



# NORTH AFRICAN MIGRATION SYSTEMS: EVOLUTION, TRANSFORMATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT LINKAGES



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**ABSTRACT.** The paper first analyses how the evolution and transformation of North African migration systems has been an integral part of more *general* processes of political and economic change. Subsequently, the extent to which policies can enhance the development impact of migration is assessed by analysing the case of Morocco, the region's leading emigration country. Over 3 million people of Moroccan descent (out of 30 million Moroccans) live abroad, mainly in Europe. Since the 1960s, the Moroccan state has stimulated migration for economic and political reasons, while simultaneously trying to maintain a tight control on «its» emigrants. However, fearing remittance decline, a remarkable shift occurred after 1989. Along with policies to facilitate holiday visits and remittances, the Moroccan state adopted positive attitudes towards migrants' transnational civic activism, integration and double citizenship. Huge increases in remittances (well over \$5 billion in 2006) and holiday visits suggest that these policies have been partially successful. However, these policies could only work because of macro-economic stability and continuing emigration, and because they were part a more *general* process of liberalisation of Moroccan society. Although remittances have positively affected living conditions and economic growth in sending regions, remaining constraints such as corruption, legal insecurity and a lack of trust in the state, explain why many migrants are still hesitant to invest and do not return. The lesson is that targeted «diaspora policies» have limited effects if they are not accompanied by general political reform and economic progress creating attractive environments to return to and invest in.

**KEYWORDS.** International migration, development, remittances, policies, North Africa

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## INTRODUCTION

The significant political, social and economic transformations that North Africa<sup>1</sup> has witnessed over the past decades would be impossible to understand without considering the role of the significant migration movements within, towards and particularly from this region. Bordering the wealthy countries of the European Union (EU) and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), North Africa has evolved into one of the world's leading «labour frontiers» (cf. Skeldon, 1997). Large-scale migration was not only a response to a demand for labour in EU and the GCC countries, but it also fundamentally affected social and economic development in the region.

Over 8 million migrants originating from North African countries are currently believed to live abroad, among which 4.7 million in Europe and 2.4 million in Arab oil countries. At the same time, North Africa witnessed significant intra-regional labour migration, in particular to oil-producing Libya. In particular over the last decade, North Africa seems to have entered into a migration transition. The most salient features of this have been, besides sustained out-migration, increasing immigration from sub-Saharan countries as well as the new role of North Africa as a transit zone for sub-Saharan and even Asian migrants who want to migrate to Europe.

Persistent and increasing migration from and through North Africa has put relations with European countries under considerable stress. In particular the EU has attempted to «externalise» its restrictive immigration policies through putting North African states under pressure to adopt restrictive immigration laws and regulations and to intensify (joint) border controls. The creation of such a buffer zone is part of the association agreements the EU has signed with all north African states except Libya aiming at creating a free trade zone, which is believed to promote migration-reducing development in North African and other Mediterranean sending countries.

Faced with the failure to meet their stated objectives of curbing immigration, there has also been a resurgence in the interest among European states in the potentially positive effects of migration and remittances on social and economic development in migrant sending societies. Receiving countries often perceive migration-propelled development as a way to alleviate unwanted migration pressures. Particular hope has been recently put on temporary migration

<sup>1</sup> We will limit our analysis to the North African countries bordering the Mediterranean: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt. Nevertheless, it should be noted the sharp distinction commonly made between North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa is not only historically incorrect by neglecting the fact that the Sahara *itself* is a huge transition zone between these two sub-continental constructs, but, is also contested by significant trans-Saharan migration.



which is propagated as a kind of a «win–win–win» strategy to reconcile the interests of the migrants, sending and receiving countries (Ruhs, 2005; for critical reviews see Castles 2006; de Haas 2006).

At this particular point, it can be instructive to study the North African experience. Firstly, for North African sending states «migration and development» is not a new issue, as migration has been an integral part of their national development strategies since decades. Secondly, past policies which European and the GCC countries have pursued to stimulate temporary and return migration are often ignored in the debate on new proposals to boost temporary migration from the region.

Migration is both moulded by and helps to mould broader transformations processes. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to understand the evolution and transformation of the North African migration system between 1945 and 2005, and how this process is *reciprocally* related to broader processes of social, political and economic change in North African, Europe, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. By focusing on Morocco, the region's most prominent emigration country, the paper will also address the extent to which governments of sending countries have been able to enhance the development impact of migration.

#### MIGRATION SYSTEMS AND MIGRATION TRANSITIONS

For analytical purposes, it seems to be useful to relate the specific North African migration experience to two central theoretical concepts, namely migration systems and migration transitions. Mabogunje (1970), the founder of migration systems theory, defined a migration system as a set of places linked by flows and counter flows of people, goods, services, and information, which tend to facilitate further exchange, including migration, between the places. While Mabogunje focused on rural–urban migration within the African continent, Portes and Böröcz (1987) and Kritz *et al.* (1992) extended this to international migration. International migration systems consist of countries – or rather places within different countries – that exchange relatively large numbers of migrants, and are also characterized by feedback mechanisms that connect the movement of people between particular countries, areas, and even cities to the concomitant flows of goods, capital (remittances), ideas, ideals, representations and information (cf. Fawcett, 1989; Gurak and Caces, 1992). The fundamental assumption of migration systems theory is that migration alters the social, cultural, economic, and institutional conditions at both the sending and receiving ends – that is, the entire developmental space within which migration processes operate.

The migration transition is the notion that societies and countries in parallel with economic restructuring and concomitant social change and demographic transitions tend to go through a sequence of initially increasing emigration, the



coexistence of significant but diminishing emigration and increasing immigration to eventually become net immigration countries (Zelinsky, 1971; Skeldon, 1997). This is linked to the notion of the «migration hump» developed by Martin (1993) and Martin and Taylor (1996), who argued that a temporary increase in migration – a migration hump – has been a usual part of the process of economic development since a certain threshold of wealth is necessary to enable people to assume the costs and risks of migrating.

Increasing incomes, the development of transport and communication infrastructure, improved access to education and information as well as concomitant processes of social and cultural change and tend to give people the capabilities and aspirations to migrate: initially predominantly internally, in later stages increasingly internationally (de Haas, 2005). Only in the longer term, after sustained growth and decreasing opportunity gaps with destination countries, emigration tends to decrease and countries tend to transform from net emigration into net immigration countries. In the 19th and the first half of the 20th century, most western European countries went through such a migration transition (Massey, 1991; Hatton and Williamson, 1998). In recent decades, countries such as Spain, Italy, Greece and Ireland in Europe and Malaysia, Taiwan and South Korea in Asia completed their migration transition. On the basis of the persistent expansion of the greater European migration system, the challenging question is whether North African will also go through similar migration transitions in the near future.

## EVOLUTION OF NORTH AFRICAN MIGRATION SYSTEMS

### *Colonial and post-colonial migration*

The pre-colonial population history of North Africa has been characterised by continually shifting patterns of human settlement. Nomadic or semi-nomadic (*transhumance*) groups travelled large distances with their herds between summer and winter pastures. Frequent conflicts between tribal groups over natural resources and the control over trade routes were associated with the regular uprooting, movement and resettlement of people.

