

Moroccan Diaspora politics since the 1960s

LITERATURE REVIEW

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October 12, 2020

DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.4080855](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4080855)

ERC AdG PRIME Youth

ISLAM-OPHOB-ISM

785934



Istanbul
Bilgi University

Preface

This literature review was prepared in the scope of the ongoing EU-funded research for the “PRIME Youth” project conducted under the supervision of the Principle Investigator, Prof. Dr. Ayhan Kaya, and funded by the European Research Council with the Agreement Number 785934.

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Introduction

Because of its proximity to Europe, Morocco has always been an important immigration hub either as a country of emigrants or a country of transit. The first institutional involvement in emigration happened during the protectorate when France needed soldiers and workers. Later other European countries signed agreements with Morocco for the recruitment of a cheap workforce. It was only in the 1970s and, most notably in the 1980s, when Moroccan laborers and students became politically active in France that the state wanted to establish institutions and initiate policies to regulate more than just the economic aspects of migration (Brand, 2006). Thus, emigration was first considered economic and temporary. It concerned mainly the movement of workers to Europe. Discourses and policies started to be formed with the intensification and diversification of Moroccan emigration and the increasing awareness of the importance of remittances for the local economy in the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. The development of a strategic vision in the 2000s, which was more elaborate and exhaustive, with legal and financial means, came to strengthen diaspora economic, religious, and cultural links with their home country. Both the discourses and policies on emigration shifted to reflect a more positive attitude towards emigrants, their integration in the receiving country, and their participation in their home country's modernization process.

Three trends usually describe this shift in the attitude towards emigration. The first trend happened soon after the independence of Morocco and lasted until 1989. During this trend, emigrants were referred to as Moroccan Workers Abroad (*Travailleurs Marocains à l'Étranger*, TME). They were discouraged from integrating into their guest countries, as it would endanger the flow of remittances. They were also perceived as a political threat to national stability, which explains the repressive diaspora policies. During the second trend, between 1990 and 2000, emigrants were referred to as Moroccans Residents Abroad (*Marocains Résidant à l'Étranger*, MRE). It was a phase during which the state started 'courting' the diaspora being aware that their integration would favor remittances and investments. Since 2000, diaspora policies have emphasized the importance of strengthening diaspora links with their home country and the importance of granting emigrants and their descendants civil and political rights.

The nature of the relationship between the Moroccan state and Moroccan emigrants has evolved mainly following the intensification of migration flow from Morocco to Europe and following the

increasing focus of academic and policy research into migration flows, their nature, and movements and impacts. This intensification has also influenced the way the Moroccan state thinks of migration and elaborates its migration policies. Thus, this relationship has changed from 'controlling' to 'courting' (de Haas, 2005) or as other researchers note the state's perception of emigrants changed "from being expendable, minimally endowed subjects, to a valuable resource that generates additional scarce resources" (Brand, 2006, p. 69). The diversity with which the state approaches and elaborates migration policies is a part of the Moroccan strategy to ensure excellent relations with its European neighbors, which translates into cooperation to regulate and control migration flows (Sadiqi, 2004).

This paper would like to examine how Moroccan state politics towards its diaspora formed, initiated, and evolved as well as how the discourse shifted from considering emigrants as a source of remittances to full citizens. Thus, the analysis of diaspora politics will tackle state diaspora discourses, policies, practices, and the establishment of liaison institutions. In their broader perspectives, these policies refer to economic, social, cultural, legal, and political systems as well as practices that the home state deliberates towards its community abroad (Brand, 2002). To do so, this paper will be divided into three parts: the first part will deal with the first phase of emigration from the 1960s to the 1990s while the second part will tackle the second phase between the 1990s and the 2000s, and finally the last part will focus on the third phase of emigration since the 2000s.

The objective is to examine how the Moroccan state tries to engage emigrants in national life. Thus, this paper would like to examine the evolution of the state's discourse towards emigration and how this shift in the official discourse has influenced diaspora policies since the 1960s. It also would like to explore how the state had tried to engage these emigrants in national life.

1. The first phase: Moroccan state as a mere sender and 'controller' of temporary labor emigrants

Following the high demand for labor force to work in factories and mines, Morocco ratified bilateral agreements, specifically with France in 1963, Germany in 1963, Belgium in 1964, and the Netherlands in 1969 (Drhimeur, 2020). As a result, qualified and semi-qualified Moroccan workers moved to Europe via formal and informal networks. Most of these workers came from the Berber regions of Morocco, known for being rebellious. The Moroccan state's perception and promotion of emigration obeyed an economic logic as it meant reducing local unemployment and attracting remittances. They also obeyed a security logic allowing to 'eliminate' any element that would present a threat to the regime's stability (Drhimeur, 2020). This emigration was thought to be temporary, and Moroccan Workers Abroad were expected to return home. This explains why the state has sought to establish 'surveillance apparatuses' in the receiving countries to monitor them being afraid that these workers, and later on students and political refugees, would bring any ideologies or forms of mobilization not tolerated at home.

State discourse represents emigration as economic and temporary

In the 1965-1967 Three-Year Plan¹, emigration was first seen as an important tool to calm down rebellious tendencies, participate in the economic development through remittances but also participate in the general development and modernization of the country since these emigrants, who acquire knowledge and experience abroad, were expected to return home and share their expertise (de Haas, 2005). However, this 'optimism' soon faded away, and the educational argument was eliminated in the governmental perception of migration in the 1968-1972 Plan (de Haas, 2007)². In this new governmental economic plan, the emphasis was made on the economic dimension (Collyer, 2013). References described it as a temporary phenomenon to send a greater number of labor emigrants to Europe and reduce unemployment (Brand, 2002). More emphasis was placed on the economic dimension of emigration following an increase in unemployment and a deficit in the balance of payment (de Haas, 2007). Remittances were not only considered as an economic safety valve that would reduce unemployment and poverty, they were also considered as "a political safety valve" that would reduce political and social discontent (de Haas, 2014). Economic crises, regional discriminations, and political discontents resulted in the rise of insurrections in different regions of Morocco, mainly among the Berber speaking population in the Rif region (de Haas, 2007). Promoting emigration from this region was perceived by the central state to get rid of political tensions (Ibid).

The state was mainly a sender of contractual workers expected to return home once their contract expired. In the 1960s, they were sent to work in factories and mines and were referred to as 'Moroccan Workers Abroad' (*Travailleurs Marocains à l'Etranger*, TME) (Collyer, 2013a). Starting in the 1970s, Moroccan emigrants were labeled 'Moroccan Workers and Business Travellers' (*Travailleurs et Commerçants Marocains* (TCM)) (Ibid). Thus the objective was mainly focused on 'economic gains', on the possibility of reducing unemployment in the sending country, which Benkirane called "a mercantile and rentier vision of an emigration" (Benkirane, 2010, p. 4), where "the worker at home was a potential commodity and the expatriate a source of income" (Brand, 2002, p. 7). Even if the 1973-77 Plan³ proposed measures to develop emigration-related services in Morocco, establish a network of social attachés abroad, create an Emigration Fund to help emigrants with settling abroad, and reinforcing social actions through the organization of social and cultural activities for these emigrants. However, there was no change in how the state viewed emigrants as *devisard*, as a hard-currency earning individual (Brand, 2006).

¹ See <http://www.abhatoo.net.ma/maalama-textuelle/developpement-economique-et-social/developpement-economique/planification/plan-de-developpement/plan-triennal-1965-1967> entry date 2 September 2020.

² See <http://www.abhatoo.net.ma/maalama-textuelle/developpement-economique-et-social/developpement-economique/planification/plan-de-developpement/plan-quinquennal-1968-1972-volume-i> entry date 2 September 2020.

³ See <http://www.abhatoo.net.ma/maalama-archives/archives-textuelles1/developpement-economique-et-social/developpement-economique/planification/plan-de-developpement/plan-quinquennal-1973-1977-situation-comptable> entry date 2 September 2020.

When these workers came back home during the holidays, they were often victims of corrupt civil servants and policemen who saw them as wealthy emigrants and demanded their “toll fee” for granting them documents or other services (de Haas, 2007). This created a sense of being unwelcomed in their home country, of being “unprotected” and perceived in terms of what their wallets contained (Ibid, p. 3).

The establishment of Moroccan associations abroad was presented as a way to facilitate the lives of emigrants abroad (Benkirane, 2010). However, they were suspected of wanting to politically control and monitor the Moroccan community in Europe, pushing some scholars to describe this period as being “marked by an exclusive logic of political control and even repression” (Ibid). These associations’ were a clear indication that the Moroccan state viewed emigrants as more than just commodities, but also as “extensions” of the Moroccan population who needed to be monitored for security reasons (Brand, 2002). Thus, during this first phase, emigration was seen both as a political and economic instrument.

