SOLROUTES

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C. Cassarini, M. Lovato

Università di Genova | DISFOR DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE DELLA FORMAZIONE

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MIGRATIONS, MOBILITIES AND BORDERS IN WESTERN AND CENTRAL SAHARA'S: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL INSIGHTS FROM SOLIDARITY STUDIES (MOROCCO, MAURITANIA, ALGERIA)

Introduction

The north-western part of the African continent is a central space in the Euro-African migration dynamics (Bensaâd, 2009b). From a geographical point of view, it can be considered as a pivotal space, as a true contact point and node between different political and cultural areas. In this perspective, Morocco can be seen as the real center of contacts between these different areas and societies (Alioua, 2005). However, to fully understand the logic of these connectivities [1] (McDougall et Scheele, 2012), it is necessary to consider the Moroccan migratory space from a perspective that transcends national borders, and truly integrate it into a regional and continental perspective. This change of focus stems above all from the empirical realities imposed by the structures of contemporary migration routes.

From a geographical point of view, Morocco is a perfect illustration of the entanglement of African routes and societies. Both mountainous, open to the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, but also linked to the Sahara, this geography links lifestyles, cultures and societies that are themselves linked to the spaces that delimit them. Morocco's strong connection to the Sahara makes it a space of crucial connectivity both with West Africa (Senegal) and with the Sahelian countries (Mali, Niger) (Peraldi, 2011). The dynamics of these connectivities can be studied in different ways. In the context of a research project on the 'solidarity studies', the Euro-African migration routes constitute an ideal scientific object to grasp 'their emergence, their transformations, and the imaginaries and social spaces they engender'. Beyond the historical depth of migrations and mobilities in North-West Africa, several changes that have affected the Euro-African geopolitical balance have made these migration routes crucial issues in the relationship between North and South (El Qadim, 2015).

Among these changes, two seem to us to be heuristic for understanding the deployment and, at the same time, questioning the logics of solidarity along migration routes. The first change concerns, over a more or less long period of time, the establishment of a reticular

border space between the European Union and Africa, particularly in the Western Mediterranean area (Brachet et al., 2011). This legal, political, and technical production has led to profound changes in the construction of migratory routes and itineraries (Ahouga et Kunz, 2017 ; Andersson, 2014). It has also led to changes in Moroccan society and its place in Africa, on a regional and continental scale. It is in this first context that the logics of solidarity regarding people on the move should be questioned. The second change concerns, on a finer scale, the manufacture of mobilities in the Saharan space through and towards Morocco. Indeed, beyond international and Euro-African mobilities, Morocco is affected by mobilities that do not only have Europe as their destination (Alioua, 2005). These mobilities are commercial, trade-related, and more broadly circular (Marei et al., 2019). However, they have brought about profound changes in the spaces and territories they cross. The aim is therefore to understand how these circulations can also provide a 'fulcrum' for other Euro-African mobilities and their interaction logics.

Thus, we consider the manufacture of borders and mobilities as two types of spatial, social and political dynamics that are interdependent and through which the notion of solidarity deserves to be questioned. To do that, it is necessary to start from a broader look on the region where Morocco is situated. It is needed to look at the spatial, historical and political dynamics related to the Western and Central Sahara region, taking into consideration how migration and mobilities have affected Mauritania, Algeria and Morocco. These countries are strongly interconnected between each other yet present their own particularities. Once the regional perspective is defined, we can refocus our gaze to Morocco and the recent borderization process taking place there, redefining politics, spaces and mobilities, and consequently affecting regional balances and relations.

Routes across and within Western and Central Sahara's

Civil society organizations and the issue of migration

The prevalence of international migration in North Africa suggests that it should be seen as a social phenomenon in its own right, but over the last twenty years it has entered the political sphere in different ways. These differentiated forms of politicisation depend on a wide range of factors: the nature of the political regimes in place, according to their degree of authoritarianism or liberalism, their exposure to the international and development arenas,

the importance and functionality of migratory dynamics in the economies and, finally, the geopolitical strategies put in place by these different states in relation to the process of border externalisation. These different factors help us to understand how 'civil societies' in these countries have dealt with the issue of migration, not only in relation to their own nationals in Europe, but also in their relations with foreigners, particularly sub-Saharan Africans, in those countries.

First of all, it seems important to stress the idea that, without succumbing to a form of methodological nationalism, we must not standardise the way in which civil societies operate in the region. Indeed, each of the states we are interested in here have their own historicity, and the civil societies that have been built up there have all experienced their own form of historical trajectory. Without going back over these historicities, it is appropriate to emphasise the extent to which the history of civil society in Morocco is different from the Algerian experience. The monarchical nature of the Moroccan regime, despite years of very strong authoritarianism, did not offer the same spaces for expression than the military regime in Algeria or the Mauritanian one. In Morocco, particularly during the reign of Mohammed 6, these channels of expression allowed the emergence of a civil society, open to its diaspora and, above all, authorised to invest in "constructive" ways of arguing in the political arena of the Makhzen. In Algeria, on the other hand, civil society has shown little interest and has not been allowed to invest this thematic, mainly because migration is an issue closely associated with security risks and is therefore reserved for the State apparatus. Whereas Morocco has seen the emergence of a very dense network of organisations with a humanitarian vocation towards people on the move, Algeria limited its advocacy to a few human rights organisations, at least until 2020 and the wave of authoritarian tightening that followed the Hirak movement. From a certain point of view, the situation in Mauritania is similar to that in Morocco, even though the regime is not monarchical but republican. Indeed, despite a succession of coups d'état since the 1990s, "civil society" has always been considered as a "legitimate" interlocutor and its existence has never been the subject of debate. The presence of CSOs is dictated primarily by the political regimes in power.

However, the dynamics of these CSOs also depend on their exposure to international arenas, in other words the worlds of development and humanitarian action. In Algeria, the notion of "development" has its own historical trajectory: it is considered to be the preserve of the state and its political, administrative, economic and military centralism. As a result, Algeria has shown very little openness to international aid and to the worlds of development

and humanitarian aid. In contrast, Morocco and Mauritania have been calling on international organisations since the 1970s in a wide range of areas to support human, economic and territorial development. The presence of these development circles has helped to "irrigate" civil society circles with skills, strategies and funding, and has led to the establishment of a rent system between international organisations and local civil societies. It was in this context that the migration issue began to emerge in the mid-2000s, both through certain tragic events at borders, and through certain international and developmentalist organisations which, with the support of government funding, began to develop a number of co-development programmes aimed at fighting against irregular migration.

At a regional scale, civil society organisations working on these issues can be categorised into three main types.

The first type concerns organisations that operate almost exclusively with international funds and can be considered as local "operators" of various types of immobilisation mechanisms. Their involvement is generally highly professionalised and operates according to international organisational criteria. These organisations are "dominant" in the sense that they monopolise most of the funds dedicated to these issues. They are not very critical and are characterised by a form of conservatism that does not question the contemporary mobility order. The sociology of these organisations is characterised by a high degree of internationalisation and employees who are generally involved in humanitarian work. They include many people with dual nationality and young Europeans who have studied development and humanitarian work.

The second type, at the opposite extreme to the first, is made up of organisations that are also internationalised, operating with funds from alternative European worlds openly fighting for freedom of movement. They are not very professional and operate almost entirely on a voluntary basis. These structures have been set up in opposition to the migration management approach, and use a variety of means to help organise local solidarity groups, sea rescues, etc. They can be considered "dominated" in the sense that they have limited access to funding, but are characterised by their strong sociological symmetry with the first category: they also include many people with dual nationality or young Europeans who have studied development and humanitarian work.

Finally, the third type is made up of very small associations whose legitimacy and commitment are based on specific local issues (access to healthcare, integration, etc.) and

specific beneficiary groups (vulnerable migrants, etc.). These structures can be formal or informal and are subject to a degree of political flexibility, depending on the material or financial support they receive. Their forms of practical involvement with people on the move make them an object of struggle between the first two categories.

This typology, which is necessarily incomplete and open to improvement, nonetheless refers to the objective structures of the dynamics of civil societies linked to migration in North Africa. Present both on the roads and in border areas, these organisations, in that they mesh the territories of mobility in the region, also constitute concrete points of entry into the contemporary dynamics of solidarity in the region.

