بالقرب منكم أكثر من أي وقت مضى
Vous n'avez jamais été aussi
proches de votre pays

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Almería-Tél. : 0034 636 420 391/0034 649 640 745	Sète-Tél. : 0033 666 719 831	Gênes-Tél. : 0039 34 75 05 49 36
Algésiras-Tél. : 0034 660 442 846/0034 660 441 694	Port Vendres-Tél. : 0033 666 719 831	Naples-Tél. : 0039 34 84 78 76 87

However, apart from *Opération Transit*, on the governmental level no coherent policies towards migrants had been developed around the turn of the century. The main character of the new policies towards emigrants remained symbolical and expressed at the level of official (royal) discourses. The practical neglect of the issue by mainstream political parties was presumably linked to the fact the emigrants do not vote or stand for election (Belguendouz 2006: 13). In 2002, finally, a Minister for Moroccans abroad was re-created, although still as part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and lacking an own budget or personnel. This led

Belguendouz (2006: 15) to comment that governmental policies towards emigrants tend to remain at the level of declarations of good intent rather than concrete action. There is still discontent on the lack functioning of Moroccan consulates in defending emigrants rights. In the same vein, other institutions such as the migration observatory of the Hassan II Foundation and another observatory within the Ministry of the Interior, the creation of which was announced in 2003, seem hardly functional (Belguendouz 2006: 16-20).

Voting rights and migrants' council

In the absence of vigorous governmental action, it has been the King who has pushed hardest for a more coherent and welcoming policy towards emigrants. In recent royal discourses, migrants are systematically celebrated, a marked contrast with past approaches. In recent years the King has particularly emphasised the need to improve the representation of migrants in the Moroccan political arena. In November 2005, King Mohammed VI announced that migrants including their descendants will obtain the right to vote and be elected in the *Chambre des Représentants* as well as the creation of a *Conseil Supérieur de la Communauté marocaine à l'étranger* (CDCME).

Voting rights for emigrants may sound superfluous taking into account that all Moroccan nationals, including emigrants, have the constitutional right to vote. In fact, emigrants did elect five special migrant representatives in the Moroccan House of Representatives during the 1984 elections, but this experience was suspended in 1993 (Belguendouz 2006: 27-28). Despite the recent announcement by the King, no concrete steps have been taken to practically enable emigrants to vote during the 2007 national elections. For unclear reasons, the idea of extending practical voting rights to emigrants seems to have been discarded for the time being. This might be partly related to the daunting practical problems this poses for Moroccan consulates as well as the fact that second and third generation Moroccan descendants are not enlisted in Moroccan voting registers.

Attempts to create the *Conseil Supérieur de la Communauté Marocaine à l'Etranger* (CDCME) have gained more momentum. The

Conseil Consultatif des Droits de l'Homme (CCDH), a consultative council created in 1994 to advise the King on human rights issues plays an increasingly important role in this process. A special commission on the human rights of emigrants had already been created within the CCDH in 2003, comprising (appointed) representatives from emigrant communities (Belguendouz 2006). In November 2006, King Mohammed VI formally requested the CCDH to initiate extensive consultations in preparation of the creation of the emigrant council in 2007, which should serve

as an effective institution that enables our expatriate community to contribute to Morocco's current development efforts in all fields. Indeed, Moroccans living abroad have shown deep attachment to their identity as well as strong commitment to their country's progress. They have also been defending Morocco's unity and taking an active part in promoting democracy and development in their homeland. (Royal Discourse 6 November 2006).

Although it remains to be seen to what extent the future emigrant council will be able to meet these expectations, the CCDH has taken remarkably quick and apparently effective action, by setting up a quadrilingual (Arabic, French, Spanish and English) website on the activities of its Moroccan migrations working programme (www.ccdh.org.ma/migration). A special working group was set up in November 2006 and among its expert members are several former exiles and opponents to the monarchy as well as publicly critical scholars¹⁰. The working group has organised several seminars and seems serious in its intention to consult the wide array of Moroccan expatriates and their associations. This is a remarkable change with the past, in which civic activism was seen as a potential act of subversive behaviour.

¹⁰ Among the experts are also former exiles such as Abdou Menebhi, former chair of the left-wing and anti-monarchist KMAN (Committee of Moroccan Workers in the Netherlands): Beyuki Abdelhamid (who fled to Spain in 1984 after being condemned to thirty years in jail for political activity and founded the Spanish association of Moroccan workers (Briscoe 2004); and Mbarek Boudarka (formerly condemned to death in absentia and member of the Equity and Reconciliation Commission). Among the scholars is Abdelkrim Belguendouz, known for his critical stance toward Moroccan migration policies.

New economic policies

On the economic side, Morocco's already successful policies to facilitate remittances through a network of post offices and, increasingly, banks have been continued, and extended by new monetary policies since the end of the 1980s, involving the lifting of restrictions on exchange and on the repatriation of money (Giubilaro 1997: 30). Since 1995, migrants have been allowed to open foreign exchange banking accounts with Moroccan banks (Fellat 1996: 316), which have established an increasing number of foreign offices in European cities with sizeable Moroccan communities. Remittance transfers have further been encouraged through fiscal policies favouring migrants (Refass 1999: 98). Moreover, currency devaluations have increased the value of remittances and encouraged migrants to remit money (Giubilaro 1997: 30). The number of Moroccan banking accounts held by migrants have increased at an average annual rate of 10 percent between 1996 and 2006, and emigrants held no less than 35 percent of all current accounts in 2005 (Libération, 10 April 2007).