Diaspora policies were meant to be controlling

During the first phase, Morocco ratified bilateral agreements with France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium, among others. It established overseas bank subsidiaries and took economic and financial measures to increase the formal flows of remittances. It also sought to establish associations in Europe that would help with the daily lives of Moroccan emigrants. These associations also served to monitor the Moroccan diaspora as tensions rose in Morocco.

The bilateral agreements

In 1956, when the newly independent Moroccan state was formed, not much attention was given to emigration policies since the whole emigration phenomenon was considered temporary. The soldiers and workers sent to Europe were expected to return home after a while (Collyer, 2013). With the increase in demand for labor in Europe, various agreements were signed with European countries, including France, Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands during the 1960s, thus representing the first signs of the Moroccan state’s real involvement in the planning and management of emigration (Drhimeur, 2020). These emigrants were considered ‘guest workers’, and these contracts were meant to “formalize and secure these interests” (Brand, 2002). Four ministries were involved in the selection process: the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of the Interior, responsible for providing passports and necessary documents, the Ministry of Health, in charge of medical examination, and finally, the Ministry of Labor that included the Office for Emigration at that time (Belguendouz, 2006). In short, it was the Ministry of Labor the official and main office to address the question of emigration. This bureau had two objectives. The first was to centralize labor requests from foreign countries and suggest recruitment zones, and the second was to supervise the selection process according to professional and health criteria (Brand, 2006). The bureau was also in charge of ensuring that labor conventions ratified by Morocco were respected (Ibid). These agreements concerned mainly the selection and recruitment of workers. To control Moroccan emigrants’ movements, recruiters were directed towards the country’s most rebellious regions where passport issuance policies were also very selective (de Haas, 2007).

The agreements did not include the social and cultural needs of emigrants or their integration or education (Benkirane, 2010). Europe sought cheap workforce, while Morocco was mainly interested in increasing the number of migrant workers and so negotiating a number of their rights was not on the agenda (Belguendouz, 2006). Emigrant engagement in national life bore an economic logic. One can read in the 1963 national economic plan that:

The extension of emigration [...] will have three main effects: it will allow an increase in the inflow of foreign currency which will partly finance internal investments, the employment of a part of our population which cannot be absorbed within our borders without an increase in the workforce in unproductive sectors, the constitution of a larger group of nationals who acquired professional qualifications and favorable attitudes towards entrepreneurship and economic development abroad (Division de la coordination économique et du plan, 1968, p. 93).

It was the engagement of Moroccan workers within trade unions and the struggles of those working at Pennaroya, Renault, and Câbles de Lyon, for example, that enabled these workers to obtain some economic rights (Belguendouz, 2006). It was also foreign associations and support organizations established by migrants that fought for these rights (Brand, 2006). Some of these associations were used as mediators between the European governments and Moroccan laborers (Ibid). For a very long time Moroccan diplomacy was mainly concerned with “the utilitarian and functional aspect of emigration”, and even turned a blind eye to racism and violence Moroccan emigrants were victim of (Ibid). These agreements’ ratification signaled a turning point in Morocco diaspora policies, a departure from the “haphazard” approach the country adopted since independence to a state-managed labor export approach (Iskander, 2010).

Economic and financial measures

During the early years of emigration, Morocco did not establish a system to facilitate the transfer of remittances (Brand, 2006). Emigrants were expected to send money via the post or to bring it back with them when visiting or returning home once their contract expired (Ibid). In 1968, the state entrusted the *Banque Centrale Populaire* (BCP) with the organization and regulation of this transfer (Ibid). Since then Morocco has initiated policies to increase remittances transfer, including establishing a network of overseas bank offices, consulates, and post offices (de Haas, 2005). The BCP created in 1961, is one of the major banks in Morocco. It soon established branches in Europe, especially in France, Germany, England, Canada, Spain, Netherlands, and Belgium.⁴ It helped Moroccan emigrants to open bank accounts in Morocco (Iskander, 2010). Most of these emigrants could not read or write or speak any European language. The bank employees accompanied them to the post office and helped them fill in forms to send cash transfers back to their home country (Ibid). Employees also helped them with other administrative tasks and sometimes became friends (Ibid). In 1971, the Moroccan government decided to offer a *prime de*

⁴ See BCP, <https://www.groupebcp.com/fr/Pages/home.aspx> entry date 2 October 2020.

fidélité, ranging from two and a half percent to ten percent of every emigrant fund deposited in a Moroccan bank to maintain the local currency parity with European currencies (de Haas, 2007). The scheme was abandoned in 1987 as it became too costly for the government (Ibid).

In the 1980s, remittance transfers via bank accounts became the first means of money transfer and replaced postal orders (de Haas, 2005). Iskander (2010) views this period as a tentative of the Moroccan government to “reach out” to its diaspora. Owing to this initiative, remittances to Morocco rose (Berriane and Aderghal, 2011), and the bank managed to control 98 percent of all remittances sent to Morocco (Charef, 1999). While emigrants benefited from administrative help, the bank grew to be one of the most important banks in Morocco (Collyer, 2013).

That said, Morocco had initiated policies with receiving states to promote investment programs, return migration, and the participation of returning emigrants in the development process. However, these policies failed mainly because of a discouraging investment environment and general distrust in government agencies among emigrants (de Haas, 2007). Studies have also indicated that emigrants were more interested in investing in housing construction and consumption than in productive enterprises, agriculture, or industry (Ibid). Researchers concluded that instead of participating in the country’s general development and modernization, emigration contributed to the “development of underdevelopment” (Ibid, p. 15). Policies then focused more on stimulating remittances than stimulating investment as an instrument to promote development. In their turn, studies on the participation of remittances in the local economy have indicated a lack of a coherent strategy that would facilitate the use of this capital for economic development purposes. Their impact remains limited as they fail to create jobs or set up businesses (Lamchichi, 1999). Studies have also indicated that investments serve the already industrialized regions of Morocco and not the original regions of emigration (ibid).

Economically speaking, Morocco grew dependent on remittances. During the 1980s, Morocco entered an economic crisis that pushed the country to consider a strategy to stimulate the flow of emigrant remittances and savings (Brand, 2002). Morocco removed restrictions on exchange and repatriation of money (de Haas, 2005); exchange controls were relaxed, and emigrants were allowed to open bank accounts in convertible Moroccan dirhams (Brand, 2002). The establishment of overseas bank offices helped to reduce transfer rates, and after the crisis of 2009, Moroccans living abroad could benefit from cost-free transfers for six months (Bilgili and Weyel, 2013). The fiscal measures that favor emigrants and devaluating the local currency to increase the value of foreign currency enabled a steady increase in the flow of remittances (de Haas, 2014). In 1989, *Al Amal Bank* was established to help co-finance emigrants’ investment projects in their home country by providing loans with low-interest rates (de Haas, 2005). The government did not conduct any economic or technical studies before launching the bank that was entrusted with directing investments mainly towards industry, commerce, and tourism (Belguendouz, 2006). The bank failed to attract projects as it lacked a clear vision and strategy, the main structures that would enable it to function as a financial bank and a real network of branches established abroad or in the main Moroccan regions of emigration (Ibid)

The “Amicales” of workers and merchants

Moroccan Ministry of Interior, Moroccan embassies, consulates, mosques, and other state-created offices have attempted to create a strong network to maintain strict and tight control on Moroccan migrant communities in Europe (de Haas, 2005). To discourage their integration and naturalization, teachers and imams were sent to provide Arabic language and religious classes to remind them of their origins and prevent any assimilation efforts (de Haas, 2014). The “*Amicales*” of workers and merchants was established to serve this purpose (Benkirane, 2010). These associations were created with the help of large businesses in Morocco and were managed by figures close to the regime (Brand, 2002). The “*Amicales*” were presented as an initiative to help Moroccan emigrants in Europe organize their lives. They were created in 1973 in Belgium, France, and the Netherlands (de Haas, 2007).

The increase in the number of emigrants during the 1970s coincided with the national context of repression and human rights abuses. The Moroccans who left because they faced harsh repression in Morocco, remained active mainly through student associations and labor unions in Europe (Brand, 2006). Thus, in turn, emigrants were suspected of being involved in opposition activism. To “control” and manage this diaspora, the Moroccan state needed to have access to these groups, and many students became informants. They had to provide information on students abroad in exchange for passports and other services (Ibid). To further control Moroccans abroad, the state used the Amicales for “the role of coercive administrative auxiliary and the right arm of the Moroccan security system” (Benkirane, 2010, p. 4). The security logic having quickly taken priority, they functioned as instruments of the Moroccan consulates to supervise, recruit and monitor the emigrants, preventing them even from participating in workers’ demands to protect their rights or to be treated equally as the natives” (Benkirane, 2010, p. 4). Discouraging emigrants from creating their own independent associations or any other form of organization or from joining existing ones in the receiving countries including political parties and trade unions reflected a state fear that these emigrants would organize themselves into “political opposition “from outside” and that their integration would result into a decrease in remittances (de Haas, 2005). The Moroccan state perceived emigrants’ participation in trade unions or strikes as treason (Sahraoui, 2015).

