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Introduction: revisiting Moroccan migrations

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Since the 1960s, Morocco has evolved into one of the world's leading emigration countries and in many ways migration has permeated Morocco's social, cultural and economic life. However, Morocco's position within Euro-African migration systems seems to be undergoing significant changes since 2000. Although Morocco remains primarily a country of emigration, it is also becoming a destination for migrants and refugees from sub-Saharan Africa and, to some extent, from Europe. The growing presence of immigrants confronts Moroccan society with an entirely new set of social, cultural, political and legal issues around diversity and integration. This special issue explores how continued emigration and increasing immigration is transforming contemporary Moroccan society, with a particular emphasis on the way in which the Moroccan state is dealing with these shifting migratory realities. The analyses highlight how existing migration theories can help to make sense of these transformations and, vice-versa, how the Moroccan case can contribute to migration scholarship. The Moroccan migration experience particularly exemplifies the value and necessity of going beyond Euro-centric biases in migration research that artificially divide the world into 'receiving' and 'sending' countries.

Keywords: emigration; immigration; migration transition; Morocco; theory

1. Moroccan migrations in a North African perspective

Over the second half of the twentieth century, Morocco has become one of the world's major emigration countries. Notwithstanding increasing European immigration restrictions since the early 1970s, Moroccan emigration has shown a striking persistence and has become more diversified, both in terms of destination countries and origin regions within Morocco. Focusing first on France as well as Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany, Moroccan emigrations have diversified to Italy and Spain from the late 1980s and, to a certain extent, to North America. This has consolidated Morocco's position as an emigration country. Since the mid-1990s, Morocco has even overtaken Turkey as the main source of non-EU migration to Europe. Although the 2008 Global Economic Crisis, and particularly high unemployment in southern European destinations, has slowed down the number of departures to a certain extent, emigration is still very high and the roughly 4 million Moroccans living abroad continue to represent vital social, economic and political interests.

Yet, changes in Moroccan migration patterns since 2000 highlight that Morocco is increasingly assuming an intermediate position linking African and Mediterranean migration systems. Besides emigration, Morocco now faces significant transit migration, immigration and settlement of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and elsewhere. This seems to be symptomatic of globalisation and overall increases in Morocco's regional and global connectivity through media, trade and transport links. Although the numbers are still comparatively small, the growing presence of immigrants confronts Moroccan society with an entirely new set of social and legal issues around diversity and integration, typical for immigration countries. This has engendered new debates on national identity, human rights and religious diversity, as well as triggered policy changes. Challenging the conventional view of Morocco as a 'sending country', the question arises whether these changes are a harbinger for a future migration transition in which Morocco might witness increasing immigration alongside a possible decreasing emigration potential.

In order to explore this further, the authors of this special issue investigate six different dimensions of how recent changes in migration patterns have affected Moroccan society, with a particular emphasis on the way in which states have dealt with changing migration realities. The first three articles deal with Moroccan emigration to Europe. Nina Sahraoui's article 'Acquiring "Voice" Through "Exit": How Moroccan Emigrants Became a Driving Force of Political and Socio-economic Change' looks at diaspora policies – the traditional focus of Moroccan migration policies – and argues that emigrant communities have over time undergone a process of political empowerment through their stay abroad. In 'Language as a New Instrument of Border Control: The Regulation of Marriage Migration from Morocco to Germany', Miriam Gutekunst offers an ethnographic insight into the legal obstacles Moroccan marriage migrants face when they seek to reunite with their partners in Germany, which is illustrative of attempts by other northwest European destination countries to curtail family migration. Dominique Jolivet's study 'Times of Uncertainty in Europe: Migration Feedback Loops in Four Moroccan Regions' assesses the extent to which the 2008 Global Economic Crisis has affected Moroccans' migration aspirations.

The other three articles shift the focus to Morocco as a destination country. In 'Sub-Saharan Students in Morocco: Determinants, Everyday Life and Future Plans of a Highly Skilled Migrant Group', Johara Berriane investigates the geopolitics of student mobility in West Africa, with a particular emphasis on the aspirations and life experiences of sub-Saharan students in Morocco. In 'Immigration and *Pensée d'Etat*: Moroccan Migration Policy Changes as Transformation of "Geopolitical Culture"', Myriam Cherti and Michael Collyer discuss Morocco's 2014 regularisation programme for irregular migrants, and in particular how changing migration policies are related to Morocco's geopolitical reorientation to the African continent. The final article, 'French Migrants in Morocco: From a Desire for Elsewhereness to an Ambivalent Reality', by Catherine Therrien and Chloé Pellegrini, shifts the attention to the (much ignored) experiences of European migrants living in Morocco.

This special issue emerged from a workshop organised by the Euro-Mediterranean University (Fez) and the International Migration Institute (Oxford) in Fez, Morocco, on 22–24 May 2014. Entitled 'Moroccan Migrations: Transformations, Transitions and Future Prospects', the aim of the workshop and this special issue was to explore recent migration trends from and towards Morocco, and how these changes are simultaneously affecting and affected by general social, cultural, economic and political transformations of Moroccan society. Besides providing an overview of long-term Moroccan migration trends (in this editorial), the articles explore (i) how shifting Moroccan migration dynamics are related to changing perceptions and aspirations of

Morocco's emigrants and immigrants, but also (ii) how migrants use their agency to defy government constraints, as may be seen, for instance, in the continuation of Moroccan migration to Europe despite immigration restrictions, or the de facto long-term settlement of sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco despite their frequent labelling as 'transit' migrants by governments, the media and researchers. While these examples highlight that migration is a partly autonomous social process that often escapes or circumvents state restrictions, the articles also illustrate (iii) how changing migratory realities on the ground as well as broader geopolitical considerations have compelled the Moroccan state to adopt and adapt its own emigration and immigration policies.

Through an analysis along these three key dimensions, this special issue pursues the broader theoretical ambition of relating the particular Moroccan case to a larger conceptual effort under-way in migration scholarship, that is, to reconceptualise migration as an intrinsic part of larger processes of social transformation and development rather than as a 'problem to be solved' (IMI 2006). This is important because many analyses of migration in Morocco, North Africa and the non-Western world in general are still mired in naive 'push–pull' models, which tend to portray migration as consequence of underdevelopment, poverty and conflict. This mode of analysis is also evident in media coverage of the tragic spike in drownings in the Mediterranean in spring 2015. This is at odds with increasing evidence on the highly complex, nonlinear and counter-intuitive relation between development and migration. For instance, going against power-ful preconceptions, 'development' through economic growth, increasing education and infrastruc-ture improvement often spurs emigration partly because it increases people's aspirations and capabilities to cross borders (de Haas 2010).