In all North African countries, modernisation and colonial intrusion occurring as of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century has triggered processes of urbanisation and substantial rural-to-urban migration. However, only in the «French» Maghreb<sup>2</sup> colonialism was associated to substantial international movement, in contrast

<sup>2</sup> Although also Mauritania and Libya are part of the *Itihad al Maghreb al 'Arabi*, or the Arab Maghreb Union created in 1989, we will use the more conventional delimitation to its three core states.



to Libya and Egypt. The French imprint was particularly heavy in Algeria, which was colonised in 1830 and became an integral part of France. The French protectorates over Tunisia and Morocco were formally established in 1881 and 1912, respectively. Labour recruitment in the Maghreb started during the First World War, when an urgent lack of manpower in France led to the active recruitment of tens of thousands of men for the army, industry and mines (Muus, 1995:198). In the Second World War, labour shortages again led to the recruitment of Maghrebi workers and soldiers (de Haas, 2007b).

In Egypt, which came under full British control in 1882, modernisation policies pursued as of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and symbolised by the completion of the Suez Canal in 1869, intensified traditional patterns of internal migration towards Cairo and, to a lesser extent, Alexandria and the Suez Canal zone. Until the 1950s, few Egyptians except for students migrated abroad, and, in fact, more foreigners from Arab and other countries migrated to Egypt (Sell, 1988; Zohry and Harrell-Bond, 2003).

Between the 1950s and 1973, and depending on their political position, attempts by North African states to either impede or to steer emigration have fundamentally influenced migration patterns. In a striking reversal of the current situation, this was a time in which sending states imposed more restrictions on migration than receiving states through selective passport issuance policies or exit visa requirements.

Egypt regained full independence from the UK in 1953, and after the 1956 Suez Crisis president Nasser came out of the war as an Arab hero, which reinforced Egypt's position as leader of the Arab world. Except for the policies to promote the education of Egyptian students abroad in the 1960s, the Egyptian state actively discouraged labour emigration, mainly through «exit visa» requirements (Choucri, 1977; Sell 1988). Within Nasserist socialism, migration was seen as endangering national development through the «brain drain».

Meanwhile, migration from the Maghreb to France had continued after the end of the Second World War. Already in 1945, the number of Algerian workers and their families in France numbered about 350,000.<sup>3</sup> After Morocco and Tunisia became independent from France in 1956 «colonial» migration patterns largely persisted. Because France stopped recruiting Algerian workers during the Algerian war of independence (1954–1962), migration of factory and mine workers from Morocco was boosted (de Haas 2007b). Nevertheless, Algerian migration continued as a result of the upheaval caused by the 1954–62 war but also by the demand for workers in the rapidly expanding French economy (Collyer, 2003). In 1962, over one million *colons* and *harkis* (Algerians who served with the French army in the war of independence) left Algeria after the National Libera-

<sup>3</sup> Source: <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-361.html> (Accessed 16 May 2006).



tion Front (FLN) succeeded in pushing France out. Between 1946 and 1968, six years after Algerian independence, Algerians were allowed to circulate freely between Algeria and France (Collyer, 2003).

#### THE GUEST-WORKER BOOM (1963–1972)

Post-colonial migration was only modest compared with the decade following 1962, in which the Maghreb became firmly integrated in the Euro-Mediterranean migration system. In this period Maghreb countries experienced their great labour migration boom towards Europe. For Morocco and, to a lesser extent, Tunisia went along with a diversification of migration destinations beyond France. Rapid post-war economic growth in northwest Europe created increasing unskilled labour shortages in sectors such as industry, mining, housing construction and agriculture. This triggered an increasing emigration of «guest workers» from poorer countries around the Mediterranean. Until the early 1960s, most were recruited in south European countries. When this migration stagnated, attention shifted towards south Mediterranean countries. Morocco and Tunisia signed formal agreements on the recruitment of workers with France, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands (see table 1). In 1968 the Algerian and French governments agreed on a quota of 35,000 migrants per year, which was reduced to 25,000 in 1971 (Fargues, 2004). Migration boomed particularly from 1967, to peak in 1972 (de Haas, 2007b)

TABLE 1  
Years of signature of labour recruitment agreement with  
Morocco and Tunisia

	FRANCE	WEST-GERMANY	BELGIUM	NETHERLANDS	LIBYA
Morocco	1963	1963	1964	1969	NA
Tunisia	1963	1965	1969	1970	1971

Sources: Baduel 1980; de Haas 2007b.

The influence of formal recruitment by specialized agencies was only important in the initial years of labour migration and in «setting the stage» of subsequent chain migration. Already in the 1960s, spontaneous settlement and informal recruitment through migrant networks by companies became far more important numerically. Administrative obstacles, waiting lists and the accompanying bribery incited people to circumvent and to migrate as tourists and subsequently overstaying (Reniers, 1999:683). Most migrants succeeded in obtaining perma-



ment residence papers through a series of legalization campaigns in the Netherlands (1975), Belgium (1975) and in France (1981–1982) (Muus, 1995:199).

While Algerian migration remained overwhelmingly oriented on France, Germany became the second most important destination for Tunisians, whereas Belgium and the Netherlands developed into secondary destinations for Moroccan migration. Tunisia and in particular Morocco pursued strongly pro-emigration policies, in the expectation that their countries would greatly benefit from the experience, training and financial resources of migrants, which were expected to return.

### *The 1973 Oil Crisis turning point*

The shock of the 1973 Arab–Israeli October war, the Oil Crisis and the ensuing economic recession in Western Europe would dramatically reshape and expand the North African migration landscape. For Maghrebi–European migration, it heralded the end of the «recruitment phase» and the onset of increasingly restrictive immigration policies pursued by European states, a trend that would persist until the present day. Quite on the contrary, for the Arab oil countries the events of 1973 marked the *beginning* of massive labour recruitment.

Political change in Egypt and unprecedented economic growth in the oil producing Gulf countries and Libya coincided to cause unprecedented migration from Egypt and, to a much lesser extent, the Maghreb countries to the booming Arab oil countries. The 1973 Arab oil embargo against the US and a number of its Western allies (the «Oil Crisis») led to a quadrupling in oil prices. This was followed by ambitious development programmes in the Arab oil-producing countries, leading to a huge increase in the demand for labourers. This particularly affected Egypt, where the number of registered emigrants increased from 70,000 in 1970 to a reported 1.4 million in 1976 and to 2.3 million in 1986 (Zohry and Harrell–Bond, 2003:27,31).

This coincided with a turnaround in Egyptian migration policies since Sadat came to power in 1970. Sadat's *infitah* or open door policies meant a reorientation from the Soviet Union towards the United States, and a move from a centralised plan economy towards liberalisation and increasing opening of the Egyptian economy to foreign investment. Temporary migration became to be seen a means to alleviate demographic pressures and stimulate economic growth. In 1971 all legal barriers to migration were lifted while government workers were allowed to emigrate while maintain the right to return to their jobs (IOM 2005).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Restrictions on labour migration were already relatively eased after the 1967 Six–Day War and the





While removing state constraints and encouraging individualism and consumer desires, the open door policy and liberalisation has been widely seen as increasing inequality in Egyptian society. On top of this was piled «the remarkable reversal of relative economic conditions» (Sell, 1988:93) between Egypt and its eastern and western Arab neighbours.

The majority of migrants went to Saudi Arabia, although all other Arab oil countries received their share of Egyptian migrants. Both skilled and unskilled workers migrated to the Arab oil countries, although most skilled migrants preferred the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates). As a key provider of specific skills (such as nursing and teaching) to these labour markets, some scholars have considered Egypt's specific education policies as an integral part of its broader emigration policies (Fargues, 2004:1360). In particular Iraq became a popular destination for unskilled migrants, because of its liberal immigration policies towards fellow Arabs, and its need for foreign labour as a result of the 1980–1988 war with Iran.