Diaspora politics reflected domestic politics characterized by what is referred to as the Years of Lead, of continuous state violence and oppression against political activists and dissident voices (Mohsen-Finan, 2007). These emigrants were considered as a threat to national security, especially because leftist political refugees in Europe started organizing into activist movements (Lacroix, 2005). It was feared that the organization of emigrants into unions in Europe would result in support for the left-wing opposition back in Morocco (Collyer, 2013), or that these expatriates would return with “ideologies and forms of activism that were not tolerated at home” (Brand, 2002, p. 9). In fact, these emigrants often faced difficulties returning to Morocco, such as being denounced by the Moroccan consulates in Europe or by members of the Amicales (Brand, 2002). Leaders of such associations worked for the Moroccan intelligence services providing the names of activists who were then harassed or detained once they arrive in Morocco (Sahraoui,

2015). Repression took the form of harassment, detention, and confiscation of passports in Morocco or pressure on European employers to make them redundant (Sahraoui, 2015).

Integration in the host countries was also discouraged by the regime, fearing that integration would both sensitize emigrants about political questions and organizations and might reduce remittances flows on which the country became economically dependent (de Haas and Plug, 2006). Emigrants were also prevented from participating in local political life (de Haas, 2007). King Hassan II often expressed his idea that acquiring European citizenship formed a kind of betrayal to Morocco (Ibid). He opposed granting Moroccan emigrants abroad the right to vote in local elections and advised them against going to the polls (Ibid). Speaking on the introduction of voting rights for Moroccans in France, King Hassan II emphasized “Morocco’s fierce and persistent determination not to interfere in French internal affairs and not to fight the quarrels of the French” stating that participating in local political life was “in a sense, a betrayal of one’s origins” (Cited in de Haas, 2007, p. 20).

Political rights

In a surprise decision, king Hassan II announced in 1984 that emigrants would be able to participate in the elections of September of the same year and have the right to representation within the national parliament (Collyer, 2013). Five electoral constituencies were created abroad. The first in Paris, the second included the rest of France, the third was in Brussels, the fourth included Spain, Italy, Portugal, Great Britain, North America (the United States of America and Canada), South America, Africa, except North African countries, and finally the fifth included Tunisia, Libya, Algeria, Mauritania, Sudan, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Syria (Belguendouz, 2006). Participating in local elections was an opportunity for emigrants to sensitize various Moroccan organizations to their cause, participate in national debate, and put pressure to have a single interlocutor, which would later develop into the *Ministère chargé des marocains résidant à l'étranger* (Ministry in charge of Moroccans residing abroad) (Ibid). However, the division in electoral constituencies did not allow emigrant representatives to establish close ties with their electorate, nor to have the adequate means to effectively defend the interests of such a diverse population (Ibid). The process was criticized for lacking transparency since the *Amicales* were involved, and in 1993 the process was abolished (Ibid).

ELCO: the teaching of Arabic and Moroccan culture

Morocco signed a cultural agreement with France in 1983, the Netherlands the same year, with Belgium in 1986, and Germany in 1991. These agreements concerned the teaching of Arabic and Moroccan culture (*Enseignement de Langue et Culture*, ELCO) to the descendants of Moroccan emigrants (Belguendouz, 2006). Because emigration was initially thought to be temporary, these programs were meant to facilitate the reintegration of Moroccan emigrants once they returned home (Berriane, 2018). However, once emigration started to be perceived as a permanent phenomenon, ELCO became important for constructing a Moroccan identity abroad as well as strengthening and consolidating emigrants’ ‘ties with their home country (Ibid). For European countries, the consolidation of these ties was deemed necessary to facilitate their integration in the host countries. These programs could help children “develop self-awareness”, improve their

relationships with their families, and help their parents with their integration project (Ibid, p. 134). Nowadays these programs employ 576 teachers and reach some 70,000 beneficiaries per year (Ibid). They offer face-to-face teaching, e-learning, and cultural trips. A study carried out by the *Conseil Supérieur de l'Education, de la Formation et de la Recherche Scientifique* (Higher Council for Education, Training, and Research) and *Fondation Hassan II* (Hassan II Foundation) in 2017 showed that ELCO has helped to preserve emigrants and their descendants' cultural identity and ties with their home country. The study also indicated that to improve the quality of teaching, especially classical Arabic, there is a need for educational innovation and optimizing human and financial resources (Ibid).

The *Ministère de l'Education Nationale* (Ministry of National Education) is in charge of the program. However, the *Ministère des Affaires Etrangères*, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and *Fondation Hassan II*, which ensure the administrative follow-up of Moroccan teachers, do not coordinate with the Ministry of National Education, which partially explains why the programs were inadequate and the follow-up insufficient (Belguendouz, 2006).

2. The second phase: The 1990s or when emigration became permanent and policies symbolic

During the second phase, in the 1990s, emigration intensified to take different forms, including family reunification, emigration of women and children, and students (Drhimeur, 2020). Despite the host countries' restrictive immigration policies, Moroccans' movement to Europe continued to persevere (Drhimeur, 2020). In Morocco, access to passports has become liberalized as the state continued to promote emigration since it has remained an important source of hard currency and fund transfers (Drhimeur, 2020). However, it has become difficult for the state to control emigrants' flow. The state had to change its discourse and adapt its strategies. In turn, emigrants were not referred to as 'guest workers' but as Moroccans Residing Abroad. Morocco acknowledged that emigration is permanent and that Moroccans' settlement in the receiving countries is permanent. As a consequence, the state had to consider its relationship with its diaspora and think of ways to engage them. State discourse started promoting the successful integration of emigrants abroad while highlighting the importance of strengthening their economic, cultural, and social links with their home country. This shift in state discourse was followed by new diaspora institutional arrangements, programs, and policies to help Moroccan emigrants with their integration in the economic, social, cultural, and political spheres of their receiving countries and engaging them in national economic and social activities.

The state discourse recognizes emigration as a permanent phenomenon:

The discourse on emigrants was frequently linked to the understanding and significance of what being Moroccan means. In his speech in 1990, late king Hassan II pronounced a "paternalistic" perception of Moroccan emigrants in which he made it clear that emigrations' relationship with Morocco is about their relationship with him:

Since we are linked by the act of allegiance to Our subjects living overseas in the same way as to their brothers living in Morocco We feel a religious, moral and paternal responsibility towards them. Our subjects living overseas deserve much greater attention than their co-citizens living in Morocco, whose needs are examined morning and night. We charge you with the needs of these sons, who are Ours [...] The objective of this task is to ensure the connections and the act of allegiance (Ministère de l'Information, 1990).

Thus, emigrants are presented as the subjects of his majesty who deserves greater attention to “ensure the act of allegiance”. Moroccan emigrants are addressed as subjects, and their nationality is inalienable (de Haas, 2005). Moroccans abroad cannot relinquish their Moroccan nationality even if they acquire the citizenship of their host country (Ibid). Hassan II opposed any form of integration in the host country, stating that

They will never be integrated. (...). I discourage you, in relation to my people, the Moroccans, to try an embezzlement of their nationality because they will never be a 100% French” because integration into French society means for him a threat that would diminish their “marocanité (Cited in Sahraoui, 2015, p. 4).

Once Morocco and the European receiving countries became aware of the permanent nature of Moroccan emigration came the need to change the terminology used to characterize Moroccans living abroad, especially when they started asking for visibility within the European public life (Sahraoui, 2015). In France, for example, they organized themselves into the ‘*Marche des Beurs*’ from Marseille to Paris and called to be recognized as French citizens of North African descent in the 1980s, denounced racism and police brutality (Ibid). The terminology shifted from ‘Moroccan Workers Abroad’ to ‘Moroccan Nationals Abroad’ (*Ressortissants Marocains à l'Etranger*)” and ‘Moroccan Residents Abroad’ (*Marocains Résidents à l'étranger*). However, the term *Marocains Résident à l'Etranger* (Moroccan Residents Abroad) is thus used to emphasize the “Marocanité” of Moroccan emigrants and their descendants (de Haas, 2005). It was also an indication that the “relation of filiation” between the Moroccan state and its diaspora can never be “broken” (Gouirir, 2018). The emigrants and their descendants thus remain subjects of his majesty, their Moroccan nationality is their first nationality, and Sunni Islam is their religion (Ibid). The establishment of liaison institutions bore securitized dimensions, as they should be able to guarantee emigrants’ allegiance to Morocco, and in the King’s perception, allegiance to himself. The educational programs offered to emigrants’ children language, cultural and religious classes that served to export Moroccan sovereignty abroad, and diffuse the state ideology in which the King is the ‘Commander of the faithful’ (de Haas, 2007).

