



MOROCCO, AT THE HEART OF THE HARMONIZATION OF THE AFRICAN UNION'S MIGRATION POLICIES: CONTEXT, COMPLEXITY, DIVERSITY, EFFECTS AND CHALLENGES

AFRİKA BİRLİĞİ GÖÇ POLİTİKALARININ UYUMLAŞTIRILMASININ MERKEZİNDE FAS: BAĞLAM, KARMAŞIKLIK, ÇEŞİTLİLİK, ETKİLER VE ZORLUKLAR

Abstract

Since the mid-1980s, the European Union has adopted a cautious attitude toward migratory flows. It has constantly stepped up initiatives to combat immigration by tightening border controls and reducing visa issuance, thereby forcing would-be emigrants to look for alternatives. At the same time, Africa is facing unique migration challenges. The consequences of colonization, the imposition of capitalist relations, and the development of an extroverted economy, among others, continue to influence current migration dynamics. Persistent economic crises, compounded by inequitable global economic policies are driving many people to seek better opportunities elsewhere. In addition, the effects of climate change, such as desertification, droughts, and floods, are intensifying migratory pressures. African countries therefore need to develop effective migration policies to govern migration flows and respond to geopolitical challenges. It is crucial to put in place regional and international cooperation mechanisms to manage migration in a coordinated and humane manner. This means thinking carefully about migration issues, considering the historical, economic, and political realities that shape them. This issue must be at the heart of the states' and the African Union's concerns. This is true of continental efforts like the Kampala Convention and the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA), but they can only be fully appreciated when implemented.

Keywords: Migration Policies, African Union, Migrants Rights, Climate Change, Migration Governance.

Öz

Avrupa Birliği, 1980'lerin ortalarından itibaren, göç akışlarına karşı temkinli bir tutum benimsemiştir. Sınır kontrollerini sıkılaştırarak ve vize verilmesini azaltarak göçle mücadele girişimlerini sürekli olarak hızlandırarak müstakbel göçmenleri alternatifler aramaya zorlamıştır. Bu arada, Afrika benzersiz zorlu göçlerle karşı karşıya kalmıştır. Sömürgeciliğin sonuçları, kapitalist ilişkilerin dayatılması, dışa dönük bir ekonominin gelişimi, diğerlerinin yanı sıra, mevcut göç dinamiklerini etkilemeye devam etmektedir. Adil olmayan küresel ekonomi politikalarıyla daha da kötüleşen kalıcı ekonomik krizler, birçok insanı başka yerlerde daha iyi fırsatlar aramaya itmektedir. Ayrıca, çölleşme, kuraklık ve sel gibi iklim değişikliğinin etkileri göç baskılarını yoğunlaştırmaktadır. Bu nedenle, Afrika ülkelerinin göç akışlarını yönetmek ve jeopolitik güçlüklerle yanıt vermek amacıyla göç politikaları geliştirmeleri gerekmektedir. Göçlerin koordineli ve insancıl bir şekilde yönetilmesi amacıyla bölgesel ve uluslararası işbirliği mekanizmalarının uygulamaya konulması hayati önem taşımaktadır. Bu da göç sorunlarını şekillendiren tarihi, ekonomik ve politik gerçekleri gözönünde bulundurarak dikkatlice düşünmek anlamına gelir. Bu düşünce, Devletlerin ve Afrika Birliği'nin

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endişelerinin merkezinde yer almalıdır. Kampala Sözleşmesi ve Afrika Kitasal Serbest Ticaret Bölgesi'nin (ACFTA) kurulması gibi kıta düzeyinde girişimlerde bulunulduğu doğru olmakla beraber bu önlemlerin değeri ancak sahada uygulanmaları halinde gerçekten anlaşılabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Göç Politikaları, Afrika Birliği, Göçmen Hakları, İklim Değişikliği, Göç Yönetimi.

If it's impossible for all of us to leave the village together, why not go off on my own and send them some money to help them survive, until I'm able to take them away from here, to a placethat isn't already dead?

(Eltayeb, 2009: p. 18)¹

Introduction

Migration is a contentious issue and possibly the biggest challenge of the 21st century. It is one of the essential components in the logic of increased exchanges implied by globalization. Emigration and immigration are plural, changing, and variable categories; they concern rich and poor countries, the countryside as well as the cities, the poorly qualified as well as the highly educated. On closer examination, from a purely quantitative point of view, the number of immigrants is almost equal in the countries of the North and those of the South. This stands in stark contrast to the widely held beliefs propagated by the media or by somewhat partisan minds. Paradoxically, a soothing, even dramatic discourse about migration from the South to the North obscures this sociological reality (Smith, 2018: 272).

