Diaspora's Mobilization and Politics in Morocco

LITERATURE REVIEW

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Preface

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Introduction

Since the 1960s, Morocco has evolved into a major emigration country. At first this emigration concerned mainly temporary workers who then decided to settle in their receiving countries and asked their families to join. Europe was also a land of political exile for leftist activists who fled the repression of the regime. Later, emigration became more selective to include students and a qualified workforce. Aware of the importance of remittances for the local economy, the Moroccan state has sought to formulate diaspora policies to strengthen emigrants' cultural, social, and religious ties with the home country and involve them in the economic, social, and human development of Morocco. Throughout this period, Moroccan migrants have attempted to influence politics in Morocco and produce change. While the first generation of Moroccan emigrants remained mainly culturally and socially oriented towards Morocco, the second and third generations have maintained strong ties with their home country and claimed their European identity at the same time (Berriane, de Haas and Natter, 2015). Moroccan emigrants' changing identity has translated into an increasing active engagement in political and public space in Morocco (Ibid). Integration in the receiving countries has enabled Moroccan emigrants to have access to resources and improve their capacity to 'negotiate' with the Moroccan state and inject agency (Sahraoui, 2015). This paper would like to understand how Moroccan communities in Europe, particularly in France, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, have sought to influence politics in Morocco. The analysis of Moroccan migrant activism in Europe should consider the evolution of the Moroccan regime, the regional context, and the changing identity of the Moroccan emigrant. This activism took different forms as migrants formed powerful pressure groups, mobilized and lobbied, created transnational associations and organizations, wrote articles in the press, and used social media to diffuse information. They also organized protests to demand political and social reforms to improve their rights as emigrants and bring democratic reforms in Morocco. They have created strong transnational ties to promote local civic engagement and bring democratization dynamics. This paper will be divided into two parts to discuss how the Moroccan diaspora attempted to influence politics in Morocco. The first part will explore how Europe presented a land of political exile and opposition from outside for Moroccan leftist activists and how migrant workers politicized to denounce human rights abuses in Morocco and initiate democratic reforms. The second part explores the opportunities the political opening in Morocco offered to migrants to promote both their civil and political rights and democratization in Morocco.

1. Europe as a land of political exile and politicization

From the onset of large-scale emigration, the Moroccan state has tried to maintain tight control on its diaspora in Europe. It relied on a vast network of embassies, consulates, government-controlled associations and even students to discourage Moroccan emigrants from integration and participate in political life in their receiving countries. Yet, the state could not prevent Moroccan political opponents, mainly highly educated left-wing activists, from fleeing to Europe and forming an opposition from the outside (de Haas, 2007). Some of these refugees organized themselves

into a movement entirely focused on the democratization process in Morocco (Daoud, 2002). Others; however, joined trade unions in Europe in an attempt to mobilize Moroccan workers to defend their economic rights (Lacroix, 2005b).

Political upheaval and exile in Europe:

When King Hassan II succeeded his father, Mohammed V, in March 1961, he drafted new constitutions in 1962, in 1970, 1972, and 1992 (Campbell, 2003). Each of these constitutions confirmed the monarchy's supremacy to which the judicial, legislative and executive institutions were subordinated (Ibid). His reign was marked by great social and political turmoil as students, workers, and the unemployed took to the street to demand economic and political reforms (Mohsen-Finan, 2007). What followed was the declaration of a state of emergency between 1965 and 1971, and protests were violently crushed by the security apparatus (Ibid). Political opponents under the leadership of Mehdi Ben Barka, a left-wing Moroccan politician, founded *Union Nationale des Forces Populaires National* (Union of Popular Forces, UNFP) and called for democratic reforms and the establishment of a republic (Lacroix, 2005b). He was obliged, along with other activists, to flee to Europe.