In the remainder of this editorial, we will therefore not only seek to explore how contemporary migration theories – particularly those on the role of development, policies, agency and aspira-tions in migration processes – can help us understand recent trends in Moroccan migration, but also how the specific Moroccan case enriches migration theory. This is particularly relevant to remove the still predominant Euro- or Western-centric bias in migration research, where most debates and theories on migration and 'integration' are informed by the experiences of a handful of 'migration destinations' in the Global North, notably the USA, the UK, Germany and France, and largely disregard the dynamics of and experience with migration in countries in the Global South. It is therefore important to understand and analyse the experiences of countries like Morocco that are labelled 'origin' or 'transit' countries from a European perspective, but that are also immigration countries in their own right.

2. Moroccan emigration

2.1. *Morocco, a country of accelerating and diversifying emigration*

Since Moroccan independence in 1956, emigration has undergone fundamental transformations and increased in overall complexity and diversity. Today, Morocco is one of the world's leading emigration countries, with the global Moroccan diaspora estimated at around 4 million (out of a total population of about 34 million; this includes second and third generations). Moroccan contemporary emigration patterns are deeply rooted in colonialism (de Haas 2014). Algeria's colonisation by France in 1830 prompted Moroccans to engage in increasing seasonal and circular labour migration to Algeria. Morocco's own colonial era (1912–56) marked the beginning of migration to France, mainly in the context of industrial work and recruitment into the French army in the First and Second World Wars. When France stopped recruiting Algerian

workers during the Algerian War of Independence (1954–62), recruitment and migration of factory and mine workers from Morocco was boosted.

Yet, post-colonial migration was modest compared with the decade 1962–72, when strong economic growth in Western Europe resulted in high demand for low-skilled labour. Labour recruitment agreements with West Germany (1963), France (1963), Belgium (1964), and the Netherlands (1969) led to a diversification of Moroccan emigration beyond France, dramatically expanding its magnitude and geographical scope. Between 1965 and 1972, the estimated number of registered Moroccans living in the main European destination countries increased tenfold, from 30,000 to 300,000, further increasing to 700,000 in 1982, 1.6 million in 1998, and 3.1 million in 2012 (de Haas 2014).

While Moroccan emigration has been overwhelmingly oriented towards Europe, substantial numbers of Moroccans have also emigrated to other Arab countries and Israel. Since the 1970s, approximately 120,000 Moroccans have migrated to Libya and several tens of thousands to the oil-rich Gulf countries to work on temporary contracts. Moroccan Jews followed a distinct pattern, emigrating in massive numbers to France, Israel, and Canada (Québec) after the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 and the Six Day War of 1967. As a result, Morocco's Jewish population dwindled from an approximate 250,000 to the current number of about 5000.

The 1973 Oil Crisis prompted European governments to freeze recruitment, while the ensuing economic recessions (lasting well into the 1980s), the relocation of labour-intensive industries to low-wage countries and the shutdown of mines in Europe led to soaring unemployment among migrant workers. However, the increasing migration restrictions put in place by European states did not lead to massive returns, but instead interrupted circulation. This had the unintended effect of stimulating the permanent settlement of Moroccan workers in Europe. In the same period, the economic situation in Morocco deteriorated and, following two failed *coups d'état* in 1971 and 1972, the country entered a period of political instability and repression, further encouraging permanent settlement of migrants in Europe.

Settlement was followed by large-scale family reunification. This largely explains continued migration to France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany over the 1970s and 1980s despite high unemployment and the destination countries' official aim to curb migration. High naturalisation rates and low return migration compared to other immigrant groups in Europe (only about one quarter of Moroccans who emigrated between 1981 and 2009 returned to Morocco) further solidified the permanency of Moroccan presence in Europe.

From the mid-1980s onwards, Italy and then Spain emerged as new destinations for Moroccan workers, mainly as a consequence of high demand for (often irregular, and increasingly also female) migrant labour in agriculture, construction, care and other lower skilled services. Initially, Moroccan migration to Southern Europe had a predominantly circular character, as Moroccans could travel freely back and forth. However, as with the guest-worker generation, migration restrictions and border controls would interrupt this. After Italy and Spain introduced visa requirements in 1990–91 – in compliance with joining the Schengen Area – Moroccans started to overstay their visas or to migrate illegally across the Strait of Gibraltar. Despite border controls, irregular migration continued, primarily because of sustained labour demand in southern Europe and repeated regularisations by Italian and Spanish governments that granted legal status to hundreds of thousands of unauthorised migrants.

While migration of low-skilled workers to Italy and Spain still continues today, it is complemented by more recent and growing emigration of Moroccan high school and university graduates to the USA and the French-speaking Canadian province of Québec. To a significant extent, this reflects structural development trends in Morocco, as manifested in the increasingly urban

and literate character of Moroccan society. As this rising emigration of skilled workers and business people testifies, the stereotypical image of the economically marginalised Moroccan migrant 'guest worker' is less and less tenable. Among these new Moroccan emigrants, there is also an increasing proportion of women migrating independently. For instance, more and more Moroccan women work as domestic workers, nannies, cleaners, or in agriculture and small industries in southern Europe. This contrasts with the situation before the 1990s, when most Moroccan women migrated as their spouses' or parents' dependents in the framework of family reunification.

The 2008 Global Economic Crisis slowed down Moroccan emigration, as high unemployment among migrants living in Europe, and especially in Spain (Khaldi 2014), led to fewer departures and increased temporary returns. However, the 2008 crisis did not lead to the major drop in Moroccan emigration that some had expected. Immigration restrictions play a major role in explaining low return rates: returnees were mainly Moroccans with European citizenship or permanent residency, while those with temporary residence or without legal status have tended to stay put in countries such as Spain and Italy despite unemployment and economic insecurities, because they feared that they might not be allowed to move back to Europe after a few years.

In retrospect, Morocco's post-independence emigration experience can be characterised along three main dimensions that will be further explored in this special issue: (i) persistent, accelerating and diversifying emigration, notwithstanding European immigration restrictions; (ii) the changing identities and growing political engagement of Moroccan migrants of the second and third generations; and (iii) the recent decrease in emigration since 2008, accompanied by growing, albeit limited returns of Moroccan migrants.