The foreign demand for Egyptian labour peaked in 1983, when 3.3 million Egyptian were estimated to work abroad. After 1983, the Iran–Iraq war, falling oil prices, declining demand for construction workers, the immigration of cheaper Asian and South–Asian labour and the policy to replace foreign labour with nationals would cause a relative decline in the demand for Egyptian and other Arab workers in the GCC countries. This coincided with substantial return migration (Zohry and Harrell–Bond, 2003:27–31).

The oil crisis also created the condition for the emergence of a new migration pole *within* North Africa. When Libya gained independence from Italy in 1951, the country possessed a small and impoverished population. The discovery of significant oil reserves in 1959 would radically change this situation. From the early 1960s, the petroleum industry came to dominate the economy, and rapidly increasing oil revenues after 1973 allowed the new Nasserist leader Al–Qadhafi to launch ambitious social and economic development schemes. As in the Gulf States, the concomitant labour demand could not be fulfilled locally, and this triggered substantial migration of mostly temporary migrants. Egyptians have been the largest nationality present in Libya, and worked predominantly in agriculture and education (Hamood, 2006:17).

The economic boom in the Arab oil countries also generated significant migration of workers from Tunisia and Morocco. For geographical and political reasons this migration was predominantly oriented on Libya, and mostly con-

subsequent economic downturn, which heralded the start of more long–term emigration, while students abroad tended to stay abroad after obtaining their degrees (cf. Zohry and Harrell–Bond, 2003).





sisted of lowly or unskilled migrants who stay for relatively short periods. More long-term «temporary» migration of skilled workers to the Gulf countries, such as occurred from Egypt, remained relatively modest.

As a more modest but significant oil producer, socialist Algeria also benefited from the 1973 surge in oil prices (Collyer, 2003). At the same time as Egypt abandoned its restrictive policies, Algeria, which denounced emigration as a form of post-colonial dependence (Fargues, 2004:1360) formally suspended all migration to France in 1973, based on the assumption that booming oil revenues would allow Algeria to employ its own people.

The European economic downturn provided the mirror image of the boom of the Arab oil economies. In Europe, the 1973 Oil Crisis heralded a period of economic stagnation and restructuring, resulting in rising structural unemployment and a lower demand for unskilled labourers. This hit the guest-workers disproportionately and led to their mass unemployment. Not only most host societies expected that this migration would be temporary, also most migrants themselves, standing in an ancient tradition of circular migration (de Haas, 2007b), intended to return after a certain amount of money had been saved to buy some land, construct a house, or start their own enterprise. However, contrary to expectations, and notwithstanding significant return migration, large number of Maghrebi migrants ended up staying permanently.

Not only European states but also Algeria and Tunisia (Fargues, 2004: 1359–1360) tried to incite migrants to return. Yet these return policies typically failed. First, this was related to the lack of opportunities for economic reintegration in most countries of origin. Morocco and Tunisia suffered much more than the European countries from the structurally higher oil prices and the global economic downturn, and started to experience increasing unemployment while Morocco also entered into a period of political instability and repression following two failed coups d'état against King Hassan II in 1971 and 1972.

Second, the increasingly restrictive immigration policies and in particular the introduction of visa restrictions had the paradoxical effect of pushing migrants into permanent settlement rather than the reverse (Fargues, 2004; Obdeijn, 1993). Many Maghrebi migrants decided to settle not so much despite but *because of* the increasingly restrictive immigration policies. Prospective return migrants feared that they would not be allowed to go back to the receiving countries if they failed to re-adapt. Combined with general uncertainty about development in the Maghreb, this made migrants decide to «to be on the safe side» and not to risk their residence abroad (Entzinger, 1985:263–275).

Subsequent large-scale family reunification heralded the shift from circular to more permanent migration, and besides natural increase and illegal migration this phenomenon mainly explains why northwest European populations of Maghrebi origin kept on increasing at relatively stable rates throughout the 1970s and 1980s, despite the formal ban on recruitment. The registered population of



Moroccans in France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany increased from 400,000 in 1975 to almost one million in 1992 (de Haas, 2007b). The registered Tunisian population living in France, Germany, Belgium, Italy and Switzerland doubled between 1977 and 1992 from 225,000 to 444,000 (calculations based on Gammoudi, 2006). Despite the formal ban, migration to Algeria to France was continued also mainly through processes of family reunification. The number of Algerian descendants (excluding *colons* and *harkis*) in France increased from an estimated 500,000 in 1964 to 800,000 in the early 1980s.<sup>5</sup>

### *The 1991 Gulf War turning point*

After a period dominated by relatively persistent labour migration from Egypt to the Gulf countries and Libya and family migration from the Maghreb to France and other north–West European countries, the North African migration landscape witnessed fundamental transformations since the late 1980s. Again, a number of political upheavals (Gulf War, outbreak of Algerian civil war, UN embargo on Libya) occurring in 1991–2 played a major role in setting new migration trends and creating increasing interlinkages between north– and sub–African migration systems while solidifying north–Africa’s central position in the Euro–Mediterranean migration systems as both an origin and transit zone.

The 1991 Gulf War led to massive forced repatriation of migrants from the GCC countries including 700,000 Egyptians from Iraq, Jordan and Kuwait (Baldwin–Edwards, 2005:28). These events reinforced the already existent tendency in Gulf countries to increasingly rely on Asian immigrants. This went along with efforts to «indigenise» the labour force of the Gulf countries to decrease dependency on migrants and relieve increasing unemployment among native populations (IOM 2005:54.59). Such reforms were incited by persistently low oil prices over much of the 1980s and 1990s.

Despite the apparently decreasing potential for migration, Egyptian migration to the Gulf has been more persistent and permanent than the policies intended. Although both Egypt and GCC countries stubbornly classify this migration as *temporary*, Sell (1988) already observed that many Egyptian migrants stay on for longer periods and that substantial family reunification has occurred. Although they are expected to return, thousands leave Egypt each year with the intention of permanently settling abroad (Zohry and Harrell–Bondm, 2003:31). It has been proven notoriously difficult to implement the indigenisation policy while semi–legal migrants continue to enter through intricate systems of visa–

<sup>5</sup> Source: <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-361.html> (Accessed 16 May 2006).



trading (IOM 2004:60), whereas undocumented labour migrants can also enter the country through making the *hadj*, the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca. In fact, after the Gulf war migration rates quickly resumed to pre-War levels and the number of labour contracts boomed between 1992 and 1995 (Zohry and Harrell-Bond, 2003:30,35).

However, a qualitative change did occur in the structure of the strongly segmented GCC labour markets, with native workers mainly take over the high-level position in the labour market, but continued to shun lower-level jobs in the relatively poorly paid private sector (Baldwin-Edwards, 2005:27). While Asian immigrants increasingly fill manual jobs in the unskilled segments of the labour market (IOM 2005:62), Egyptian and other Arab migrants to the Gulf increasingly occupy the middle segments of the GCC labour markets (cf. Zohry and Harrell-Bond, 2003:35). Unskilled Egyptian migrants such as construction workers have increasingly migrated to Jordan (IOM 2005: 62) and Lebanon, which have increasingly replaced Iraq as a destination of such workers. The declining potential of migration for unskilled workers to Arab countries has possibly stimulated growing Egyptian migration to Italy (cf. Zohry and Harrell-Bond, 2005:7).

Until 1990 the history of Algerian emigration to Europe was the history of Algerian migration to France.<sup>6</sup> However, the outbreak of the civil war in 1991, which killed more than 100,000 people, led to an increase of refugee and economic migration to an increasingly diverse array of European countries (Collyer, 2003).