The terminology also shifted when remittances stagnated in the early-1990s, and the state started recognizing the importance of adopting a more positive discourse and attitude towards emigrants. *Ressortissants Marocains à l'Etranger* (Moroccans Residing Abroad, MRE) has become the most widely-used term to refer to Moroccan emigrants by state institutions. Other terms are also used. For example, ‘Moroccans of the World’ (*Marocains du Monde*, MDM) used by the Ministry in charge of relations with emigrants or ‘Moroccan Citizens Abroad’ (*Citoyens Marocains à l'Etranger*, CME)

by some Moroccan emigrants themselves to reinforce their claim to political rights (Charchira, 2008). It was a shift that acknowledged emigration as a permanent phenomenon and that most of these emigrants would not probably return home (Collyer, 2013). The state started then ‘courting’ the diaspora instead of patronizing them (de Haas, 2005). A new strategy was adopted to stimulate remittance transfers and investments, including targeted campaigns in the receiving countries and the establishment of new liaison institutions (Ibid). This happened within a general change in the country’s macro-economic policies that emphasized the importance of remittances and emigrants’ investments to promote national development (de Haas and Plug, 2006). Emigrants are no more addressed as “indolent remittance senders,” but as potential investors who should be ‘courted’ (Ibid, p. 11).

Diaspora policies were meant to be symbolic

With the increase and diversification of Moroccan emigration, the Moroccan state tried to institute a national strategy that included different mechanisms and institutional structures to manage emigration. Following the decrease in remittances in 1987 (Collyer, 2013), King Hassan II decided to create *Ministère chargé des marocains résidant à l'étranger* (Ministry in charge of the Moroccan community abroad). He established *Fondation Hassan II* (Hassan II Foundation for Moroccans Living Abroad) to help finance diaspora investments in their home countries (Benkirane, 2010). A new strategy emerged that allowed for Arabic and religious teaching to the children of emigrants born in Europe (Collyer, 2013). These policies started to address emigrants’ cultural, social, and educational concerns. They were implemented during a period that witnessed a “general process of liberalization” that increased freedom of speech and association, allowing emigrants to create transnational cultural organizations and aid associations (de Haas, 2005).

Ministère chargé des marocains résidant à l'étranger

Creating a ministry in charge of Moroccans living abroad was a clear indication that the Moroccan government became aware of the complexity of the issues emigrants face (Brand, 2002). Their issues are complex and include legal, educational, personal, and investment projects, among others (Ibid). These issues need to be rationalized in one efficient Ministry (Brand, 2002). It is also an indication that the Moroccan state would like to be more involved in defending emigrants’ rights (de Haas, 2007). The causes and objectives of the decision were stated in a royal speech on March 3, 1990:

When we were in La Baule, we met the representatives of the Moroccan settlement who asked us to set up a cell or a government body that would be responsible for their problems beyond employment. Given that the problem of our Moroccan settlement has no connection with the Ministry of Employment, that we are bound by the act of allegiance of our subjects abroad in the same way as their brothers in Morocco, that we have a paternal, religious and moral responsibility towards them (...) We will take care of the interests of these sons who are ours (...). The objective of the mission is to safeguard the bonds and the act of allegiance (...) (*Ministère de l'Information*, 1990)

Thus the new delegate Minister, under the responsibility of the Prime Minister, was in charge of promoting the interests of Moroccan emigrants, including negotiating bilateral agreements to ensure their legal protection and help with associational life abroad (de Haas, 2007). The department is also responsible for protecting Moroccan emigrants' moral and material interests, providing economic, social, cultural, and educational programs and facilitating their reintegration once they return home (Brand, 2002). However, the department was abolished in 1997, unable to survive frequent ministerial changes, four different governments within four years (Belguendouz, 2009/2), and victim of cutbacks in the ministerial and institutional budget (Brand, 2002). It was "incorporated" into the *Ministère des Affaires Etrangères* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) (de Haas, 2005). However, the creation of a ministry in charge of Moroccans living abroad enabled to build trust with Moroccan emigrants because it showed them that the Moroccan state cared about them when organizing field visits, opening communication channels, creating a dialogue especially with the second generation and also putting into place socio-educational, socio-cultural and socio-religious programs (Belguendouz, 2006).

Fondation Hassan II

Fondation Hassan II (Hassan II Foundation) was established by a royal decree on July 13, 1990 (Law no. 19-89, 1990). It is a "non-profit institution with a social vocation, endowed with a moral personality and financial autonomy" in charge of the protection and promotion of Moroccan emigrants abroad as it works "to maintain the fundamental ties they have with their homeland and to help them overcome the difficulties they encounter in their emigration." (Law no. 19-89, 1990). The establishment of the Foundation was mainly explained by a need to preserve the cultural and religious identity of the second generation living abroad and strengthen their fundamental links with their country of origin (Belguendouz, 2006). It is a semi-governmental institution, its budget comes from the Ministry in charge of Moroccans Residing Abroad and it has a focus on sociocultural activities (Collyer, 2013). Its primary role is to conduct research and publish studies about migration, coordinate partnerships with the International Organization for Migration to fund research, finance education and social assistance to Moroccans abroad in the form of language, cultural classes and finally organize cultural exchange programs and holiday camps for emigrants' children living in Europe (Brand, 2002).

At the Foundation, we are not seeking to obstruct the integration of Moroccans abroad. To the contrary, we know that their integration in the host country affects their development. We want our compatriots abroad to live in harmony in their host state and to feel as much at ease outside as inside Morocco. This is how they can avoid the suffering of exile, the distress and the loss of bearings. It is in this way that our community abroad becomes a potential resource capable of contributing to the development and the modernization of Morocco. Omar Azziman (Cited in Brand, 2002, p. 13)

The Foundation has a focus on education, cultural exchange programs, sport, and youth. It helps create and equip schools and cultural centers that provide language, cultural and religious classes to Moroccan descendants abroad (Bilgili and Weyel, 2013). In addition, it can also provide financial, medical, and legal assistance if needed (Ibid). When it comes to its economic activities, it

is in charge of informing emigrants about investment opportunities in Morocco, and assisting them with their investment projects (Ibid). A promise was made to ease the obstacles and regulations to investments by emigrants, address the issue of corruption and heavy red tape (de Haas and Plug, 2006)

The Foundation was in charge of *Opération Transit* to facilitate the return of emigrants for summer holidays (de Haas, 2007). The operation included efforts to reduce the long delays that emigrants faced in the sea ports of Tangier and Ceuta, to facilitate administrative procedures, and to address harassment and corruption (Ibid). The operation was created when the state became aware that corruption and harassment discouraged emigrants from visiting Morocco (Ibid). The responsibility of facilitating Moroccans' return for the summer holidays was then given to *Fondation Mohammed V Pour la Solidarité* (Mohammed V Foundation for Solidarity) in 1997 (Collyer, 2013).

One of the most important activities of the Foundation is within the educational and cultural realm. Indeed, between 1994 and 1995, 484 language and Moroccan culture teachers taught 70,600 children of Moroccan origins, and 1,200 children benefited from vacation camps in 1993 (Brand, 2006).

The document that sets for the creation of the Foundation does not refer to any political role of emigrants (Brand, 2002). The Foundation has been criticized for failing to display financial transparency and substantially representing the Moroccan community abroad (Belguendouz, 2012). The Foundation that sought to replace the *Amicales*, also indicated a desire for the Moroccan regime to change its relationship with the Moroccan community abroad (Brand, 2002). Given the regional context of political liberalization in Algeria and the rise of the *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS), the Foundation might have presented the regime with a more efficient way to 'control' or monitor emigrants and avoid any potential contagion from the Algerian neighbor, or an opportunity to better understand and control the religious-cultural environment of Moroccans abroad against any influence of militant Islamism (Ibid). In 1991, Morocco announced its intention of closing the *Amicales* acknowledging they were inefficient and counter-productive and that emigrants preferred to create their own independent associations (de Haas, 2007). The decision to close the *Amicales* was a consequence of the pressure from the Moroccan community abroad who criticized the association for lacking credibility and for failing to meet their cultural, educational, and economic needs (Belguendouz, 2006). It was also criticized by the European governments for impeding their attempts to establish a dialogue with Moroccans in their guest countries (Ibid).

Later, the Foundation was also criticized for being mainly responsible for facilitating the 'transit' of Moroccans living abroad to their home countries having failed to gain the trust of Moroccans in Europe (Benkirane, 2010). In 1996, King Hassan entrusted the presidency of the Foundation to his elder daughter, reflecting a "substantial patronage" and control by the state (Collyer, 2013). The Foundation sought to establish regional delegations in each country that hosts a Moroccan emigrant (Brand, 2002). However, the plan was abolished as it seems the Foundation does not

have enough financial resources to afford it (Ibid). The Foundation's cultural programs were heavily criticized for being unable to consider the specificities of the educational system of the receiving countries and the needs of the Moroccan community abroad in its Arabic teaching programs (Ibid). An evaluation of the Foundation pointed to its failure in meeting its original objectives. The evaluation states that

like many public administrations, even though that is not its statute, it seems to have no visibility, and each year it undertakes the same activities, with the same brochures, the same communiqués sent to the press. No action of any breadth is organized, there is no involvement of MREs, and to top it all, no measures are adopted to improve the conditions of its personnel, who have no work, but also no statute (Quoted in Brand, 2002, p. 20).