Remittance transfers were also facilitated because of the rapid spread of financial services. Besides the expanding bank sector, the rapid extension of money transfer offices (MTOs) such as Western Union have further facilitated remittances. In particular Western Union has developed into a major, new channel of remittance transfers since its arrival in Morocco in 1995. Its services are on offer in more than 700 post offices throughout the country, even in the smallest countryside towns. Despite the relatively high costs, the high speed and reliability of the transfer has made this service widely popular. In 2003, Western Union started a large-scale publicity campaign among Moroccan migrants in Europe. Especially for undocumented migrants and (often female) Moroccans without banking accounts, this service can be an attractive alternative to bank transfers and informal remittance channels (De Haas and Plug 2006).

Under the new policies, migrants are increasingly being seen as a vital element linking Moroccan with European business communities. Consequently, migrants were officially no longer approached as passive remittance milch cows or inert remittance senders that should be kept quiet, but increasingly as potential businessmen who should be convinced to invest in Morocco. The state has become more aware of the need to

reduce obstacles to investments, whether by nonmigrants or migrants, such as the complexity of regulations, problems of corruption, and excessive red tape (Kaioua 1999:124-5).

In 1989 the Banque Al Amal was created particularly with the aim of helping to finance emigrants' projects (Belguendouz 2006, Collyer 2004, Leichtman 2002). In 2002 King Mohammed VI announced a series of policy measures aimed at easing administrative procedures for obtaining business permits, in particular through the creation of so-called "guichets uniques" (De Haas 2003). He also announced to create a network of regional investment centres to assist entrepreneurs in creating and running enterprises. Yet these policies seem to have had little measurable success in the absence of a structural improvement in investment conditions.

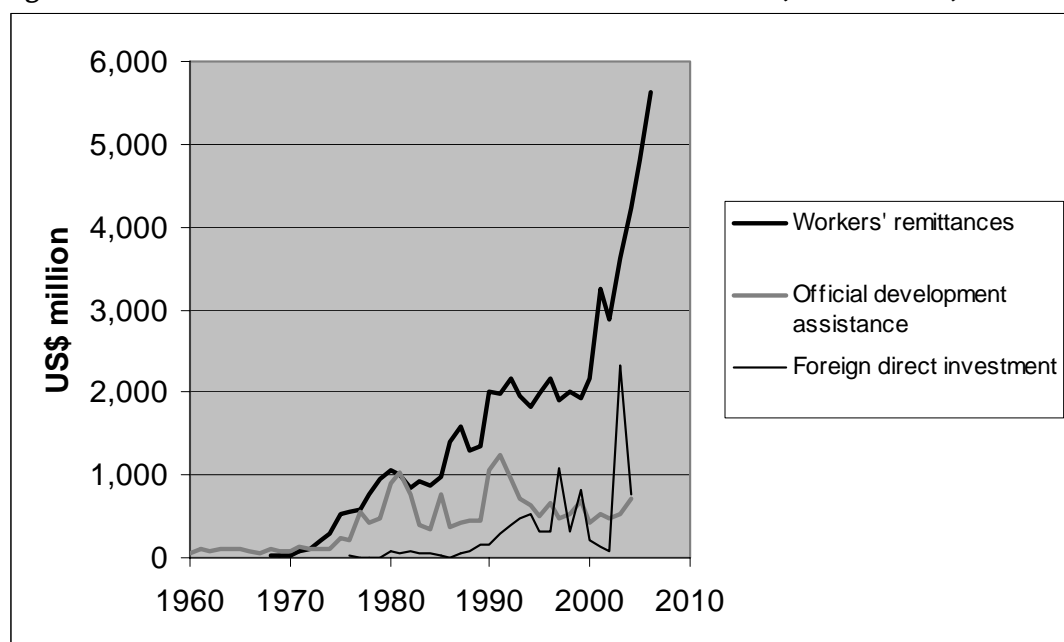
Surging remittances and holiday visits: A decisive success?

Considering the huge increases in remittances and holiday visits by migrants, the new diaspora policies seem to have been successful. After an ominous stagnation in remittances during the 1990s, Morocco has been particularly successful in channelling more and more remittances through official channels. In 2001, a spectacular increase in remittances occurred to \$3.3 billion from \$ 2.2 in 2000. This increase can partly be attributed to the so-called "Euro effect", concomitant money laundering, and, perhaps, the effect of 9/11 (De Haas and Plug 2006). However, after a minor relapse in 2002, remittances have shown a continuing steep upward trend in subsequent years, to reach an unprecedented level of \$4.2 billion in 2004 and an estimated \$5.6 billion in 2006 (source: World Development Indicators database).

Morocco stands prominent among remittances receiving countries, and according to recent World Bank estimates it was the developing world's fifth remittance receiver in absolute terms after India, China, Mexico and the Philippines in 2005. From the perspective of the Moroccan state, migrants are to be considered as a major "export product". Remittances have become a strategic and relatively stable source of foreign exchange and have become vital in sustaining Morocco's balance of payments. Over the past two decades the value of remittances has not

only proved to be substantially higher and less volatile than other international resource flows such as official development assistance (ODA) and official aid and foreign direct investment (FDI), but its relative importance as a foreign exchange resource has only increased due to a significant decrease or stagnation in other capital flows over the 1990s and early 2000s (De Haas and Plug 2006, Giubilaro 1997).