Given the multiplicity of debates on migration in most Northern countries, the omnipresence of this issue, and its importance at election time, there is a tendency to favor South-North migration and a lack of interest, disaffection, or even neglect of South-South and North-South migration. Similarly, while there is growing interest in migration to the countries to the north particularly in Europe, the topics of international South/South migration in general and migration within the African continent in particular remain little known and have received far less research. The research that has been done is scattered and very rarely published. As a result, in most tables of data on international migration, boxes remain empty for large parts of the African continent, and there is only limited knowledge of the forms and patterns of migration across the continent. As a result, many assertions about mobility in Africa are based more on supposition than on concrete empirical evidence. Information production in the North contrasts with the mandatory aphasia in Africa.

What is more, extremist rhetoric, which often has a predominantly emotional, protectionist, and defensive character, encourages people to believe in the invasion. Judging by the rise of the far right in Europe, including Poland, Hungary, Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, Spain, and more recently Portugal (Le Monde, 2018), etc., ultra-nationalist harangue is proving particularly decisive in shaping certain public opinions that see immigration as a threat (Atak and Crépeau, 2014:93-112). It is a subject that is at the heart of political debates and European election campaigns, with the stigmatization of immigrants and xenophobia becoming commonplace. In many cases, the perception of migration is often shaped by clichés, ideological exploitation, silences, taboos, and things left unsaid, which collectively give rise to ideas of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, and intolerance.

¹Translated from Arabic (Sudan) by Paul Henri, *Editions!Espritdespéninsules*, Paris, 1999.

It contributes to the economic development of these countries, to their cultural enrichment, and strengthens mutual understanding between peoples. As a result, migration is one of the most crucial global challenges of our century; it is neither a burden nor a boon, but a challenge that both the countries of the North and the South must rise to.

The stricter policies in the countries where people settle, travel through, and leave have led to the emergence of new forms of migratory movement, with plural and hazardous spatial-temporal strategies, multiple actors invested in astounding migratory projects, and relational networks that go beyond the ethnic ties of yesteryear. In this paper, we shall attempt to analyze the case of the African continent and African migration, with particular reference to the issue of migration policies and the place and role of Morocco in the current debate on concerted African policy. Given the diversity of forms, figures, and experiences of this mobility between Africa and Europe in particular, we do not wish to compartmentalize it into pre-established typologies (immigration, tourism, expatriation, return, lifestyle migration) but rather apprehend it in its entirety. Similarly, the *raison d'être* of this article also lies in our desire to paint a global picture of the realities of African migration. Using a range of geographical scales, we seek to highlight the many concurrent and/or intertwined dynamics of African migration in the context of attempts to harmonize migration policies.

Focusing on a broader spectrum means asking whether these mobilities have common characteristics and, if so, what they are; whether hybrid or minority figures move against the background of the categorized ones; whether there are gray areas at the margins of the most widespread experiences. We hope to contribute to examining the processes of transnationality, hybridization, and circulation that are taking place in African territories, as well as the transformations in relations between Europe and Africa through the prism of migration issues. The situation is further exacerbated by the intensity of a unique demographic change, the rise of a young population, the urban transition, and all this against a gloomy global economic backdrop. The situation is so severe that most observers concur that although the African continent is rich, its people are impoverished!

1. International Migration... A Boon for Africa!

Migration has long been a strategy for survival and income diversification. They are also a form of resistance to the many colonial invasions and 'aggressions' that have occurred throughout history, to the precariousness of the environment in which they originate, to the crisis in the agricultural sector in the face of market liberalization, to the low level of industrialization in most African countries, to chronic political instability, and to the increasing number of natural disasters. All of these factors have contributed to the emergence of a migration dynamic that has long been a foundation, both within and outside the continent. As a result, African men and women have always been able to find additional resources elsewhere, i.e., by temporarily leaving their own country. People in Africa have emigrated for a limited period of time, primarily in search of additional resources to improve their own lives and those of their families, but not only. Emigration is also a form of initiatory mobility, a means of discovery, self-assertion, and new freedom, as well as a way of reinforcing a sense of belonging to the place of departure. Over the years, families have 'learned' emigration as a profession, making it a well-established practice.

2. Africa, A Singular Plural: Complexity!

It is well known that economic differentials are powerful factors in international movement, and what is true for goods is also true for people. In fact, Alfred Sauvy was already stressing this in the 1950s when he said, 'If wealth does not go where people are, people will naturally go where the wealth is' (Sauvy, 1974). Indeed, the industrial revolution in Europe disrupted the traditional fabric through rural exodus, demographic shifts, changes in economic activities, and urban

expansion. This fact reveals a different picture. The population overflow had necessitated emigration, or, as Europeans always say, expatriation. During the major movements of the 19th century, around 50 million people left for America alone. Australia, New Zealand, and the African colonies also had their share of settlers. In those days, people moved freely.