2.2. *Policy restrictions and the diversification of Moroccan emigration*

The first dimension of Moroccan emigration has been its persistent growth and diversification since the 1960s. Figure 1 illustrates the coexistence of increasing European migration restrictions
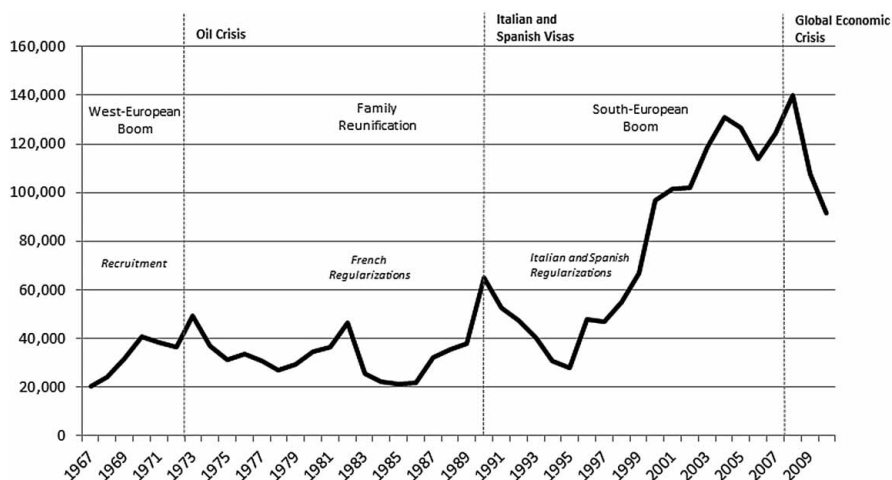

Figure 1. Yearly Moroccan emigration to Europe, 1967–2010.
Source: International Migration Institute, University of Oxford, DEMIG C2C database, www.imi.ox.ac.uk.

and growing Moroccan emigration. Paradoxically, the increasingly permanent nature of settlement in Europe is the partial result of European policy restrictions, as stringent entry rules have prevented migrants from circulating between origin and destination (De Mas 1990). This reflects broader findings in the research literature that migration restrictions interrupt circulation as well as undercut the naturally high responsiveness of migration to economic cycles (Czaika and de Haas 2014).

Although they have not substantially curbed migration, policy restrictions can have powerful effects on migration dynamics through making access to migration opportunities increasingly selective. In her contribution to this special issue, Miriam Gutekunst illustrates this by exploring the legal obstacles Moroccan marriage migrants face when they seek to join their partners in Germany. Since the German ban on recruitment and the introduction of visa requirements for North African migrants in the mid-1970s, marriage migration has become the most important legal pathway for Moroccans to migrate to Germany – as has been the case for other destinations such as France, Belgium, the Netherlands and, more recently, Italy and Spain.

Adopting an ethnological approach, Gutekunst explores the impact of a specific policy measure – the 2007 introduction of a German language certificate for marriage migrants – on the selection of migrants by the German state. Although Germany's official justification for the 2007 language requirement has been to facilitate integration, the author's analysis shows that the language certificate leads above all to the hierarchisation (increasing selection) of marriage migrants according to their educational and financial background. For Gutekunst, this signals that the utilitarian logic of a neoliberal migration management has also found its way into the control of marriage migration.

The 2007 policy change has also led to the commodification of German language acquisition in Morocco, triggering the emergence of a new market for language certificates that seems part and parcel of the global 'migration industry'. In parallel, cultural institutions such as language schools have become an integral part of Germany's border control system. Herewith, Gutekunst's article contributes to the literature on the externalisation and outsourcing of migration management to private actors. Her account illustrates that policy restrictions, rather than curbing immigration, increase the *selectivity* of migration by excluding the poor and uneducated from migration opportunities – since the intermediate structures that continue to facilitate migration (such as language schools) mainly benefit the relatively better-off and those who already have strong network connections to those living in Europe.

Policy restrictions have also partly accelerated the geographical diversification of Moroccan emigration away from the traditional destinations of France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany (see Figure 2). Facing increasing immigration restrictions, Moroccan migrants have adapted their destinations – since the 1980s, low-skilled migrants have emigrated mostly to Southern Europe, while more recently, high-skilled migrants have increasingly settled in North America. Today, Moroccan migrant communities can be found around the world (see Figure 3), including in North America, Asia and Australia, and the degree of spatial diversification of Moroccan emigration is much higher than for countries such as Algeria and Tunisia (Natter 2014a).

Notwithstanding this diversification, Moroccan migrants today remain concentrated in a relatively small number of destination countries such as France, Spain and Italy (see Figure 4). Such concentration also occurs at the regional level within destination countries, with the lion's share of Moroccan emigrants living in regions such as France's northern mining area and southwestern agricultural areas, Germany's coal mines and steel industry areas around the Ruhr and Frankfurt,
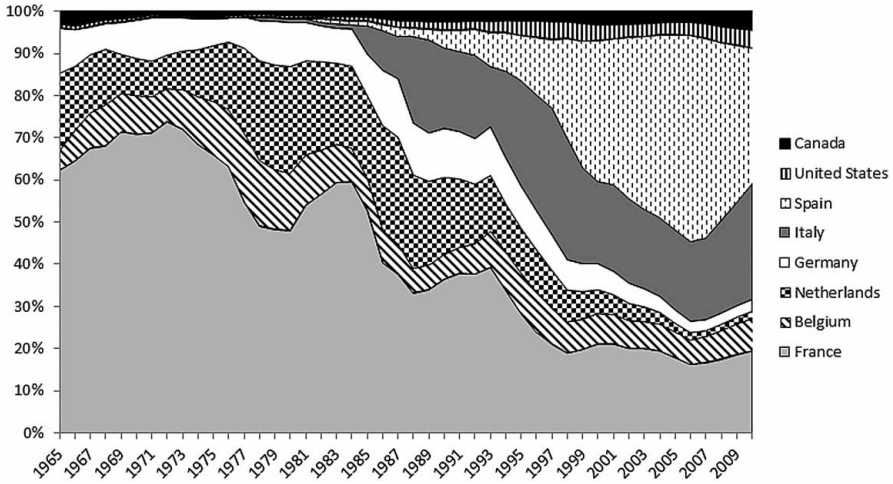
Figure 2. Yearly Moroccan emigration, by main destination, 1965–2010.
Source: International Migration Institute, University of Oxford, DEMIG C2C database, www.imi.ox.ac.uk.
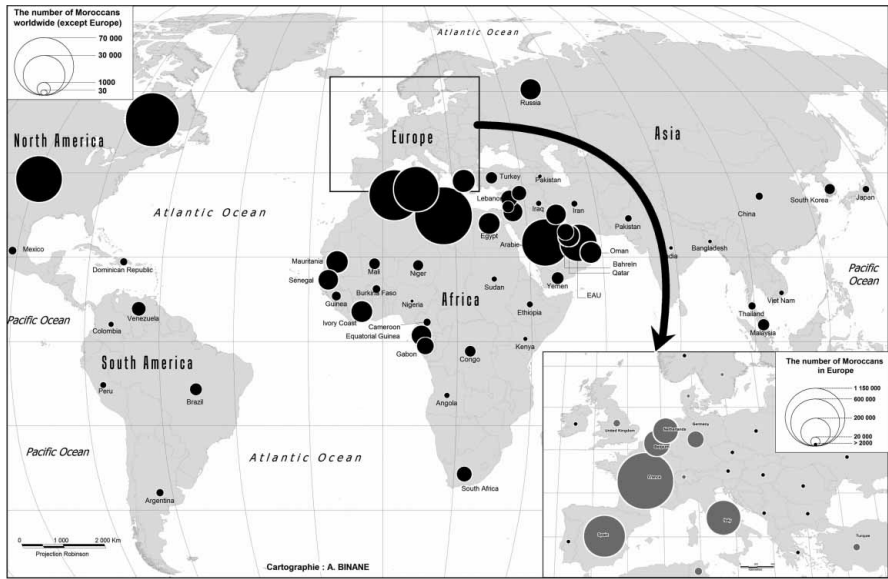
Figure 3. Global geographical diversification of Moroccan emigrants, 2012.
Source: Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate for Consular and Social Affairs (2012).