Another major turning point in North African migrations was the air and arms embargo imposed on Libya by the UN Security Council between 1992 and 2000. Disappointed by the perceived lack of support from fellow Arab countries, Colonel Al-Qadhafi embarked upon a radical reorientation of Libyan foreign policy towards sub-Saharan African countries (Hamood, 2006: 17). Al-Qadhafi positioned himself as an African leader and started to encourage sub-Saharan Africans to work in Libya (Hamood, 2006; Pliez, 2002). Consequently, Libya became a major destination and (after 2000) a transit zone for migrants from sub-Saharan Africa (cf. Boubakri, 2004). In the early 1990s, most migrants came from Libya's neighbours Sudan, Chad and Niger, which subsequently developed into transit countries for migrants from a much wider array of sub-Saharan countries (Bredeloup and Pliez, 2005:6).

Increasing sub-Saharan immigration cannot uniquely be attributed to Libya's new pan-African politics, but is also part of a general trend towards restructuration and segmentation of Libyan and North African labour markets. Similar to the Gulf States, an economic downturn through low oil prices and the

<sup>6</sup> In 1990 the Algerian community in France was estimated at more than one million people, representing 97 percent of all Algerians living outside of Algeria (Collyer 2003).



sanctions led to calls to indigenise the Libyan workforce as of the early 1980s. However, Libyans were not willing to take up the manual and unskilled jobs, which have been increasingly been taken up by sub-Saharan African migrants (Hamood, 2006:18), possibly because of a decreased willingness among North African migrants to work in Libya.<sup>7</sup> Libya has increasingly relied on sub-Saharan migrants for heavy work in sectors such as construction and agriculture, whereas Egyptian and Maghrebi workers appear to be increasingly concentrated in slightly more high status service sector jobs.<sup>8</sup>

### *New migrations to southern Europe*

Since 1990, EU states have further strengthened external border controls and tightened up their visa policies. However, North African migration to Europe showed a remarkable persistence and a diversification in terms of destination countries. Migration to the established destination countries France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany was primarily continued through the process of family formation. This was partly the consequence of the high tendency among Maghrebi descendants to marry partners living in their parents' regions of origin (cf. Lievens, 1999).

However, in particular after 1995, an unexpected resumption of *labour* migration occurred from the Maghreb but also Egypt to southern Europe. In Mediterranean Europe, the remarkable growth in export-oriented agriculture, construction and tourism has generated increasing demand for seasonal, flexible and low-skill labour (Fargues, 2004: 1357). There is a high demand for unskilled migrant labour, especially in the relatively large informal sectors of these countries, Italy in particular. This makes it relatively easy to find work given local demand for low-skilled, low-paid workers. Themselves former labour exporters, Spain and Italy have emerged as new major destination countries for Moroccan (to Spain and Italy), Tunisian (mainly to Italy), Algerian (mainly to Spain) and Egyptian (mainly to Italy) migrants since the mid 1980s.

Until Italy and Spain introduced visa requirements in 1990 and 1991, respectively, Maghrebi migrants were able to enter as tourists and often followed a seasonal migration pattern. However, given the sustained demand for immigrant workers, the introduction of visas and increasing border controls led to the increasingly undocumented, costly, dangerous and more long-term character of

<sup>7</sup> Compared to the opportunities in Europe, Libya is not a particularly attractive country to work in for Maghrebi migrants. Libya immigration policies have been highly erratic (Hamood, 2006:18), migrants do not have rights and salaries are considerably lower.

<sup>8</sup> Source: observations by author in Libya (Tubruq, Benghazi, Tripoli, Zliten), April 2005.



this migration rather than a decline. An increasing proportion of independent Maghrebi labour migrants to Southern Europe are women who work as domestic workers, nannies, cleaners, or in agriculture and small industries (cf. Salih, 2001).

On several occasions since the late 1980s, southern European governments were compelled to grant legal status to migrants, among which a large share of Moroccans and, to a lesser extent, Algerians, Tunisians and Egyptians. For instance, between 1980 and 2004, the combined Moroccan population officially residing in Spain and Italy increased from about 20,000 to 650,000 (de Haas, 2007b). Another development is increasing migration of higher educated Maghrebis countries to Canada (Québec) and the US.

### *Trans-Saharan Migration*

Since 1995, a mixed group of asylum seekers and labour migrants from sub-Saharan Africa and even the Middle East and South Asia have gradually joined Maghrebis crossing the Strait of Gibraltar to Spain or from Tunisia to Italy (Barros *et al.*, 2002; Boubakri, 2004: 3). Since 2000, anti-immigrant riots and increasing repression towards migrants in Libya have incited increasing numbers of sub-Saharan migrants to migrate to other Maghreb countries or to make the Mediterranean crossing (cf. Hamood, 2006)

Tougher policing at the Strait of Gibraltar and Tunisian coast by Spanish-Moroccan and Tunisian-Italian forces have presumably led to a general diversification in attempted crossing points (Boubakri, 2004: 5; de Haas, 2007b; Fadloulah *et al.*, 2000:113-5) from the eastern Moroccan coast to Algeria, from Tunisia's coast to Libya, and from the Western Sahara and most recently Mauritania and other West-African countries to the Canary Islands. A substantial proportion of migrants consider North African countries as their primary destination, whereas others failing or not venturing to enter Europe prefer to settle in North Africa rather than return to their more unstable and substantially poorer home countries (Barros *et al.*, 2002; Bredeloup and Pliez, 2005; de Haas, 2007b).

#### CURRENT MIGRATION CHARACTERISTICS

Persistent migration from North Africa over the past four decades has led to the establishment of sizeable migrant communities abroad. Because reliable time series data of migration movements are unavailable, we can only rely on migrant stocks data to estimate the main migration trends from North African countries. Figure 1 displays estimates of «stocks» of North African descendants living abroad based on sending-country data sources. These figures tend to include second and third generations, but may exclude undocumented migrants (see Fargues, 2005).

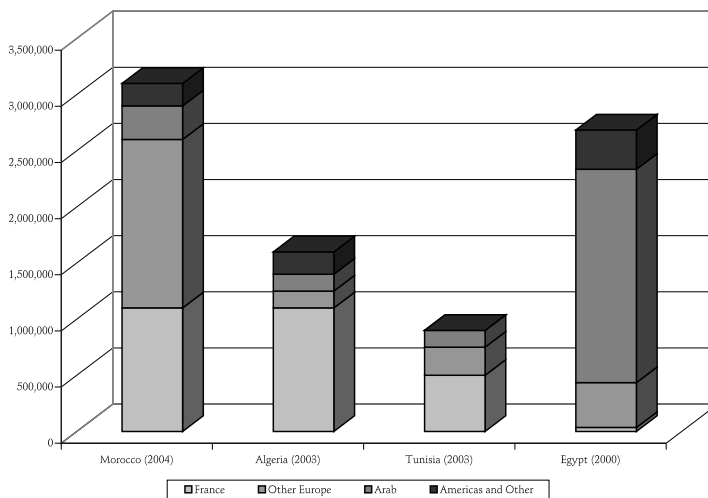


It reveals the concentration of Maghrebi migration on Western Europe and of Egyptian migration on the Arab oil producing countries.

On a total of 8 million, approximately 4.7 and 2.4 billion North African descendants were believed to live in Europe and Arab countries, respectively, around 2004 (Fargues, 2005). Morocco has the largest emigrant population of all countries involved with 3.1 million expatriates (10.4 percent of its total population in 2004), followed by Egypt (2.7 billion, 3.7 percent of total population), Algeria (1.4 billion, 4.3 percent) and Tunisia (840,000, 8.5 percent). In all countries, but particularly in the case of Egypt, underregistration related to undocumented migration seems to play an additional role.

FIGURE 1

Stocks of North African descendants according to destination region



Source: Various sending country sources cited in Fargues 2005 (Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt) and Labdelaoui 2005 (Algeria).