When Mehdi Ben Barka fled to France, in 1962 he formed the *Association des Marocains de France* (Association of Moroccans of France, AMF). The AMF was an association closely associated with the UNFP (Mohsen-Finan, 2007) and bringing together sympathizers from other migrant associations such as *Union des Etudiants Marocains* (Moroccan Students Union, UNEM) (Lacroix, 2005b). The latter brought together Moroccan leftist students who militated to advance democracy in Morocco (Laffort, 2009). These students organized meetings with lawyers and writers and journalists critical of the regime to defend human rights and denounce regime abuses (Ibid). However, these political refugees' concerns were mainly oriented towards Morocco, namely towards denouncing the repression of the regime, welcoming other political refugees, and supporting Moroccan opposition movements of the left (Metzger, 2015b). They organized meetings to gather Moroccan students, workers, and political activists to discuss ways to initiate economic, social, and political change in Morocco (Berrada-Bousta, 2012). Morocco remained their focal point (Lacroix, 2005b). Exile is experienced as a form of treason. Many refused to take part in defending migrants' rights in Europe. This was considered a second treason, a defeat since they nourished the idea of returning home (Ibid). After having previously taken part in the nationalist struggle for independence from France, they were forced to flee to Europe because they had criticized the regime and demanded democratic reforms (Merizak, 2009). Furthermore, the movement did not believe that the end of French and Spanish protectorate in Morocco was the end of colonialism (Merizak, 2009). The movement leaders believed that their objective was also to resist neocolonialism, which represented "the survival of the colonial system despite the formal recognition of the independence of emerging states which become the victims of indirect and subtle domination" (Cited in Mellouk, 1994, p. 44) They considered their exile as a temporary defeat in their struggle against the Moroccan regime and not only did they mobilize to denounce the regime oppression but they also hoped that their mobilization would help them return to Morocco where their activism should take place (Lacroix, 2005b). For these political refugees, emigration, in all its forms, was temporary because the Moroccan emigrant remained part of the Moroccan people (Dumont, 2008). Shifting their activism to defend workers' right would shatter their opposition movement, which would be a victory for the Moroccan regime (Lacroix, 2005b).

To inform European publics about the political repression in Morocco, they organized protests, and to influence homeland politics, they developed transnational solidarity structures with leftist organizations in Morocco and established political exchange with other activists in North Africa (Berrada-Bousta, 2012). Some Members of the

AMF became involved in migrant workers' movements (Lacroix, 2005b). They collaborated with French trade unions to defend workers' rights, their access to work, health services and housing (Merizak, 2009). They also offered literacy programs to workers in both Arabic and French (ibid). The interaction between workers and activists shaped the history of Moroccan mobilization abroad and had enabled to politicize these workers (Lacroix, 2005b). They became politically active in opposition forces within Morocco and workers' movements in Europe for the protection of their rights (Merizak, 2009).

The AMF became the *Association des Travailleurs Marocains de France* (Association of Moroccan Workers of France, ATMF), a trade union to defend workers' rights in 2000 (de Haas, 2007). Thus the political participation of migrants in France was either entirely directed towards denouncing the transgression of human rights in Morocco, and refrained from any active participation in French politics, or defended both workers' rights in France by joining trade unions and strikes and human rights in Morocco through transnational associations (Virkama, 2012).

Hassan II's repressive politics, arbitrary detentions, and executions led several activists to flee not only to France but also Belgium, Germany, Spain, and the Netherlands (Drhimeur, 2020d). In Belgium, they established *Regroupement Démocratique Marocain* (Democratic Rally of Moroccans, RDM), in Germany *Union des Travailleurs Marocains d'Allemagne* (Moroccan Workers' Union in Germany, MAB) and in the Netherlands *Association des Travailleurs Marocains en Hollande* (Moroccan Workers' Union in the Netherlands, KMAN) (El Baroudi, 2015). These associations offered literacy classes and sought to promote awareness about Morocco's political situation and human rights violations (ibid). For example, in the Netherlands, KMAN and other left-wing organizations collaborated with the opposition forces in Morocco to try and influence the promotion of human rights (van Heelsum, 2002). They also sought to counter the influence of the *Amicales*, an association created by the Moroccan state and used as a security apparatus to identity opposition members within the diaspora (Drhimeur, 2020a). Moroccan migrants in the Netherlands created their own associations that would form social and political resistance against state diaspora associations, promote democracy in Morocco and improve workers' legal status and living conditions in the Netherlands (van Heelsum, 2002).

In 1979, various Moroccan associations for promoting democracy and human rights collectively established the *Comité de Lutte contre la Répression* (Committee for the Fight against Répression), which was immediately banned by the regime (El Baroudi, 2015). Activists then called to form an opposition movement in Europe and open committees in Europe. The first committee was established in Paris in 1972 and in other cities in France, including Lille, Anger, and Dijon as well as Belgium in 1977 (ibid).

The Moroccan Association for Human Rights (AMDH), created in 1979 by leftist political opponents of the monarchy, was banned by the regime in 1984 (Dumont, 2016). It exported its activism to Europe and established the Association for the Defense of Human Rights in Morocco in Paris in 1984 (ASDHOM) (ibid). The Association called on the Moroccan state to free political prisoners and it was very active in its struggle for human rights. As one of its militants explained:

> Herein France, there was a greater freedom to discuss that. … We were the only trustworthy source of information. The information which we had in our possession in Morocco could not leave Morocco. … When it did, we were the amplifier, the ones who knew how to forward the message to such and such an organization or a press agency (Cited in Dumont, 2016, p. 251).