Old and new mobilities: capturing the manufacture of routes in their historical and economical depth
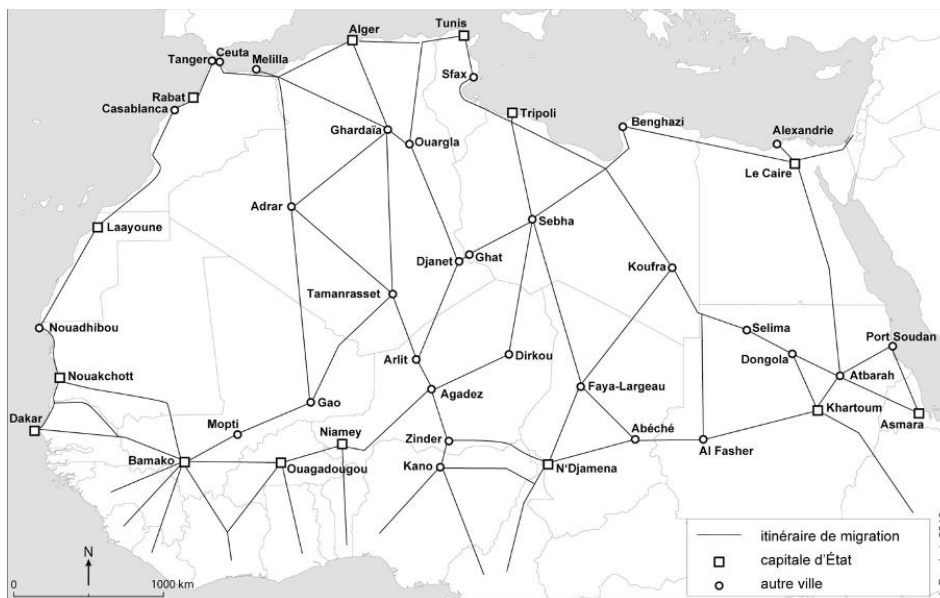
Carte 1 : African migration routes. Author: Julien Brachet. Source: Julien Brachet, Armelle Choplin, Olivier Pliez. Le Sahara entre espace de circulation et frontière migratoire de l'Europe. Hérodote – Revue de géographie et de géopolitique, 2011, 142, pp

Dernier pays d'immigration avant le Maroc	Pays d'origine												
	Syrie	Côte d'Ivoire	Sénégal	Guinée	RDC	Cameroun	Centr afrique	Mali	Yémen	Autres africains	Autres arabes	Autres pays	Total
Algérie	48,9	35,1	27,6	69,0	57,7	83,1	51,0	78,3	29,8	61,4	15,7	0,0	55,2
Mauritanie	4,9	25,3	57,5	10,8	6,9	,4	6,4	9,2	12,4	3,8	6,1	25,0	9,3
Liban	22,8	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	25,0	7,5
Egypte	8,7	0,0	0,0	2,2	0,0	,4	0,0	0,0	32,3	,5	15,0	0,0	4,1
Mali	,4	14,0	5,5	4,8	8,9	,9	0,0	0,0	0,0	7,6	3,9	0,0	3,9
Libye	2,3	1,8	0,0	,5	1,0	1,3	0,0	8,3	0,0	11,6	15,8	25,0	3,4
Tunisie	3,3	2,7	2,8	1,1	1,0	1,9	0,0	0,0	0,0	2,0	5,5	0,0	2,2
Sénégal	0,0	1,8	0,0	7,4	2,0	,9	3,5	0,0	0,0	3,0	0,0	25,0	1,7
Turquie	4,2	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	2,4	0,0	1,4
Niger	0,0	,6	2,8	0,0	0,0	6,8	0,0	2,1	0,0	2,0	0,0	0,0	1,2
Autre	4,5	18,6	3,9	4,3	22,6	4,2	39,1	2,1	25,6	8,1	35,6	0,0	10,0
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Tableau 1 : Last immigration country before Morocco by nationality. Source : La migration forcée au Maroc, résultats de l'enquête nationale de 2021, rapport détaillé. Haut commissariat au Plan

Those three countries (Morocco, Mauritania, Algeria) are part of the same international migration system (Berriane et al., 2015). Algeria and Mauritania were the countries crossed by 64.5% of the people on the move questioned as part of a survey by the Haut Commissariat au Plan in 2021, which shows the importance of overland travel in these migratory routes. However, due to their different geographical positions, they are not affected in the same way by the dynamics of borderization. In fact, it seems more relevant to analyze them in terms of their own political histories and societies. In Morocco, migration management is inseparable from the political construction of the Makhzen [2], particularly around the emergence, in 2013, of a 'migration diplomacy' oriented towards Africa (Qadim, 2017). In Algeria, the pushbacks and purely security-based management of foreigners is inseparable from the military nature of the political regime and its 'isolationist' geopolitics (Chena, 2016). In Mauritania, the importance of the 'international' dimension of migration management is intrinsically linked to the state's involvement in 'securing' the Sahara and controlling the borders (Ould Moctar, 2023). In this sense, Mauritania offers yet another example of how the security imperatives of spatial control are combined with the challenges of migration control.

Nevertheless, these three countries are structurally experiencing international migration dynamics that have profoundly transformed the places and spaces on and around which they have been built. It is also important to remember that, although these dynamics are much older than European borders, they have also and above all been structured by important logics of economic complementarities (Pliez, 2002). In Algeria, Mauritania and Morocco, the place of foreigners is not new. For a long time (until the 1990s at least) it

was defined by temporalities and circulatory mobilities with the countries of origin. Many works agree on the fact that the history of intra-African mobilities has been deeply structured by the economic differentials between North and South (Bredeloup, 2021). The example of Libya can, in this sense, be considered as particularly representative of these dynamics (Bensaâd, 2012) even if each of these countries has, in its own way, a very long history of international mobilities.

The example of Mauritania allows us to see with acuity the way in which contemporary migratory routes have been based on a deep history of different mobilities, intersecting, linking and producing, through these processes of fusion, routes used and known by modern adventurers [3] (Streiff-Fénart et Poutignat, 2006). The city of Nouadhibou, known as one of the hot spots of the passage to Europe, has experienced a singular development intrinsically linked to the different migratory configurations and their migratory impacts. Created in 1907 under the name of 'Port-Etienne', Nouadhibou has historically been connected to international dynamics, both migratory and economic. Its strong fishing industry has made it a particularly well-known city on a regional scale (Choplin et Lombard, 2008). Since the 1970s, this dynamism has made it a highly attractive area from a migratory point of view. In addition to internal Mauritanian migration, other more regional migration dynamics were quickly added, linked to Mauritanian social groups (from the south of the country), but also to others whose influence went beyond national borders. This is the case, for example, of several Soninke groups, who connected the city of Nouadhibou to international migration networks from the 1970s/1980s onwards (Choplin et Lombard, 2007). These migrations, in addition to being inserted into economic niches (crafts, mechanics, fishing, etc.), fill the structural deficit of labour not formed by the Mauritanian education system. This is how, in the 1990s, Nouadhibou became one of the most cosmopolitan cities in West Africa. These different migratory layers do not only transform the economic structures of the city, but they also transform the urban space and contribute to its development. The 'Qairaan' district, for example, is known to be one of those concentrating many young men wishing to go to the Canary Islands, while the 'Numéros' district has for a long time been a place of settlement for African immigrants wishing to work mainly in Mauritania (Oumar Ba et Choplin, 2005). Within this city, the migratory layers have thus drawn relational dynamics where 'mobile' and 'immobile' people, through their migratory strategies, maintain the permanence of a migratory route. While Nouadhibou is undoubtedly one of the major border towns in West Africa (Streiff-Fénart et Poutignat, 2008, Ould Moctar, 2023), the

gradual northward movement of migratory networks has also transformed north african countries.

In Algeria, far from the large coastal metropolises, it is in the Sahara and its cities that contemporary migration routes find both their origins and their dynamics (Bensaâd, 2008). In Algeria, the first migration routes were, like the situation in Nouadhibou, mainly caused by the project of nationalization of the Algerian Sahara and the launch of several large development projects (Bensaâd, 2009a; Chena, 2013). Since the colonial period, the city of Tamanrasset has been one of the most important cities in the central Sahara. This strategic position encouraged the Algerian state to develop it and to call upon a workforce that was not available in the north. It was therefore from Niger and Mali that these workers came, already drawing, thanks to the Tuareg transport networks, the contours of a regional and cross-border mobility space (Lensari et Bellal, 2019). This situation lasted until the 1980s and even went beyond the Saharan area to affect cities further north. From Tamanrasset, although these migratory networks initially remained confined to cross-border movements, they gradually escaped and connected Algeria to Morocco via the town of Adrar, in search of new opportunities. Although the migratory function of the Algerian Sahara remains mainly structured around 'transit', the urban anchoring is not to be underestimated.