the Randstad area in the Netherlands, the Brussels area in Belgium, Québec in Canada, Catalonia and Andalusia in Spain and the north of Italy (Berriane 2014a).

Also within Morocco, particular regions tend to specialise in migration towards specific destinations. Migration to northwestern Europe mainly originates from rural, Berber-speaking areas in the northern Rif, the southwestern Sous and the southern oases. New emigration to Italy and Spain
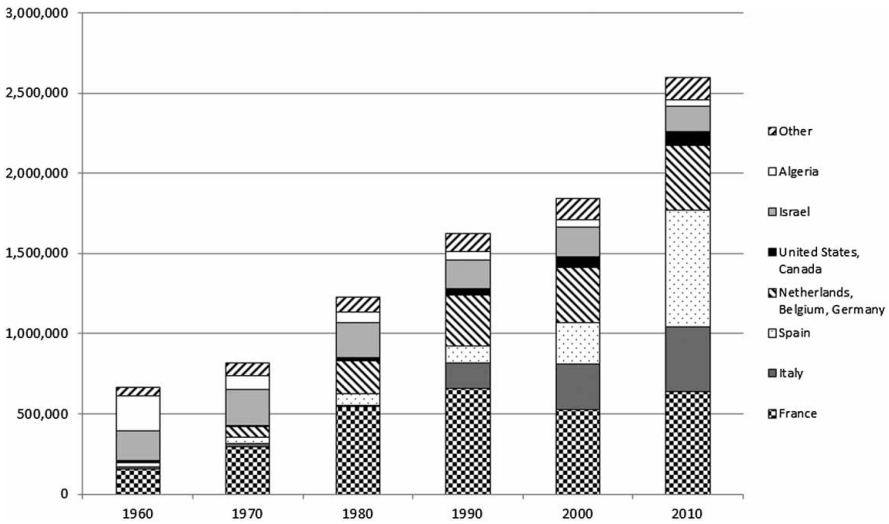
Figure 4. Total Moroccan-born emigrant population, 1960–2010.
Source: World Bank (1960-2000) and National Sources (2010).

since the 1980s has on the other hand emerged from regions that used to predominantly feature internal migration (Bencherifa 1996), such as the areas around Khenifra or Khouribga. This 'specialisation' of origin areas is also replicated on a smaller scale: within the Rif, for instance, migrants from the Kebdabna, Bni Sidel or Bni Oulichek communities have migrated to Germany, while those from other communities in the same region have settled mostly in the Netherlands. This echoes Mabogunje's (1970, 12–13) theoretical observation that in established migration systems, flows of information lead to 'almost organised migratory flows from particular villages to particular cities' and that these dynamics encourage migration along certain geographical pathways, resulting in 'a set of relatively stable exchanges … yielding an identifiable geographical structure that persists across space and time'.

2.3.   Changing identities and transnational engagement of the Moroccan 'diaspora'

A second dimension of Moroccan emigration has been the changing identity of Moroccan emigrants, and particularly of second and third generations, and the implications this had for migrants' political engagement and the politics of Morocco and European destination states. While the first generation of the 1960s and 1970s has tended to remain strongly oriented towards Moroccan society and culture, the second and third generations identify with their European lands of birth while retaining strong ties with Morocco. This double cultural identification is not necessarily contradictory, as a continuously strong identification with Moroccan society does not necessarily preclude a high degree of integration in societies of settlement. This supports findings in the migration literature that 'integration' and transnational identification do not have to be substitutes, but can under certain circumstances be mutually reinforcing (Guarnizo, Portes, and Haller 2003; Snel, Engbersen, and Leerkes 2006).

Permanent settlement, the transnational identification and increasing education and self-consciousness of second and third generations has, however, compelled the Moroccan state to

change its attitude and policies towards what it now calls the Moroccan 'diaspora'. Since the 1960s, the Moroccan government has encouraged emigration, as remittances were expected to reduce poverty, unemployment and discontent, and thus function as a political safety valve (De Mas 1978). At the same time, the government attempted to maintain tight control of Moroccans living in Europe and discouraged their integration into receiving societies, including naturalisation. Moroccan migrants were also warned from joining trade unions or political parties, and, hence, from forming an opposition force from abroad. However, over the 1990s, with the growing up of a second generation, Moroccan state institutions became increasingly aware that these policies alienated migrants and, particularly, that this may endanger vital remittance transfers (de Haas 2007).