In France, for example, even though the status of foreigners came into practice after the Revolution of 1789, with nationality as the criterion of distinction, the terms 'immigration' or 'immigrant' are absent from the legal field (Noiriel, 1988:71). The International Congress on Government Intervention in Emigration and Immigration held in Paris in 1889 was the first to address the issue of organizing international mobility. The New World countries, which were then experiencing rapid expansion and fiercely advocating for freedom of movement, engaged in discussions with the countries of origin, concerned about the potential loss of their vital populations. These talks eventually led to a compromise. The final resolutions, as noted by Nancy L. Green, 'enshrine non-intervention while calling for the establishment of a non-governmental organization to regulate the anarchy of flows' (Green, 2002:83). We are a long way from this blessed era of freedom of movement for human beings; since the beginning of the twentieth century, there has been increasing state intervention, firstly to plan and organize, but also to protect against migratory flows. At the end of the last century, closing borders became the watchword of industrialized countries.

Paradoxically, clear restrictions on people's free movement coincide with the growing transnationalization of financial and communication flows. North and South, rich and poor, divide today's world; it is preferable to be wealthy and in excellent health, possessing the passport of a developed country rather than the opposite. This document (the passport) not only signifies national belonging, protection, and the right of citizenship, but also an increase in rights, in particular a worldwide right to unhindered movement, thus limiting the border to a mere formality of boarding, a point of symbolic recognition. For the 'poor' in the south, the border serves as a psychological barrier, an obstacle to overcome, and a location to avoid rather than cross.

In this context, Africa appears to be the continent that has suffered unprecedented tragedies in the history of humanity (Boissezon, 2010:222). Africa has been stripped (Le Monde, 1985) of its wealth, its men and women (Pétre-Grenouilleau, 2004:468), and its place in commercial exchanges, which, regardless of whether they were triangular (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2011), have never been equitable.² Plunderers have plundered other riches, including its raw materials.

Africa has had to withstand the weight of its historical legacy. Therefore, African societies have had to develop strategies aimed at mitigating or reducing the impact of the disasters they have faced. Rural exodus and/or international emigration often accompany societal change, family breakdown, economic transformations, political turbulence on the African continent, and the harmful effects of climate change (iom.int/fr/news/).

We can only observe objectively and retrospectively that, faced with the burden of their historical heritage and economic difficulties, African societies have, out of obligation, cultivated strategies whose main objective has been to cancel out or lessen the consequences of the disasters they have suffered. The diversity of forms of resistance, resilience, and 'agentivity' (i.e., the ability to act) includes geographical mobility for both men and women, as well as internal and

²As far back as 1962, René Dumont, analyzing the agricultural sector, published a book entitled 'L'Afrique est mal partie' (Africa is off to a bad start), which will be republished in 2012 by Editions Seuil. 320 pages. Charlotte Paquet Dumont places it in context, while Abdou Diouf and Jean Ziegler, in the two prefaces to this edition, examine René Dumont's analysis over the last five decades and assess its current validity, while each developing a distinct and well-argued opinion. The afterword by Marc Dufumier, head of the Chair of Comparative Agriculture at Agro Paris Tech, highlights the text.

international migration. The first reflex is to leave, not to mention fleeing one's village for the city.

3. Africa, A Singular Plural: Unbridled Urbanization!

The immediate result is a population concentration in cities, where urban growth rates frequently exceed 3%. The rate of urbanization in Africa increased sixfold between 1950 and 1985. In extreme cases, it has been in excess of 5% per year since the early 2000s, and even much higher in some countries such as Liberia, Burundi, Sierra Leone, and Niger, where the urban population has doubled in 15 years. In 1990, only 31% of the African population was urban; by 2035, this rate is expected to rise to 49%. At the same time, giant conurbations or megacities are emerging, such as Lagos in particular, which, according to United Nations estimates, is growing at a rate of 3.7%. As a result, it is likely to become the world's third-largest metropolis by 2030.

In fact, population growth in African cities remains largely dependent on the rural exodus, internal emigration, and an influx of people from other neighboring countries. The growth of these cities (OCDE/CSAO, 2020) is more the result of rural areas' difficulties than their economic expansion. Towns and cities, especially the larger ones, attract people in search of gainful employment, access to services and infrastructure, and opportunities for social and professional mobility (amnistiegenerale.wordpress.com/2022/02/16/). However, due to strong growth and intense migratory flows, nearly all African cities are experiencing numerous challenges. They are no longer able to play their role of mixing and integrating migrant populations with no resources, who congregate in the old, dilapidated districts of the center or in the shanty towns on the outskirts. These are all places that tend to act as springboards for young would-be international emigrants.

At the same time, the globalization of trade in goods, capital, and new information and communication technologies (NICTs) has never been so widespread. The acceleration of human mobility due to improved transport conditions (faster and cheaper), as well as the proliferation of media and cultural networks, have all whetted the appetite to see what is going on elsewhere. Globalization is also producing border crossers, both legal and illegal.

The widespread dissemination of the Western vision of the world has upended a number of practices, customs, and traditions. The modernization of territories and the resulting new forms of spatial organization have led to the development of new socio-spatial hierarchies that have impacted the spatial-temporal articulation of the African countryside and cities. The existence of major economic and spatial inequalities, in terms of economic wealth and human development, between territories, continents, countries, regions, towns and countryside, individuals, social groups, men and women, and networks ultimately contributes to the desire to leave. The temptation to want to leave at any price has never been so strong, in the face of an almost universal closure of destination countries.