For example, there were almost 60 sewing workshops run by African entrepreneurs in the town of Tamanrasset in 2006 (Bensaâd, 2009b), while around the town or outside it, groups of people on the move took over the urban margins and settled there. This is notably the case of a very precise and rich ethnography carried out in the Oued of Tamanrasset, near the neighborhood of 'Tahaggart' (Minvielle, 2011). Under a bridge, people on the move have created a real social and economic space dedicated to mobility: 'The toponymic construction of the "adventurers" is well organized around the shared migratory experience of transit. It expresses part of the contradiction between the migrant's desire to continue the adventure towards places he considers more prosperous and the dead-end situation he experiences in Tamanrasset. The metaphors are cruel: the dream of taking flight like a »'Alouette » is shattered on the walls of the 'Abribus', a closed space that forbids movement, a waiting room that never sees a bus pass by. Cameroonians, Ivorians, Congolese and Burkinabés can sometimes wait more than three years at the Alouette, to raise the funds necessary to continue their journey to the North‑Algiers, Oran or Morocco.' (Minvielle, 2011, p. 9).

Approaching routes through scales: local structures and international networks

If the Algerian Sahara is today mainly known for the large waves of pushbacks organized by the state (Bureau, 2019) towards the Niger borders, especially in Assamaka, it is nonetheless a very important transit area, but also a settlement area for sub-Saharan African nationals in search of other futures (Spiga, 2005). Here again, it seems important to understand the migration routes that cross it in a broader perspective than that of Europe. These routes are also the site of various economies and cannot exist without the participation of local actors facilitating or hindering the passages to Europe (Scheele, 2012). From this perspective, it is also worth considering the role of Tuareg groups in the construction of Saharan migration routes (Giuffrida, 2010). Indeed, from the 1970s to the present day, the place of Tuareg groups in the shaping of Saharan migration routes must be considered as central. Their knowledge of the routes, their dominant position in the Saharan economic worlds and their strategic position in Saharan geopolitics have made them crucial intermediaries in the worlds of mobility (Brachet, 2009).

This dominant position is explained both by the transformation of their lifestyles from nomadism to urban sedentarism and by their cross-border spatial hold between Mali, Niger, Algeria and Libya (Grémont, 2011). *'The Tuareg are a heterogeneous Berber-speaking social group, organized around four major poles (Ahaggar, Aïr, Azjer/Ajjer, Azawad/Tademekkat) with complex links between them [4]. They have never been united politically or ideologically but are organized in several socially and politically interconnected constellations, recognising each other's existence in cooperations and rivalries'* (Kohl, 2013:2). From a certain point of view, Tuareg groups can be considered as paradigmatic of the use of space and dispersion as a 'resource', both economic and political. This privileged place, both in mobility and in the places that structure it, invites us to consider the underground and informal economies that shape contemporary migration routes. If the vision of the Tuaregs has long been a victim of a form of romanticization in the European worlds, it is appropriate here to move away from this to understand them in the context of a political economy of mobility that is undergoing change, particularly under the effect of the externalization of European borders in the Sahara (Brachet, 2018). "The 'Afrod', the name given to this economy of mobility, has become a space of struggle between different Tuareg groups. The sharp deterioration in security conditions and the increase in controls have contributed to a substantial decline in the market and an increase in transport prices.

The intertwining of migration and trade routes is an interesting way of approaching the question of relational dynamics between actors of mobility and control in this project. As we have just seen, in the Sahara, networks of passage and economic networks are intertwined at the heart of the Tuareg political economy (Bencherif, 2021). However, this reality is not unique to the central Sahara. Two other passage nodes see similar dynamics intersect. The first concerns the region of Meghna and Oujda, between Morocco and Algeria, a hotbed of 'trabendo', the smuggling trade between the two countries. The second concerns a wider axis linking Rosso, Nouakchott, and Agadir in Morocco and moving people and goods along this Atlantic Saharan route.

Between Algeria and Morocco, if it is known that many sub-Saharan nationals choose to cross the border, few studies have attempted to understand how these mobilities are made possible despite an official closure. Since 1994 and following a rise in tensions between the Algerian and Moroccan states (Vermeren, 2022), the border has been closed and citizens of both countries have been subjected to a visa regime. Since then, all land travel has been officially prohibited. However, as several studies have shown, local societies have never really interrupted exchanges (Moussaoui, 2015). Because they were located on the margins of their representative states, cross-border trade appeared to be one of the only means of subsistence.

As a symbol of links that have not been broken despite the geopolitical reality, local border groups have maintained networks of sociability and notability that make it possible to continue what is known locally as 'trabendo'. *'Trabendo is a visible, daily activity, approved as much by the trabendistes as by the border guards, the customs and other official actors supposed to monitor the border. Thus, living in this space implies being able to transgress the law, having the right contact to guard against the danger of seizure of goods'* (Moussaoui, 2015:1). It is therefore no coincidence that, on a border of 1900 kilometers in length, the bulk of the 'passages' of sub-Saharan adventurers from Algeria to Morocco take place in this area. Beyond the proximity of two large cities from which it is possible to reach the large Moroccan coastal metropolises, these crossings are above all made possible by the existence of an economy of the passage of various goods. If the city of Oujda is particularly known as one of the largest cities for the reception and passage of sub-Saharan adventurers in Morocco (Johnson, 2013), it is largely due to its sociological and economic proximity to the Algerian populations of the Maghna region. The example of this border

region shows once again how important it is to consider local logics in the political economy of passage and mobility.

All routes lead to Morocco … and its cities

'The treatment of sub-Saharan immigration in Morocco has largely been reduced to encampments of comrades in the north of the country, expulsions into the desert, dramatic shipwrecks and surreal landings of pirogues on the beaches of Spanish islands. Such an approach leaves in the shade the migration of Moroccans themselves, privileges transit in the definition of Moroccan space and neglects the inscription of sub-Saharan adventurers in urban centers, as well as their installation in the working-class neighborhoods of the local society'. (Timera, 2009:1)

To understand the patterns of circulation, mobility and settlement of sub-Saharan populations in Morocco, it is necessary to understand these phenomena primarily through the prism of the places that form the core of them (Karibi, 2016). After long journeys, the accumulation of multiple skills and migratory experiences, the 'adventurers of migration' arrive at the threshold of Europe (Pian, 2007). It is here, at the foot of the border, that the logics of cooperation and tensions between migration actors and control actors are reconfigured (Collyer, 2007). However, far from investing only the margins of the migration routes, people on the move manage to overcome blockages based on their ability to mobilize resources from different networks of actors (Pian, 2009; Timera, 2009).

As we have seen, the 'crossing' of a border or a larger space (such as the Sahara) is never done without the participation (sometimes under duress, sometimes not) of actors with strong local roots. This configuration is to some extent reflected in the way in which people on the move mobilize networks of former travelers and adventurers in Morocco. Just as Nouadhibou, a city that combined different spatial configurations of mobility, Moroccan cities, depending on their geographical position, are worked on from below by these sub-Saharan circulations. It is in the heart of often popular, relatively cosmopolitan neighborhoods, where different migratory histories have been superimposed, that adventurers connect, find contacts, reconfigure their migratory projects and develop strategies to pursue their adventure, suspend it or reconfigure it around new imperatives (Dessertine, 2016).

One of the most representative neighborhoods of these configurations is Takadoum, in Rabat. This very old working-class neighborhood was taken over in the 1990s by several Senegalese people who came to work in the city. From a discreet presence, their installation has become more and more assertive over the years and with the arrival of new adventurers. Since the 2000s, Takadoum has become a major place for sub-Saharan Africans settled in Morocco (Ntang et Peraldi, 2011). Beyond transit, various Senegalese or Malian traders began to run African shops and to organize a highly dynamic economy of mobility around these new presences, playing on their knowledge of migration and trade networks (Pian, 2005).