Figure 3. Remittance, ODA, and FDI flows to Morocco (1960-2006)



Source: Office des Changes Maroc, World Bank Development Indicators

Between 2001 and 2006, official remittances only represented 7.4 percent of the gross national product (GNP), and 59 of Morocco's trade deficit (Libération, 10 April 2007). Officially registered remittances only by far exceed the value of direct foreign investments, which are also much more unstable. Until 2005, they also exceeded the receipts from tourism. The revenues of remittances dwarf those of phosphates, Morocco's main primary export commodity.

The increase in remittance is partly linked to another apparent success of Morocco's new diaspora policies, that is, the enormous increase in the number of Moroccans returning during the summer holidays. A survey conducted in 1975-1976 indicated that about 64 percent of

international migrants visit Morocco each year (Berrada 1990). More than two decades later, this situation has not changed much. According to a recent survey, three quarters of the international migrants have visited Morocco at least once in the past two years (Fadloulah, Berrada, and Khachani 2000). This is somehow surprising in the light of previous expectations that ties to Morocco would gradually weaken with migrants' settlement.

The transit operation has gained truly massive proportions over recent years, alongside with a steady increase in tourists visiting Morocco. In one decade, the number of migrants visiting Morocco has increased by 2.6 times. Between 15 June and 15 August 1993, 848,000 people and 159,000 cars entered the northern harbours of Ceuta, Tangiers, and Melillia (López García 1994). This excludes arrivals by airplane. In 2003, Moroccan government sources claim that over 2.2 million migrants and 580,000 cars have crossed the Strait of Gibraltar between 15 June and 15 September¹¹. In 2006, the total number of holiday visits by migrants and their descendants has increased to about 3 million (*Libération*, 10 April 2007).

This spectacular surge in holiday visits, which can be partly attributed to persistent emigration (in particular to Italy and nearby Spain) in combination with Morocco's new *Marhaba* policies, has certainly contributed to an equally impressive surge in remittance receipts, in particular because Moroccan remittance data include cash money brought to Morocco converted into local currency at local banks. Moreover, increasing holiday visits are also likely to maintain transnational family links, with equally positive effects on remittance transfers.

Diaspora policies as part of general change

The recent surge in remittances and holiday visits suggest that Morocco's diaspora engagement and remittance policies have been highly successful. However, this phenomenon should at least partly be explained by the remarkable persistence of Moroccan emigration to Europe over the past

¹¹ Source: La Ministre Déléguée chargée de la communauté marocaine résidant à l'étranger / Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et de la Coopération; <http://www.marocainsdumonde.gov.ma>, Accessed 9 May 2006.

two decades. Secondly, Morocco's *specific* diaspora engagement and remittances policies could only be partially successful because they were an integral part of more *general* political and economic reforms, which have (1) increased civil liberties, (2) boosted tourism and (3) solidified Morocco's macro-economic stability.

Increased civil liberties and women's rights

In the post-Cold War context, Morocco came under increased international pressure to reduce human right violations, in particular from its main allies France and the United States who, in the postcolonial and Cold War context, often used to turn a blind eye on such practices and perhaps also supported them. Over the 1990s, Morocco's human rights record came under intensified scrutiny by the international community. After decades of repression, then King Hassan II took a series of steps that were critical in creating a climate of greater freedom in Morocco. These reforms substantially increased freedom of expression, the freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and association.

In the same period, the fear of a socialist or communist overturn from abroad gradually faded. After the general amnesty proclaimed in 1994 (Belguendouz 2006:4), exiled leftist opponents were allowed to come back, culminating in the 1998 political *Alternance*, in which Abderrahmane Youssoufi, a former leader of the radical left exiled in France since 1965, took office as the new socialist prime minister. In many ways, it was through welcoming and incorporating the critical voices of the diasporas that this process of political change was given shape.

This process was consolidated and accelerated after the death of Hassan II and the accession to the throne of Mohammed VI in 1999. After the death of Hassan II in 1999, the new King Mohammed VI continued these reforms. Especially in the early 2000s, the human rights situation improved. Political prisoners were released, the islamist leader Abdeslam Yassine house arrest was lifted in 2000, even the most controversial political exiles like Abraham Serfaty were allowed to return in the same year.

Since 1993, limited though increasing cultural rights have been granted to Morocco's sizeable Amazigh (Berber) population, culminating in

the establishment of the IRCAM (Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture) in 2001. In 2004, the new *Moudawana*, Morocco's Civil Status Code, was adopted, which substantially increased women's rights, raising the minimum age of marriage to 18, introducing divorce by mutual consent and significantly curtailing men's to repudiate their wife as well as polygamy.

The Moroccan government also announced to clarify the fate of the "disappeared" victims of political oppression and to compensate their families through setting up the Arbitration Commission on Compensation in 1999. In 2003, the Equity and Reconciliation Commission was established to look into disappearances and arbitrary detention in previous decades. The ensuing public hearings of victims of past repression were an unprecedented phenomenon in the North African and Middle Eastern context. Nevertheless, openness on this issue has only been partial, and there is no official intention to identify or prosecute officials responsible for torture and disappearances. The fate of hundreds of people who disappeared between the 1960s and early 1990s remained unclarified (de Haas and Hoebink 2005).