As Nina Sahraoui argues in her contribution to this special issue, the Moroccan state therefore changed policy course in the early 1990s. Drawing on interviews with migrant community leaders and Moroccan government officials, her article analyses the long-term evolution of the relationship between the Moroccan state and its 'diaspora' – from controlling to courting its citizens abroad. Along with the dismantling of the control apparatus in Europe, this translated into a more positive attitude towards naturalisation and dual citizenship. These changes paralleled a certain liberalisation of Moroccan politics and society during this period, which also implied more freedom for migrants to establish organisations. Financial reforms made it easier to transfer money and to hold foreign currency accounts. In 1990, a ministry for Moroccans residing abroad was created next to the *Fondation Hassan II pour les Marocains résidant à l'étranger*. In 2007, King Mohammed VI further established the Council for the Moroccan Community Abroad (CCME). Today, political actors in Morocco are discussing the modalities of granting Moroccans abroad more political rights through direct representation in Parliament. Alongside accelerating emigration over the 1990s and 2000s, these policies seem to have contributed to a major surge in remittances to $6.9 billion in 2012, equal to about 7% of Morocco's gross national product, and about six times official development aid (de Haas 2014).

The changing and more transnational identification of second and third generations is also seen in their increasing, active engagement in public and political debates both in Morocco and in Europe. In Europe, first-generation migrants have generally occupied a marginal political position, as they often saw their migration as temporary. In electoral campaigns, right-wing and, particularly, extreme right-wing parties have since the 1980s consistently exploited the migration issue and made use of Moroccans (alongside other low-skilled, predominantly Muslim, migrant groups) for political purposes. The Netherlands is a particular case in point, where the 'Moroccan problem' has become a standard expression in political discourse across the mainstream political spectrum to denounce weak cultural and economic integration of migrant communities (Refass 2014). Yet, new generations of well-integrated Moroccans abroad have become more assertive in exercising their active political rights, no longer positioning themselves exclusively as political *subjects*, but also as political actors. Their increasing representation on electoral lists as candidates, as well as growing local and national election turnout rates among new generations (Hargreaves 1991; Jacobs, Martiniello, and Rea 2002), exemplify their rising political consciousness and growing presence in the political landscape of European societies.

Simultaneously, and illustrating the broader argument that 'integration' in destination societies and transnational engagement can be complementary, Moroccan migrants' involvement in the Moroccan public and political space has intensified over time. As Nina Sahraoui's case study of the French-Moroccan association 'Migration et Développement' in this special issue shows, transnational involvement of Moroccan emigrants has injected agency and encouraged democratisation processes in economically and politically marginalised regions in Morocco. Sahraoui uses

her article as a platform to critically engage with Hirschmann's dialectic between migrants' 'voice' and migrants' 'exit' (Hirschman 1970, 1993), which suggests that faced with discontent, people either stay and raise their voice or leave through migrating. Overcoming this dichotomy, Sahraoui argues that Moroccan migrant communities abroad have undergone a process of political empowerment and succeeded in getting a 'voice' *through* their 'exit'. For the predominantly unskilled migrants coming from rural areas and mostly belonging to Berber groups, emigration redefined power relationships with the Morocco state. Thus, their settlement and integration abroad has empowered Moroccan migrants and their descendants by enhancing their access to resources and their capacity to interfere in political processes 'back home'.

2.4.   *Changing perceptions of Europe and migration aspirations*

The third dimension of change discussed here is the complex migratory consequences of the 2008 Global Economic Crisis. Although emigration slowed down and returns increased moderately, increasing unemployment did not lead to the expected major drop in Moroccan emigration, which instead continued throughout the economic recession (see Figure 1). This partly parallels the scenario of the mid 1970s, during which the economic crisis and halt in recruitment interrupted the circulation of migrants. Also, this reflects more general findings in the literature that migration restrictions often reduce return rates, interrupt circulation and stimulate long-term settlement and subsequent family migration (Castles, de Haas, and Miller 2013; Czaika and de Haas 2014).

In order to assess the extent to which the 2008 crisis may indicate a possible decline in Morocco's future emigration potential, it is important to understand whether and how the crisis and the political–economic situations in Europe and Morocco manifested in Moroccans' perceptions of migration. In her contribution to this special issue, Dominique Jolivet investigates how the 2008 Global Economic Crisis and the changing opportunities for migrants in Europe have impacted migration aspirations of non-migrants in Morocco. Drawing on a survey of 2000 non-migrants and 80 in-depth interviews in four Moroccan regions (the Todgha Valley, the Central Plateau, Tangier and the Eastern High Atlas), her paper provides crucial insights on how 'feedback processes' affect migration from the perspective of migrants' origin regions. More precisely, this study explores how information and ideas about migration opportunities, conveyed through migrant networks or the media, can either stimulate or deter people to migrate along particular geographical pathways (Mabogunje 1970).

Like Gutekunst's analysis of the increasing selectivity of family migration, Jolivet's article also contributes to a more critical understanding of the role of networks and information flows, not only in increasing migration (which is the usual assumption in the literature) but also in potentially discouraging migration. Her findings suggest that migration aspirations have indeed shifted in reaction to feedback mechanisms, through a growing awareness of declining opportunities in Europe. This fundamentally ambiguous image of Europe, however, does not necessarily undermine migration aspirations altogether and emigration is still considered by many as a means to improve individual wellbeing and the economic situation of the family (Aderghal 2014; Berriane 2014b).

However, the same feedback mechanisms can lead to distinct outcomes depending on particular migration histories, migration destinations and locally available opportunities within different regions. Particularly in more prosperous and urban regions, such as Tangier and its surroundings, and among relatively advantaged socio-economic groups, building a future in Morocco has recently emerged as an attractive alternative to emigration. These regions may represent a declin-

ing emigration potential, partially because of the growing opportunities in some economic sectors in Morocco and the people's awareness of the difficulties faced by emigrants (Berriane et al. 2012). Yet, in view of the still large differences in terms of wages, quality of public amenities and human rights, the attraction of Europe, despite unemployment and discrimination, remains strong in many regions. This particularly applies to the most marginal and impoverished regions such as isolated villages in the Oriental High Atlas around Tounfite or in the proximity of Oulmes, which have so far experienced only low emigration precisely because of their isolation and high poverty rates. Particularly in these regions, improved infrastructure, increasing education and modest income growth are likely to continue fueling people's aspirations and capabilities to emigrate at least in the near future.