These measures were more symbolic than successful but marked a shift in the state's discourse towards its diaspora (Benkirane, 2010). However, the king remained the main political actor that formulates this discourse (de Haas, 2007). The Moroccan state seemed to have understood that the integration-discouraging and repressive policies only increased emigrants' distrust of Moroccan institutions, and probably discouraged potential investors among the Moroccan community abroad instead of bringing them closer to Morocco (de Haas, 2005). These policies were also heavily criticized by the European countries, which saw them as an obstacle to their integration efforts (de Haas and Plug, 2006). Hence the third phase of emigration policies wanted to strengthen the Moroccan diaspora's links with their home country and adopt a positive attitude towards the integration of Moroccans in their host countries. The latter is now perceived as a way of attracting and promoting remittances' flow to Morocco (de Haas and Plug, 2006).

The most important shift in emigration policies was then symbolic and concerned mainly how the Moroccan state addresses its diaspora. Another critical shift was the emphasis on communication and information as the government started publishing studies and magazines dealing with the Moroccan communities abroad (Brand, 2006). In 1994, the first *Annuaire de l'Emigration Marocaine* was published, followed by the Ministry newsletter, 'Lettre d'Information,' and a magazine *Rivage*. The *Annuaire de l'Emigration Marocaine* published studies on the most important Moroccan communities abroad (ibid). It was suspended before it issued a second volume. *Lettre d'Information* informed about the activities of the ministry and migrant associations dealing with youth, religions and sports. *Rivage*, on the other hand, was a magazine published in January 1993 and suspended in winter 1994/1995. It covered migrant issues, youth, integration and even investment. Because it was published both in Arabic and French, it was criticized for being 'inaccessible' as most of the first generation of Moroccan emigrants could not read or write and were mostly of Berber origins (ibid).

3. The third phase: Mohammed VI towards reinforcing and consolidating diaspora links in the 2000s

In the 1990s, European immigration policies became less flexible resulting in increased undocumented migration among many Moroccans. It has become necessary for Morocco to

regulate this flow and to enact appropriate policies. At the national level, the 1990s were marked by a political opening that allowed an opposition party to rise to power for the first time, and initiate political reforms allow increased press freedom, promote women's rights, decline torture and for civil society organizations to form (Monjib, 2011). Besides, king Hassan II was seriously ill, and it was necessary to prepare for a 'smooth' throne transition to his son (Ibid). Emigration discourse and policies in their turn followed this political trend. The 2000s marked a new phase for the Moroccan state involvement in the management and representation of its diaspora. During this phase, the Moroccan government established a new strategy to reinforce the state cultural, political, and economic links with its emigrants being more aware of the importance of their political and cultural weight (Collyer, 2013). This discourse and policies seem to come from a royal intention most of the time. It is the King who seems to push for a more positive and welcoming attitude towards emigrants, and it is the King who seems to push for more civil and political representation of emigrants in local life (de Haas, 2007). Decisions and policy reforms are "unilaterally" decided upon by the King, who also chooses and nominates members to different diaspora institutions (Ibid).

Discourse on emigration is about full citizenship

Since Mohammed VI's succeeded his father on July 23 1999, his discourse on emigration has taken a more modern tone. Relationship with Moroccans living abroad is no more presented as being 'paternal'. In 1999, during a speech, he presented the Moroccan state as "the motherland" (Maroc.ma, 1999), generous, preoccupied, and available for its community abroad to help them preserve their linguistic, cultural, and religious links with their home country, to protect them in case of difficulties and to negotiate a better future for them with their host countries. This is said Moroccan emigrants and descendants are still considered as the subjects of the King as he himself stated in his royal speech of July 30 2002:

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 (Cited in de Haas, 2007, p. 42).

For the first time in the 2000-2004 Plan, an entire section was devoted to Moroccan emigrants defending their rights and preserving attachment to Morocco (Brand, 2006). It is the first document that represents these emigrants as "full human beings and full citizens, in the sense of the state's manifesting a serious concern for their welfare and success" (Ibid, p. 68). In this way, this section affirms state sovereignty over Moroccans abroad, reaffirming their loyalty and laying claim to their resources and their contribution to local development (Brand, 2006). As a matter of fact, the Plan argues that the inflow of foreign currency to Morocco was made possible thanks to

the consolidation of relations between the state and its diaspora (Ibid). It reflects the state's acknowledgment of the centrality of Moroccans abroad, and the need to elaborate policies to defend these emigrants and help them solve their problems (Brand, 2006). Emigrants are, therefore, to be treated as genuine citizens. They are celebrated as "national heroes" in the media (de Haas, 2007, p. 23). Their "Moroccanness" and loyalty are no more questioned if they acquire European citizenship (Ibid). In 2005, Mohammed VI refers to them as "sons of the nation" whose efficient role "we consider as a major advantage for the new Morocco" and speaks of their devotion and "total sincerity in the development of our country" (Maroc.ma, 2005). Emigrants are still considered loyal subjects, but the emphasis is not made on their allegiance to the person of the King. Rather the emphasis is made on their allegiance to Morocco on their importance for developing their home country (Collyer, 2013).

Two years later, in 2007, in a speech, he announced that the Moroccan diaspora is "a major asset for the new Morocco" who "while remaining attached to their authentic Moroccan identity" have also been involved in the development of Morocco (Maroc.ma, 2013). Thus, the discursive shift in the official discourse towards emigrants emphasizes more citizenship as stated by the King himself in his speech on the Green March Day on November 6, 2007:

The democratic, development-oriented process I am spearheading requires the participation of all Moroccans, wherever they may be, in a spirit of strong commitment to our national identity and to responsible citizenship. My regular field visits and my tireless efforts to make sure my citizens at home enjoy a dignified life are equaled only by the special importance I attach to the conditions of our beloved fellow citizens who live abroad (Cited in Sahraoui, 2015, p. 5)

Becoming aware that Moroccan emigrants have put down roots in Europe, and are claiming their dual belonging, initiated a change in the traditional concept of the nation and pushed the Moroccan state to think of new ways to address these 'citizens' (Sahraoui, 2015).

Diaspora policies and engagement of emigrants in national life

The 2000s also saw a change in the way the Moroccan state address its diaspora, acknowledging their dual belonging. Thus, the reform of the Family Code in 2004 allowing Moroccan mothers to pass their nationality on to their children, came as a recognition of this dual citizenship but also an attempt to maintain diaspora links (Sahraoui, 2015). The Constitution of 2011 further acknowledged and recognized this dual belonging:

The Kingdom of Morocco works for the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of the Moroccan citizens [feminine] and citizens [masculine] resident abroad, within respect for international law and for the laws in force in the host countries. It is committed to the maintenance and to the development of their human ties, notably cultural, with the Kingdom, and the preservation of their national identity.... It sees to the reinforcement of their contribution to the development of their homeland [patrie], Morocco, and to the strengthening [resesserrement] of ties of amity and of cooperation between the

governments and the societies of the countries where they reside, and of which they are citizens (Article 16, Constitution of Morocco, 2011)

Furthermore, the constitution insists on the importance of Moroccan residing abroad to participate in public life. This participation is wanted, but it is also presented as a duty, and a role Moroccans abroad should play as citizens (Sahraoui, 2015).

An economic strategy

An economic strategy directed at Moroccan emigrants meant establishing financial institutions to help them open saving accounts in their home country and facilitate cash transfers between their guest countries and Morocco (Benkirane, 2010). To promote the investment from the Moroccan community abroad, bureaucratic procedures were simplified, and tax incentives were offered, especially in sectors like agriculture, housing, and private education (Benkirane, 2010). *MDM Invest Funds* were also established to help finance projects in Morocco in sectors such as the industry, services, education, hotels, and health (The Ministry Delegate in charge of Moroccans Living Abroad, n.d.). Facilities were also granted to Moroccans living abroad when it comes to mortgage loans and reduced cash transfer fees (Benkirane, 2010). While economic policies have managed to increase the flow of remittances, which are considered to be higher because remittances happen also through informal channels or when goods are sent to Morocco, policies to promote emigrants' investments have not proved to be very successful as corruption and lack of trust in governmental institutions continue to discourage potential investors (de Haas, 2014).