While the fear a left-wing overturn faded, in particular after the onset of the civil war in neighbouring Algeria in 1991, the rising Islamist movement both within Morocco and in the Diaspora was now perceived as the main threat to the established political order. In some cases, this has taken a radical and violent form of attacks perpetrated by Moroccans in and outside Morocco.

The main perceived threat to the political establishment is now the political Islam, which in some cases has taken radical and violent forms, to begin with in Morocco, and which has possibly resulted in a certain backlash in civil liberties. After the bomb attacks in Casablanca on 16 May 2003, the authorities intensified their clampdown on alleged Islamist activists, passing a new antiterrorist law on 28 May. The law, which contained a broad and unspecific definition of terrorism, extended the legal limits for pre-arraignment detention and restricted suspects' access to legal counsel (Amnesty International, Annual report 2004).

Since the 1990s, also Moroccans descendants living in Europe have been increasingly active in radical-islamist movements, and, in some

cases, radical jihadist movements. For instance, most perpetrators of the train attacks of 11 March 2004 in Madrid were Moroccans, and the murderer of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh in November 2004 was a radical Islamist Dutchman of second generation Moroccan descent. The main difference with the organised left-wing movement is that violent political Islam forms an *underground* movement which, in particular in the post 9/11 era, is also perceived as a threat to stability and security by European states. In fact, (Moroccan) emigration has been increasingly linked to the issue of security. In contrast, the former left-wing opposition exiled in Europe was basically free and even encouraged to organise itself openly.

It is important to stress the partial nature of recent reforms as well as the fact that Morocco has remained a largely autocratic society. On the other hand, it is important to recognise the real changes that have taken place. Although the King has not given up any of its essential constitutional powers, and although it is debatable to what extent any real democratisation has occurred at all (Willis 2002), there has been an unprecedented and uncontested increase in civil liberties over the past 15 years. This has significantly reinforced Moroccan civil society.

The more liberal attitude of the state towards Moroccan citizenship in general has also positively affected the position of Moroccan migrants. Recent general political reform has also had positive effects on migrants' position and involvement in Moroccan affairs. The general liberalisation has also radically expanded migrants' freedom to establish organisations such as Berber, 'home region' and aid associations (De Haas 2003, Lacroix 2005). In southwest Morocco, for instance, *Migrations et Développement*, a transnational development association created by Moroccan migrants in France, has acquired a significant role in the development of rural infrastructure, and is even consulted by the state (Lacroix 2005). Also the new Civil Status Code (*Moudawana*) has a potentially positive influence on the position of female migrants. For instance, the restriction it imposes upon repudiation means that female married migrants need to have less fear of being repudiated and left alone during summer holidays, as has frequently happened in the past.

Equally within the context of recent liberalisation, politically critical migrants are hardly ever bothered anymore when visiting Morocco. In contrast, the Moroccan government has pursued the *opposite* strategy of not silencing but co-opting activist and critical migrants into its effort to boost the development potential of migration. The success of this new strategy is exemplified by presence of several former exiles in the newly appointed Moroccan migrations working group within the Conseil Consultatif des Droits de l'Homme (CCDH).

Migrants as tourists

In the same vein, the *Opération Transit* and the associated surge in holiday visits should be seen as an integral part of a more general process of political reform and a general clampdown on corruption and the worst excesses of human rights violations. Widespread corruption and abuse by police and gendarmerie, although far from eradicated, at least became debatable for the first time after decades of public denial and tacit tolerance of such practices by the Moroccan state. More civil liberties and improved treatment of Moroccans by the state has also created room for better treatment of migrants.

The *Opération Transit* should also be seen as an integral part of a strong government-led campaign to boost tourism to Morocco. This effort has led to a smoothing of custom procedures, more active combating of corruption by border officials and police as well as a general crackdown on the activities of so-called *faux guides* (bogus guides), hustlers preying upon visitors at border posts and in most towns, which gave Morocco a particularly bad reputation as a country to visit. These changes have led to a widely recognised reduction in harassment of visitors.

The official target of the government's "2010 Vision" is to reach 10 million tourist visitors in 2010, up from 4.4 million in 2001¹². A telling development in this context is the increasing blurring of the distinction between tourists and migrants-on-holiday. Although tourism receipts (from non-Moroccan visitors) and cash remittances (brought back by migrants-on-holiday) are still administered separately, migrants have

¹² Source : <http://www.tourisme.gov.ma> (accessed 27 April 2007).

become an integral part of Morocco's tourist policies in recent years. Migrants are increasingly considered as tourists, who should subsequently be welcomed accordingly. This coincided with a significant shift in official discourse of the Moroccan Ministry of Tourism, which in 2003 suddenly started addressing visiting migrants as TMRE (Moroccan Tourists Résident à l'Étranger) instead of MRE (Moroccan Residents Abroad). The *Office National Marocain du Tourisme* (ONMT) launched a programme to promote tourism to Morocco by TMREs.

Migrants have now been integrated in tourism statistics (Belguendouz 2006: 33-34). This shift is also related to changing patterns of holiday making of migrants, which start to resemble more those of foreign tourists. Whereas migrants used to stay in the inland villages and towns of origin, younger migrants and the second generation tend to travel much more inside Morocco and spend period in Morocco's coastal resorts. The TMRE represented half of all 6 million tourists visiting Morocco in 2006¹³. In addition, they tend to spend several weeks in Morocco against only six days on average for foreign tourists (Libération, 10 April 2007).