Moroccan migrants, political and ideological activists, also sought to publish and distribute newspapers in Morocco. They published, for instance, the monthly newspaper *Option Révolutionnaire* (Revolutionary Option) in Arabic

between 1975 and 1984 (Berrada-Bousta, 2012) and created a transnational link between activists in Europe and activists in Morocco (Berrada-Bousta, 2012b). In prisons, Moroccan activists received the first issues in 1979 and we were able to understand the importance of the emergence of this movement [...] which trained activists here in Europe; it is a formidable group of activists which is a treasure for the entire Moroccan revolutionary movement and also an important ideological and political heritage (Cited in Berrada-Bousta, 2012b, p. 8).

Promoting political reforms

The end of the Cold War marked a shift in Morocco's domestic policies as the state came under pressure from Europe and the United States to initiate political reforms (de Haas, 2007). The failure of communism and the triumph of democracy pushed the monarchy to recognize the changing international politics and the need to change their techniques (Campbell, 2003). Furthermore, the mobilization of migrant associations to diffuse information on the repressive politics of the Moroccan regime in the 1980s led to a series of royal decisions by King Hassan II to increase freedom of expression, the press, and freedom of assembly and association (Berrada-Bousta, 2012b).

Soon after the Moroccan Association for Human Rights was banned in 1984, it established branches in France and sought to put pressure on the Moroccan regime to release political prisoners (Dumont, 2016). This mobilization pushed the regime to reopen the Moroccan Association for Human Rights (AMDH) in 1988 (El Baroudi, 2015).

The political participation of migrants took different forms. They mobilized and lobbied within European parliaments. They formed transnational committees and associations to denounce repression in Morocco. They sent supplies, medical, and legal assistance to victims of regime repression and published articles and books to draw attention to human rights abuses (El Baroudi, 2015). As a consequence, Hassan II, wanting to calm down international pressure as criticism rose against violation of human rights, set up *Instance des Droits de l'Homme* (Human Rights Council) and *Comité Consultatif des Droits de l'Homme* (Human Rights Advisory Committee, CCDH) in 1990 and released political prisoners (ibid).

In 1994 Morocco announced a general amnesty that made it possible for left-wing opponents in exile to return home (de Haas, 2007). Once back home, they formed the *Rassemblement des exilés politiques marocains* (Rally of Moroccan Political Exiles REPOM) (Berrada-Bousta, 2012). One of these exiled leftist opponents was Abderrahmane Youssoufi who formed the *Union Nationale des Forces Populaires* (National Union of Popular Forces, UNFP) along with other exiled leftist leaders including Mehdi Ben Barka (de Haas, 2007). Later the party was allowed to form the *Gouvernement d'Alternance* for the first time in 1998 (Rollinde, 2004).

2. Political opening and transnational engagement

After the death of Hassan II in 1999, the new King Mohammed VI continued the state approach towards political opening. This, along with emigrants' integration in destination countries, consolidated their transnational engagement and involvement in Morocco's public and political affairs (Berriane, de Haas and Natter, 2015). It became possible for Moroccan migrants to establish transnational organizations to participate in the development of Morocco. They also used existing associations to advance democracy in their home country and acquire political rights. Moreover, the changing identity of Moroccan emigrants from unskilled workers coming from rural areas to communities claiming their double belonging has politically empowered Moroccan migrants who have obtained their 'voice' in their attempt to redefine power relationships with the Moroccan state (Sahraoui, 2015). Through their settlement and integration, these emigrants have secured access to resources and consequently enhance their capacity to influence Morocco's political process (Ibid). Because migrant associations have sought to participate in

local development and have sought to establish partnerships with local associations, emigrants change the socio-economic realities of their regions of origin. The way they mobilize, and their civic engagement has also introduced democratization values at the local level. There seems to be a dialectical relation between political openness and the influence of the transnational diaspora organization. The more the Moroccan state supports political liberalization and democratization, the greater the influence of migrant civil society. Subsequently, the more these transnational organizations engage in local development the more they can influence public and political affairs.

The consolidation of a transnational civil society

Moroccan migrants used resources available to them to establish transnational organizations that would help them participate in the development of Morocco and influence politics. These organizations vary in objectives and can religious, business-oriented, youth-oriented, or charity associations (Berriane, de Haas and Natter, 2015). This does not mean that migrant associations, organizations and committees established by opposition movements in the 1970s denouncing regime oppression ceased to exist or mobilize. On the contrary, they continued their struggle to advance democracy in Morocco. ASDHOM continues to rally to free political prisoners in Morocco and to denounce state crackdowns on social media critics and violations of freedom of the press.[1] In 1999, *Union des Etudiants Marocains* (Moroccan Students Union, UNEM), organized protests in France to express their criticism of the Moroccan state's official presentation of the country, especially after it announced it would organize *Année du Maroc* (the Year of Morocco) in France (Laffort, 2009). *Année du Maroc* consisted of art exhibitions, music, popular arts, and shows to introduce the Moroccan culture to the French public (L'Economiste, 1998). To deconstruct travel agencies' presentation of Morocco as an exotic country and sensitize French and European citizens about real political challenges back in Morocco, UNEM organized *L'autre Maroc* (the Other Morocco) because