The rest of the world, when not silent, fails to measure the difficulties, pretends to act, and declaims without acknowledging its 'indifference', to the point that Pope Francis said during his visit to immigrants in Lesbos that we cannot tolerate 'The globalization of indifference (Speech by Pope Francis in Lesbos, 2016)'. Since the beginning of the 1990s, with the creation of the Schengen area³, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the break-up of the Eastern bloc, the dissolution of the multinational states of the East (the USSR and Yugoslavia), and the development of neo-liberalism, there has been a growing awareness of the need to protect the environment. With the development of neo-liberalism, we are witnessing the increasing closure of borders, sovereigntist

³ Signed in 1985 and 1990, the Schengen agreements ensure the free movement of people and -with a few exceptions - abolish checks on travelers within the area formed by these states. At the same time, they guarantee greater protection at the area's external borders.

retreats, (un.org/fr/chronicle/article/la-protection-des-droits,) and the proliferation of attempts to harmonize immigration and asylum policies on a global scale. (ohchr.org/fr/migration/about-migration-and-human-rights).

These include the adoption of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime by the United Nations Member States. Additionally, the United Nations adopted two Palermo Protocols: The Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air, The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons. In December 2018, 175 countries ratified the Marrakesh Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration.⁴ The United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families marks the end of an era and the emergence of a 'new world order' (Duclos, 2023). It has had as much an impact on the world economy, with the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in January 1995, as on the philosophy of international migration governance policies.

However, despite all the legal, security, and police efforts to control 'irregular' immigration, the aspirations of a better place remain unbroken.

4. Africa, A Singular Plural: The Facts!

Nowadays, it is deplorable to note that the alarmist discourse on migration is, with a few exceptions, the driving force behind European policy.⁵ There is no doubt that migration poses a number of challenges, but positive migration governance offers real opportunities for countries of origin, transit, and settlement. It contributes to the economic development of these countries, enriches their culture, and reinforces a form of mutual understanding between peoples. However, some politicians raise concerns about demographic instability and the potential invasion of immigrants from Africa. And they do so without, as far as we know, any plausible basis. Migration suffers from *ipsedixitism*, a term that refers to the tendency to accept an assertion as true simply because a supposedly trusted source makes it without providing a proof. Of course, according to demographers, Africa's population will continue to grow, rising from 700 million in 2000 to 906 million in 2005, then to 1.5 billion today, and reaching almost two billion in 2050, i.e., growing at a rate of 4.5% a year⁶. Europe's population, on the other hand, will fall from 730 million to 628 million over the same period. However, the biggest disparity between the two continents is in the proportion of 15-64-year-olds, i.e., the working-age population. However, this does not imply that young Africans are migrating to Europe nor should we raise the demographic scarecrow.

According to statistics from the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), (United Nations, 2024), as of July 1, 2020, the world's estimated migrant population stood at 281 million,⁷ representing just 3.6% of the global

⁴ Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (A/RES/73/195) –Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2018.

⁵ It is against this backdrop of frenzy, fear, and community solidarity in the face of the 'migratory ogre' that emigration in general, and 'irregular' emigration in particular, has become a recurring social and political issue in Afro-Mediterranean relations. It is a central theme in Euro-Mediterranean discussions, particularly the so-called '5+5' meetings. The proliferation of legal reforms since Dublin I is another indicator of this relentlessness. The European Parliament adopted the Pact on Migration and Asylum on 10 April 2024, which mandates the processing of a proportion of asylum applications at the EU's external borders.

⁶ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2011). World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, Highlights, and Advance Tables. ESA/P/WP.220. http://esa.un.org/wpp/Documentation/pdf/WPP2010_Highlights.pdf.

⁷ In this work we do not deal with refugees, who, according to estimates by the High Office of the United Nations Refugees (UNHCR) 35.3 million worldwide by the end of 2022, including 5.9 million Palestinian refugees under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), as well as 5.4 million asylum seekers.

population.⁸ The absolute number of migrants in the world has undoubtedly risen considerably, from 77 million in 1965 to 111 million in 1990, then 140 million in 1997, reaching 175 million in 2000 and 281 million in 2022, but in relation to the number of inhabitants on our planet, the proportion remains low; it was 2.3% in 1990, then 2.8% in 2000, and 3.5% in 2022. What is more, more than 80% of the world's migrants are legal, and a large proportion of this migration is South-South or North-South. As a result, the African continent, with a population of around 1.5 billion, has around 40 million migrants, or around 17% of the world's population and barely 14% of all migrants. While Europe's demographic weight in the world population is 10%, its absolute share of the migrant population is 24%. This is despite the fact that the number of migrants in Africa has risen by 67% in the space of 10 years, a greater increase than on any other continent. Furthermore, the two main regions where Africans are most concentrated, namely the Middle East and Europe, have a low share of all migrants, at 6.6% and 8.2%, respectively (Williams, 2024).