Remittances and macro-economic policies

Also the remarkable increase in remittances cannot exclusively or not even mainly be attributed to the shift in Morocco's specific policies to stimulate remittances or court the diaspora, but rather to a combination of factors of a more general nature. Yet a recent analysis of the destination-country specific evolution of remittance flows to Morocco (de Haas and Plug 2006) indicated that the structural solidity of remittances should primarily be explained by other factors than specific remittance policies.

First, there has been an unforeseen persistence of family and labour migration from Morocco to north-western Europe after the 1973 Oil Crisis. Second, new and increasingly large-scale massive "primary" labour migration occurred towards the new destination countries Spain, Italy, and to a lesser extent the UK and the US over the past two decades.

¹³ Source: <http://www.bladi.net/12127-tourisme-mre-maroc.html> (accessed 13 June 2007)

Through successive legalisation campaigns, new, rapidly growing migrant communities have been established in Spain and Italy which are likely to significantly increase in the coming decade through continuing labour migration, family reunification and family formation. In Spain and Italy, large-scale migrant amnesties have recently been implemented. Remittance have been particularly been soaring from these countries. Remittances from the non-Eurozone countries UK, Sweden and also the US have also spectacularly increased in recent years.

Second, the durability of transnational links between Morocco and the settled migrant communities in northwest Europe have proven to be strong and intergenerational. This is not only testified by the high incidence of family formation through new marriages, but also through a remarkably persistent inclination to remit money. Although it might be true that second and third generations are less inclined to remit, integration does not automatically imply less involvement in the country of origin.

The classical integration model does not seem to be valid anymore, since migrants increasingly foster transnational identities and dual loyalties (de Haas 2005a, Vertovec 2004). Therefore, the presumed decline in fatherland involvement only occurs slowly, if it occurs at all, and is at least partly counterbalanced by the arrival of new immigrants from Morocco, through which family links are continuously renewed. This explains why the expectation that most family ties would be cut after one or two generations, which was based on the classical integration model (immigration – adjustment – integration – assimilation) has generally not come true. Indeed, the Moroccan media and politicians tend to celebrate persistent and increasing remittances as the proof of the eternal link between the Moroccan Diaspora and their fatherland.

Third, Moroccan policies to attract remittances through the new fiscal and monetary policies favouring migrants, and a government-encouraged expansion of Moroccan banks branches in Europe, the lifting of restrictions on foreign exchange also have played a role in increasing remittances. It is also likely that the advent of services like Western Union have siphoned off part of the informal transfers. Part of the recent surge

in officially registered remittances may thus merely reflect a shift from informal to formal channels (Kapur 2003: 11).

In general, it is unlikely that Moroccan migrants would massively remit money through official channels without the stable macro-economic environment, a reliable banking system and the absence of large black markets for foreign exchange. Another general trend which created the context prompting the Moroccan government to change course towards Moroccan descendants living abroad was the general neoliberal turn in domestic economic policies, which implied an increasing deregulation and opening up of the Moroccan economy. These new macro-economic policies not only expanded the room for entrepreneurs, but also went along with high hopes being put on Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) as a tool for national economic development. This also led to a renewed hope in the positive role migrants may potentially play in remitting money and encouraging investment. This also exemplifies that the line between remittances and Foreign Direct Investment can be a rather blurred one.

Institutional development obstacles

The remarkable shift towards Moroccan 'Diaspora engagement policies' cannot be understood without taking into consideration political and economic trends and reforms occurring in the late 1980s and 1990s. These general changes also created the necessary room for changes in specific policies towards emigrants. Recent political and economic reforms of a general nature have made Morocco a more attractive country to live in, to invest and to visit for tourists and migrants alike. Without this general process of change, it is unlikely that specific diaspora engagement could have been successful. In fact, several of these policies, such as the creation of a special Ministry for emigrants, the Al Amal investment bank or the introduction of voting rights for emigrants have either not materialised or have partly or completely failed (cf. Belguendouz 2006). This makes it even more likely that *general* changes have in fact been much more important.

While the Morocco policies to increase remittance and direct them through formal channels have arguably been a success, certainly in comparison with other north-African countries, it is less certain and

perhaps still too early to judge whether the attempts to promote Morocco as a fertile ground for investments targeted at the migrant Diaspora have been successful. On the one hand, in contrast to previous pessimism on development impacts of migration, there is now general consensus that remittances do contribute to income growth. Although the direct contribution of migration and remittances to poverty alleviation is limited, its total direct and indirect benefits are significant (Schiff 1994). It has been estimated that, without remittances, the percentage of the Moroccan population living below the poverty line would increase from 19.0 to 23.2 percent (Teto 2001)¹⁴,.

Empirical evidence suggests that migration and remittances have considerably improved living conditions, income, education and spurred economic activity in migrant sending regions through agricultural, real estate and limited business investment. Even consumptive expenditure and investments in housing (often dismissed as “non-productive” or conspicuous) tend to have positive multiplier and employment creating effects, from which also non-migrants indirectly profit to some extent. This has transformed migrant-sending regions such as the Rif, Sous and several southern oases into relatively prosperous regions that now even attract internal “reverse” migrants (De Haas 2007a).