> Morocco is not just that one, there is another Morocco that is hidden: and our role to us, so that French democratic opinion can have a fair view of Morocco, was to show the other Morocco ... and the Other Morocco for us, it is the Morocco of human rights, women's rights, children's rights, political Morocco, the Morocco of disappearance, Morocco as a springboard for imperialism towards Africa ... we wanted to give several facets of Morocco, and we managed last year, through everything we have organized, to show this aspect! (Cited in Laffort, 2009, p. 387).

The first and the second generation Moroccan emigrants have maintained close ties with Morocco as they regularly spent their holidays there (Schüttler, 2008). However, third generation Moroccans visit their home country less but they remain very active within Moroccan associations (Ibid). They use existing transnational organizations and associations or created new ones to engage in political life in Morocco. Most of these new associations, however, focus on development projects in two regions of Morocco (Lacroix, 2005c). These regions are located in the South and the Rif, are Berber, marginalized and have long consisted the traditional sending regions of Moroccan migrants (Ibid). Most of the first-generation Moroccan emigrants were of Berber origins. They were oppressed in Morocco and found in Europe a land of exile, the freedom and ability to form associations and defend the recognition of their cultural rights by the Moroccan state (de Haas, 2007). These migrants established various International Solidarity Organizations for Migration (Lacroix, 2005b). These organizations included the Moroccan Women Association in the Netherlands (MVVN) to promote Moroccan women's rights (de Haas, 2007), as well as aid associations to help

[1] See http://asdhom.org

with development in Morocco (Lacroix, 2006) and Berber (Amazigh) associations to strengthen the Moroccan Berber movement from outside the country (de Haas, 2007).

Currently, these transnational associations form the Euro-Mediterranean Migration and Development Network (Lacroix, 2005b). They act as intermediaries between villages, Moroccan public authorities, and donors (Lacroix, 2011). Thus to advance their political, cultural, and religious points of view and values, migrants form associations that pursue different goals (Gouirir, 2018). While some work to promote human rights, others often have mutual aid associations with a politico-religious vocation (Gouirir, 2018). Emigrants lobby and form pressure groups to influence politics in Morocco. They also write articles for local newspapers and take part in demonstrations to make their "popular" demands (Ibid).

Similarly, in Germany, most individuals who are descendants of a Moroccan migrants are involved in cultural associations, either to improve the situations of members through self-help initiatives or to promote development back in Morocco (Metzger, 2015a). While the first diaspora associations established in the 1970s mostly defended workers' rights, in the 1990s with the political opening in Morocco, associations evolved to become active in the cultural, religious, sports, youth, and political fields Their engagement in development activities has also evolved from an "individual, informal and localized basis" through the transfer of remittances and donations, to a "collective, formal and ongoing basis" with the establishment of development organizations (Metzger, 2015a). Opportunity structures available both in Germany and Morocco have also made it possible for them to form an association to defend human rights and democracy in Morocco (Schüttler, 2008). To have their voices heard and to be considered more than just sources of remittances, the *Mouvement Nouvel élan* (the New Momentum Movement, M.O.N.E) and Organization FZ in Germany, with other Moroccan migrant associations in Europe, wrote a memorandum to the head of the Moroccan government asking for policy reforms that would grant them representation within the Moroccan parliament and within institutions dealing with migration issues (Aujourd'hui.ma, 2012). They also criticized the slow pace of reforms having previously lobbied to obtain the right to vote when they established in November 2001, established the *Congrès des citoyens d'origine marocaine* (the Congress of Citizens from Moroccan Origins) in Tangier, Morocco (Schüttler, 2008).

In 2002 and given a lack of a national debate about the necessity to grant migrants voting rights, Moroccan migrants went to court to denounce the absence of a possibility for them to vote abroad (Sahraoui, 2015). They mobilized under *Conseil de l'union des associations des professions libérales des Marocains de France*[2] (the Council for the union of associations of liberal professions of Moroccans in France) to denounce the unconstitutionality of the parliamentary elections (Lacroix, 2005b). In 2003, the Supreme Court declared that their demand was inadmissible on the ground that migrants can only invoke the right to vote for referendums, and when they are in Morocco (Belguendouz, 2006).