North African migration to Europe has generally been the migration of unskilled and semi-skilled workers from rural areas who obtained manual jobs in industry, agriculture and service sectors. Some recruiters preferred illiterate workers because they were not suspected of trade union activism (cf. de Haas, 2003). Migration has reportedly become more selective for education, more urban and more female in recent decades (cf. Salih, 2001; Labdelaoui, 2005). It is not entirely clear whether this reflects a veritable change in migration selectivity, or *general* processes of urbanisation and improvements in educational achievement in the source countries (Fadloulah *et al.*, 2000:xvi,83; de Haas, 2003). However, in Algeria the refugee dimension of much recent migration has reportedly contributed to the selective out-migration of the relatively higher educated (Collyer, 2003).

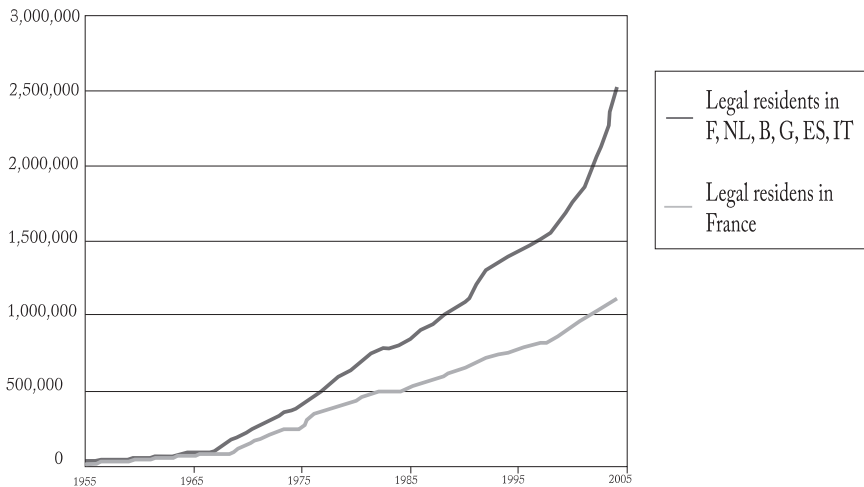


Migration from Egypt to the Gulf has traditionally comprised a relatively high proportion of well-educated professionals (cf. Schoorl *et al.*, 2000:xvi). High-skilled migration from Egypt outside beyond Arab world has traditionally been focused on the US, Canada and Australia. Skilled emigration from students and professionals from the Maghreb was traditionally focused on France, but after 1990 there has been an increasing orientation on the US and Canada. Increasing migration of the higher skilled is related to the very high unemployment among university graduates in the Maghreb (cf. Boubakri, 2004:10; de Haas, 2003) and a general lack of career opportunities and job satisfaction (Baldwin-Edwards, 2005:4). On the basis of an extensive data analysis, Fargues *et al.* (2005) revealed a striking pattern in which Europe attracts the lower educated while the US and Canada succeed in attracting most higher skilled North Africans.

A final trend is the increasing feminisation of labour migration from the Maghreb countries, which apparently concurs with improved education of women, their partial emancipation and high female unemployment rates, as well as an increasing demand for domestic labourers, nannies, cleaners and other jobs in the (informal) service sector of Europe (Fadloulah *et al.*, 2000; Labdelaoui, 2005).

FIGURE 2

Evolution of Moroccan descendants living in main receiving countries 1955–2004



Source: Various sources in de Haas 2007b

### Country-level data

Over the past four decades, Morocco has evolved into one of the world's leading emigration countries. Moroccans form not only one of largest, but also one





of the most dispersed migrant communities in Western Europe. Out of a total population of 30 million, over 3 million people of Moroccan descent lived abroad in 2004. This does not include the approximately 700,000 Jews of Moroccan descent currently living in Israel (de Haas, 2007b). Figure 2 illustrates the remarkably increase of the Moroccan migrant stock living in the main European receiving countries since the late 1960s as well as the decreasing spatial focus on France. Between 1974 and 2004 Moroccan expatriate communities in Europe have increased at an average rate of 72,000 people per year in defiance of the increasingly restrictive immigration policies; although part of this increase represents natural growth. The post-1997 acceleration largely reflects the large-scale regularisation campaigns in Italy and Spain.

France is still home to the largest legally residing population of Moroccan descent (more than 1,100,000), followed by Spain (424,000), the Netherlands (300,000), Italy (299,000), Belgium (293,000), and Germany (102,000). Smaller but rapidly growing communities of higher-skilled migrants live in the United States (100,000) and Canada (78,000).

TABLE 2  
Moroccan citizens residing abroad (2004)

COUNTRY		COUNTRY	
France	1,113,176	Algeria	79,790
Netherlands	300,332	Libya	120,000
Germany	102,000	Tunisia	25,637
Belgium	293,097	Other Arab countries	57,345
Spain	423,933		
Italy	298,949	US	100,000
UK	35,000	Canada	77,713
Other European	50,384		
		Other	11,734
TOTAL	2,616,871	TOTAL	472,219

Source: Consular data; in Fargues 2005: 231–232.

Although France is still the main focus of Algerian migration with 1.1 billion expatriates reported in 2003 (Labdelaoui, 2005:10), a diversification has occurred after the outbreak of the Algerian civil. Between 1995 and 2003 the population of Algerian descent living in France has increased with 18 percent, against 113 percent in other European countries, with the largest increases occurring in Spain (547 percent) and Italy (126 percent). A 96 percent increase in Algerian



presence in Germany reflects the influx of refugees to this country in the early 1990s. The biggest increase has been in migration to Canada, increasing from 10,000 to 35,000 (see table 3).<sup>9</sup>

TABLE 3  
Algerian citizens residing abroad (approximately 2003)

EUROPE		OTHER	
Belgium	19,095	Arab countries	76,795
France	1,101,253	Morocco (1995)*	25,000
Germany	17,641	Tunisia (1995)*	30,000
Italy	13,000		
Spain	45,791	Canada	35,000
Scandinavia	10,000	US	18,000
UK	14,152		
Netherlands	7341	Other	19,365
TOTAL	1,228,273	TOTAL	149,160

Source: Labdelaoui 2005: 12–13 (2003 data);  
\*CNES (1997), cited in Fargues 2005: 89–91

Compared to Algeria, Tunisian emigration, traditionally more focused on France than Morocco but less than Algeria, has also become more diversified. Besides an estimated 493,000 Tunisian descendants in France, approximately 54,000 Tunisian descendants are living in Germany (see table 4). In more recent years, neighbouring Italy has rapidly developed in the new principal destination for Tunisian labour migrants.

Egyptian statistical services make a formal distinction between «temporary» migration to Arab countries and «permanent migration» to Western countries. Table 5 shows the predominance of migration to Saudi Arabia (924,000 migrants), Libya (333,000), Jordan (227,000) and Kuwait (191,000). Remarkably, the US (318,000), Canada (110,000) and Australia (70,000) host the largest Egyptian communities outside the Arab world. More recently, mostly undocumented migration from Egyptians to Italy has gained momentum (Zohry and Harrell–Bond, 2005:7). The reported migration stocks in the Arab and South European countries are likely to be underestimates due to substantial undocumented migration.

<sup>9</sup> Own calculations based Fargues 2005 and Labdelaoui 2005.



TABLE 4  
Tunisian citizens residing abroad (2001–2003)

COUNTRY		COUNTRY	
France	493,028	Algeria	13,554
Italy	101,042	Libya	60,023
Germany	53,925	Morocco	4,082
Belgium	17,084	Other Arab countries	7,217
Switzerland	6,909		
Netherlands	7,058	Canada	12,347
Other European	16,719	US	9,800
Sub-Saharan Africa	1,149	Other	653
Asia	669		
Total	697,583	Total	107,676

Source: Consular data, *Ministère des Affaires Etrangères*; in Fargues 2005: 316.