However, it has also become clear that the developmental *potential* of migration is not fully realized due to a generally unfavourable investment climate through lacking infrastructure, corruption, bureaucracy and a perceived lack of legal security (De Haas 2007a). Despite the level of remittances, and although there has been diversification of economic activities of migrants beyond housing (Khachani 1998), relatively few

¹⁴ In urban environments, this increase would be from 12.0 to 16.6 percent, and in rural environments from 27.2 to 31.0 percent (Teto 2001). The actual contribution of migration to poverty alleviation is probably higher, as only international remittances transferred via official channels are included in such estimates. In regions with high migration participation rates, the contribution to poverty alleviation can be far higher than these overall figures indicate. On the basis of a World Bank study on Morocco (Report 11918-MORC, 1994), Schiff (1994: 15) stressed that because most Moroccan migrants do not belong to the group below the poverty line, remittances benefit relatively non-poor households rather than the poorest. This explains why the direct contribution of remittances to poverty alleviation is relatively limited. However, the indirect contribution of remittances to poverty alleviation might be higher through income multiplier effects of remittance-driven consumption and investment.

migrants seem inclined to have the financial capacity to start large-scale enterprises in Morocco.

The Al Amal emigrant investment bank created in 1989 has not fulfilled its promises, and has in fact also attributed a very small amount of loans to migrants (Belguendouz 2006: 10-11). However, this is unlikely to be the *cause* of the relatively low level of investments by emigrants. Neither the creation of special investment banks, nor the creation of regional investment centres to assist migrant investors nor publicity campaigns aimed at image building are likely to be successful unless general investment conditions improve. Again, *specific* migration and development policies are unlikely to succeed if they are not accompanied by *general* political and economic reform.

From hard to soft control

Loyalty to the King and Nation

While following a far more liberal approach than before, the Moroccan state has moved from hard to soft control; and tries to strike a delicate balance between courting and controlling the expanding Moroccan Diaspora. However, the unchanged bottom line remains that Moroccan citizens abroad *and* their descendants (now also in female line) are ultimately subjects of the King, the constitutional commander of all Moroccan faithful. No one seems to be in a better position to summarise the essence of the new Diaspora engagement policies of the Moroccan state than King Mohammed VI himself, who confirmed in his royal speech of 30 July 2002 that

We should not abstain to express all the joy and pride that is bestowed upon Us by the attachment of our Faithful subjects living abroad to their fatherland. We are rejoiced by their indefectible adherence to the bonds of the eternal "bei'a" [oath of allegiance to the King], and to their authentic civilising identity, as we rejoice ourselves by their concern to maintain their strong attachment to their families in Morocco. We assure them of Our new esteem for

their efficient contribution to the effort of economic development, and the international brilliance of Morocco.

We confirm Our strong will to guarantee that they will keep the place that they deserve and that they play an active and efficient role in all domains of national life.

The relationship between the Moroccan state and Moroccan migrants is also revealed by the paradoxical fact that the recent positive policy shifts were only possible through general policy reforms unilaterally decided upon by the King, the fact that the idea of extending voting rights has apparently been discarded without debate in parliament, and the fact that the future *Conseil Supérieur de la Communauté marocaine à l'étranger* (CDCME) will contain members nominated by the King "known for their remarkable implication in the defence of the rights of Moroccan immigrants and the superior interests of the state" as well as "representatives of the authorities" (Royal Discourse, 6 November 2005). A draft of the law establishing the CDCME which was leaked in 2006 confirmed that the Council will probably consist of permanent members representing governmental and non-governmental institutions dealing with migrant affairs, elected members as well as members appointed by the King (Belguendouz 2006: 41-42).

The main shift after 1990 has been a growing awareness withing the Moroccan state apparatus that migrants' social and economic integration in destination countries does not have to undermine their contribution to Morocco's development. Through a process of learning-by-doing, it has realised that efforts to counter migrants' integration abroad are rather counter productive. There has been an interesting reversal of perspectives and policy analysis. Economic and political integration is now considered to be a desirable development, because correctly positioned migrants can play a key role in attracting investments and stimulating trade. More prosperous and 'integrated' migrants are also in a better position to send larger sums of money to family and friends in Morocco. This reflects a shift in thinking in which the development contribution of migrants is not forcibly linked to return migration, as it has become

increasingly clear that transnationally oriented and integrated migrants are perfectly able to engage with their origin countries without necessarily returning.

Political participation of Moroccan descendants abroad is now encouraged instead of discouraged, because they can contribute to a more positive image of Moroccans abroad and is seen as potentially furthering Morocco's international interests. This shows that politically mobilised emigrants are increasingly considered as a potential political instrument rather than a threat.

A recent example of this were the protests held by Moroccan emigrants in 2005 calling for the release of the Moroccan prisoners of war who had been detained in Tindouf in southwest Algeria for almost 20 years by Polisario, the rebel movement working for the separation of the Western Sahara from Morocco (Jeune Afrique, 28 August 2005). In May 2005, Moroccan emigrants in the United Kingdom organised a sit-in in London (Arabic News, 18 May 2005). This was followed by similar protests in June and July by Moroccan emigrants in Germany, Italy, Spain and the US, calling for the release of the prisoners but also to denounce Algeria's and Polisario's position and to support the Moroccanity of the internationally disputed territory of the Western Sahara. A sit-in in Washington also urged the international community to "include the Polisario separatist movement among terrorist organisations" (Arabic News, 27 and 30 June 2005).