3. Moroccan immigration

3.1. *Morocco, a destination in its own right for diverse migrant populations*

Alongside these changes in emigration trends and patterns, Morocco has since the mid-1990s also evolved into a destination for migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and elsewhere. Although immigration is still modest compared to the large-scale nature of Moroccan emigration, this is a significant shift from the past. An increasing number of migrants from sub-Saharan and other African countries travel to Morocco on visas to pursue studies and to find jobs in unskilled and skilled trades. West African and, more recently, some Filipina women migrate to Morocco as domestic servants and nannies for wealthier Moroccan families, and there is also a modest, but growing presence of Chinese traders in Moroccan cities. In addition, growing numbers of Europeans have settled in Morocco as workers, entrepreneurs, or retirees. Some European labour immigrants, particularly from Spain, have come to Morocco since the onset of the Global Economic Crisis in 2008 (de Haas 2014).

While the number of students and workers from African countries such as Senegal and Mali (who enjoy visa-free travel to Morocco) has been increasing, the African immigrant population in Morocco also includes asylum seekers and refugees fleeing conflict and oppression in Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Cameroun or Nigeria, and most recently also from Syria and Iraq (UNHCR 2015). Indeed, Morocco has seen a growing presence of Syrian refugees since 2011 and in 2014, the Moroccan state granted legal status to more than 5200 of them.

A substantial number of, predominantly African, migrants use Morocco as a staging post before attempting to enter Europe. These migrants often enter Morocco from Algeria, at the border east of Oujda, after crossing the Sahara over land. Once in Morocco, they may attempt to enter one of the two Spanish enclaves located on Morocco's northern coast. Yet, many migrants failing or not venturing to enter Europe prefer to settle in Morocco as a second-best option rather than return to their more unstable and substantially poorer origin countries. Tens of thousands have settled in cities like Casablanca, Rabat, and Fez on a semi-permanent basis, where they find jobs in the informal service sector, domestic households, petty trade, and construction (Berriane et al. 2013). The presence of immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa has also increased religious diversity and, to a certain extent, revitalised Christian life in some cities of a predominantly Muslim country.

Since 2000, immigration has furthermore emerged as a topic of academic and political interest in Morocco. This has been fostered by the growing interest of European governments in indirectly exerting control over Morocco's borders in order to prevent irregular migration from Morocco

and sub-Saharan Africa into Europe. However, although 'transit' migration from Africa to Europe has dominated Moroccan discourse on immigration over the past decade, insights from empirical research, including articles in this special issue, show that the reality of immigration into Morocco is much more diverse and complex (Berriane et al. 2013).

In this special issue, we focus on three main dimensions of immigration to Morocco that have affected social transformations: (i) the consolidation of Morocco as a destination for students and workers from sub-Saharan African and, particularly, francophone West African countries; (ii) Morocco as a de facto place of residence for irregular migrants and refugees from the wider region, triggering policy changes and growing political awareness within Morocco's public sphere; and (iii) the growth of immigration from other world regions such as Asia and the Middle East, but especially from Europe in the wake of the 2008 Global Economic Crisis.

3.2.   *Morocco as a destination for sub-Saharan workers and students*

The first dimension of immigration to Morocco is the growing number of West African migrants who come to Morocco to study and work. These migrations are not new, but rooted in much older patterns of pre-colonial trans-Saharan mobility and connectivity through conquest, trade and pilgrimage (Berriane et al. 2013). Ever since independence, the Moroccan state has had a strategic interest in maintaining strong economic, cultural and political connections with West African states such as Senegal and Mali, and these links have been reinforced over the past years.

The image of sub-Saharan migration to Morocco as a new phenomenon is therefore partly a misperception, as is shown in Johara Berriane's contribution to this special issue, in which she explores student mobility in West Africa. While the Moroccan state has encouraged sub-Saharan student migration since the 1970s by providing scholarships, numbers have been rising rapidly especially over the past decade, to reach more than 8500 sub-Saharan students enrolled in Moroccan higher education in 2013–14. This growth is not only the result of the good reputation of Morocco's higher education system and the fact that student visas remain for many the only legal emigration pathway. It should also be understood in the context of Morocco's intensified political, economic and cultural links with sub-Saharan Africa that is partly guided by its diplomacy on the Western Sahara issue, the growing economic weight of West Africa for Moroccan firms and Morocco's religious role in the wider region.

In contrast to the existing, Euro-centric, literature on student mobility that is often framed as an essentially 'South–North' migration, Berriane's article provides crucial insights into how student migration operates in a 'South–South', intra-African setting. Based on her analysis of two surveys among 150 sub-Saharan students and 16 semi-structured interviews, Berriane shows the importance of transnational networks (mostly family links between the origin country and Morocco) in fostering the wish and making concrete plans to study in Morocco. Religion and cultural proximity also often play a role. However, while students are officially and politically 'welcomed' in Morocco and do have high expectations of their stay there, their daily struggles are similar to those of irregular sub-Saharan migrants, as they face frequent racism and xenophobia. These experiences of exclusion – be it on the street, in the neighbourhood or at university – reinforce their multi-layered identities as African, black, Muslim, or Christian, and often encourage their eventual retreat into sub-Saharan communities.

Berriane's article also reveals that sub-Saharan students often have similar migration aspirations to other migrants, since many conceive their stay in Morocco as part of a long-term migratory plan to work or pursue further studies abroad. However, many end up staying in Morocco to work in the French-language press or the telecommunication sector. This mirrors

the insights offered by interviews with 50 sub-Saharan migrants analysed by Myriam Cherti and Michael Collyer. Their article in this special issue reveals that with the passage of time, migrants tend to increase social, economic and cultural ties through friendship, study, work, trade, love, marriage, language acquisition and other forms of adaptation and integration, herewith increasing the likelihood of gradually settling in Morocco. These observations challenge two common approaches in migration scholarship, namely to portray African migrants in Morocco as 'transit' or 'trapped' migrants and to separate student, irregular, refugee and labour migration in the study of migration aspirations and determinants.

3.3. *Social and policy responses to African settlement in Morocco*

The second key dimension of recent immigration is Morocco's evolution into a de facto place of residence for irregular migrants and refugees from Africa and the Middle East, which is accompanied by the growing political salience of these migrations in the Moroccan public sphere. With the closure and militarisation of Europe's southern borders since the 1990s, African migrants have used Morocco as a transit space from which they attempt to enter Europe. Partly coinciding with Europe's economic recession and declining attractiveness for migrants, more and more migrants however prefer to prolong their stay in Morocco or even permanently settle there.