Thus, members of migrant associations in Europe are outspoken about their exclusion from parliamentary elections. For instance, The Association of North African Workers in France (*Association des Travailleurs Maghrébins de France*, ATMF) denounced how migrants are unfairly excluded from the election process and asked for the implementation of the right to vote:

[2] *Conseil de l'union des associations des professions libérales des Marocains de France* brings together 22 associations including *Collectif des Marocains d'Ile- de-France* and *Association des Sahraouis Marocains* in France and Europe.

> It is said that only activists claim (that right) or those who have something else in mind. But citizens cannot take part in this debate, they are excluded from the debate (...) except people who are active either in political parties, or in trade unions or in NGOs. (...) Until this right is not granted, a share, and a big share after all, it represents in terms of percentages 10 to 12% of the population that is excluded. It is not insignificant 12% of the population that has no representation (Cited in Sahraoui, 2015, p. 8).

In 2005, the King promised migrants political and civic rights, the right to vote, the right to representation within the Moroccan parliament, and the right to run for elections (Belguendouz, 2009). Migrants organized seminars, petitions, press conferences, round tables. They even lobbied within different ministries in Morocco, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as various diaspora institutions such as Foundation Hassan II, political parties, and unions (Ibid).

Moroccan diaspora and the Arab Spring:

In the context of the Arab Spring, pressure from the Moroccan diaspora and its involvement in civil society led to the expansion of the voting right to include migrants (Brand, 2014). Moroccan diaspora 'renewed' its commitment to political change in Morocco and expressed its support for the 20 February Movement that carried out many demonstrations in different cities to demand economic, social, and democratic reforms (Aboussi, 2018). In 2011, the youth took to the streets in Morocco to demand democratic reforms (Monjib, 2011). Being disillusioned with the political elite and endemic corruption, demonstrators organized themselves under the 20 February Movement and demanded the establishment of a parliamentary monarchy whereby the king reigns but does not rule (Hashas, 2013). The Movement embodied a new sense of empowerment and of being able to produce political change (Drhimeur, 2020b). This feeling spread to the diaspora that set up the Coalition of Assemblies to support the 20F Movement abroad and showed 'unconditional' support to the Movement's activism (Aboussi, 2018). The Association for the Defense of Human Rights in Morocco (ASDHOM) also declared its solidarity with the Moroccan demonstrators. ASDHOM participated in the 20F Movement follow-up committees, along with other migrant associations, including the Moroccan left and Amazigh associations, and called for demonstrations in front of the Moroccan Embassy in Paris on October 23, 2011 (Dumont, 2016). Another key player within the 20F Movement committees in Europe was the Justice and Charity[3], an antimonarchist religious movement established in Morocco and having branches in Europe (Dumont, 2016). This religious movement was also very influential among the Moroccan migrants' association, the ATMF (Ibid). Thus, they helped raise international awareness through the organization of protests, distribution of leaflets, press conferences, interviews, publication of papers, and cultural activities (Berrada-Bousta, 2012). However, members of the 20 F Movement abroad were not new activists or comers in politics (Beaugrand and Geisser, 2016). They were experienced activists who had been involved in defending workers' rights or former activists in exile campaigning for human rights (ibid). The youth engaged within the 20F Movement in Europe were Moroccan students planning to return to Morocco upon graduation and hoping to find better social, political and economic conditions (Berrada-Bousta, 2012). This third generation of Moroccan migrants showed less interest to Morocco and so travels less frequently to their home country than their parents or grandparents did (Kreienbrink, 2005). Their perception of Morocco derives from local TV programs and Moroccan

[3] Justice and Charity created branches in Europe under an association called Muslim Participation and Spirituality in Seine-Saint-Denis and which was previously formed by a group of Moroccan students in the 1990s (see Zeghal, 2005).

diaspora cultural programs (Mahieu, 2019a). Moroccan authorities have long represented the country as the "exception" in the MENA region and an example of good governance (Vermeren, 2012). The king's quick reaction to the demands of demonstrators during the Arab Spring further consolidated the official discourse that presented the country as an "exception" to the violence that characterized other Arab countries (ibid). Promising constitutional reforms and the organization of early parliamentary elections, the king managed to absorb social discontent (Drhimeur, 2020d). This is how young Moroccans born in Europe seem to perceive Morocco, as an "exception", as democratic and caring (Berrada-Bousta, 2012). Morocco's pro-active attitude towards its diaspora has tried to shape their imagination, expectations and attitudes. Diaspora policies have indeed tried to replace the old feeling of "emotional resentment" towards Morocco within the first generation of migrants when they felt they were obliged to leave the country, with a feeling that Morocco is a land of opportunities and modern (ibid). And so the 20F Movement had difficulties in mobilizing young people from Moroccan descendants in Europe because diaspora policies and institutions made them lose interest in politics (Berrada-Bousta, 2012). The Moroccan state discourse has started courting Moroccan migrants giving them the feeling that the government actually cared about their rights (de Haas, 2007). In addition, policies like the Summer Universities for Young Moroccans Living Abroad would like to show Morocco as a modernizing and tolerant country (Mahieu, 2019b). These programs serve to mobilize the support of diaspora members and shape their values and perceptions of Morocco (ibid). Moreover, being away from Morocco has produced an affectionate and nostalgic relationship with the home country, which seeks to protect the system more than questioning it (Berrada-Bousta, 2012).