Although it is difficult to prove, these protests may have contributed to the increasing pressure put on Polisario and Algeria by humanitarian organisations such as Amnesty International and politicians such as US senator and former POW John McCain. In particular under pressure of the US government, in August 2006 Polisario decided to released all remaining (404) prisoners of war (BBC New, 18 August 2005). Although it is difficult to establish the extent to which these protests have triggered this release, they exemplify how Moroccan state increasingly sees emigrants a vital elements in defending "our vital national causes and first and foremost the territorial integrity¹⁵" (excerpt from strategic

¹⁵ "Territorial integrity" is the term used in official discourses to refer to Morocco's claim that the Western Sahara is integral part of its national territory.

note of the Delegate Minister for the Moroccan Community Abroad, 13 March 2003, quoted in Belguendouz 2006: 43).

Maintaining control

Despite the remarkable shift in policies and the *tone* with which it addresses emigrants, the Moroccan state has not given up a number of policy instruments allowing to binding migrants to the Moroccan state and to continue exerting a certain level of control. This is not only evident in Morocco's persistent policy to send imams and Moroccan culture and Arabic language teachers abroad, but also in Morocco's systematic opposition against Moroccan descendants in Europe relinquishing Moroccan citizenship.

While the Moroccan state now favours the naturalisation of Moroccans abroad as a way of facilitating the integration and rooting of Moroccan communities in Europe while simultaneously allowing their free circulation, Moroccan citizenship is constitutionally inalienable. This means that Moroccans obtaining citizenship of their country of settlement cannot relinquish their Moroccan nationality, so that they automatically acquire double citizenship. Furthermore, the Moroccan state considers each child with at least one Moroccan parent as Moroccan. In order to stress their "Marocanité", all migrants including their descendants—whether first, second or third generation—are officially called MRE: *Marocains Résidant à l'Étranger* (Moroccan Residents Abroad) and, hence, subjects of the King. In this context, recent plans for a change in legislation allowing women to pass on Moroccan citizenship to their children, can also be seen as an intended or unintended way to 'Moroccanise' the children of mixed unions as much as possible.

This policy is mainly enforced through Morocco's National Identity Card system. Moroccan migrants visiting Morocco are required to show their Moroccan *Carte d'Identité Nationale*, even when holding a European or another foreign passport. To obtain and renew such cards, Moroccans living abroad are obliged to visit and register with a Moroccan consulate. In this way, the Moroccan state can keep rather excellent track of "its" subjects living abroad. Moroccans are also expected to register their newborn children at Moroccan consulates. A related tool is the

requirement of Moroccan descendants to give their children (mostly Arabic) names which are officially recognised as 'Moroccan' – children with Christian and other 'inappropriate' (such as many Berber) names will not be included in their parents' identity and travel documents. Holding double citizenship also implies that while visiting Morocco, migrants are not fully protected by the host countries' embassies, which *de facto* maintains a level of dependency on the Moroccan state.

Conflicting sovereignty claims?

Such policies can be interpreted as attempts of the Moroccan state to export its sovereignty and national ideology abroad in order to foster links with migrant communities. At several occasions, this has created conflicts with politicians and governments of host societies. Sending Moroccan teachers abroad for classes in Arabic language and Moroccan culture has been seen by certain European politicians as an obstacle to integration, and remains controversial. Also Morocco's opposition to migrants including their descendants relinquishing Moroccan citizenship is seen by some European politicians and governments as running counter their integration policies.

Tensions on such issues have been particularly high with the Dutch government. Besides refusing to incorporate Moroccan-paid teachers into its national education system, it refused to institutionalise its relations with the Moroccan religious authorities by allowing in Imams sent and paid by the Moroccan government. This was seen as an unwanted interference of the Moroccan state in Dutch internal affairs. In its turn, the Moroccan state has argued that policies like sending state-approved Imams abroad helps to prevent religious radicalisation of Moroccan youth, and that the Dutch refusal to allow this on grounds of unwanted interference in internal affairs was therefore counterproductive (Azough 2004)

In 2004, the Dutch government decided to abolish 'own language and culture' classes in 2004. In 2004, the Dutch Minister for Integration and Immigration requested the Moroccan ambassador in the Netherlands to stop the practice of automatically granting Moroccan citizenship to Moroccan descendants. This was part of her efforts to abolish double

citizenship as a means to further migrants' integration. The Moroccan authorities refused this request, which they perceived as unwanted interferences in Morocco's internal affairs.

In 2005, the Dutch government officially requested the Moroccan state to enable renouncing Moroccan citizenship as of the third generation, a request which was also refused (Belguendouz 2006: 35). In 2006, right-wing MPs publicly questioned the national loyalty of Khadija Arib, a Dutch Labour Party MP who is also one of the two Dutch-Moroccan members of the migration working group of the CCDH. They argued that membership of this working group, who advises the Moroccan King, is incompatible with her membership of the Dutch parliament because of conflicting loyalties and that she therefore had to choose. In Belgium, Fatiha Saidi, an MP for the Socialist Party declined an invitation to become member of the CCDH migration working group because she did not want to work for institutions belonging to two different states (El Ayoubi and den Boer 2007). While revealing a growing gap between official policies and the *de facto* transnational nature of the life and activities of many migrants, such examples also highlight the potentially conflicting nature of sovereignty claims made by the Moroccan and European states.