5. Africa, A Plural Singular: Africans Migrate, Especially to the Rest of Africa!

Although African migration continues to grow and globalize year on year, it remains primarily intra-continental. We aim to fill this data gap with the creation of the African Migration Observatory (AMO) in December 2020 and the launch of the Pan-African Statistical Institute (STATAFRIC) in Tunis in November. The data currently circulating should be treated with extreme caution.

According to the latest figures published in a recent report, (IOM UN, 2024) there has been a 53% increase in the number of migrant workers since 2010. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) estimates that there will be 21 million inter-regional migrants in Africa in 2020, an increase of 3 million compared to 2018 (United Nations, 2024). For its part, Centre for Strategic Studies on Africa talks of 43 million African migrants in 2022 (Williams, 2024). There will also be approximately 9 million refugees, and the effects of climate change (United Nations, 2023) will cause 7.5 million people to move (United Nations, 2024) within Africa. These figures, which only take into account people protected and assisted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), are far from reflecting reality. In fact, many internally displaced people do not benefit from UNHCR services and therefore escape these statistics (Likibi, 2018: 4-8).

In terms of geographical distribution by major region and in descending order, East Africa is home to 7.7 million, or 26.7%; (United Nations, 2020) West Africa has 7.6 million, or 27.4%; Southern Africa hosts 6.4 million migrants, or 22.2%; Central Africa 3.9 million, or 13.6%; North Africa 3.2 million, or 11.1%.

⁸ Measures to restrict internal and international travel linked to COVID-19, implemented by the vast majority of countries around the world, reduced migration between March 2020 and July 2021. 281 million people were living in a country other than their country of birth in 2022, 128 million more than in 1990 and more than three times as many as in 1970 (<https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/wmr-2022-interactive/?lang=FR>).

Figure 1: Annual Displacements Due to Natural Disasters in Africa

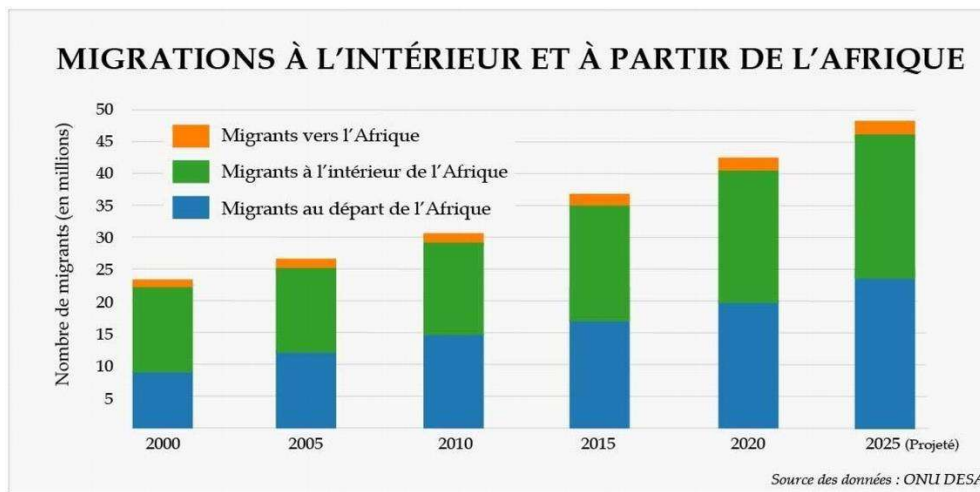


Each major African region often has its own model, inherent networks, and intrinsic migration profile, which may differ from one country to another. Generally speaking, migration is very marked in each of the five major African regions, with the exception of Central Africa. Because of a lack of infrastructure, the nine countries that make up this region⁹ have closer links with African countries in other regions than with their own. But even in this case, almost 75% of migrants from this region lived in another African country (United Nations, 2020).

Another feature of African migration is that almost half of all migrants live in five countries: South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Kenya, and Ethiopia. South Africa, the continent's most industrialized country, attracts almost 3 million migrants, making it an attractive destination for those seeking employment opportunities and students, as well as victims of political instability and environmental risks. Indeed, natural hazards like cyclones and floods frequently affect countries like Madagascar, Malawi, and Mozambique (IDMC, 2019). On the other hand, slow-onset disasters such as drought have an impact on the lives and migration patterns of millions of people in Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, and Zambia SADC, 2019. In West Africa, the number of migrants nearly doubled between 1990 and 2020, while their share of the total population has remained stable, at 2.8% in 1990 and 2.6% in 2020. Côte d'Ivoire is the country with the highest number of migrants, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of its population. Nigeria follows with 1.3 million migrants. At 8.8% of its population, the Gambia has the second-highest proportion of migrants as a percentage of its population (United Nations, 2020). Notably, the number of migrants from the sub-region settling in North America has increased from 3% in 1990 to 10% in 2020 (United Nations, 2020). Lastly, while it is true that the African population is increasingly venturing outside the continent, it is important to acknowledge that we are far from the stereotype of an African invasion or exodus!