TABLE 5  
Egyptians citizen residing abroad by Country of Residence – 2000

«TEMPORARY» MIGRATION		«PERMANENT» MIGRATION	
Bahrain	4,000	Australia	70,000
Iraq	65,629	Austria	14,000
Jordan	226,850	Canada	110,000
Kuwait	190,550	England	35,000
Lebanon	12,500	France	36,000
Libya	332,600	Germany	25,000
Oman	15,000	Greece	60,000
Qatar	25,000	Netherlands	40,000
Saudi Arabia	923,600	Italy	90,000
UAE	95,000	Spain	12,000
Yemen	22,000	Switzerland	14,000
		United States	318,000
Total	1,912,729	Total	824,000

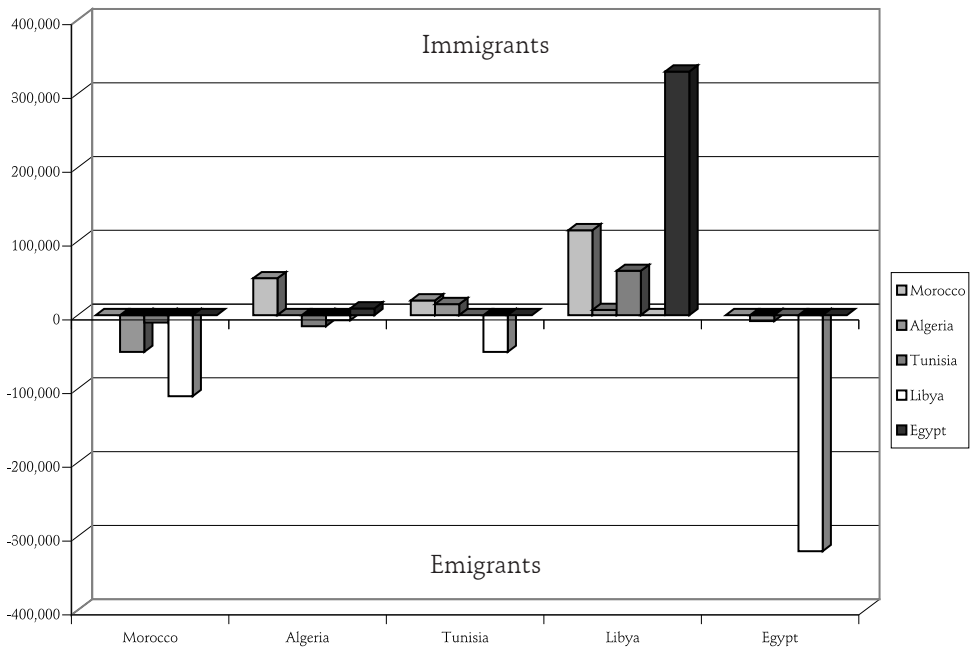
Source: CAPMAS 2000 and 2001, in Fargues, 2005: 109



Based on migrant stock data, we can estimate the net intra-regional migration movement. Figure 3 illustrates Libya's role as a host country of migrants from within the region, particularly from Egypt. Nevertheless, these figures are likely to severely underestimate the true level of intra-regional mobility. In particular short-term migrants are unlikely to register with their consulates.

FIGURE 3

Estimated net intra-regional migration based on migrant stock data (2002–2004)<sup>10</sup>



Source: Own calculations based on various sources cited in Fargues 2005

### Immigration

There are no reliable estimates about the increasing number of sub-Saharan migrants living in North African countries. Alioua (2005) estimates the number of sub-Saharan migrants and refugees living in Morocco at several tens of thousands. Libyan local authorities estimate the number of legal foreign workers at 600,000, while illegal immigrants are estimated to number between 750,000 and 1.2 million (Bredeloup and Pliez, 2005:6; EC 2004). Another source claims that

<sup>10</sup> Algerian data on expatriate populations are from 1995.



Libya houses 2 to 2.5 million immigrants (including 200,000 Moroccans, 60,000 Tunisians and 20,000 to 30,000 Algerians and 1 to 1.5 million sub-Saharan Africans), representing 25 to 30 percent of its total population (Boubakri, 2004:2). Cairo hosts one of the largest urban refugee populations in the world, mainly Sudanese but also Palestinians, Somalis, Ethiopians and Eritreans. The current refugee and migrant population in Egypt (mainly Cairo) is estimated at levels of anywhere between 0.5 and 3 million (Zohry and Harrell-Bond, 2003:49).

THE DEVELOPMENT DIMENSIONS OF MIGRATION:  
THE CASE OF MOROCCO

*Migration and remittances as  
a national development strategy*

For all four North African migrant sending countries, migration has played a major role in relieving tensions on the labour market. Morocco, Tunisia and (since 1971) Egypt have pursued a persistent policy of openly or tacitly stimulating migration as a development tool. While the attitude of the Algerian state towards migration has been more ambivalent, it has gradually adopted a *laissez faire* approach to emigration largely out of economic necessity.

When sending and receiving countries gradually realised that many migrants would not return, the policies of sending states increasingly focused on policies aiming at securing remittances, stimulating investments by migrants as well as symbolic policies aimed at fostering bonds between expatriate populations and their imagined or real homelands (for an overview, see Fargues, 2004). To illustrate the development impacts of migration in their relation to policies to enhance such impacts, this section will further concentrate on the case of Morocco, the region's most prominent emigration country.

Throughout the post-independence period, the Moroccan state has actively stimulated international out-migration for political and economic reasons. International migration was seen as a «safety valve» to prevent political tensions in certain rural, predominantly Berber areas (Rif, Sous and south-eastern oases), which have a rebellious reputation vis-à-vis the central «Arab» state (de Haas, 2007b). These policies were mainly pursued through selective passport issuance policies and directing recruiters to these areas.

Besides a political instrument, migration was also seen as a tool for national economic development. The utility of migration was primarily seen through the skills and knowledge that migrants were expected to acquire by working and studying abroad. However, the belief that migrants would be particular actors of change gradually faded over the 1970s. Efforts to stimulate returned migration and migrants' investments programs generally failed, mainly because of an un-



favourable investment climate and a general distrust among migrants in government agencies (Fadloullah et al., 2000:32; Obdeijn, 1993).

In contrast to policies aiming to stimulate investments by migrants, policies to increase remittance transfers through the creation of a network of consulates, post offices and bank branches abroad over the 1970s and 1980s have been more successful. At the same time, the Moroccan state attempted to maintain a tight control on migrant communities in Europe through a network of a control and spying networks abroad. Until the early 1990s, the state actively discouraged migrants' integration in the receiving countries, out of a fear that migrants would form a political opposition «from outside». Integration was also perceived as endangering the vital remittance transfers (de Haas and Plug, 2006).

### *From controlling emigrants to courting the diaspora*

However, an ominous stagnation in remittances in the 1990s and a growing consciousness that repressive policies alienated migrants rather than binded them closer to the Moroccan state prompted the Moroccan state to adopt a more positive attitude (de Haas and Plug, 2006). This concurred with a process of relative political liberalisation and a substantial improvement of Morocco's human rights record. Furthermore, a neoclassical turn in economic policies implied deregulation and opening up of the Moroccan economy. After years of scepticism, this also created renewed hope in the role migrants may play in encouraging foreign direct investment.