Moreover, on 21 March 2011, under pressure, the king announced that the committee in charge of reviewing the Constitution would consult with the *Moroccan Foreign Committees to Review the Constitution* to address migrants' social and political rights (Ibid). Thus, diaspora organizations were included in the constitutional debate. However, this participatory approach of inclusion "worked to contain the diaspora's practices and not challenge the state in this very turbulent context" (Drhimeur, 2020). The inclusion of the diaspora aimed to ensure that transnational activism does not threaten the stability of the regime (Ibid). Constitutional reforms reaffirmed that voters outside the country can only vote in the constitutional referendum and through a proxy system for the parliamentary elections. It seems that the 2011 constitutional reforms and voting by proxy was the regime's way of calming discontents while preserving control of migrants' political engagement (Brand, 2014). Maintaining voting by proxy for migrants meant "significantly circumscribing both their impact on politics and the effective, as opposed to merely symbolic, import of their transnational citizenship" (Brand, 2014, p. 9) thus promising Moroccan migrants the right to electoral participation and parliamentary representation.

The same year migrants organized demonstrations to protest their exclusion from the parliamentary elections. These demonstrations denounced voting by proxy, and the *Coordination Europe de l'union national de l'initiative syndicale libre* (European coordination of the national union of the free trade union initiative, UNIS-Libre), an association for the promotion of migrants' rights, called it "incompatible with Articles 17 and 18 of the Constitution" (Cited in *L'Economiste*, 2011). While Article 17 states that "the Moroccans residents abroad enjoy the full rights of citizenship, including the right to be electors and eligible. They can be candidates to the elections at the level of lists and of local, regional and national electoral circumscriptions", Article 18 explains that "the public powers work to assure a participation as extensive as possible to Moroccans resident abroad, in the consultative institutions and [institutions] of good governance created by the Constitution or by the law" (Constitution of Morocco, 2011), thus

For the *Collectif des Marocains du monde* (Collective for Moroccans of the World),[4] which brings together 180 associations in Europe, voting by proxy is "an infringement of the principle of the personal right to vote" and "violates the secret nature of the vote" itself (Ibid). These associations call for the right to presentation in the Moroccan parliament to defend their economic, social and cultural interests because they believe Moroccan state diaspora policies and institutions have failed to do so (Ibid). A group of migrants' organizations named *Forum Civil des Marocains d'Europe* (Civil Forum of Moroccans of Europe) called to boycott the constitutional referendum describing the proxy vote as a "humiliating form of participation" (Aboussi, 2018, p. 16). It was a criticism of the lack of democratization and the political regime (Ibid). Moroccan activists in Belgium mobilized under Pole of the Moroccan Democrats in Europe to denounce how the government, led by the winning party PJD (Justice and Development Party), reflected a non-democratic state and announced that they will continue to support the 20F Movement and call for democratic reforms (Ibid). The PJD, which is the leading political party since 2011, had previously refused to take part in the Arab Spring or to challenge the interests of the monarchy (Drhimeur, 2020c).

Migrants have found several formal and informal ways to influence politics in their country of origin. They have formed formal associations and non-governmental organizations. They have organized charity, cultural, and artistic activities to shed light on Morocco's political realities, and raise European countries' awareness on abuses in Morocco (Virkama, 2015). The Internet and social media have also offered Moroccan diaspora new possibilities for cross-border participation. Modern means of communication have enabled the diaspora to play an active role in the 2011 Uprisings (Kadri, 2012). Migrants have seized social media to bypass restrictions and state censorship and diffuse democratic ideas to "contest existing power structures and social inequalities" (Virkama, 2012, p. 76). They have created a virtual public space for debate as they seem being more interested in virtual platforms than participating in traditional party politics (Ibid).