A religious, cultural and social strategy

The 2000s saw the beginning of a new debate about the importance of the civil and political rights of Moroccans living abroad. The intensification of emigrant flows and the economic significance of remittances pushed the Moroccan government to think about a new strategy towards its diaspora. Besides, more and more Moroccan emigrants started asking to be granted the right to institutional representation (Benkirane, 2010). What followed was a cultural and religious strategy that aimed to establish more cultural centers in the receiving countries, and increase the involvement of the Ministry of Habous in the management of religious affairs abroad (Drhimeur, 2020). Cultural centers aimed at preserving the national cultural and religious identity, strengthening the links between Moroccans living abroad and Morocco while the Ministry of Habous was in charge of 'controlling' Islam abroad (Drhimeur, 2020). Cultural centers to teach Arabic were already established in Europe, and the Moroccan government was already involved in managing the religious affairs of its diaspora in Europe. What was novel was the shift in the discourse about the teaching of Arabic and Islam in Europe. While Hassan II had previously asked Moroccans living abroad not to make any efforts towards integration or vote in European elections, he even threatened not granting double citizenship (Bouoiyour, 2008), the governmental speech is now different. It is more centered on the necessity of encouraging the Moroccan community abroad "to assume its civic responsibility and to join political, union and associative life" (The Ministry Delegate in charge of Moroccans Living Abroad, 2003). The speech also encourages "integration and cohabitation in host societies, while preserving the Moroccan national identity in its Muslim, Arab and Amazigh dimensions" (The Ministry Delegate in charge of Moroccans Living Abroad,

2003). The government thus changed its discourse asking to review the way Arabic and Islam are taught (Benkirane, 2010). Teaching Arabic and Islam should now take into considerations the cultural specificities in Europe and should be able to meet the needs of Moroccans living abroad (Ibid). To meet this objective, Morocco signed cultural agreements with host countries that involve emigrants' associations while previously only *Ministère de l'Education* (Ministry of Education), *Fondation Hassan II* (Hassan II Foundation) and *Ministère des Affaires Etrangères* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) were involved (Ibid).

To further strengthen cultural ties, in the early-2000s, a public satellite channel: *Al Marghribia* 'the Moroccan' was established to broadcast programs in Arabic, French, and Berber that are mainly directed towards the diaspora (de Haas, 2007). Other programs on national television encourage emigrants to visit during the holidays and dedicate some programs to portray successful emigrants such as business people, artists, writers, and politicians (Ibid).

Morocco not only seeks to strengthen economic ties between its diaspora and the home country. It now seeks to strengthen their cultural, linguistic, and religious ties. The new strategy would also like to contribute to improving the legal status and the social life of the Moroccan diaspora through the consolidation and the extension of international agreements that involve Moroccans living abroad and the creation of social services offices within Moroccan consulates to help the Moroccan communities (Benkirane, 2010). Legal assistance is thus provided to the most vulnerable groups, including single parents, unaccompanied children, and prisoners (Bilgili and Weyel, 2013). Maintaining cultural links entailed policies that target the descendants of Moroccan emigrants through the organization of summer universities and summer camps (Nuno and Souiah, 2013). They have been organized since 2009, and about 1,500 children and 300 young adults benefited from their activities each year. The Moroccan authorities present them as opportunities to learn about the language and culture of their origins and interact and socialize with Moroccan youth. These summer camps are also a reminder of their perpetual allegiance to Morocco and of their 'Marocanité' (Üstübici, 2015).

Besides the teaching of Arabic and Moroccan culture in schools, mosques, and associations, Morocco has also started opening cultural centers called *Dar Al Maghrib* (Nuno and Souiah, 2013). By defending their interests and promoting their wellbeing, Morocco would like to restore emigrants' trust in the government (Ibid). The Moroccan state seems to want to be more involved in the lives of its community living abroad. Preserving these links will help maintain a Moroccan identity and consequently ensure emigrants' loyalty to the country (Ibid). It will also help improve the image of Morocco (Benkirane, 2010).

'Marhaba' (Welcome):

In 2007, Fondation Mohammed V pour la Solidarité (Mohammed V Foundation for Solidarity) changed the label for its program that facilitates the transit of Moroccans living abroad to Morocco during the summer holidays from 'Operation Transit' to 'Marhaba' (Welcome) (Collyer, 2013). The aim was to engage with emigrants and promote a sense of "belonging" through assistance with custom difficulties, health services, and the organization of cultural events (Ibid). During summer

holidays, these operations set up assistance, and reception centers to provide logistical, medical, and legal assistance to Moroccans living abroad (Bilgili and Weyel, 2013). Service centers to serve, assist and help Moroccan migrants-on-vacation were established on Italian, Spanish, French, and Moroccan highways (de Haas, 2007). Commercials are broadcasted on television and radio to welcome them, customs procedures are simplified, less corrupt, and extensive efforts ensure that their transit and their summer holidays are as smooth as possible. The King himself visited the port of Tangier to welcome emigrants coming for holidays in a symbolic act to show that the state is doing its best to maintain and consolidate links with the Moroccan diaspora. This operation should also be seen as a part of a national strategy to boost tourism, which explains why in 2003 the Ministry of Tourism started referring to Moroccan emigrants as Moroccan *Tourists Résidant à l'Etranger*, (TMRE, Moroccan Tourists Residing Aboard) who are now included in tourism statistics (Ibid).

Conseil de la communauté marocaine à l'étranger and political rights

In 2005, the King he announced the creation of the Conseil de la communauté marocaine à l'étranger (Council of the Moroccan Community Living Abroad, CCME) and promised these emigrants the right to electoral participation and parliamentary representation:

That of creating, under the presidency of Our Majesty, a Higher Council of the Moroccan Community abroad, constituted in a democratic and transparent manner, and benefiting from all the guarantees of credibility, efficiency and authentic representativeness. It will also include members appointed by Our Majesty among the personalities known for their remarkable involvement in the defense of the rights of Moroccan immigrants and the superior interests of the nation, as well as representatives of the authorities and institutions concerned with emigration issues (Maroc.ma, 2005).

This marked a shift in the Moroccan state diaspora politics since talks about granting Moroccan emigrants political and civic rights happened for the first time (Benkirane, 2010). The decision thus grants Moroccans living abroad the right to vote and run for elections and to be represented in the House of Representatives “in an appropriate, realistic and rational manner” (Belguendouz, 2006). This happened within a context of continual pressure from the Moroccan diaspora to be granted full citizenship (Belguendouz, 2009a). This community organized seminars, petitions, press conferences, round tables, and even delegation visits to different ministries in Morocco, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, institutions such as Foundation Hassan II, political parties and unions (Ibid). This also happened after some European governments, for example on a visit to Rabat in 2005, the Dutch Minister responsible for integration officially asked the Moroccan government, to stop recognizing Dutch citizens from Moroccan origins as Moroccans (Belguendouz, 2006). The King and the state clearly indicated, that Moroccan nationality can never be alienated and that descendants of Moroccan emigrants will always remain Moroccans (de Haas, 2007).

The King then asked *Conseil Consultatif des Droits de l'Homme* (the National Human Rights Council, CCDH) to provide its opinion on the creation of the Council (Belguendouz, 2009a). For the King, the Council of the Moroccan Community Living Abroad is

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 (Cited in de Haas, 2007, p. 28)

Conseil Consultatif des Droits de l'Homme (the National Human Rights Council) contributes to the "protection of the rights and freedoms of Moroccans residing abroad", coordinates between different national and international diaspora institutions, and participates in elaborating a national strategy to engage emigrants in the development of their home country (Belguendouz, 2009a). The CCDH also comprises of representatives from different emigrant communities as part of a special commission for the protection of emigrants' human rights (de Haas, 2007).

In 2007, two years after the royal speech that announced its creation, the *Conseil de la communauté marocaine à l'étranger* (Council of the Moroccan Community Living Abroad, CCME) was finally established (Collyer, 2013). The initiative was highly welcomed by Moroccans living abroad since it promised consultation meetings with emigrant groups and more diversity in its geographical representation of emigrants (Belguendouz, 2009a). The Council was created to identify and analyze the issues of Moroccans abroad regarding their rights, citizenship, political participation, education, culture, and religion (Bilgili and Weyel, 2013). The objective was to promote emigrants' participation in the economic, social, cultural and political development of Morocco (Ibid). The Council is also in charge of evaluating diaspora policies with the objective of producing a national strategy to engage emigrants in national development and presents its recommendation to the King (Ibid).

However, the Council was criticized for its lack of democratic principles in the way members are selected and for playing merely a consultative role (Belguendouz, 2009a). It was initially intended to provide consultation on emigrants' legal issues, but soon it started to be involved in cultural, research, and educational roles, and engage directly with emigrants (Collyer, 2013). Its roles started to overlap with the role of other institutions. In its turn, the Moroccan diaspora criticizes the Council for being 'imposed' and for failing to be a democratically elected and transparent institution (Belguendouz, 2009a). The 2011 Constitution enhanced and guaranteed the role of the Council

to give its opinion on the orientations of public policies permitting assurance to the Moroccans resident abroad [of] the maintenance of close ties with their Moroccan identity, to guarantee their rights, to preserve their interests, [so as] to contribute to the human and lasting development of their Country, Morocco, and to its progress (Article 163, 2011 Consitution).