Although immigration is still very low compared to the large-scale nature of Moroccan emigration, the growing presence of immigrants confronts Moroccan society with social and legal questions typical for immigration countries. Ambivalence best describes the reaction of Moroccan politics and society towards these new migrants. On the one hand, Moroccan society and politics seem to adopt stereotypical responses to growing immigration in which xenophobia (especially towards migrants from sub-Saharan Africa), the fear of social downgrading and migrants 'stealing' jobs, as well as cultural alienation (especially through the growing Christian communities) are widespread. On the other hand, Moroccan lawyers, migrants' associations, religious institutions and human-rights NGOs constitute a vibrant civil society that has mobilised around migrants' rights over the past decade. Next to providing everyday support and assistance to refugees and migrants, these groups have also played a major role in making racism, xenophobia and discrimination public (both domestically and internationally) and, hence, an increasing concern for the Moroccan state, also in terms of its human rights record and image abroad (Ustubici 2014).

In developing its immigration policy, the Moroccan state has over the past decade adopted a restrictive, security-based approach, largely emulating dominant European approaches and accompanying discourses. This manifested in the law 02–03 of 2003 (Natter 2014b), passed in the aftermath of the May 2003 terror attacks in Casablanca, as well as in frequent raids and repeated illegal expulsions of migrants, including refugees, to Algeria and Mauretania. Partly in response to increasing immigration as well as growing criticism from Morocco's civil society of the abuse of migrant rights, in September 2013 King Mohammed VI took his European interlocutors by surprise when he announced a new, more strongly human-rights-based migration policy. Its centrepiece was a regularisation programme that granted legal status to nearly 18,000 irregular (mainly African but also European) migrants between 1 January and 31 December 2014. In 2015, the new National Strategy on Immigration and Asylum was enacted, announcing the integration of migrants regularised in 2014, as well as the elaboration of three new laws on migration, asylum and trafficking to replace the 2003 law.

In their contribution to this special issue, Myriam Cherti and Michael Collyer understand this most recent and unexpected policy move as a manifestation of Morocco's deepening diplomatic

relations with African countries. Referring to Sayad's argument that migration policies reveal the 'pensée d'Etat', that is, how the state thinks of itself (Sayad 1999), and drawing on O Tuathail's (2006) concept of 'geopolitical cultures', they interpret Morocco's new migration policy as a signal of the more general reorientation of Moroccan politics – away from a reactive, EU-driven agenda towards a proactive policy that reflects the country's broader international priorities, especially towards its key African allies. Signalling greater respect for migrants' rights, most of whom come from African countries, Morocco's new immigration policy is now more in line with its increasing geopolitical interest to maintain good relations towards the South. This policy reorientation also resonates with the idea that changing migration realities have challenged Morocco's self-image as a quintessential emigration country 'where everybody wants to leave' to gradually create more space to accommodate the self-image of Morocco as an immigration society.

3.4. *European migration and settlement*

The third immigration trend is the diversification of the origin of Morocco's immigrants. Although small in scale, there is a growing presence of Asian and Middle Eastern migrants. Most prominently however, European migration to Morocco has steadily increased since 2000 and many Europeans actually reside and work in Morocco without a residence permit, prolonging their tourist status through repeated exits and re-entries. Yet, their presence is rarely subject to public or political debate in Morocco, which again seems to reflect the Euro-centric nature of dominant migration discourses.

In the last contribution to this special issue, Catherine Therrien and Chloé Pellegrini provide specific insights into the understudied but numerically important phenomenon of French migration to Morocco. Today, nearly 50,000 French migrants live in Morocco, making it the largest migrant community in the country, ahead of sub-Saharan immigrant communities. Based on participant observation and in-depth interviews with 38 French migrants in Morocco, the authors explore migrants' narratives and reveal that this type of migration is guided by two dominant aspirations. First, migrants demonstrate an aspiration for a better quality of life, encompassing not only economic but also intangible factors. Second, they exhibit a desire for 'elsewhereness' which is driven by two motivations – seeking self-fulfilment and seeking escape.

The interviews also show that social relations between French migrants and Moroccans are anything but unproblematic, be it in private or professional contexts. The authors explore the different adaptation and integration strategies of French migrants, ranging from living 'with' or 'among' Moroccans to living 'within a bubble' or 'in parallel'. These reveal the different ways in which French migrants in Morocco manage the encounter and set boundaries with the Moroccan 'other'. This micro-sociological study brings to the surface an often overlooked aspect of Morocco's changing migratory model (and migration studies more generally), namely the growth of North–South migration and the social integration issues and tensions emerging from it.

4. Revisiting migration trends and theories – which way forward?

Over the entire post-independence period, Morocco has conceived of itself as a country of emigration. Political discourse and migration policies were almost exclusively geared towards Moroccan emigrants and the scholarship on Moroccan migration has likewise focused primarily on issues such as the recruitment of workers, remittances, diaspora engagement or migrants' integration in Europe. Since 2000, immigration to Morocco has emerged as a topic of political and

academic interest, although primarily dominated by a Euro-centric perception of Morocco as a transit country for sub-Saharan migrants supposedly on their way to Europe. However, as the articles in this special issue illustrate, Morocco (like other North African countries) is also a migration destination in its own right for migrants coming from sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and elsewhere. At the same time, Maghrebi emigration to Europe has continued at rather high rates, which has been partly facilitated by a diversification of destinations.

While the number of immigrants in Morocco is still small compared to the millions of Moroccan migrants living in Europe, the increasing long-term settlement and visibility of regular and irregular migrant populations in urban areas in Morocco signals a significant change from the past. This has triggered varied social and political responses ranging from overt xenophobia, racism and state violence on the one hand to humanitarian action, substantial NGO activism and legalisation policies on the other. Recent changes in Moroccan migration policies show that there is also a change of consciousness and recognition on the official level of Morocco's growing role as a migrant destination.

The six articles of this special issue have sought to provide different perspectives on recent changes in Moroccan migration. The diverse roles of Morocco as an origin, destination and transit space and the societal and policy reactions this has generated exemplify the more general need to revisit conventional dichotomous, and essentially colonial, ways of conceptualising global migration, which conceive of the world as divided into (wealthy) receiving countries in the global North and (poor, 'developing') sending countries in the global South. This reveals a Euro- or Western-centric bias because, in fact, most countries, including in the 'developing' world, experience significant immigration alongside emigration. This means that concerns around the settlement and integration of migrants and related issues of social cohesion, xenophobia, racism, diversity and national identity are not unique to Western 'receiving countries', as the case of Morocco so vividly demonstrates.