Empowerment through emigration: the case of Migration et Développement and *Immigration, Développement, Démocratie*

Migrants have found new ways to express their Moroccan citizenship. They lobby, form transnational associations, and solidarity associations to influence their lives in their receiving countries and their home country. In 1986, a group of Moroccan migrants in France established *Migration et Développement* (Migration and Development) to help two regions in Morocco hit by severe drought: the Atlas and the Anti-Atlas[5]. The Association also calls for broader political representation of Moroccan migrants and highlights the necessity to address migrants' political rights (Sahraoui, 2015). Migration and Development has been able to forge partnerships with Moroccan and European partners promoting a discourse based on consensual activism, participatory democracy and the need to empower women (Lacroix, 2005a)

It is an example of how emigrants have sought to inject agency and promote democratization in different regions of Morocco, especially those that are politically and economically marginalized (Sahraoui, 2015). This is said, Migration and development's discourse does not challenge the legitimacy of the Moroccan state, rather highlights the need to normalize relationships with the government and to build contractual partnerships (Lacroix, 2005a). By providing

[4] The *Collectif des Marocains du monde* brings together more than 180 associations in Europe, for example the *Coordination europe de l'union national de l'initiative syndicale libre,* Regroupement *des Marocains d'Europe pour une une citoyenneté effective* and the Moroccan development network in Europe, the Association Cap Sud MRE in France.
[5] See https://www.migdev.org

electricity, water, or by helping local communities to set up a cooperative, this association has produced sustainable change because, according to its founder, it has helped to cultivate a culture of protest:

> When we bring water, we need to make the population reflect upon water management, good management practices, no corruption, no misappropriation. Through the implementation of projects we teach something else to people, so after we should not be surprised that people take care of themselves, claim and have demands for us (...) we have cultivated protest, because with development, when someone evolves and open his/her eyes, stands up, this person will demand and claim. For me, the whole development revolves around it (Cited in Sahraoui, 2015, p. 18).

Thus, associations do not only denounce their exclusion from political representation in the parliament; they also seek to empower the most marginalized regions. To provide services and improve the infrastructure, *Immigration, et Développement* has to set up partnerships with local associations, which then become:

> A small revolution at the village level because we destabilize, but in a positive manner, the established order where only the eldest and the village notables give orders. Because an association is democratic. It is true that village associations are diverse and do not resemble each other. Each association has its way of working, depending on the context, depending on the heritage, on the number of persons, the degree of openness etc. There are associations in which the Jemâa itself was formalised but the village notables still manage, but they accept the rules of the game; and there are associations where a symbiosis has been created with youth, because in the villages it is very hard to accept youth, for an old man who is 70, even if his son is 50, for him it is still his son, he cannot sit in the same meeting. Now, in the associations the sons can be there, even women take part. In the beginning it was impossible, in the 1980s. (...) The first reaction of local authorities was creating an association is against the Makhzen12, 'why do you create an association? What do you want to do? Against whom are you organising?' This was the reaction. Organising means against somebody. A lot of water has flowed under the bridge since then but at first it has been difficult (Cited in Sahraoui, 2015, p. 19).

Another example of migrant associations that advocate for voting rights is *Immigration, Développement, Démocratie* (Immigration development, Democracy), a transnational development association created by Moroccan emigrant workers in 1999 in France. It aims to help in the promotion of a strong civil society in Morocco to achieve democracy and sustainable development[6]. This association's creation followed a debate on the necessity of taking part in the development in Morocco within leftist emigrants (Lacroix, 2005b). This debate was initiated by the ATMF (Association of Moroccan Workers of France, ATMF) and CADIME (*Coordination des Associations Marocaines Démocratiques en Europe,* Coordination of Moroccan Democratic Associations in Europe) (ibid). *Immigration, Développement, Démocratie*'s activism to defend migrant workers' demands and rights has enabled it to enlarge its network in Europe Moroccan emigrants and local associations in Morocco (Ibid).

Migrant associations and their local partner associations have sensitized small villages and towns about democratic values, their rights, and ways to mobilize to obtain these rights. Transnational ties have helped to give marginalized voices a high level of agency and question the state's role since these associations have been providing the services and infrastructure that the Moroccan state is supposed to provide (Sahraoui, 2015). Participating in development

[6] See https://idd-reseau.org

projects opens the doors to politics in Morocco to promote local democracy and popular empowerment (Lacroix, 2005b).

A migrant political party:

Migrants form pressure groups, development organizations, networks and debate forums, and they have also sought to create a political party in Morocco called *l'Alliance pour la Patrie* (the Alliance for the Fatherland) (Aboussi, 2018). This party brings together a committee of 130 Moroccans living in 23 different countries abroad and it is led by the same activists who established the Moroccan Foreign Committee to Review the Constitution (Ibid). Being disappointed with how political parties have failed to influence public policies to advance the rights of migrants, *l'Alliance pour la Patrie* seeks to engage the Moroccan diaspora in public and political life and to promote its right to parliamentary presentation (Yawatani, 2011). When explaining the objective of the party, leaders have stated that their "ideal is that Moroccan immigrants, of different ideologies, can collaborate for a societal project of a democratic and modern country" (Cited in Yabiladi.com, 2011). The party wants to include both Moroccans living abroad and living in Morocco in its attempt to defend migrants' political rights but also promote their investment in their home country (Lecourrierdelatlas.com, 2011)