This presence has gradually blended into the urban fabric, with a system of property rentals run by African people and dedicated to the new adventurers. New power relations and new hierarchies of mobility have emerged from this settlement. The figure of the 'thiaman' is representative of these relational configurations (Pian, 2008). At the same time chief, leader, entrepreneur and intermediary (Magallanes-Gonzalez, 2021), the 'thiaman' hold their power from their knowledge of the routes but also from their ability to master the uses of the installation.

These multiple presences, although hierarchical according to multiple criteria, sometimes based on nationality but also and above all on seniority, have nonetheless created cosmopolitan spaces in all Moroccan cities where a dialectical relation between mobility and immobility is constructed in multiple social dimensions. Agadir, Rabat, Casablanca and many other cities have thus become spaces where mobility has progressively built social spaces of cooperation and competition in which the fabric of contemporary migration routes are constantly replayed (Khrouz et Lanza, 2015).

These relational dynamics can also be found in religious spaces. Indeed, many people on the move have carried their religious practices and spirituality with them. In Morocco, a Muslim country where the King is also Commander of the Faithful, the African presence is also synonymous with a return of Christian religious alterity (Bava, 2021). For more than 30 years now, this presence has created new religious spaces (house churches, old Catholic churches reinvested…) but it has also transformed the political space of the religious, both in Morocco and in the space invested by the people on the move (Bava et Boissevain, 2020). It is more broadly a reconfiguration of Christian theologies (evangelical, Pentecostal) of mobility that these presences produce and to which they give meaning. The importance

of religion is central to the relational dynamics of solidarity. Investing the space of the religious allows us to grasp the multiple transformations that the African presence in Morocco brings about, at the urban level (churches, etc.), at the political level (Christianity as a new cosmopolitical object), and at the social level (the religious as a space of power).

Therefore, without spaces of settlement and anchorage, there are no spaces of movement. The transformations of the Moroccan socio-urban fabric mentioned above are intrinsically linked to the geopolitical status of Morocco in the construction of European borders in the Mediterranean. The point is not to assert that Morocco is, above all, a space of transit or settlement (Collyer et al., 2012; Khrouz, 2016). As several authors have stated, these statuses only refer to constructed political processes, and to theoretically oppose them would be part of these logics. On the contrary, the point here is to think of them dialectically, because the 'hot spots' of European borders in Morocco are unquestionably linked to longer anchorages (El Arabi, 2021; Maâ, 2022). Life in the forest, as described in many researchs (Ntang, 2021), its difficulties and its times of waiting constitute the universe of meaning of adventurers in Morocco today (Mouna, 2020). The cities of Nador, Layoune, Dakhla, Ceuta or Melilla are these hot spots and materialize the intertwining of the logics of movement and borders (Queirolo Palmas, 2019, 2021; Gross-Wyrtzen, 2020).

The borderization process in Morocco

Legal and geopolitical framework

To situate Morocco in the space of regional mobility and geopolitical balances, we consider it a fluid space of passage where different mobilities are intertwined, a crossroads of migratory flows of different nature: movements for work, study, asylum, *adventure*. Flows that involve Morocco as a country of transit, destination, origin or return. Until the 1990s, internal regulations governing migration were limited and generally not enforced (Perrin, 2016). The situation changes in connection with the process of Schengenization of the European Union: with the generalization of the internal visa regime, the restriction of entry for nationals of "third countries", European borders are built. In the idea of protecting European space, non-member countries neighboring the EU are involved in border management, in order to control and limit the entry, through a military construction of the frontiers. During this period, the concept of "transit migration" emerged and is now seen

as a security issue: apparatuses to manage migratory flows are constructed with a securitarian approach. At the legal level, the concepts of *regular* and *irregular* migration are recognized by Law 88-11 in Algeria and the 2008 Immigration Law in Mauritania. The establishment of detention mechanisms and waiting zones, as well as deportation practices, have created a system of border rejection in the three countries considered (Cassarino, 2017) - characterized by the criminalization of unauthorized migration.. This approach to migration not only has implications for national policies on migration flows and border management, but also creates new balances of power in geopolitical relations between North African countries and the European Union and its member states, as well as within the African region, which is characterized by delicate and often tense border negotiations.

In Morocco, the borderization process is formalized by Law 02-03, introduced under the government of Mohammad IV in 2003, to regulate the entry and presence of foreigners in the territory (Labayen and Gutiérrez, 2022; Bartels, 2018). This law establishes legal migrant status and its requirements, limiting the conditions of access to employment, health care, education, and social services. Criminal and administrative penalties, such as a ban on re-entry, are provided for those who enter the territory or remain there irregularly; aiding and abetting the irregular entry into or exit from the territory of foreign nationals or citizens is punished by fines and imprisonment. Once the concept of the "regular migrant" is established, borders are physically erected through the placement of militarized and technological borders and the development of mechanisms and spaces of administrative detention.

This Eurocentric migration policy also impacts on people on the move who have no intention of arriving in Europe, who circulate to Morocco from the sub-Saharan area, hence the historical flows of labor-driven mobility, as well as student or religious ones (Cassarino, 2017). In fact, the possibility of regularization is extremely limited and consequently access to social services and the world of work is prevented. The presence of undocumented people in the territory increases exponentially: they become particularly vulnerable and are at risk of poverty, marginalization and, as a result, exploitation and violence. The inaccessibility of housing services pushes many people on the move to precarious housing solutions on the fringes of cities or in informal camps in border areas: spaces that Stock (2020) calls 'limbospaces,' as it becomes impossible to leave without documents. On the other hand, there is no establishment of an asylum or reception system for migrants -

basic assistance programs are provided by international organizations operating in the country since the early 2000s, working closely with government policies.

Border management practices involve the systematic use of force and violence, characterized by expulsions, push-backs and casualties, and the reduction of people on the move to degraded living conditions. Such practices have been documented over time by some civil society actors - for a comprehensive example, see the 2018 GADEM report. In border defense, violence is used to discourage people from crossing the border and to push back those who are intercepted, from all sides of the border: by Moroccan, Spanish, and Algerian police. This is combined with regular raids on informal encampments in border areas, and subsequent forced deportations to Morocco's southern and central cities - where people are displaced and confined to informal camps or industrial and suburban neighborhoods - or to Algeria. In the latter case, people are in turn at risk of being deported to the south of the country and then to Mali, following the logic of chain deportations. This "dispersal policy" (El Arabi, 2020) also affects people with regular permission to stay in the territory, as practice of forced internal relocation. In urban areas, violence takes place through continuous raids by authorities and forms of racism by the local population.It is a form of racialized violence that mainly affects citizens of sub-Saharan countries, even people who have settled in the territory regularly and for a long time.

Border devices in Morocco are established and supported by a series of bilateral and international agreements, involving the European Union and its member countries, particularly Spain. Europe's request insists on Morocco to engage in deportations of irregular people to sub-Saharan countries and the readmission of irregular nationals from Europe. It takes place in a continuous negotiation, on the one hand with the granting of international funds as a source of exchange, and on the other hand with the use of visas as an offer by Europe to facilitate or deny its entry regime for Moroccan citizens. The visa policy, in parallel with the process of *schengenization*, becomes increasingly restrictive for Moroccan citizens, who start facing more and more obstacles, bureaucratic and economic, to legally gaining access to European Union member countries. While increasing the number of visas granted to Morocco consequently to readmissions, the policy remains selective, giving only skilled people the opportunity to migrate legally (Alioua and Arab, 2023; Infantino, 2016).

Morocco's national migration policy changed in 2013, taking a more diplomatic direction, with the New Migration Policy - including measures to regulate migration according to

international human rights standards. The document is the result of consultations between the government and civil society actors and reports that the intention, communicated with narratives designed to please European partners, is to facilitate regularization procedures and subsequent legal residence in the country. As reported by the website of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates, the shift involves the "challenge to perceive immigrants as an opportunity and not as a cultural, social or economic threat" [4]. As a result, in 2014, the National Strategy for Immigration and Asylum (SNIA) was established, the body responsible for coordinating integration and access to health care, housing, employment, and other social services. The System provides regularization lines for illegalized foreigners based on a number of requirements: by marriage, employment, illness, or after 5 years of continuous residence. The government launched two regularization campaigns, in 2014 and 2017, giving about 50,000 illegalized foreigners, mostly sub-Saharans, access to one-year legal status (Ghazouani, 2019). Applications for regularization were granted at a rate of 83.5%, of which 55% were Sub-Saharans (21% from Senegal) (Gross-Wyrtzen, 2020). The residence permit can be renewed for the duration of one year. SNIA is coordinated by UNHCR and IOM under the guidance of the Moroccan government and involves various humanitarian organizations in providing services to legalized foreigners. The situation is different for UNHCR-recognized asylum seekers, particularly Syrian nationals: they are not issued a regularity card but a receipt, which does not guarantee them full access to SNIA services.