This Euro-centric bias in migration research is also particularly visible in scholarship on migration policies. Migration from Morocco (and North Africa in general) is predominantly framed as a problem in need of control, requiring European initiatives that focus on immigration restrictions and that compel North African countries to collaborate on border control and deportation policies through linking aid and migration policies. As the articles in this special issue highlight, this entirely disregards the fact that the Moroccan state is not the passive recipient of European policy directives. Instead, Moroccan policy-makers play an active role in shaping the country's migration policies in which they have to take into account domestic political pressures and concerns about their international human rights reputation, their possible interest in continuing emigration (to generate remittances and still internal unrest), as well as their own geopolitical and economic interest, notably to maintain good relations with other African states.

In order to redress Euro-centric biases in migration scholarship, it is therefore important to understand the experiences of societies that currently go through complex social, economic, political and migratory transformations. Morocco is a particular case in point, with limited, but increasing levels of immigration and settlement significantly impacting on the social and economic fabric, eventually triggering changing policy responses by the Moroccan state. To a certain extent, this seems to reflect parallel transformations of migration patterns in other countries such as Turkey or Mexico. These changes should compel researchers to adopt new ways of conceptualising and analysing migration by embracing migration processes in their full complexity.

The articles in this special issue have attempted to show how the rich Moroccan migratory experience can contribute to revisiting and amending existing concepts and theories in migration

studies. Gutekunst showcases the selective power of Germany's most recent family migration policies and illustrates how border controls are externalised to private actors such as language institutes, transforming the German language into a commodity on the Moroccan migration market. Sahraoui's case study reveals how Moroccan migrant communities have on the one hand succeeded in getting a 'voice' *through* their 'exit' and, on the other hand, how their involvement in Morocco has injected agency and encouraged democratisation processes in marginalised regions. Jolivet's survey analysis contributes to a more nuanced assessment of the role of networks and the circulation of information and ideas on migration aspirations by showing that although European destinations have lost part of their appeal since the 2008 crisis, aspirations to emigrate to Europe still remain high throughout large parts of the Moroccan population, particularly in poorer and more marginal regions.

Berriane's article on sub-Saharan student migration to Morocco underlines the historical roots of sub-Saharan mobility and her analysis of their migration aspirations highlights the Western-centric bias in migration research focusing exclusively on South–North student migration. Cherti and Collyer delve into Morocco's migration diplomacy towards its southern neighbours and argue that the King's decision to enact the 2014 regularisation programme was importantly motivated by the deepening diplomatic relations with African countries, signalling a revived African geopolitical culture. Finally, the article by Therrien and Pellegrini sheds light on the understudied but numerically significant French migration to Morocco, discussing not only their aspirations to migrate, but also the tensions arising from this North–South migration.

Since independence in 1956, Morocco's migration system has undergone fundamental transformations, among which most importantly the growth of immigration and emigration despite increasingly restrictive migration policies on both sides of the Mediterranean, the diversification of immigrants' origins and emigrants' destinations, as well as the creation of new transnational spaces between Africa, Morocco and Europe.

The persistence of migration despite policy restrictions seems consistent with more general evidence that the effect of migration policies on long-term trends and volumes of immigration are relatively small compared to other migration determinants such as development in origin countries and labour demand in destination countries. However, immigration restrictions often lead to unintended 'substitution' effects which can make them counterproductive: (i) *categorical substitution* through a reorientation towards other legal or illegal migration channels; (ii) *intertemporal substitution* affecting the timing of migration such as 'now or never migration' in anticipating future restrictions; (iii) *reverse flow substitution* when restrictions interrupt circular migration, pushing migrants into permanent settlement; and (iv) *spatial substitution* through the diversion of migration to or via other countries (de Haas 2011). The diversion of Moroccan migration into family migration channels, its increasingly permanent character, and the diversification of destination countries seem powerful illustrations of at least three out four of these substitution effects, and the extent to which these effects are interrelated and mutually reinforcing.

Based on this overview of Moroccan migration trends and patterns, what can we say about the future? According to migration transition theories pioneered by Zelinsky (1971) and later elaborated by Skeldon (1997), demographic transitions and processes of socio-economic transformation associated with capitalist development initially tend to lead to strong increases in emigration. This paradox that economic and human development accelerates emigration can be explained by the fact that development processes simultaneously tend to increase aspirations and capabilities to emigrate, while conditions of absolute poverty and marginalisation constrain many people from migrating abroad (de Haas 2010). This is backed up by historical and contemporary evidence that high-emigration countries are typically middle-income countries (Pew

Research Centre 2013; Clemens 2014). Only when societies reach higher standards of living does emigration tend to decrease while immigration increases, although overall levels of migration and mobility remain high in economically 'advanced' societies. This can lead to the gradual transition of net emigration countries to net immigration countries, as has happened after 1980 with Italy and Spain and, more recently, with Turkey.

Within this logic, it is pertinent to ask whether the recent slowing down of emigration, the moderate increase in return and increasing immigration are indications that Morocco may indeed be entering a new migration phase (de Haas 2014). Will Morocco become an immigration country or will it continue to play its role as emigration country *par excellence*? This is difficult to predict, as it obviously depends on future economic growth and stability in Morocco as well as conditions in origin and destination countries. However, for the near future, it is likely that Morocco will increasingly assume a double function. On top of its historical role of emigration country, Morocco is becoming more and more a destination country for sub-Saharan and European migrants. In recent years, this has triggered a policy response in which Moroccan authorities have started to adapt to the changing migratory realities, in particular through the recent regularisation campaign targeting irregular migrants. This could herald further policy responses and the development of a more fully fledged immigration policy. This is a remarkable change in a country where policy interventions vis-à-vis migration have so far almost uniquely targeted Moroccan migrants living abroad.

In thinking about different scenarios for the future of Moroccan migrations, it is also essential to consider Morocco's function and place in regional migration systems. The increasing complexity and plurality of roles played by Morocco show that the conventional distinction between immigration and emigration countries has limited, if any, analytical value. While it used to fulfil a rather clear role as quintessential emigration country, Morocco seems to be increasingly assuming the function of a bridge linking African and Euro-Mediterranean migration systems, which will engender uncertain, but certainly significant future changes in patterns and trends of migration from and to Morocco.

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