⁹ Angola, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Sao Tome and Principe.

Figure 2: Migration within and from Africa



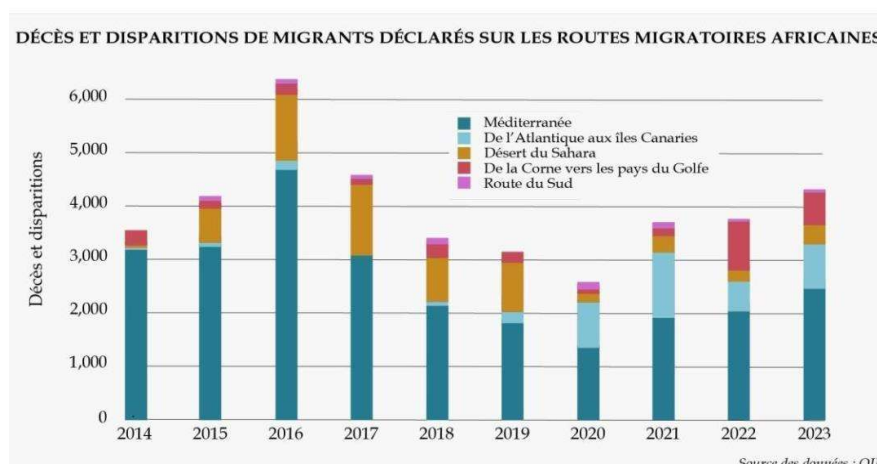
Source: United Nations (2020)

6. Africa, A Singular Plural: The Heavy Toll of So-called Illegal Migration

European countries find themselves caught in the double contradiction of having to preach the benefits of liberalism and highlight its many virtues while at the same time trying to limit immigration. In other words, they have to encourage the movement of people who move capital around while at the same time blocking those whom money moves around as a result of relocation, flexibility, and unemployment—the people left behind by liberalism and its 'castaways' in the south. On one hand, there is the obvious desire to build free movement of people within the Schengen area, coupled with watertight protection from the outside world. This is exactly what is meant by the basic definitions used (area, European, citizen, immigrant, foreigner, etc.) and the actions that have been taken (harmonization of conditions of entry into the Schengen area, creation of the Schengen Information System (SIS), adaptation of the Dublin Convention, the Agreement on the readmission of persons residing without authorization of 29 March 1991, the Convention governing the crossing of the external borders of the European Union, visa requirements, and penalties for carriers). As a result, certain borders can no longer be located "at the border" in the traditional geographical, political, and administrative sense but rather elsewhere, where selective controls such as health and security are implemented.

On the other hand, there is a form of implicit recourse to so-called 'illegal' immigrants who, despite themselves, live outside the law and in an often-precarious situation. Moreover, the various regularization operations highlight the imbalance between demand and supply in terms of employment. Farmers rely on this workforce to harvest fruit and vegetables on a seasonal basis. They do not always comply with the laws in force. Just look at the living and working conditions of immigrants on some farms in southern Spain, or recall the dramatic events at El Ejido (Alternatives Economiques, 2024). Moreover, if need be, the COVID-19 crisis clearly demonstrated the agricultural sector's need for immigrant labour (Radio France, 2024). But other sectors do not hesitate to call on illegal immigrants: construction, clothing, catering, hotels, etc. In spite of themselves, they live outside the law and in an often-precarious situation. This is especially true in southern European countries, where the flow of 'irregulars' is significant, but not the only one. This suggests that illegal immigrants act as a buffer between political constraints and economic reality. In Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, for example, the measures to combat so-called 'illegal' immigration have become more diversified and heavier in recent years.

Figure 3: Deaths and disappearances of migrants reported on African migration routes.



At the same time, as Figure 3 shows, the number of migrants who disappear on their way to Europe is dramatically high. The International Organization for Migration (IOM), which initiated the Missing Migrants project in 2014, an open-access database recording the deaths and documenting migrant deaths and disappearances, records, 61,867 migrant deaths worldwide since 2014, although the actual number is significantly higher. The deadliest migratory route remains the central Mediterranean, where at least 22,871 people have lost their lives over this period. The deadliest overland migration route is the border between the United States and Mexico. Similarly, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), at least 8,565 people died on migratory routes in 2023 (Le Monde, 2024).

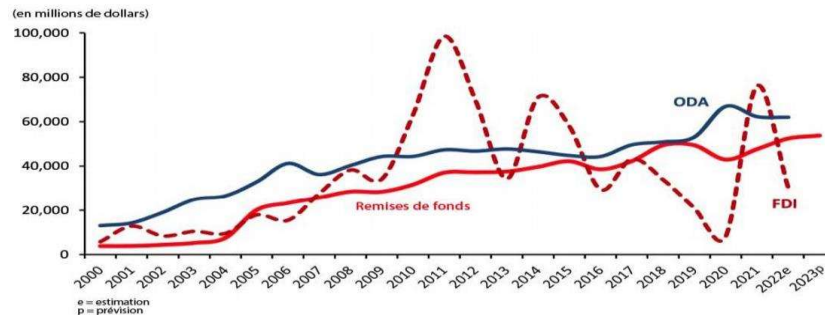
7. Transfer of Remittances by Migrants

The constant increase in remittances from African migrants (Figure 4), reveals their resilience and the significant contribution they make to their family, their community, and their country of origin.