Regarding the New Migration Policy, the text has not yet been translated into law and has no de facto legal force - since 2013, two drafts for the asylum law have been arranged and are still in draft, Law 02/03 remains the main legislative reference on migration in Morocco. Despite developments since 2013, administrative reforms to ensure long-term solutions have not been implemented and structural violence and discrimination persist. Sub-Saharan people in particular still face barriers to accessing integration and social services, despite being officially entitled, and are easily involved in exploitative networks and informal labor. The COVID pandemic has increased social vulnerability, isolating many people from assistance and increasing their marginalization: many, due to movement restrictions and job loss, have not had the opportunity to renew their regularization [5]. As the Global Detention Project (2021) report highlights, Morocco's migration management policies are still characterized by the use of force, expulsions, arbitrary detentions, and a de facto lack of access to regular status.

This policy has promoted the externalization of the European border to Moroccan territory, in order to prevent entry into Europe. The European Union granted economic funds to projects that directly or indirectly required border reinforcement. According to data reported by State Watch [6], since 2001 the EU has allocated around 215 million euros in development funding for projects related to strengthening border security in Morocco: 68.6 million euros between 2001 and 2010 and 140 million euros from 2018 onward. From 2014 to 2022, the European Union (2023) has allocated €2.1 billion for Morocco through the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa under the Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI - Global Europe) and other funding instruments, such as the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).

The international presence is not only economic: as has been seen, UNHCR and IOM play a role in the management of Moroccan migration policy, and work closely with the State. IOM has been working in the territory since 2001, later formalized in 2007, UNHCR since 2007. Since the 1990s, the European Union and its member states have funded initiatives to deter irregular migration, encouraging the involvement of IOs, whose presence has increased especially since 2011. The organizations propose initiatives to support the government in managing the flows: information campaigns, aimed at sensitizing 'possible migrants' not to leave, or voluntary repatriation programs. Maâ (2022) and Bartels (2018), studying such initiatives, recognize them as 'border practices', which have a softer form and often co-opt community representatives and immigrants in activities, replicating Eurocentric categories and the purpose of externalizing migration management.

During the last few years, there has been an increased cooperation between the Moroccan regime and the European agencies, Europol and Frontex, already operating at the Moroccan borders, and currently discussing working arrangements (European Union, 2022). Central is Frontex's presence in managing the route from the southern coast of Morocco to the Canary Islands (ASGI, 2022). Operation Hera [7], in fact, was established in 2006 by a cooperation agreement between the European Agency, Mauritania, and Senegal, and a series of bilateral agreements with Spain, to patrol and intercept boats in the Sahara coast. In June 2022, Frontex, in cooperation with the Spanish National Police, launched Minerva Operation, to support border guards at the ports of Algeciras, Tarifa, and Ceuta with migration flows from Morocco.

Insights into border and migration studies in Morocco

The process of militarization that began in 1990 has affected migratory flows crossing Morocco in different ways. Regarding sub-Saharan mobilities, we consider both circular movements and those directed towards the European gates. In this case, the border created a condition of illegality and subsequent marginalization and racial violence. Here, the border has affected the original migration projects, forcing those who do not have access to regularization to leave Morocco, or to settle those who are rejected at the border and do not have the possibility to continue. The more restrictive conditions of entry into the Schengen area for third-country nationals have also reduced the possibility of regular movement for the large number of Moroccans, not easily having access to a visa.

With the borders new kinds of mobilities have emerged, challenging border closure devices and the concept of regular movement. The '*hraqa*' which from the Moroccan dialect denotes those who, unable to enter regularly, 'burn' their documents before breaking into Europe (Arab, 2009). By burning documents, people on the move burn evidence of not being considered entitled to enter, and take the right to do it. In the Bambara dialect it is called '*boza*' (Mouna and Kchikach, 2020) when the crossing is successful, meaning 'victory.' This image portrays two things. On the one hand there is the establishment of a physical border, stating, according to a clear geometry of power, who is allowed to pass and who is not. The border acts as a filter, defining what is safe and what is not and incriminating anything that does not meet its parameters.

The process of borderization in Morocco, at various levels, has established a demarcation between different types of government: in the state-territory-society nexus, on the one hand, and in the implications of the border for state-state relations, on the other. It has taken place through a profound criminalization of unauthorized movements and the 'spectacularization' of the border (Cuttitta, 2014): it is spectacular the presence of a 12-kilometer-long fence, developed control technologies in Melilla, as well as armed ships patrolling the maritime borders. On the other hand, movements as the *hraqa* and *boza* are processes by which this setting is 'burned', by jumping the fence, at sea, on foot, dodging the police shots. This act, which can end in victory at the border, or in rejection, is full of symbols. In the informal camps in the forests at the border, in the suburban neighborhoods, in the masses of people trying to enter in front of the locked European gates: at the center is movement, now restricted, now disruptive. The frontier occupies time, what Ilcan (2022)

calls the 'fronterization of waiting,' the action of decelerating migratory movements, during which border authorities can selectively identify, detain, and expel people on the move, colonizing their time. The clear and frozen violence of border agents and structures is contrasted with the slow, and less obvious, 'violence of abandonment' (Gross-Wyrtzen, 2020): people on the move unstuck in informal camps, not allowed to leave due to lack of documents, or deported to southern cities or industrial neighborhoods. Situations where the violence is not direct, but where abandonment becomes a strategic exercise of power. In which the racialized bodies of people on the move are invisibilized and experience liminality: some manage to get out, and *win* or *burn* the border, some still have to wait, or go back, or it is unknown. The last destination is told by the dramatic shipwrecks in the middle of the sea, the bodies carried back by the current, or lost somewhere.

It is interesting to observe Morocco as a space where migratory mobilities and border politics are mutually enacting and transforming each other. It is a space where different actors and different narratives are proposed, in a continuous deconstruction and recomposition of powers and meanings. In this regard, it becomes necessary, in the wake of the discourse pursued since the beginning, to widen the gaze and reposition Morocco. The concept of 'transit' here is restrictive, not reporting the stories and migration projects where Morocco is a country of origin, or destination, or return. Looking at Morocco as a transit country keeps the prism of the European border at the center, effectively reproducing colonial narratives and evading the fact that for most African migrants the desired destination is not Europe (Gross-Wyrtzen and Gazzotti, 2020). We want to look at Morocco as a crossroads, where frontiers relate to space as 'entanglements' (El Qadim and İşleyen, 2021), involving exchanges and interactions, historical, spatial, political and moral. Here relationships are interdependent and multidirectional, and positions and meanings change, through a process of continuous negotiation among the various actors involved. The process of borderization takes place in Morocco in a deeply intertwined historical and geographical context of a colonial and divisive past, of strained political relations between the center of the country and its marginalized regions and the Western Sahara.

In this context, the border becomes an object of conflict and negotiation. Regarding the intrusive presence of the European Union and its member states in this process, we look at Morocco's positioning in negotiations and bargaining. Morocco's label as the 'gendarme of Europe' is challenged when looking at how the country acts autonomously and as a leading player (Ahouga and Kunz, 2017). In this relationship, irregular migration becomes

a political exchange commodity (El Arabi, 2020), in which Morocco's diplomatic positions are played out to obtain more rights for its diaspora, or in agricultural or foreign fish production deals, or, again, in political pressure regarding Western Sahara. In the face of European agreements, demands, and claims, Morocco organizes its own 'counter-strategies' (El Qadim, 2018), asserting even the concept of dignity, a basic sentiment of anticolonial struggles. From this perspective, Morocco's reluctance to accept readmission agreements in exchange for visa facilitation is interpreted as an expression of national pride, as a moral basis for supporting a better right to mobility for Moroccans (El Qadim, 2018). Morocco's cooperation with the EU and its member countries is hence 'strategically intermittent' (Gross-Wyrtzen and Gazzotti, 2020). The New Migration Policy represents Morocco's policy trajectory based on an attempt to preserve both domestic interests and geopolitical needs. The post-colonial political trajectory made Morocco a hybrid regime [8]: it preserves authoritarian elements while securing a relatively liberalized image from an international perspective (Jimènez-Alvarez et al., 2020). By proposing humanitarian narratives, according to the European vocabulary, the New Migration Policy guarantees an internationally appreciable image, which hides the fact that, since the text has not been converted into law, the border policies remain securitized and are continuously redirected according to Moroccan interests.