Within the context of Arab Revolutions, the 20 February Movement was formed and carried different demonstrations in Morocco. The Movement had supporters within the diaspora who put pressure to be granted political rights (Aboussi, 2018). The King then decided to involve Moroccan communities abroad in drafting the new Constitution (Ibid). Thus, Articles 16, 17, 18 and 163 are dedicated to Moroccans abroad and their political rights but they fail to define the practice of these rights since details were to be specified in the text of laws (Ibid).

Thus given the context of the Arab Spring and street mobilization, in 2011, Moroccan emigrants were granted the right to vote both in the constitutional referendum and later that year in parliamentary elections, thus recognizing “a greater degree of citizenship (Collyer, 2013). To participate in the constitutional referendum, 520 voting booths were established outside the country. Still, participation remained low with a disappointing figure of 266,301 Moroccan emigrants, which means less than 10 percent of Moroccans registered in Moroccan consulates abroad (Ibid). To vote in the parliamentary elections, emigrants had to either return to Morocco or vote through a proxy system. Polling stations were not established abroad, and it was explained by a lack of financial means and the complexity of logistics (Ibid).

The history of the political participation of Moroccans abroad reveals a multiplicity of initiatives ranging from the electronic vote to the establishment of voting booths within the Moroccan consulates. However, they have not led to effective participation of Moroccans abroad in the elections in Morocco (El Abid, 2015).

Until today Moroccan living abroad can only vote through a proxy system even if young Moroccan born abroad have the right to register to vote (Benkirane, 2010). The Literature wonders if by refusing to include the Moroccan community abroad in the electoral process reflects the regime’s fear that this community, brought up in a European democratic context, will end up presenting a threat to the political system in Morocco, calling for more political and democratic reforms (Ibid). Thus, strengthening economic, religious, and cultural links without giving this community a political weight and power seems to ensure their loyalty to the regime and discourage any dissident voice. The creation of the Council and the 2011 constitutional reforms provided the regime with the possibility of offering participation without representation while at the same time it is an effective tool to control the diaspora (Dalmasso, 2018). Thus the regime could “successfully convert a loud horizontal voice from abroad into a not very loud vertical one through a ‘participation’ process” while countering its diaspora’s claims for political participation (Ibid, p. 198).

Ministère chargé des marocains résidant à l'étranger

In 2007 the government re-established *Ministère chargé des marocains résidant à l'étranger* (Ministry of Moroccans Residing Abroad) (Bilgili and Weyel, 2013). The objective is to coordinate actions and objectives between different stakeholders and institutions such as *Conseil de la Communauté Marocaine à l'Etranger* (Council of the Moroccan Community Abroad), Fondation Hassan II (Hassan II Foundation), Conseil marocain des Oulémas pour l'Europe (Moroccan Council

of Ulemas for Europe) and Fondation Mohammed V pour la Solidarité (Mohammed V Foundation for Solidarity) (Ibid).

Besides coordinating with other institutions, the Ministry is in charge of organizing cultural, educational, artistic, social, and economic activities for the Moroccan diaspora, such as the National Day of Moroccans Abroad and the cultural weeks in receiving countries (*Ministère Chargé de la Communauté Marocaine Résidant à l'Etranger*, 2009). The establishment of cultural centers in residence countries aims to reinforce the Moroccan national identity among the descendants of Moroccans residing abroad (Bilgili and Weyel, 2013). Legal assistance is also offered in the form of trainings and conferences that sensitize emigrants about their rights, through capacity building of non-governmental organizations dealing with migrants' human rights and through cooperation with national and international organization which focus on rights of migrants. In case Moroccans residing abroad would like to definitively return to Morocco, the Ministry is also in charge of monitoring and facilitating their return by establishing "*Maisons des MRE*" in different cities in Morocco (Ibid). These "Houses," which help inform emigrants about governmental migration measures, will play an important role in helping returning emigrants with any administrative, social, cultural, and economic issues (Bladi.net, 2009). The Ministry is also working to collect and centralize data and information on migratory flows in general to study and better understanding the living conditions of Moroccans residing abroad (Bilgili and Weyel, 2013)

The Ministry is delegated to the Minister of Foreign affairs and enjoying a significant budget and personnel (Collyer, 2013). Thus the Ministry of Foreign Affairs positions itself as the main intermediary between emigrants and their home country, a sort of "contact point" to solve all kinds of issues related to living abroad, to investment in Morocco, to finance and consular services (Ibid).

To better engage the Moroccan Diaspora for the country's economic, social and human development, FINCOM (*Forum International des Compétences Marocaines à L'étranger*) was created in 2007 to create a platform that would function as an intermediary between Moroccans living abroad and the Moroccan state (*Ministère Chargé de la Communauté Marocaine Résidant à l'Etranger*, 2009). This Forum aims at enhancing communication between diaspora associations abroad and local associations and authorities to establish strong partnerships for knowledge transfer that would lead to local development projects (Bilgili and Weyel, 2013). This platform is part of a national strategy to mobilize the Moroccan diaspora and engage them in developing their home country (Aujourd'hui.ma, 2005). The strategy aims to promote the investment of Moroccans living abroad in economic projects and the creation of a partnership between emigrants and local associations working in economic, social and human development (Ibid). Thus, to better engage the diaspora in developing their home country, this program was launched to better orient emigrants' investment in scientific research, new technologies, and sustainable development (Bilgili and Weyel, 2013).

The assessment of the program has pointed out many issues. Because the scope of the program and its responsibilities were not specified in a detailed way, its contribution remains limited or fails to meet the objectives (*Ministère Chargé de la Communauté Marocaine Résidant à l'Etranger*,

2009). Besides, it is difficult for the different partners to coordinate their actions since their operational roles overlap sometimes or lack visibility (Ibid). The program has organized several meetings, including J Expo or Moroccans residing abroad conference; however, the recommendations of these conferences have not always been implemented (Ibid).

Mobility partnership

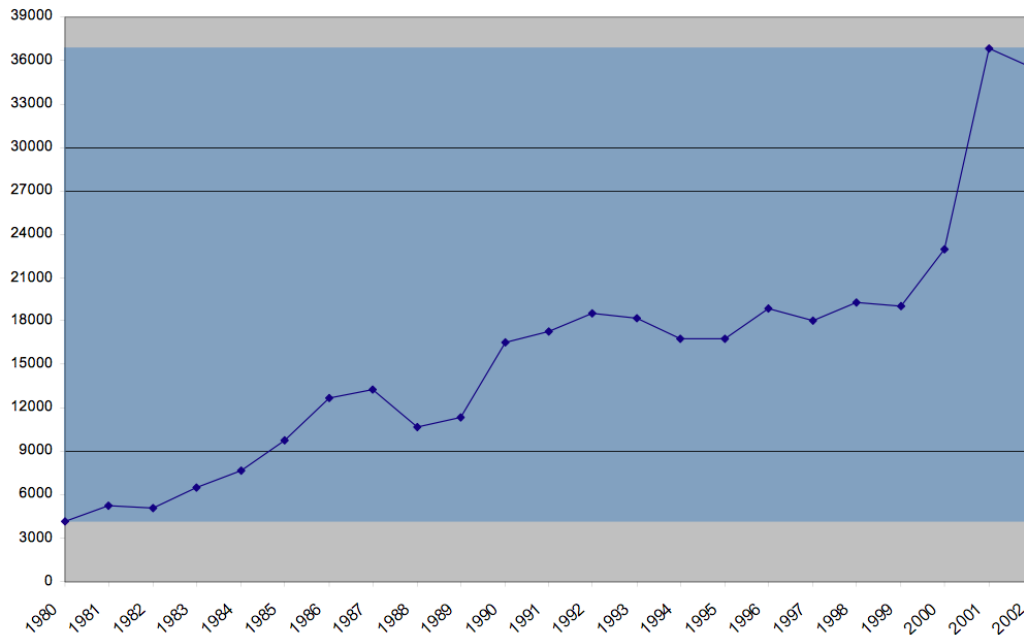
In 2013 Morocco signed a mobility partnership with different EU Member states (de Haas, 2014). This partnership offered the opportunity to negotiate the issuance of visas for Moroccan students and high-skilled workers in exchange for state collaboration in the readmission of illegal migrants (Ibid). However, given the new diplomatic role that Morocco would like to play in Africa, it is unlikely that the government will accept the readmission or the expulsion of sub-Saharan unauthorized migrants (Ibid). It is also important to mention that Morocco seems to be lacking a clear policy when it comes to the migration of students and skilled workers (Bouoiyour, 2008). While the number of Moroccan students who are willing to study abroad increases and the number of those returning home receiving their degree decreases, the Moroccan government still displays a lack of initiative to address this issue or even conduct studies on the cost of this international mobility and its impact on the country's development (Ibid). It is not clear if this is the consequence of a clear vision, a hope that this diaspora would improve the country's image or that Morocco 'turns a blind eye' to students' emigration because it helps with unemployment (Ibid).