The so-called family support transfers concern both current consumption expenditures as well as health or education expenses, whereas savings transfers mainly concern investment in housing or feeding a current account. The migrant or a family member appears to use only a small portion of the funds for economic investment. It is evident that the initial beneficiaries of migrant are all the family members who have stayed in the country of origin. This is especially true in rural areas, where remittances help communities adapt to shocks such as disease or crop failures, which affect the financial health of the most vulnerable. Their role is crucial for families without social security or where it is unattainable. According to World Bank data, remittances from sub-Saharan Africans residing abroad increased by 6.1% in 2022 to reach \$53 billion US. The strong increase in money transfers to Ghana (12%), Kenya (8.5%), Tanzania (25%), Rwanda (21%), and Uganda (17%) largely explains this dynamic. Flows to Nigeria, which constitute about 38% of the total amounts sent by migrant workers to the region, increased by 3.3% to reach \$20.1 billion US. The Bank points out that the cost of a transfer of \$200 to the region was 8%, on average, in the fourth quarter of 2022, compared to 7.8% a year earlier. It should be noted that an IOM report from 2019 highlights the importance of \$528 billion US dollars. In 2018, the estimated global flows to developing countries in Africa amounted to approximately \$81 billion US concern for Africa. Approximately, ten times more remittances are received from outside than those from the interior of the continent. Africa remains the continent with the highest transfer costs, regardless of where it comes from.

In the fourth quarter of 2018, the average cost of remittances to Africa was 9%, compared to the global average of 7%. However, this African average has fallen since it amounted to 14% in 2008.’ (Natali and Isaacs, 2019:121)

Figure 4: Resources flows to sub-Saharan Africa 2000-2023.
FLUX DE RESSOURCES VERS L'AFRIQUE SUBSAHARIENNE 2000-2023



Morocco between a rock and a hard place: Morocco's long-standing role as an interface.

Morocco has become an increasingly important transit country. A wide range of countries of origin distinguishes the candidates. This is all the truer, given that, in the past, the migratory journey was generally characterized by the proven existence of a point of departure and another point of arrival without wandering, straying, or more or less forced detours. Today, however, we are witnessing an extraordinary increase in the complexity and timing of migration translations. In this context, the Central Maghreb in general and Morocco in particular play an important role as an interface between Africa and Europe in general, as well as the Iberian Peninsula and the Canary Islands in particular. This role of interface, which is also played by a few rare countries such as Turkiye and Mexico, necessarily requires bilateral and multilateral collaboration between policies in order to reconcile the social expectations and demands corresponding to migratory movements and for states to provide sustainable solutions. Understanding the significance of this interface function is crucial. All that is needed to be done is to have a glance at a world map to understand its significance. Morocco enjoys a strategic and privileged geographical position, just a short distance from the coveted continent of Europe.

As a result of their geographical position and privileged historical links with the Sahel-Sudan region, the Maghreb countries in general and Morocco in particular have maintained and continue to maintain intense human exchanges with this region. This resulted in the presence of a relatively large trading and student community on both sides, as well as an increasingly large population in transit to Europe since the mid-1980s. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, Morocco was largely open to the Sahel region in general and West Africa in particular, with exchanges of people, products, and consumer goods, as well as the circulation of thought, particularly religious thought. The connecting routes, historically inseparable from the birth of Islamic Africa, were those used by the Western populations who Islamized Africa. Both religious and commercial, they crossed the Atlas Mountains and the Saharan oases, linking Morocco to sub-Saharan Africa (Bilad es Soudan).

Colonization and the development of trade and communication methods eventually weakened the traditional exchanges between these two areas. The discovery of oil reduced the role of the traditional towns even further and led to the emergence of towns linked to the exploitation of mineral resources, such as Tamanrasset. Reactivating caravan routes by these new nomads of circumstance, who are illegal migrants, is a paradox!

Indeed, many sub-Saharan nationals use these ancient routes to reach the Mediterranean coasts (as a goal and target point), and forebears' paths for various purposes. It is worth noting that while the multiple means of transport have evolved since their predecessors, one constant remains in this trajectory, namely a particular perception linked to temporality. How could it be otherwise for individuals who, in some cases, left their family homes several years ago (twenty-four months to five years according to the testimony of Gambian or Congolese nationals) and who, by force of circumstance, find themselves stopped just a stone's throw from Europe?

It appears as though they are attracted to the closest crossing point, captivated by the allure of its proximity and virtual allure of the Spanish coast visible from Morocco. With each new arrival, the number of candidates eager to depart increases.