Border policy is an influential element of Morocco's position in the African region, which has strengthened since 2011 following the political turmoil of the Arab Spring and the decline of Libya's central role in managing regional migration and influence in sub-Saharan Africa. This is evidenced by Morocco's involvement in various regional agreements and actors: for example, the Global Forum on Migration and Development, the African Alliance (initiated by Morocco). In 2006, the Rabat Process was launched as a regional dialogue on migration, involving several African and European countries, as well as non-state actors such as the Economic Community of West African States and the EU, with the aim of "sharing the burden and responsibility" "of African migration routes and to Europe". Morocco holds the presidency. In general, the migration issue becomes an instrument of influence and negotiation with other African states, which create more privileged relationships than others. Senegal, for example, is among the nationalities 'favored' by Moroccan migration policies. Such relationships generate tensions, for example, the ongoing militarization process at the historically conflictual border between Algeria and Morocco has created other spaces for conflict and negotiation; or diplomatic clashes between countries when North

African nationals are victims of other neighboring countries' migration policies, such as, for example, in 2006 and 2007, the Morocco-Libya dispute over Moroccans detained in Libyan jails for attempted irregular migration (Cassarino, 2017).

Introduction to solidarity studies and civil society in Morocco: dynamics and contradictions

Following the examination of the border apparatus in Morocco, we intend to open a reflection on how solidarity is constituted in this context, in relation to the migratory movements part of it. Reflecting on solidarity gives space to consider different spaces, actors, and relational dynamics, continuously reshaped by migration policies. Considering how increased repression produces a change in migratory movements, slowing them down, pressuring them, or blocking them, we want to observe how solidarity is constituted in relation to people on the move or settled - in counter-borderization practices.

There is research on how people on the move organize collectively, creating strategies, sharing information to survive, and resist in the face of the border. Immobilized at the margins, on the one hand there are daily acts of resistance to make permanence 'more tolerable' (Alioua and Arab, 2023; Alioua, 2020), and on the other hand of organizing future attempts (Mouna and Kchikach, 2020). The border is perceived as a space where new kinds of agency are stimulated, what Ilcan (2022) calls the 'agency-in-displacement,' where new subjectivities are produced (Khosravi, 2019), able to question the border as an immobilizing entity. Maâ (2023), noting how 'migrants' in Morocco manipulate the device of 'voluntary returns,' recognizes how security and refoulement devices can be challenged, appropriated, and transformed into a tool part of the migration project. Borders are constantly deconstructed, and enter into the narrative of the trajectory of people on the move in different ways: Labayen and Gutièrrez (2022) examine videos shot by people on the move during border-crossing journeys, considering how the sharing of conditions and aspirations represent 'performative interventions against the increasement of forced immobility and the techno-legal and symbolic mechanism of securitization of migration' (Labayen and Gutiérrez, 2022, p. 24). The authors continue: 'transformations in global political geography and representations of migration are created from the perspective of those who, despite the fatal policies of Fortress Europe, keep moving' (Labayen and Gutièrrez 2022, p. 34).

Borders are challenged by the organized and collective movements, involving people who in their everyday struggles resist border control (El Qadim and Işleyen, 2021). To question solidarity in this sense, we consider the elements of temporality and collectivity. The reshaping of migration projects due to border policies can create waiting, even enduring permanence: in the dilation of time, people are called upon to organize differently and "make sense" of this new situation (Alioua, 2020). They do it collectively, organizing the settlement in the space, sharing projects, building relationships and resources. This is the origin of what Alioua (2020) recognizes as "collective organization of solidarity", which spreads out at different levels. The organization of the settlement offers support to people on the move and opportunities for inclusion to those who remain: those who are forced to stay organize their relocation, those who want to leave find the resources and information to do so in social networks, people on the move can stop to rest. In this case, the city, its networks and its organization, grant a "respite" (El Arraff, 2017) to travelers, but also to those who have been rejected or deported: in the neighborhoods of Morocco's large cities, in informal camps or ghettos, people on the move find networks of compatriots, opportunities for short jobs, information and the suspension of direct violence (Bachelet, 2019).In the long term, self-help groups (*see* Ustubici, 2016), associations of various kinds to support migrants, and solidarity relationships emerge: solidarity can be organized on an ethnic-community basis or promote cooperation between sub-Saharan and Moroccan migrants (Alioua, 2020). In 2005, in the aftermath of the indignation over the events in Ceuta and Melilla, the Council of sub-Saharan adventurers in Morocco was born, and later other associations of sub-Saharan adventurers, such as the Collective of sub-Saharan adventurers in Morocco (in 2010) and ALECMA (in 2012).

Settlement leads to the creation of different kinds of relationships with local communities, both on an everyday level and along shared socio-political paths. In the latter case, networks and activists draw on Morocco's democratization process, African identity, and the Moroccan emigration experience to form national and international alliances. Alongside racism and stigmatization and their violent forms, relationships of mutual trust, complementarity and recognition are emerging (Alioua, 2020). The settlement initiates political mobilization (Alioua, 2020), calling for a reflection on the right to mobility, as well as the right to stay. Life in the camps, police violence, border disappearances: on various levels these issues become visible, and are supported by Moroccan and international civil society. The demand for migrants' rights opens up spaces for reflection in which Moroccans and migrants together

demand a change in public policy. In 2011, social movements show awareness in relation to human rights issues, among which is reflected the freedom to move (Mouna et al., 2017) - civil society's denunciations and demands against migration repression create awareness and pressure on the government, whose approach somehow changes, although relatively, with the New Migration Policy in 2013.

In order to reflect on the relationship between civil society and the issue of migration, a contextualization is necessary: the Moroccan political structure does not provide space for political competition, socio-political claims or any sort of opposition. The February 20 Movement, born to demand a democratic transition, gave rise to a collective civic awareness, but did not have the tools and space to challenge the government apparatus. Actors working in the field of migrants' rights, and human rights in general, are constantly engaged in a limiting process of negotiation with the Moroccan government. In this sense, the ability of NGOs to effectively advocate for the rights of people on the move is limited given their non-involvement in policy-making processes. At the same time, the criminalization of irregular movements has severely limited the ability of NGOs to target the truly vulnerable people on the move, those who are unrecognized and undocumented. The actors active in documenting and denouncing violations are very constrained by the political context: for instance, the Anti-Racist Group for the Support and Defense of Foreigners and Migrants, founded in December to defend migrants' rights, was only recognized by the state in 2013, being limited to operate.

Civil society actors were somehow involved later in projects and management roles, as we have seen for example in their involvement in the administration of SNIA - but not in political issues, and this in fact became part of the authoritarian structure. This element allows us to see how even in the relationship between civil society actors with international organizations and the government the process of negotiation is intense, often leading to their involvement in the border system.

This insight is one element for understanding the dynamics that inhabit the migratory landscape in Morocco - populated by different actors, European, sub-Saharan, and Moroccan, involved at different levels and in multiple relationships. These relationships present different dynamics of control and movement, border and counter-border, mutually transforming. In which the distinction between borderization and counter-borderization actors and practices is not always clear, in the context of centralization and co-optation

characteristic of Morocco. In which migration management involves practices "that range from coercion to care" (Gross-Wyrtzen and Gazzotti, 2020), and humanitarian and securitarian narratives constantly intermingle, as we have seen.