Women association and civil rights:

It must be said however that most of the members and leaders of organizations created by Moroccan migrants are men (Metzger, 2015a). To fill this gap, women migrants have sought to set up organizations in which women play a more prominent role. Pressure from these women migrant associations and women's local associations to improve women's rights, pushed the Moroccan state to reform the Moroccan Family Code that ensures equal rights to women living either in Morocco or abroad, and to reform the Moroccan Nationality Code that grants the right to Moroccan women married to foreigners to transfer their nationality to their children (Elmadmad, 2011). Moroccan women migrants have indeed organized meetings with Moroccan authorities to discuss their contribution to Morocco's development and ways to ensure equality (*L'Economiste*, 2008).

Return migration and democratization:

Research has also shown that having households with a current migrant or a returnee migrant increases demands for political and social change (Tuccio, Wahba and Hamdouch, 2019). Being exposed to democratic norms in European countries, migrants channel these norms and contribute to a change in social and political behaviors and preferences. Furthermore, regions in Morocco with larger migrant returnees had greater turnout in the 2011 parliamentary elections (Ibid). The "Investigation on the Impact of International Migration on Development in Morocco" (IIIMD), produced by the *Association Migration Internationale* (International Association for Migration) with the *International Organization for Migration* and the Ministry for the *Moroccans Residing Abroad and Emigration* conducted a survey in August-October 2013 within 1200 households both with a migrant member or non-migrant member in different regions in Morocco (Hamdouch and Mghari, 2013). The survey included questions on the willingness to produce political and social change. Examples of these questions include (1) "Are you happy about how Morocco is administered?" (2) "We need to make more effort in order to treat everybody equally." And (3) "I think people should be more involved in the decision-making process" (Ibid). Returnees from European countries are more likely to transfer democratic norms to their households and increase demand for social and political change (Tuccio, Wahba and Hamdouch, 2019). The norms that the returnees bring back home expand beyond the household and into the community since they help to introduce values about good citizenship, equality and respect for law (Arab, 2017). As a matter of fact, regions in Morocco with a large concentration of return migrants have

shown that their inhabitants have less confidence in the government and are more likely to have participated in the 2011 elections (Tuccio, Wahba and Hamdouch, 2019).

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to illustrate the evolution of citizenship practices of Moroccans abroad. The first section outlined how the political repression in the 1960s and the 1970s pushed Moroccan political activists to flee to Europe and form organizations and associations to denounce the regime's repression and human rights abuses. Some of these activists joined migrant trade unions in an attempt to defend their rights. This interaction between activists and migrant laborers resulted in the politicization of workers who then no only participated in strikes demanding better conditions but also took part in an apposition to the Moroccan regime from outside. Together, political refugees and migrant workers, they lobbied in European parliaments and unions to pressure the Moroccan regime to initiate democratic reforms. They published articles in the press and found ways to distribute them in Morocco to show solidarity and raise political awareness within society. They also formed transnational and solidarity associations to provide material, financial, legal, and medical help. This pushed Hassan II to adopt a series of reforms to increase freedom of speech and association, release political prisoners, and grant political refugees amnesty and the right to come back home. Once back home, they formed a political party, the Union Nationale des Forces Populaires (National Union of Popular Forces, UNFP). Later the party was allowed to form the *Gouvernement d'Alternance* for the first time in 1998.

The second section highlighted how the political opening in Morocco since the 1990's and the integration of migrants in their receiving countries have provided them with resources to engage in public affairs in their home country. The Moroccan diaspora thus renewed its commitment to political change in Morocco. Migrants used existing organizations or established a new transnational civil society to influence politics in Morocco, promote democratization and defend the constitutionalisation of their rights. They lobbied, reached better levels of organization, wrote articles in the press, protested, participated in discussion forums, visited diaspora institutions to put pressure to gain new powers and gain their political and civil rights. They have also pressured their way onto institutions and committees to initiate political change and inject democratization values.

These actors prefer to engage in development activities in Morocco for many reasons. They are either disenchanted with the political process in Morocco or because they prefer to engage differently (Sahraoui, 2015). Because the regime sought to establish diaspora institutions and adapted a participatory attitude that includes migrants in the revision of the constitution, migrant associations and organization changed their approach towards the state (Dumont, 2016). These associations no longer prefer to confront the monarchy as it was the case during the 1970s; they now prefer consensus and accommodation (Iskander, 2010). It follows a long tradition of including dissident voices to empty them and reconvert them into supporters (Dumont, 2016).

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