The presence on Moroccan shores of would-be immigrants from increasingly distant geographical areas is therefore more the result of a state of affairs than of a choice. A dynamic logic puts them in stasis, temporary transit, if they cross Mediterranean. As a result, the Moroccan space is for them a sort of forced drop-off point, a provoked stop constituted on the one hand by the Mediterranean inlet and, on the other, by the Atlantic Ocean.

Both are equally unpassable without adequate means, increased risk-taking, and the setting up of networks of "smugglers." In the absence of data or at least reliable estimates, how many there are and where they come from is a difficult question to answer with any precision. Generally speaking, we are witnessing a form of speculation and bidding without any foundation. The only points of reference are refoulements, arrests, and the two regularization operations.

8. Morocco, A Player in African Migration Policies

In September 2013, following instructions from His Majesty the King, the government put in place a National Immigration and Asylum Strategy (SNIA) and an appropriate action plan, leading to a comprehensive policy on immigration, asylum, and trafficking. In the migration maelstrom, few Arab-African states have put in place immigration policies that respect human rights. This is a proactive approach that is unique on the African continent and has received a very favorable response in the media as well as from African and world political leaders. In the same spirit, Morocco has launched two regularization campaigns, the first in 2014 and a second on 12 December 2016, to enable certain migrants in an irregular situation in Morocco to regularize their status.

Morocco is very active at the continental and international levels. The General Assembly of the United Nations unanimously adopted a resolution on 24 December 2017, designated Morocco to host the Conference for the Adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration on 10 and 11 December 2018. The Global Forum on Migration and Development, which Morocco and Germany co-chaired, held its eleventh summit in Marrakech from 5 to 7 December 2018, immediately preceded this conference.

At the level of the African continent, on 30 and 31 January 2017, in Addis Ababa, during the 28th AU Summit, His Majesty King Mohammed VI, agreed, at the request of President Alpha Condé (Chairperson of the African Union), to coordinate the African Union's action on migration. In July 2017, His Majesty the King presented a preliminary note defining the 'Vision for an African Agenda on Migration' during the 29th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union. Two regional retreats on migration took place in Morocco in November 2017. in Skhirat¹⁰ and on 9 January 2018 in Rabat, following a participatory and inclusive approach. The

¹⁰ Is a town in Morocco, that is situated between the administrative capital and the economic center of Casablanca, Rabat.

goal is to collectively and consensually reflect on the African Agenda on Migration, which was presented at the 30th AU Summit.

The consultations that Morocco has carried out as part of its pan-African mandate have made it possible to place migrants at the heart of the debates, to demystify prejudices, and to establish a consensus. The approach adopted acknowledges security, development, and human rights as three interdependent dimensions in order to understand the migration phenomenon and act accordingly on national policies, sub-regional coordination, the continental approach, and international partnership.

Finally, the African Union proposed setting up an African Migration Observatory in Morocco to foster observation and information exchange among African countries, aiming to promote controlled management of migratory flows. Likewise, the creation of a Special Envoy for Migration within the African Union's frameworks will primarily oversee the Union's policies in this domain and collaborate with Member States to execute the African Agenda for Migration.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is urgent to place the issue of African migration at the core of the concerns of states, the African Union, the challenges of North-South dialogue, and international cooperation policy. Additionally, it is crucial to examine the issue from a subregional perspective, specifically within the Mediterranean countries and their relations with the rest of Africa. Indeed, the dichotomy between a wealthy and prosperous North, often perceived as such, and a South afflicted, whether, rightly or wrongly, by various ills, intensifies the yearning to relocate, either to establish a new life abroad or for a brief visit. But in both cases, the barriers are multiple; house arrest is required, and obtaining a visa is expensive and arduous. Based on this observation, we will wonder to what extent and in what incidental forms African countries can equip themselves, or at least avail themselves, of an efficient migration policy. Until now, managing the phenomenon has been either a straightforward endeavor¹¹ or the task of managing unbalanced geopolitical and sectoral power dynamics.

While the issue of migration has become a highly sensitive issue in Europe and the United States, many African countries view the victims with bitter resignation and a distressing indifference. Today, most states lack the ability or the firm will either to implement public policies that effectively govern international migration or control the flow of departures. However, these states are aware of the direct and indirect impact of migration on employment, social peace, and migrant currency transfers. This is particularly evident when we observe a number of recurring facts, such as the need to curb the 'brain drain', combat 'irregular' migration, facilitate the transit and/or reception of 'irregular' immigrants, accompany nationals who have settled elsewhere and attempt to bind them to their original company, and manage the pressure of European countries who want them to act as a 'buffer' or even a 'gendarme' at the service of the European Union. At the same time, increasingly advanced African skills in all fields, particular the most promising, are actively participating in the prosperity and technical and scientific development of European countries. It is legitimate to search for the most appropriate ways and means to use these skills and associate them with Africa's economic and social development.

¹¹ A l'instar de la zone de libre-échange continentale africaine (ZLECAf), quitarde à voir le jour! [In the wake of the African Continental Free Trade Area (ZLECAf), let's look forward to the future.]

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