Insights into routes and intensity of flows

Immigration in Morocco

West Africa is an overrepresented region in statistics on migration from the south. Ivory Coast is the leading country of origin of non-Western foreigners in Morocco, with 16.7%, closely followed by Senegal (15.9%), Guinea (13.2%), the Democratic Republic of Congo (10.1%), Cameroon (8.7%), Mali (4.9%), the Central African Republic (2.3%) and other African countries (15.1%).
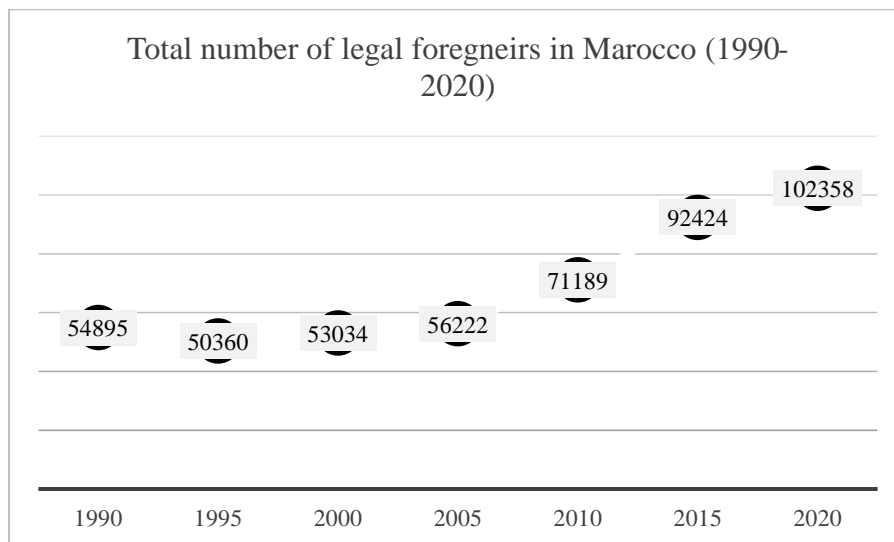
Total number of legal foregneirs in Marocco (1990-2020)

1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
54895	50360	53034	56222	71189	92424	102358

Tableau 2 : Total number of legal foregneirs in Marocco (1990-2020). Source United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2020). International Migrant Stock 2020.

Pays d'origine	Sexe		
	Masculin	Féminin	Total
Côte d'Ivoire	12,8	22,1	16,7
Sénégal	15,9	16,0	15,9
Autres africains	14,8	15,5	15,1
Guinée	16,4	8,6	13,2
RDC	7,9	13,4	10,1
Cameroun	9,5	7,6	8,7
Syrie	9,1	6,1	7,9
Mali	6,0	3,5	4,9
Autres arabes	2,9	2,0	2,5
Centrafrique	3,0	1,4	2,3
Autres pays	1,3	3,7	2,3
Yémen	0,4	0,1	0,3
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

Tableau 3: Country of origin of non-western foreigners in Morocco. Source : La migration forcée au Maroc, résultats de l'enquête nationale de 2021, rapport détaillé. Haut commissariat au Plan

	Refugees	Asylum seekers applications
2022	7.907	10.159
2019	6.642	5.621
2016	4.737	2.422
2014	1.470	1.203

Tableau 4 : Number of refugees and asylum seekers in Morocco by year. Source: Migration Data Portal, 2023.

Pays d'origine	Masculin	Féminin	Total
Syrie	55,0	53,4	54,3
Yémen	12,3	12,4	12,3
Centrafrique	9,9	10,0	9,9
Autres africains	5,2	9,2	6,7
Côte d'Ivoire	4,5	4,5	4,5
Autres arabes	5,0	3,5	4,4
RDC	2,1	2,3	2,2
Cameroun	1,9	1,9	1,9
Guinée	1,5	1,4	1,5
Sénégal	1,9	0,8	1,5
Mali	0,6	0,6	0,6
Autres pays	0,1	-	0,1
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

The numbers of refugees and asylum seekers studied in this survey show that Syria is the most represented country, which in 2022 amounted to 5,250. More than half of the refugees are Syrian (54.4%). Far less significant, but logical in view of the security situation in the country, Yemenis come second with a share of 12.3%, followed by Central Africans with 9.9% and Ivorians with 4.5%, nationals of the DRC (2.2%), Cameroonians (1.9%), Guineans and Senegalese with 1.5% each.

More generally, although these data are supposed to be representative of the demographic characteristics of the populations on the move in Morocco, they must also be interpreted with caution. They obviously refer more to dynamics than to the precise situation of these populations. In any case, as Figure 2 shows, the overall numbers between 1990 and 2020 demonstrate a strong increase of immigration in the country, even if from a relative point of view, their part remains residual (0.3%).

Morocco as a country of origin

Out of a national population of about 33.8 million, the Moroccan diaspora numbers about 4 million people – considering the ones registered in the diplomatic missions or consulates. Looking back at historical movements, until the 1920s, mobilities were generally directed towards the Middle East and sub-Saharan African countries, mostly circular and with economic purposes. Under the French and Spanish protectorates in Moroccan territory, the flows towards Europe began to emerge and intensify: Moroccan workers moved to meet the demand for labor in mining, construction and, during the world wars, the army. Initially, the movements headed for France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany, then diversified to Italy and Spain from the late 1980s and to North America. After independence, the numbers of Moroccans involved in migration processes increased and were characterized by linear movements: labor migration was followed by family reunions of workers.

The first attempts to control and regulate migratory flows can already be observed during the period of the protectorates, when, for example, France demanded a passport or minimum age requirements in order to enter the country. In contrast, unauthorized migratory flows are emerging, which, according to Drihmeur's study (2020) in 1930, accounted for more than 60% of movements. European migration policies became more and more

selective over time, impacting the flows and profiles of foreigners. Indeed, regulations since the 1990s favor the entry of skilled workers and students, and increasingly restrict the possibility of legal entry of other profiles.

Host country	1993	2007	2017	2022
France	678 917	1 131 000	1 349 309	1 327 000
Italy	91 699	379 000	420 651	420 172
Spain	65 847	582 923	363 000	879 943
Belgium	145 363	285 000	358 716	-
Netherlands	164 546	278 000	295 430	361 000

Tableau 5 : Data on the presence of Moroccan citizens by year. Sources: OECD (2017) on Belgium and 1993-2007 data - for the others ISTAT, Instituto Nacional de Estatistica, INSEE Institute, Statistics Netherlands. Data with respect to Italy, the Netherlands and Spain, collected by the National Statistical Institutes, report presence as of January 1 of the year. Italy, Spain and the Netherlands count presence of legal residents with Moroccan citizenship - second generations are also considered, but not children of mixed couples; INSEE (France) reports data for Moroccans and Tunisians together - the calculation reports the sum of *Répartition des immigrés par groupe de pays de naissance* 1,165,000 and *pàr nationalité* 747,000. This table does not include data on persons present in the territory without legal residence.

In France in 2021, though, Morocco was the nationality that obtained the most ingress visas (Alioua and Arab, 2023), and since the 2000s among the first to obtain residence permits for family reasons (Drihmeur, 2020). The main authorized migrants, as mentioned, concern people involved in skilled work or study. Parallel to this is the circular flow of seasonal workers, mainly engaged into agricultural contracts: we refer to Alioua and Arab's (2023) study of the movements of Moroccan women involved in the strawberry harvest, '*dames de fraises*', which in 2022 involved around 15,000 women.

Restrictions on legal entry into European countries are changing flows and patterns of movement, leading those who have no other means of movement to attempt unauthorized entry. The routes and modalities have changed over time, as have the profiles of the people on the move: in recent years, those taking these routes have been predominantly young men, including many unaccompanied minors. According to UNHCR data, the number of people from Morocco who have left the country and applied for asylum in other countries since 2018 is around 10,000, with an increase in recent years.
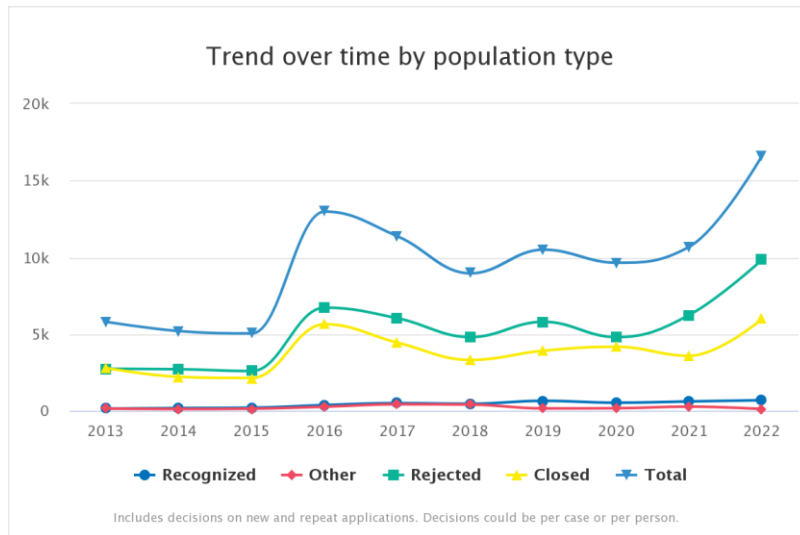
Figure 1: Asylum applications submitted by Moroccans, UNHCR, online source (last accessed August 2023).