This has resulted in a more positive attitude towards naturalization, dual citizenship and voting rights for migrants abroad. This marked a striking reversal of policy analysis, in which integration of migrants is no longer seen as a danger, but as a beneficial process which enables migrants to send more money home and to invest (de Haas, 2007b). Increasing general civic liberties also implied more freedom for migrants to establish Berber, cultural and «home town» associations (cf. Lacroix, 2005). In November 2005, King Mohammed VI announced that migrants will obtain the right to vote. However, the Moroccan state has not given up a number of policy instruments to exert a certain level of control. This is most evident in Morocco's systematic opposition against Moroccan descendants in Europe relinquishing Moroccan citizenship.

Besides establishing a ministry for Moroccans residing abroad, the Moroccan state established the *Fondation Hassan II pour les Marocains Résidant à l'Étranger*, which aims to reinforce its links with Moroccan emigrants. The state also started to clamp down on the long delays, corruption and harassment by state officials migrants-on-vacation used to experience at the borders and inside Morocco. This is likely to have contributed to the enormous increase in the

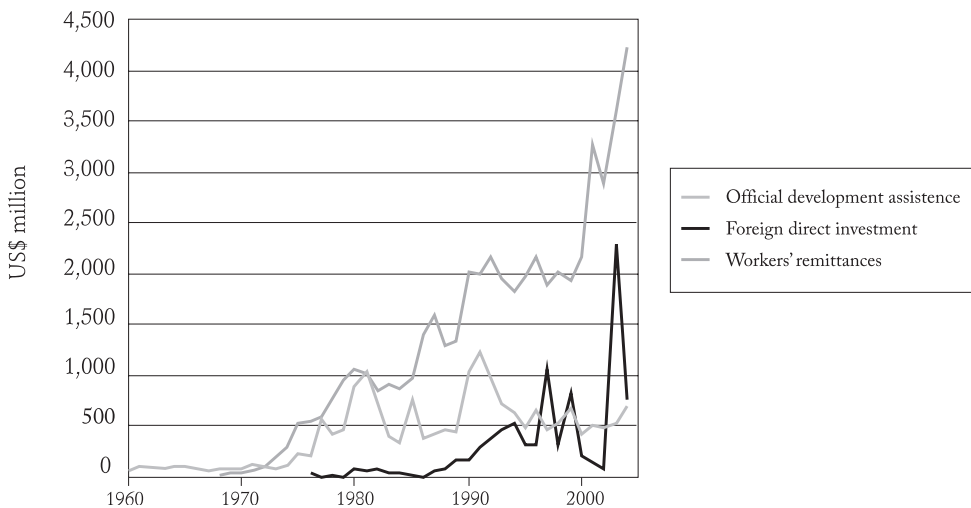


number of migrants entering Morocco's northern harbours during the summer holidays from 848,000 in 1993 to 2.2 million in 2003. On the economic side, new monetary policies have been applied in Morocco since the end of the 1980s, involving the lifting of restrictions on exchange and on the repatriation of money (de Haas and Plug, 2006). Remittances are further encouraged through fiscal policies favouring migrants (Refass, 1999:98)

At first glance, the new Moroccan diaspora policies seem to have reversed the earlier stagnation in remittances. In 2001, a spectacular increase in remittances occurred to \$3.3 billion from \$2.2 in 2000. This increase was partly attributed to the so-called «Euro effect», concomitant money laundering,<sup>11</sup> and, perhaps, the effect of 9/11. However, after a minor relapse in 2002, remittances have shown a continuing steep upward trend in subsequent years, to reach an unprecedented level of \$4.2 billion in 2004 (see figure 4). 2006 remittances have been estimated at a level of \$5.2 billion.

FIGURE 4

Total volume of official remittance, oda, and fdi flows to Morocco (1960–2003)



Source: Office des Changes Maroc,  
IMF Balance of Payments Statistics Yearbook (annual)

<sup>11</sup> It has been argued that the introduction of the Euro has incited Moroccans living in Morocco to convert their ready pre-Euro cash into Moroccan dirham. The Euro-effect may particularly apply to the Netherlands, where most Moroccan immigrants originate from the northern Rif region, where smuggling and the hash drug trade are prevalent, and large amounts of foreign cash circulate (de Haas and Plug, 2006).





However, the structural solidity of Moroccan remittances should primarily be explained by the unforeseen persistence of migration to north-western Europe; the unexpected durability of transnational and transgenerational links between migrants and «stay behinds»; and, last but not least, new labour migration towards Spain and Italy (de Haas and Plug, 2006). Also the huge increase in the number of migrants visiting Morocco is likely to have contributed to increasing remittances.

Thus, the most effective instrument for securing remittances has been securing continued migration and stimulating holiday returns. Nevertheless, targeted policies to attract remittances, the expansion of financial services, low inflation and the absence of a large black market for foreign exchange have also stimulated remittances and can particularly explain why Morocco has been relatively successful in directing remittances through official channels in comparison with other emigration countries in the region.<sup>12</sup>

### *Development impacts of international migration*

For the Moroccan state, remittances are a crucial and relatively stable source of foreign exchange and have become a vital element in sustaining Morocco's balance of payments. Remittances have proved to be a substantially higher and less volatile source of foreign exchange than official development assistance (ODA) and foreign direct investment (FDI) (de Haas and Plug, 2006) (see figure 4).

For households, international migration is often an extremely effective way of improving their financial situation and living conditions. It has been estimated that 1.17 million out of 30 million Moroccans would fall back to absolute poverty without international remittances (Teto, 2001). In regions with high international out-migration, the contribution of remittances to household income growth can be far higher (de Haas, 2007a; Schoorl *et al.*, 2000).

A recent review of the empirical literature on developmental impacts in Morocco (de Haas, 2007a) showed that that migration and remittances have considerably improved living conditions, children's education and spurred economic activity migrant-sending regions through agricultural, real estate and business investment, from which non-migrants indirectly profit through income multiplier and employment effects. This challenges the conventional view that migrants indulge in conspicuous consumption. There seems to be a sequence in which expenditure on durable consumption goods and real estate investments occur

<sup>12</sup> Remittances in kind in the form of goods taken to Morocco as gifts or as merchandise by migrants have been estimated to represent one quarter to one third of official remittances (Refass, 1999: 100–102).



relatively early in the migration cycle whereas agricultural and non-agricultural business investments only take off after one or two decades after migration.

Through urban-based real estate, business investments and consumption expenditure, international migrant households have simultaneously capitalized on, and actively contribute to, the concentration of economic activities in existing urban centres and migrant boomtowns. This has transformed major migrant-sending regions such as the Rif, Sous and southern oases into relatively prosperous areas that now attract internal «reverse» internal migrants from poorer areas.

By offering new livelihood opportunities, migration has also enabled member of formerly subaltern socio-ethnic groups, such as the *haratin* in southern Morocco, to escape from the constraints that traditional society imposed upon them. Instead of increasing or decreasing intra-community inequality as such, migration has created new forms of intra-community inequality largely based on access to international remittances, which have superimposed upon «traditional» forms of inequality based on hereditary factors such as complexion, ethnicity and land ownership.

Nevertheless, the middle and higher income classes profit relatively more from remittances than the lowest income groups because migration itself has proved to be an increasingly selective process (Teto, 2001). In comparison to the 1960s and 1970s, due to restrictive immigration policies, access to international migration has become increasingly selective on wealth and dependent on access to largely kinship-based international migrant networks (de Haas, 2007a).