Figure 4. Cartoon on Moroccan website www.bladi.net (text on banner: "Welcome to our dear ones: Moroccans Rich in Euros")



Source: <http://www.bladi.net/12127-tourisme-mre-maroc.html>
(retrieved 13 June 2007)

Conclusion

Through striking a careful balance between courting and controlling its expatriate populations, Morocco might be developing towards what Bhagwati (2003: 101) has referred to as the Diaspora model, which "integrates past and present citizens into a web of rights and obligations in the extended community defined with the home country as the centre".

Surging remittances and the spectacular increases in the number of migrants visiting Morocco seem to indicate that the recent shift of the state from repressive to more "forthcoming" policies towards Moroccan descendants living abroad through symbolic policies as well as extending rights to them has been relatively successful. However, a closer look reveals that these successes are primarily related to persistent out-migration and *general* processes of political and economic change, from which *also* migrants have benefited.

The successful Moroccan policies have primarily boiled down to openly or tacitly encouraging migration. The main instrument for securing remittances has been securing continued migration. Although the labour-

exporting policies of the 1960s and 1970s have been abandoned and lip service might be paid to migration restrictionist aims of European countries, the Moroccan state has little genuine interest in reduced emigration while European employers are in need of cheap Moroccan labour. In the meantime, migration continues and it is unlikely that governments are genuinely willing or able to stop this movement.

From the Moroccan perspective, its emigration policies have been extremely successful. Morocco has probably secured remittance for the coming decade(s) through a diversification of migration destinations. New migrant communities have been established in Spain, Italy and North America over the 1990s, which are likely to significantly increase in the coming decade through continuing labour migration, family reunification and family formation.

Successful policies specifically targeted at migrants would have been unlikely to succeed if they were not accompanied or part of a *general* form of change. The most successful example of targeted policies has probably been to facilitate remittances through encouraging the establishing of bank branches throughout Europe and various fiscal facilities favouring migrants. However, these targeted policies could never have been a success without a stable macro-economic environment, a well developed bank system, low inflation and the absence of a large black market for foreign currency.

Another successful example of targeted policies seems to be the yearly *transit operation*. The easing up of customs procedures and decreasing harassment of migrants-on-holiday by border officials and gendarmes. Nevertheless, even this recent charm offensive towards migrants was only possible in the context of a *general* process of general political change in Morocco, substantially increasing civil liberties including more freedom of expression and to establish associations. The easing of customs procedures can not be disentangled from parallel policies to boost tourism. Likewise, recent reforms in the personal status law improving the protection of women's rights inside marriage are part of a more general reform package.

The interesting question here is whether the fear of a future remittance decline has played a role in accelerating such reforms.

Although much of this change has also been driven by internal and international forces of a more general nature, and although it is difficult to disentangle causes and effects, we can hypothesize that the presence of an expanding Moroccan Diaspora has at least played an accelerating role in this process. The Moroccan state can no longer afford to address migrants, who have become more and more vocal, well-educated and aware, as passive and indolent remittance senders. Their political and economic importance has simply become too great. This exemplifies that the impact of migration goes beyond way beyond direct economic effects. Migrant communities also are an increasingly powerful “latent pressure group” on which governments increasingly depend for their survival, inciting governments to implement general reforms.

However, it would also be naïve to assume that the recent charm offensive of the Moroccan state and real but still limited political-economic reform has all of the sudden restored the deeply rooted distrust among Moroccans (migrants and nonmigrants alike) in the Moroccan state.

For instance, granting voting rights to migrants is unlikely to have a significant impact unless the recent process of liberalisation is continued and a genuine democratisation takes place, so that Moroccan citizens (again migrants and nonmigrants alike) are offered a real say in domestic political affairs.

In the same vein, an unattractive investment climate, legal insecurity and a general lack of trust in the state cannot be compensated by public relation campaigns to convince migrants to invest. The state’s general position that migrants should be informed and guided on productive investment opportunities reveals a patronising attitude and a deeply rooted convictions that migrants do not take rational decisions, and reveals a failure to understand the structural constraints that explain their hesistance to invest and/or return.

Policies that try to enhance the development impacts of migration by specifically targeting migrants seem to have limited effects as long as they do not alter the general social, economic and political environment. Recent reforms have been primarily symbolical and, although they resulted in a better treatment of migrants-on-holiday and contributed to surging remittances, they still conceal a lack of structural change.

Symbolic politics will not convince migrants to invest as long as the general investment climate in Morocco is rather unattractive due to failing legal systems, deficient credit markets, legal insecurity, corruption and excessive bureaucracy. This is exemplified by low levels of FDI, sluggish and erratic economic growth and a deficient education system. These structural problems are unlikely to be solved by specific policies targeting migrants.

However, what we know from the literature is that if development in origin countries takes a positive turn through structural institutional reform and sustained economic growth starts to take off, migrants are likely to be among the first to join in and recognise such new opportunities and, and reinforce these positive trends through investing, circulating and returning to their origin countries. This has happened in the past decades with several former emigration countries as diverse as Spain, Taiwan and South Korea, and might currently be happening in a country like Turkey.

Although significant progress has been made in making Morocco a much more attractive country to live in and visit, and although more migrants seem to be involved in Morocco's social, economic and political development, significant progress needs to be made in order to massively attract migrant investors. Only if general development conditions further improve and trust in the state is further restored, is it likely migrants will massively invest in and return to Morocco. This only seems possible through a sustained and fundamental reform of Morocco's political economy and a further liberalization of the state's attitudes towards migrants-as-citizens.

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