Destination countries include France, Italy, Austria and Spain, which have adopted a restrictive policy towards this nationality - Morocco, however, is considered a safe country in Europe, as evidenced by the high rejection rate. In Italy, 81% of asylum applications from Moroccan nationals were rejected in 2022.

The data reported refer mainly to unauthorized movements. A first route to consider is the Western Mediterranean. According to Frontex data, this route has been the most used route for entry into Europe since 2018: as we can see from the graph, the number of detections in 2018 doubled for the second year in a row to a record 56,245. Morocco is the main departure point for this route, and the presence of Moroccan migrants is significant.
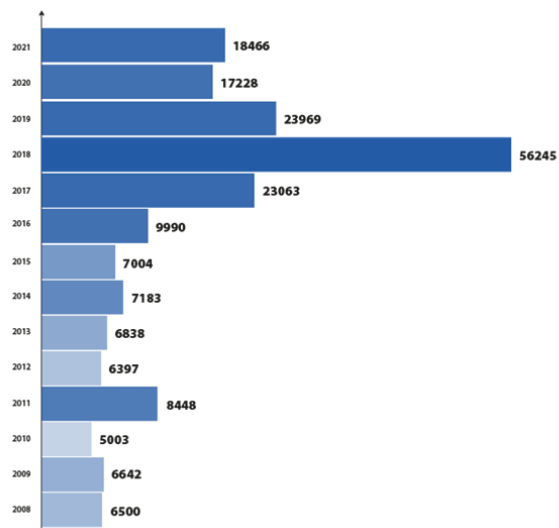

Figure 2: Unauthorized border crossings on the western Mediterranean route in numbers. (Frontex, 2023)

Between 2019 and 2021, arrivals on this route decrease to 17/20 thousand: about half of these are Algerian and Moroccan nationals, according to data reported by Frontex (2023). In parallel with the decrease in arrivals in 2019, the number of Moroccans on the Balkan route is increasing. Given the difficulty for many to reach Europe by sea due to the militarization of borders and the resulting high costs and risk of death at sea, the Balkan route is also becoming a route for many Moroccans, who arrive by plane in Turkey and then move through the countries of the Balkan region to reach Central and Northern Europe. According to Frontex, between 2020 and 2021, Moroccans were among the top nationalities intercepted along the Balkan route, after Syrians and Afghans. In 2020, Frontex counted 26,969 unauthorized border crossings; in 2021, 61,735. Looking at the Alarm Phone data (2019), after the summer of 2019, with the decrease in arrivals along the Strait of Gibraltar route, the flows to the Canary Islands and along the Balkan route intensify.

Figure 3: Arrivals via Strait of Gibraltar - (UNHCR, accessed June 2023).

Considering different migration routes together provides insight into how migration control policies affect movements and border crossings. As the militarization of borders increases, movements shift - now by sea now by land.

Border deaths

One indicator of border violence is the number of victims of border politics. In this context, we want to focus on the number of people who are missing because of the border. We report the data collected since 2014 by the IOM, the Missing Migrants Project, taking into account that these figures do not count the reality of the total number of deaths and missing at the border, which is much higher. Despite the presence of many realities, associations and activists that aim to monitor the deaths at the borders, there are many victims that are produced in silence and that are not counted, or even not noticed. One of the attempts to count border casualties is the Fortress Europe project, which monitors border deaths from 1988 to 2008; in that period only, at least 5,118 people died on the

routes from Morocco, Algeria, Western Sahara, Mauritania and Senegal to Spain, heading for the Canary Islands or crossing the Strait of Gibraltar, 2,582 of whom are reported missing.

The central Mediterranean is considered the deadliest route, with more than 17,000 deaths and disappearances recorded by the MMP since 2014. The deaths recorded are caused by the conditions of the journey, such as duration, lack of food and water and the risk of shipwreck, as well as deaths due to rejection, deportation and police shootings. Of the missing, 5,719 are registered on the Sahara crossing and 3,214 on the route to the Canary Islands or North Africa. More than 2,000 migrant deaths and disappearances have been recorded in the Western Mediterranean since 2014, most of them related to shipwrecks on the route to the Spanish mainland. Syrians accounted for the largest number of deaths on the route to Europe, followed by Moroccans and Algerians.

Conclusion and future orientations

This paper aims to look at Morocco, and broadly at Mauritania and Algeria, as a space where migration interplays on different levels. This area stands as a point of entanglement between historical migratory movements, geographical mobility and political balances. A first level, addressed in the first section of the paper, incorporates the historical and geographical point of view: looking at Morocco by placing it in a space that transcends national borders, we integrate it into a regional space of constant interchanges, of territorial transformation. We look at a history marked by movement and mobility, circular and linear routes, multidirectional interactions in fluid geopolitical relations.

The second part focuses on the construction of borders in Morocco since the 1990s, hence the political aspects and the legal framework of the borderization process in relation to the externalization of European borders. Around the new power structures and the border devices, we want to look at the entanglements that take place, between various actors and in the continuous process of negotiation between them, and what they produce in terms of movement limitations and the resulting mobilizations, in the face of the establishment of borders an opposing counter-bordering movement.

In the perspective of looking at Morocco as a point of entanglements, we want to try to understand how the concept of solidarity is embedded here. In order to do that, maybe it becomes necessary to take a step back, and think about solidarity by looking for it among

new terms and different ways of narrating it. Hence, by looking at Morocco and at the existing counter-borderization experiences, we wonder what 'solidarity' means here, how it is named, what meaning does it have and how many shapes it can play. Morocco here represents a possibility to 'decolonize the gaze on solidarity', trying to recognize the concept in terminologies and ways we are not used to. A general objective is to observe how processes and acts in support with people on the move take place in Morocco, attending to the 'spaces of encounters where social boundaries (ethnicity, class, gender, generation) are contested', in turn 'challenging the dichotomy between 'providers' and 'beneficiaries' and deconstructing the dichotomy between the governance of border immobility and the autonomy of migration.

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[1] The concept of connectivity, developed by Judith Scheele in her book "Smugglers and Saints of the Sahara. Regional Connectivity in the Twentieth Century" about Central Saharan societies, is intended to offer an innovative theoretical framework for understanding the way in which cross-border practices and mobilities are organised in time and space. By avoiding a statonational or (conversely) overly localist reading, the notion of connectivity aims to follow and restore the relationships linking humans and societies through their activities (spiritual, commercial and, more broadly, economic), by alternating the scales and places making up these relationships.

[2] In the post-colonial period, the term "makhzen" refers to the entire Moroccan state and administrative apparatus, with particular emphasis on the system of royal power which governs it.

[3] From an emic point of view, the term 'adventurer' refers to the way in which certain African migrants represent themselves and their migratory trajectories. As an analytical concept, 'adventure migration' seeks to combine what people on the move have to say about their mobility with what researchers have to say about it. For more information on this subject, read : Sylvie Bredeloup, "Migratory Adventure as Moral Experience". In N. Kleist & D. Thorsen (ed), "Hope and Uncertainty in Contemporary African Migration", Routledge Studies in Anthropology, Routledge, p. 134-153.

[4] https://marocainsdumonde.gov.ma/en/national-immigration-and-asylum-strategy/# , website of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates (accessed in August 2023).

[5] See https://www.yabiladi.com/articles/details/100077/laayoune-migration-face-nouvelles-difficultes.html (accessed in June 2023).

[6] Data available online, on https://www.statewatch.org/analyses/2019/aid-border-security-and-eu-morocco-cooperation-on-migration-control/, report 2019, accessed on May 2023.

[7] Data available online, https://frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/news-release/longest-frontex-coordinated-operation-hera-the-canary-islands-WpQls (accessed on June 2023).

[8] According to the Freedom House Index, "Freedom in the world, Morocco Country report", 2023. See also Mouna (2018).