Although migration impacts are often more positive than was previously assumed, it is also clear that migration impacts are fundamentally heterogeneous across space, socio-ethnic and gender groups, and tend to change over time and household migration cycles. More importantly, there is also agreement that developmental potential of migration is not fully realized due to several structural development constraints. These include the generally unfavourable investment climate, characterized by an inadequate infrastructure and the absence of public services; failing credit and insurance markets; excessive red tape and corruption; difficulties in obtaining title deeds on property; inefficient judiciary and a lack of legal security; as well as a general lack of trust in government institutions and doubts about future political and economic stability (Bencherifa and Popp, 2000; De Haas, 2007a).

As Heinemeijer *et al.* (1977) already observed, although migrants exhibit a relatively high willingness to invest, the investment opportunities for migrants in their regions of origin are often limited. In this respect, it is important to observe that there is no predetermined impact of migration on development. After all, depending on the specific development context, migration and remittances may give people the capability and freedom to retreat from, as much as to invest in, social and economic activities on origin countries (de Haas, 2007a).



## CONCLUSION

The immanent danger of conceiving «the» North African migration system' would be to assume a false degree of regional unity and communality of national migration experiences. The specific international migration experiences of North African countries and regions within countries reveal striking differences. It therefore seems to be more appropriate to conceive North Africa as a region in which countries are connected to several and partly overlapping trans-continental and intra-regional migration system to varying degrees. At the most general level, we can make a distinction between the core Maghreb countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia), which have been firmly integrated into the Euro (EU) –Mediterranean system, and Egypt, which is predominantly connected to the Gulf (GCC) migration system and other Arab countries such as Libya, Jordan and Lebanon. Nevertheless, over the past decade there has been an increase of Egyptian migration towards Europe.

A one-sided focus on the massive net emigration occurring *from* North Africa would also conceal the existence of an intra-regional migration sub-system centred on Libya. This country has not only evolved into the main intra-regional migration pole, but Libyan pan-African policies of the 1990s have also played a role in mounting trans-Saharan migration to North Africa and what might lead to the progressive integration of North African and sub-Saharan migration systems.

The transformations that have taken place in these North African migration systems cannot be understood without taking into account broader changes in the political and economic development context. General migration trends have been fundamentally affected by (colonial, civil and inter-state) wars and major political-economic change. The process of colonisation initially went along with immigration and settlement, in particular in Algeria, but concomitant processes of state formation, capitalist penetration, infrastructure development and increased population in combination with the demand for migrant labour in European and, at a later stage, the Gulf countries, would soon create a counter-movement of emigration. Similarly, major turning points like the Oil Crisis, Egypt's *infitah* policy, the 1991 Gulf War and the Algerian civil war and the embargo on Libya triggered new forms of migration.

Such general changes *also* created the room for specific migration policies by sending and receiving states. Through recruitment, selective passport issuance and exit visa policies, states have played a crucial role in initiating migration patterns, after which such initial patterns however tended to gain their own momentum (cf. Castles, 2004, Massey, 1989). The persistent character of North African migration to Europe over the 1990s exemplifies the limited ability of specific migration policies to counteract the structural demand for migrant labour and the migration-facilitating working of networks.



The North African case also exemplifies the «permanency of temporary migration» (cf. Martin, 1999). Although the receiving states in Europe and the Gulf have insisted that migration was temporary, even the authoritarian Gulf States have not been able to prevent long-term settlement and substantial undocumented immigration. Paradoxically, restrictive immigration policies in Europe have even pushed people into permanent settlement to a certain extent.

The literature seems to suggest that it can take many decades before positive development impacts of migration gain full momentum, that «integrated» and settled migrants possess greater capabilities to remit and invest, and that migrants possessing residency rights or (double) citizenship have a higher propensity to return and circulate. This casts doubt on the assumption that temporary migration programmes can be effective and that they will favour development in sending countries.

The Moroccan case has shown that policies to increase remittances through formal channels or to stimulate investments can only be successful if they coincide with *general* macro-economic stability and a banking infrastructure. Although migration and remittances have enabled households to increase their income and to radically improve their living conditions, migration is however too limited a phenomenon to remove more structural development constraints.

Although they can play a certain positive role, «diaspora policies» have limited effects if they are not accompanied by general reform and progress. The only way of genuinely releasing the development potential of migration and migrants resources seems to be creating attractive investment environments, generating economic growth and building trust in political and legal institutions of sending countries, along with sensible immigration policies that do not deter migrants from circulating.

In particular in southern Europe, a combination of unprecedented low fertility rates and the presence of large and booming informal sectors is likely to sustain the demand for unskilled (and skilled) immigrant labour. Extensive migrant networks and the long, southern European coastline make this migration notoriously difficult to control. However, this does not imply that current migration patterns will necessarily persist. Over the past two decades, the boundaries between the North African migration systems have become increasingly blurred, and the striking diversification and diffusion of migration itineraries point at the growing complexity of migration systems. This points to the necessity of conceptualising and explaining *change* in established migration systems (cf. Collyer, 2003).

Combining the spatial notion of migration systems with the temporal notion of migration transitions, we can conceive that the transformation of south-European countries into immigration countries has provoked the southward shift of the Euro-Mediterranean «labour frontier», a development which has offered renewed and reinforced labour migration opportunities for North African countries, which in their turn seem on top of their migration hump. The challenging ques-



tion here is whether increasing trans-Saharan migration to North African countries is indeed heralding their future transition into immigration countries for sub-Saharan and other countries, as transitional migration theory would suggest.

Some current trends might herald such a migration transition. Nevertheless, we also need to be aware of the specific internal structure and evolution of the increasingly complex segmentation of North African labour markets to understand the paradox of sustained out-migration from most North African states and what appears to be the settlement of sub-Saharan migrants in the same countries. Such complex «migration hierarchies» cannot be explained by simplistic push-pull models. Even in poorer Maghreb countries there is a striking structural unemployment among native higher educated who at the same time shun unskilled jobs. The economic growth in and migration to some northern parts of Tunisia and Morocco might indeed indicate a future southward shift of the Euro-Mediterranean labour frontier *across* the Mediterranean further into North Africa.

These trends might be reinforced by demographic transitions. Most North African countries have almost reached the point where the dramatic reductions in fertility since the 1970s will result in the reduction of the number of people attaining working age beginning in 2010 to reach full momentum in the period 2015–2020. The next generations entering the labour market will theoretically face less labour market competition and also bear an exceptionally light demographic burden compared to past and future generations (Fargues, 2004).

This might eventually lead to declining international out-migration and increasing labour immigration from sub-Saharan countries. Whether, and the extent to which such a migration transition will really happen, crucially depends on internal political and economic reform leading to democratisation, stability and more attractive investment environments. However, it is also contingent on various exogenous factors, in particular, on how association agreements with the EU will be implemented, how this will affect competitiveness and to what extent market integration will increase access of North African producers to the EU market.

Even successful economic integration might in the short term encourage migration. Adjustment to new market and policy environments is never instantaneous, while the negative impacts of trade liberalisation (on protected sectors) often are immediate. The expansion of production in sectors potentially favoured by trade reforms always takes time, which seems a recipe for a migration hump in the wake of trade reforms (Martin and Taylor, 1996:52). Furthermore, economic development and increased trade and transportation are likely to enable *more* people to migrate abroad at least in the short term.

However, genuine market integration combined with domestic political and economic reform might in the longer term indeed lead to sustained economic growth and the transformation of North African countries into labour importers. If that were the case, economic development and democratisation is also likely to incite migrants to invest and return, and thereby further reinforce these



positive trends. In the recent past this has happened in countries such as Spain, Italy, South Korea and Taiwan. Without such broader development, migration is likely to continue also in the longer term. The paradox is that development in migrant-sending societies is a prerequisite for circulation, return and investment by migrants rather than a consequence of migration.

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