Conclusion

Hence, three phases describe how the Moroccan state initiated and formulated diaspora policies. The first phase started soon after the independence of Morocco and lasted until the end of the 1980s. During this phase emigration was considered temporary. The state emphasized mostly the economic dimension and the *devisard* nature of the migrant. Diaspora policies were also a reflection of domestic politics as the state sought to control any opposition or dissident voices within its communities abroad. Acknowledging that these policies have alienated migrants who lost trust in governmental institutions, the state came to change its discourse and policies in the 1990. What followed was a national strategy to engage migrants in national development. Diaspora institutions were established to consolidate and strengthen emigrants' economic, social and cultural links with their home country. The last phase that started in the 2000s saw a change in the way the Moroccan state addresses its diaspora. Now it recognizes their dual belonging and encourages their integration in their countries of residence.

Being aware of the importance that remittances have for the local economy, the Moroccan government put into place a strategy to promote the involvement of Moroccans living abroad in "the economic, social and human development of Morocco" and "in the management of public affairs" and "human development projects" (The Ministry Delegate in charge of Moroccans Living Abroad, 2003). The increase in remittances and money transfers from Moroccans residing abroad to their home country constituted a major source of hard currency and 9.3% of the GDP in 2001, for example (See Graph 1).

Graph 1: Remittance flow during 1980-2002 in Morocco (mio. Moroccan Dirhams)

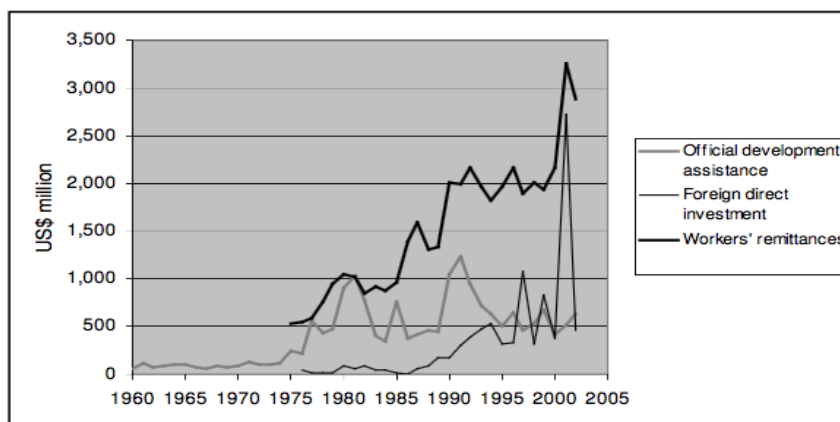


Source: Office de Changes, http://www.oc.gov.ma/MRE_annees.htm

Between 1995 and 1999, Morocco ranked sixth in the world when it comes to remittance-receiving and the fourth in 2001 (de Haas, 2005). Remittances are significant and stable sources of foreign currency and help sustain the country's balance of payment (Ibid). They have proved to be more important than official development assistance (ODA) and Foreign direct investment (FDI) (see Graph 2).

Graph 2: Total volume of official remittance, ODA and FDI flows to Morocco (1968-2000).

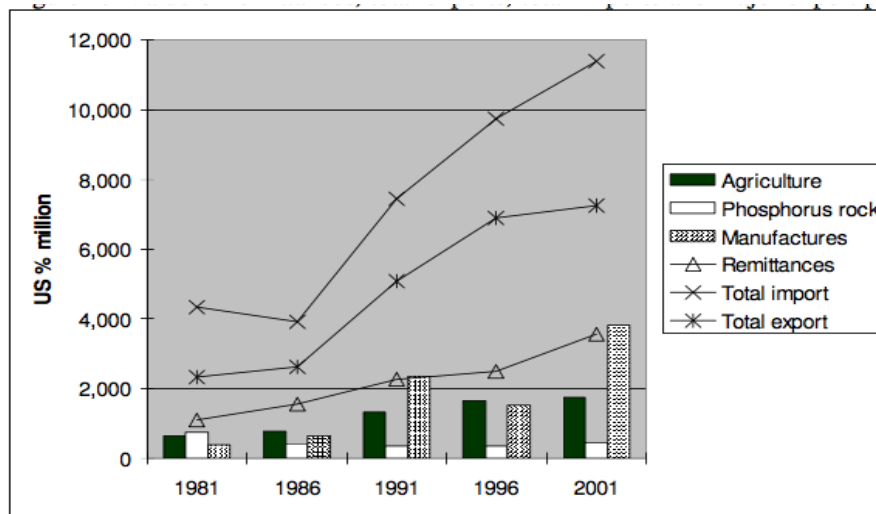
Source: World Development Indicators (World Bank)



Also, in 2000, remittances presented one-quarter of Morocco's total exports, exceeding revenues from phosphates, agricultural products or tourist industry, which are considered to be the country's main export commodities (see graph 3).

Graph 3: Value of remittances, total exports, total imports and major export products (1981-2001)

Source: IMF Balance of Payment Statistics Yearbook (annual); World Bank (Morocco at a Glance)



Remittances' transfer was facilitated through a network of post offices, banks, and a network of financial services such as money transfer offices (MTOs) (de Haas, 2007). For example, Western Union established offices even in the smallest cities and towns in the country, and its campaigns directed towards Moroccan migrants in Europe emphasized the simplicity of its services that do not require documentation thus even undocumented migrants can benefit from its services (Ibid).

Showing a positive attitude of wishing to better understand and engage Moroccans living abroad who "are no longer considered simple remittance providers for the origin country, but real actors of economic and social development and economic ambassadors of Morocco in their receiving countries" (cited in Bilgili and Weyel, 2013), seem to have managed to attract more remittances, which saw a major increase to \$6.9 billion in 2012, making about 7% of Morocco's gross national product (Berriane, de Haas and Natter, 2015). And since remittances were identified as an essential source of foreign currency, the Moroccan state had to think of a strategy to engage emigrants abroad. The state continues to focus on the economic aspect of migration, and state institutions continue to be the main actors to offer consultant services to emigrant investors (Üstübcici, 2015).

Emigration is considered as an efficient way to promote national economy. However, the tools and the means implemented to engage the diaspora in development lack coherency (Bouoiyour, 2008). As a matter of fact, sometimes the diversity in the institutions dealing with emigrants makes the national diaspora vision and strategy incoherent, and other times, their roles and responsibilities overlap or remain unspecified (Bilgili and Weyel, 2013). Because their roles and responsibilities overlap, it is sometimes difficult to coordinate actions and implement policies in an efficient way. Furthermore, the multiplication of governmental institutions and bodies has only created confusion and inefficiencies as older agencies were added to existing ones that need reforms (Sahraoui, 2015)

The main shift in diaspora politics lies in the fact that emigrants' integration in Europe is not an obstacle to their contribution to their home country's development since their integration does not necessarily mean the end of remittance transfer, and they can also participate in attracting investments (de Haas, 2007). Furthermore, they can present a positive image of Morocco and consequently defend the state's international interests. But in general, the Moroccan state was never willing to give up control of its diaspora. Policies are enacted in a way to ensure that Moroccan emigrants remain dependent on Morocco. The Moroccan nationality remains inalienable, and having double citizenship does not offer emigrants full protection by their host countries when visiting Morocco. All emigrants, including their descendants, are considered *Marocains Résidents à l'Etranger*, consequently subject to the King, and are required to show their Moroccan Identity Card while visiting, even if they hold a foreign passport (Ibid). This means that they have to register with a Moroccan consulate to obtain or renew these cards and that the Moroccan consulates have an excellent record of "its subjects living abroad". They are also required to register their children within these consulates, children who are supposed to be given names recognized as 'Moroccan'. Names that are considered inappropriate or Christian are not even included in their travel documents. And children born from mixed marriages are also considered Moroccan.

Emigration continues to be a vital source of economic development. It helps alleviate poverty, decreases unemployment, and most importantly, emigration is also an important source of political stability that deals with domestic pressure for reforms (de Haas, 2014). Moroccan officials then understood the need to initiate positive and 'binding' policies that would increase trust in national institutions, including ensuring that emigrants enjoy their civil and political rights (de Haas and Plug, 2006). Morocco has maintained strong ties between the emigrant and his country of origin thanks to a positive attitude and policies to preserve emigrants' economic interests and preserve their cultural and religious identity (Bouoiyour, 2008). These strong ties have pushed European officials to ask Morocco to intervene in local politics (Ibid). In 2004, for example, a Dutch deputy asked the King of Morocco to speak on "radical" Islam following the assassination of the director Theo Van Gogh by a Dutch of Moroccan origin. Similarly, in France, the mayors of certain cities asked the Moroccan consul to intervene and ease tensions in specific neighborhoods that experience a high density of Moroccan immigrants or French of Moroccan origin.

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